

12-1-1986

Evangelical Visitor - December, 1986 Vol. 99. No. 12

Glen A. Pierce

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Recommended Citation

Pierce, Glen A., "Evangelical Visitor - December, 1986 Vol. 99. No. 12" (1986). *Evangelical Visitor (1887-1999)*. 2510.

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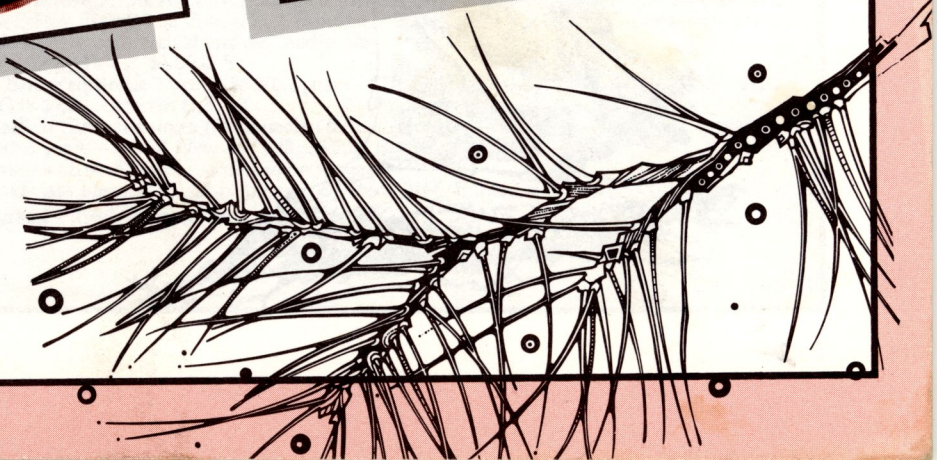
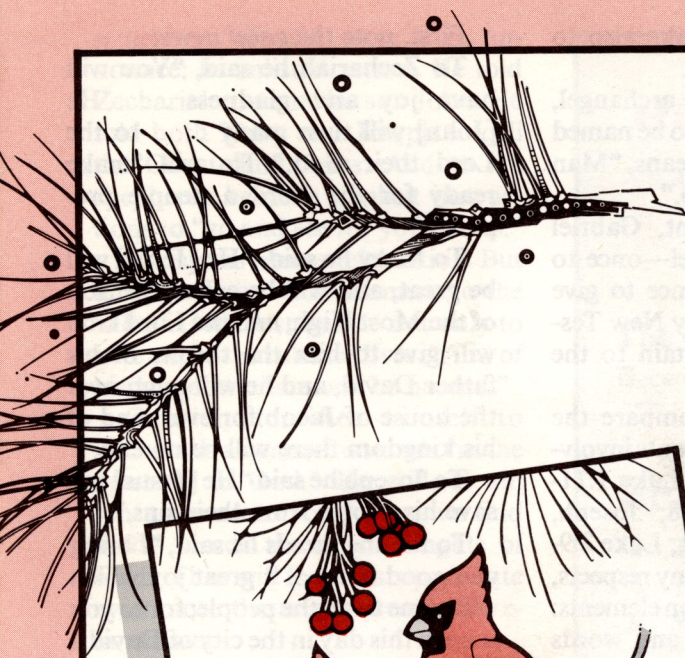
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evangelical

VISITOR

December 1986



AN angel of the Lord told Zechariah that he and his wife, Elizabeth, would have a son. They were to name him John.

Six months later an angel spoke to Mary telling her that she also would bear a son. "You shall call his name Jesus," he said.

Later an angel appeared to Joseph saying, "Do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit."

On the night Jesus was born, an angel came to a group of shepherds who were in a field watching their sheep. He told them they would find the Baby in a manger.

Who was this angel? According to Luke, the angel who spoke to Zechariah and later to Joseph was Gabriel. It seems fair to assume that this was

the same angel who spoke also to Mary and the shepherds.

Besides Michael, the archangel, Gabriel is the only angel to be named in the Bible. His name means, "Man of God," or "God's Hero."

In the Old Testament, Gabriel appeared twice to Daniel—once to interpret a vision and once to give him a prophecy. His only New Testament appearances pertain to the birth of Jesus.

It is interesting to compare the four New Testament accounts involving Gabriel (Zechariah, Luke 1:11-20; Mary, Luke 1:26-38; Joseph, Matt. 1:20-21; Shepherds, Luke 2:9-14). While different in many respects, they contain three common elements: good news, instruction, and words of exhortation.

First, note the *good news*:

To Zechariah he said, "You will have joy and gladness . . . He [John] will turn many . . . to the Lord their God." He will "make ready for the Lord a people prepared."

To Mary he said, "He [Jesus] will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end."

To Joseph he said "He [Jesus] will save his people from their sins."

To the shepherds he said, "I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

Christmas is good news. It's a time for singing and laughing. A time for hilarious celebration. A time to shout from the mountain tops, "Joy to the world, the Lord is come!"

The second common thread in the appearances of Gabriel was his *in-*



The Christmas Angel

by G. Roger Schoenhals

Evangelical Visitor

structions. He did more than announce; he enlisted action. He told Zechariah to name his son John. He told both Mary and Joseph to call the Christ-child Jesus. And to the shepherds he gave implicit instructions to "go and see for yourselves."

Christmas means celebration. But more, it means commitment to the will of God. Jesus came not only to save us, but to rule our lives. "And of his kingdom there will be no end."

Gabriel identified himself to Zechariah as one who stands "in the presence of God." He said, "I am sent to speak to you." Thus, we find in his words the very thoughts of God. This will help us appreciate even more the angel's *words of exhortation*.

Unlike the other words spoken by Gabriel, these admonitions were nearly identical:

To Zechariah he said, "Do not be afraid."

To Mary, "Do not be afraid."

To Joseph, "Do not fear."

To the shepherds, "Be not afraid."

Zechariah, Mary, and the shepherds were afraid of their heavenly visitor. Joseph, on the other hand, feared the possibility of wedding a pregnant woman. But whatever the cause, the angel noted their fears and spoke to them words of consolation.

Christmas is a time for faith, not fear. There's so much evil in the world. So much to fret about. Another Chernobyl, old age, personal failure, economic ruin, physical violence—the list goes on and on. But Christmas reminds us that God has come near to us in Jesus Christ. "What room is there for troubled fear," wrote Amy Carmichael, "I know my Lord and He is near."

Beyond the tinsel and tinkle of Christmas time, the angel of Advent speaks to us. He tells us to celebrate the good news of the Incarnation. He urges us to commit ourselves to the instructions of God. And he exhorts us to find consolation in the admonition, "Do not be afraid." ■

G. Roger Schoenhals lives in Seattle, Wash. Scripture quotations are from the Revised Standard Version.

December 1986

evangelical VISITOR

The official publication of the Brethren in Christ Church

December 1986

Vol. 99, No.12

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EVANGELICAL VISITOR (ISSN 0745-0486) is published monthly by Evangel Press, 301 N. Elm Street (P.O. Box 166), Nappanee, IN 46550-0166. Telephone (219) 773-3164. Member of Evangelical Press Association and Meetinghouse, a Mennonite and Brethren in Christ editors' group. Biblical quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are from the New International Version.

Editor: Glen A. Pierce; Editorial Assistant: Helen Johns; Circulation: Phyllis Lentz

Mailing Information: All correspondence, manuscripts and subscriptions should be addressed to the Editor, Evangelical Visitor, P.O. Box 166, Nappanee, IN 46550-0166. Changes of address should include both the old and new addresses.

Single Copy Price: \$1.00 U.S.

U.S. Subscriptions: 1 year—\$8.50; 2 years—\$15.00; 3 years—\$21.00; 5 years—\$33.00. New and Gift: \$7.00. Lifetime: \$130.00.

Canadian Subscriptions (in Canadian funds): 1 year—\$10.00; 2 years—\$18.00; 3 years—\$26.50; 5 years—\$41.00. New and Gift: \$8.50. Lifetime: \$160.00.

Overseas airmail rates available upon request.

Second-class postage paid at Nappanee, IN 46550-0166. Printed in U.S.A.

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THE story has been told for centuries now. The story of Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthasar and the gifts they brought to the newborn king. And of how they saw the star and followed it for weeks, across mountain and valley and desert. In stately procession on their swaying beasts, they came and placed their treasures at the feet of the infant Savior.

And what *were* their gifts? Ah, you say, everyone knows that. They brought gold, frankincense, and myrrh. So, since the earliest days, the story has been told.

But there you are wrong. The story is incomplete. You see, the story was told by those who had seen the wise men on their journey. And by those who stood by in wonderment as the wise men dismounted

from their weary camels and strode to the door of the rude stable. They watched as the wise men held their jeweled caskets high before them. That much the world saw. And so the story has been told.

But that is not the whole story. And if you listen very carefully and very quietly, you shall hear the rest of it. You shall hear what happened when the wise men entered the stable. And you shall learn the secret of the gifts.

The first of the three visitors to approach the stable was Gaspar. His cloak was of the finest velvet, trimmed with flawless fur. At his waist and throat were clusters of gems, for Gaspar was a wealthy man.

Those who watched saw only that he paused at the stable door. "He prays," they whispered to one another

as they saw Gaspar's lips move. But they were mistaken. They could not see that it was the Angel Gabriel, guarding the holy place, before whom Gaspar stopped.

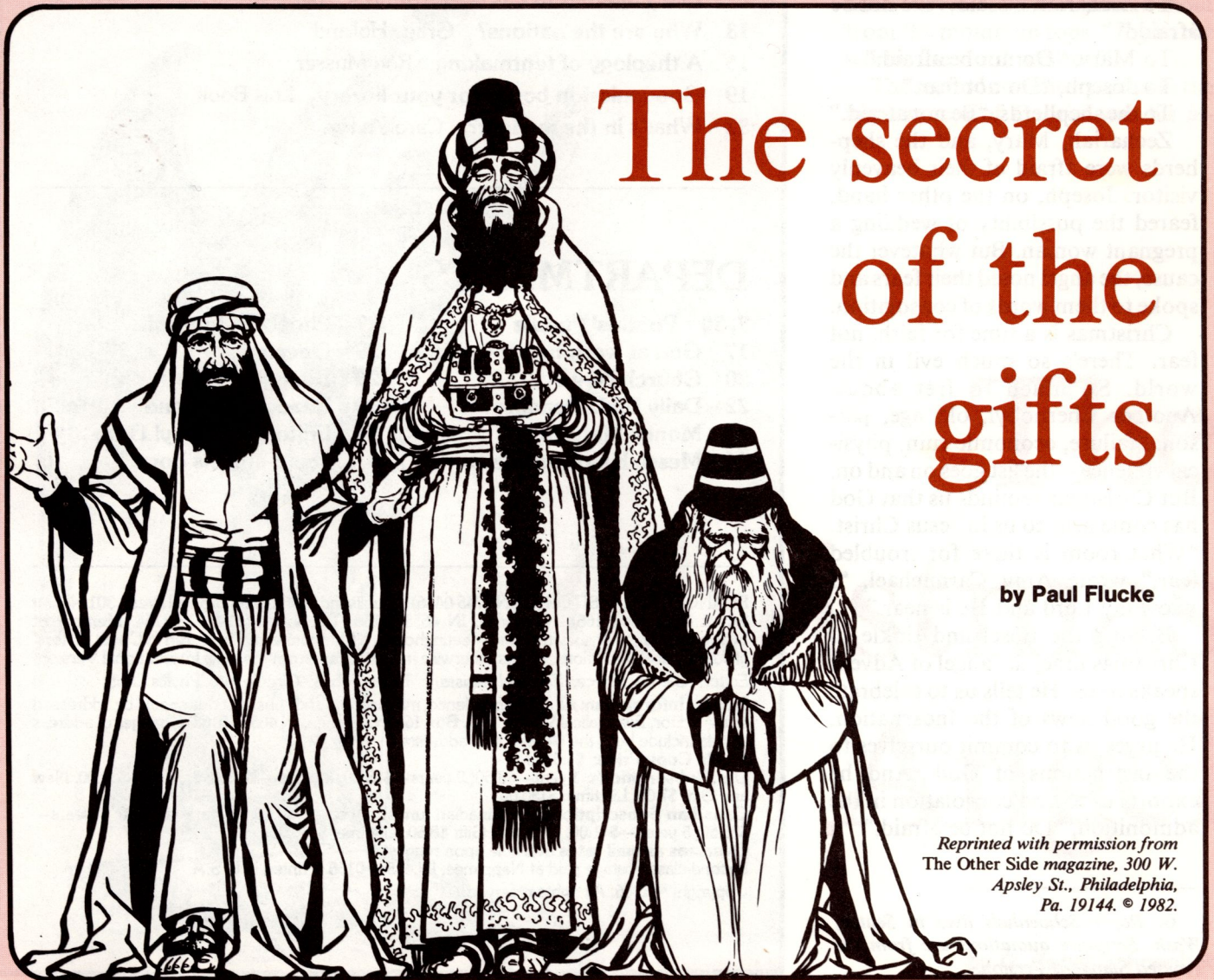
"And who are you?" Gabriel asked in a voice that was firm but not unkind.

"I am Gaspar, and I come to worship the king," he replied.

"All who enter here must bring a gift," said Gabriel. "Have you a gift?"

"Indeed I have," said Gaspar, and he held aloft a finely wrought box. It was small, yet so heavy that his arms could hardly raise it. "I have brought bars of the purest gold."

"Your gift," said Gabriel somberly, "must be the essence of yourself. It must be something precious to your soul."



The secret of the gifts

by Paul Flucke

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The Other Side magazine, 300 W.
Apsley St., Philadelphia,
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"Such have I brought," answered Gaspar confidently, the hint of a smile upon his lips.

"So shall it be," said Gabriel. And he, too, smiled as he held the door for Gaspar to enter.

And there, before the rough board wall of the stable, lay the king he had traveled so far to see. The light of the lamp fell across the tiny face and glinted back from the dark, bright eyes. In the shadows sat the parents, motionless and silent. And beyond them, Gaspar sensed the presence of the sheep and oxen who stood their reverent watch.

Gaspar advanced a step, and then another. He was just about to kneel and lay his gold before the child when he stopped and stood erect. There in his outstretched hands lay not gold but a hammer. Its scarred and blackened head was larger than a man's fist. And its handle was of sinewy wood as long as a man's forearm.

"But, but—" Gaspar stammered as he stared, dumbfounded, at the heavy tool. And then softly, from behind him, he heard the voice of Gabriel.

"So shall it be, and so it is," said the angel. "You have brought the essence of yourself."

Gaspar turned indignantly. "A hammer? What foul magic is this?"

"None but the magic of truth," replied Gabriel. "What you hold in your hands is the hammer of your greed. You have used it to pound wealth from those who labor so that you may live in luxury. You have used it to build a mansion for yourself while others dwell in hovels. You have raised it against friends and made them into enemies—and against enemies to destroy them."

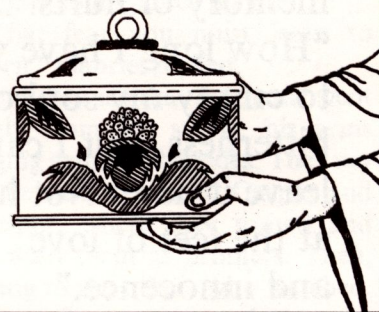
And suddenly Gaspar knew the truth. Bowed with shame, he turned toward the door to leave.

And Gabriel blocked his way. "No, no," he said, "you have not offered your gift."

"Give *this*?" Gaspar blurted in horror, looking at the hammer. "I cannot give this to a king!"

"But you must," Gabriel replied. "That is why you came. And you

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cannot take it back with you. It is too heavy. You have carried it for many years and even now your arms ache with its weight. You must leave it here or it will destroy you."

And once again, Gaspar knew that the angel spoke the truth. But still he protested. "The hammer is too heavy," he said. "Why, the child cannot lift it."

"He is the only one who can," replied the angel.

"But it is dangerous. He might bruise his hands or feet."

"That worry," said Gabriel, "you must leave to heaven. The hammer shall find its place." Slowly Gaspar turned to where the Christ child lay. And slowly he placed the ugly hammer at the baby's feet. Then he rose and turned to the door, pausing only for an instant to look back at the tiny Savior before he rushed outside.

The waiting world saw only the smile that wreathed Gaspar's face as he emerged from the stable. His hands were raised, as though the wings of angels graced his fingers. That much the world saw, and so the story is told.



Next to step to the door of the stable was Melchior, the learned Melchior. He was not so resplendent as Gaspar, for he wore darker robes of the scholar. But the length of his

beard and the furrows in his brow bespoke one who had lived long with the wisdom of the ages. A hush fell over the onlookers as he, too, paused before the door. But only Melchior, could see the angel who stood guard. Only Melchior could hear him speak.

"What have you brought?" asked Gabriel.

And Melchior replied, "I bring frankincense, the fragrance of hidden lands and bygone days."

"Your gift," cautioned Gabriel as he had done before, "must be something precious to your soul."

"Of course it is," retorted Melchior.

"Then enter, and we shall see." And Gabriel opened the door.

Melchior stood breathless before the scene within. In all his many years of searching for elusive Truth, he had never sensed such a presence as this. He knelt reverently. And from beneath his robe he withdrew the silver flask of precious ointment.

But then he drew back and stared. The vessel in his hand was not silver at all. It was common clay, rough and stained as might be found in the humblest cupboard. Aghast, he pulled the stopper from its mouth and sniffed the contents. Then he leapt to his feet, only to face the angel at the door.

"I have been tricked," he said, spitting the words with fury. "This is not the frankincense I brought!"

You bring the soured wine of a life turned grim with jealousy and hate. You have carried within you too long the memory of hurts. . . .
 “How long I have yearned to empty my soul of its bitterness. But I cannot leave it here! Not here at the feet of love and innocence.”



“What is it, then?” asked Gabriel.
 “It is vinegar!” Melchior snarled as though it were a curse.

“So shall it be, and so it is,” said Gabriel. “You have brought what you are made of.”

“You are an angel of fools,” Melchior snorted.

But Gabriel went on. “You bring the bitterness of your heart, the soured wine of a life turned grim with jealousy and hate. You have carried within you too long the memory of old hurts. You have hoarded your resentments and breathed on sparks of anger until they have become as embers smoldering within you. You have sought for knowledge. But you have filled your life with poison.”

As he heard these words, Melchior’s shoulders drooped. He turned his face away from Gabriel and fumbled with his robe, as though to hide the earthen jar. Silently he sidled toward the door.

Gabriel smiled gently and placed his hand on Melchior’s arm. “Wait,” he said. “You must leave your gift.”

Melchior sighed with a pain that came from deep within him. “How I wish I could! How long have I yearned to empty my soul of its bitterness. You have spoken the truth, my friend. But I cannot leave it here! Not here, at the feet of love and innocence.”

“But you can,” said Gabriel. “And you must, if you would be clean. This is the only place you *can* leave it.”

“But this is vile and bitter stuff,” Melchior protested. “What if the child should touch it to his lips?”

“You must leave that worry to heaven,” Gabriel replied. “There is a use even for vinegar.”

So Melchior placed his gift before the Savior. And they say that when he came out of the stable, his eyes shone with the clearest light of heaven’s truth. His skin was as smooth as a youth’s as he lifted his face to gaze on horizons he had never seen before. And in that, at least, the story is correct.



There was yet one more visitor to make his offering. He strode forward now, his back as straight as a tree, shoulders firm as an oaken beam. He walked as one born to command. This was Balthasar, leader of many legions, scourge of walled cities. Before him, as he grasped it by its handle of polished ebony, he carried a brass-bound box.

A murmur ran through those who watched as they saw him hesitate before the door. “Look,” they whispered, “even the great Balthasar does

obedience before the king who waits within.”

But we know that it was Gabriel who caused the warrior to pause. And we know, too, the question that he put.

“Have you a gift?”

“Of course,” answered Balthasar. “I bring a gift of myrrh, the most precious booty of my boldest conquest. Many have fought and died for centuries for such as this. It is the essence of the rarest herb.”

“But is it the essence of yourself?” asked Gabriel.

“It is,” replied the general.

“Then come,” said the angel, “and we shall see.”

Even the fearless Balthasar was not prepared for the wave of awe that struck him as he entered the holy place of the Christ child. He felt a weakness in his knees such as he had never known before. Closing his eyes, he knelt and shuffled forward through the straw in reverence. Then, bowing until his face was near the ground, he slowly released his grip upon the handle of the box and raised his head and opened his eyes.

What lay before him at the baby’s feet was his own spear. Its smooth round staff still glistened where the sweat of his palms had moistened it. And the razor edges of its steely tip caught the flickering light of the lamp.

“It cannot be!” Balthasar whispered hoarsely. “Some enemy has cast a spell!”

“That is more true than you know,” said Gabriel softly from behind him. “A thousand enemies have cast their spell on you and turned your soul into a spear.”

“You speak in riddles,” cried Balthasar, turning to face the angel. “I’ll teach you not to jest at a time like this.” And he raised his fist as if to strike.

Gabriel did not flinch as he continued: “Living only to conquer, you have been conquered. Each battle you win leads you only to another with a foe yet more formidable.”

“Do you think I *like* to kill?” demanded Balthasar. “You angels know nothing of this world. I am the defender of my people. Were it not

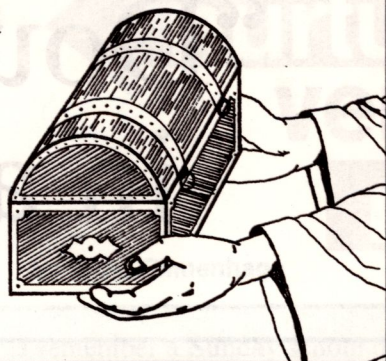
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for my spear leading them in battle, we should have been destroyed long ago. Why, even now, the enemy is massing to invade us. As soon as I leave this holy place, I must raise more armies. I must buy more spears to arm them and—”

“More,” Gabriel interrupted quietly, “than what?”

“Why, more than we have now, more than our enemies have.”

“And what will they do then?” asked the angel softly. “Will your enemies, too, need more?”

Balthasar heard the angel’s words and they seemed to echo in the deepest places of his soul as though vaguely familiar. Was the question one that he had sometime asked himself? Was it that faintest flicker of doubt, quickly stifled by one who did not dare to doubt?

For a moment, Balthasar hesitated. Then, taking control of him-

self, he reached down and grasped his spear—and turned toward the door.

“I cannot leave this here,” he said. “My people need it. We cannot afford to give it up.”

“Are you sure,” asked Gabriel, “that you can *afford* to keep it?”

“But our enemies will destroy us if we drop our spears,” Balthasar said impatiently. “We cannot take that risk.”

“Yes, it is a *risk*,” Gabriel replied slowly. “But your way is a *certainty*—a certainty of spears.”

Once again, Balthasar hesitated. And once again, the sweat of his palm moistened the smooth shaft of the spear. But now the beads stood out on his forehead as well, as the force of Gabriel’s words did battle with centuries of warrior instinct.

A long moment passed. Finally Balthasar loosed his grip, and the

spear dropped toward the floor. But as he looked at the child at his feet, he whispered anxiously to Gabriel. “But here? Is it safe to leave it here?”

The angel released a long-held breath as he whispered back, “This is the only safe place to leave it.”

“But he is a child, and the spear is sharp. It could pierce his flesh.”

“That fear you must leave to heaven,” Gabriel replied.

And they say that Balthasar went calmly from the stable, his arms hanging gently at his sides. They say that he walked first to Gaspar and Melchior, where they waited and embraced them as brothers. Then, turning to the others who watched, he went first to one and then the next, enfolding each in his outstretched arms as one greeting beloved friends whom he has not seen for a very long time.

That, at least, is how the story has always been told. And it is true, as far as it goes. But you have listened well, and now you know the whole of it.

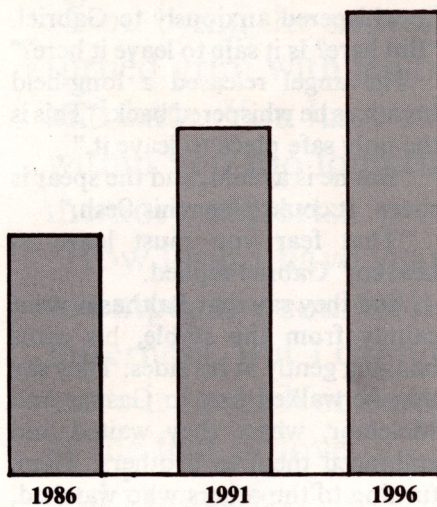
Now you, too, may kneel before the Christ child to leave at his feet those unseen, secret things that may be left nowhere else but there. And having visited the holy place, you, too, like those three visitors of old, may go on your way made new.

But what of their gifts, you ask. What of the hammer, and the vinegar, and the spear? Well, there is another story about them and how they were seen once more. Years later, in fact, on a lonely hill outside of Jerusalem. But do not worry. That is a burden heaven chose to take upon itself, as only heaven can. And will, even to this very day. ■

Pontius' Puddle

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More than “Double in a Decade”

by John K. Stoner

I listened with interest to the General Conference discussion of the proposed goal to “double in a decade.” Two of the questions on my mind were: Is this anywhere near possible, given the record for the past ten years? And, am I ready to work for this goal if I vote for it?

The realistic question—is it possible?—was not a light one for me. Someone asked how the board arrived at the goal. I wondered that too. Why not triple, or quadruple, in a decade? It is obviously going to take a miracle to reach the doubling goal. Why not go for a bigger miracle while we are at it? I didn’t hear a very precise answer to the question, but in my mind the answer was that a goal is intended to stretch, not to rip, so this might be a reasonable goal, perhaps even a realistic one.

The personal question—will I work for it?—was important too. Integrity demands that members of Conference intend to support personally what they vote for. For me this was basically a question of whether I believe in evangelism and church growth, and I knew that I did.

But these thoughts alone were not enough to gain my support for doubling in a decade. It was, and is, clear to me that this is a proposal which expects a miracle, and a large one at that. How does one go about expecting a miracle? I probed the Bible and my life for experience in the expecta-

tion of miracles. And I found some stuff.

Indeed, I did not think long in this direction until I knew that I should vote to work for a miracle.

According to the Bible, the church exists by miracle or it does not exist at all. And the function of that miracle in the Bible has to do first of all not with size, but with quality. When Jesus describes the life of those born into the Kingdom of God, one is first impressed not with how many there are, but with how different they are. The Sermon on the Mount describes a people who have been so radically changed that human psychology and politics are totally upset. Nothing in these fields of normal human endeavor would ever lead to a prediction of the church, let alone the creation of it.

But what is described in the Sermon on the Mount, we see lived in the book of Acts. Here are people who voluntarily give away what they worked hard to earn, respond to their enemies with love, and sing together on weekdays. To see these qualities in the people of God is particularly exciting, coming as it does in Scripture between the life of Jesus and the letters of Paul.

Paul said that the Kingdom of God is not a matter of certain ceremonial rules (predictable cultural norms) but of justice, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17). Now the Kingdom of God is much more than, and other than, the church, but there is a relationship between the two. And that relationship can be seen in the fact that the justice, peace, and joy of the King-

**Double in a decade! Is it possible?
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Is it possible?**

dom are made visible in the economic sharing, enemy-loving, and singing of the church.

A quick look at church history, and a glance across the street at Generic Brethren in Christ will show us that the justice, peace, and joy of the Kingdom are not always the most obvious features of the church. They may, indeed, be sadly lacking. That brings me back to the expectation of miracle as I experience it.

Double in a decade! Is it possible? I relate the question to another one like it. A church characterized by its hunger for justice, commitment to peace and expression of joy! Is it possible?

I sat there in General Conference and said to myself "You've had a lot of practice believing that what you don't see now is nevertheless possible. Vote for it." And I did.

My faith that justice and peace and joy will prevail is not, in the end, based on cultural norms or possibilities, but on the character of God. We know some things about God.

Justice: "I know that the Lord secures justice for the poor and upholds the needy." (Psalm 140:12)

Peace: "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet." (Romans 16:20)

Joy: "You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand." (Psalm 16:11)

We know, furthermore, that God wills to share his character with people—to see justice, peace, and joy developed in them.

I cannot, I confess, get enthusiastic about doubling in size a church for which justice, peace, and joy are unimportant. But if the church is about being what God is being, and doing what God is doing in the world, then may it grow forever. ■

John Stoner is a member of Lancaster Brethren in Christ Church, where he is an active participant in a house group and chairman of the church board. His witness for Jesus Christ is supported by the U.S. Peace Section of the Mennonite Central Committee.

December 1986

The church's dilemma:



by Daryl Climenhaga

I remember a Sunday school discussion of some years ago. The teacher emphasized that we were carrying evangelism too far. "We have only a given amount of energy, and if we spend it all on outreach and neglect each other, our church will die!"

I remember also the words of an early church father: "The church exists by mission as fire by burning." There is the dilemma: do we take all our energy and direct it outwards, or inwards? What do we concentrate on, missionary outreach or nurturing inreach?

The experience of the first church of Jerusalem can guide us. Few times have been so missionary-minded as the day of Pentecost. Few times have seen such concentration on nurture as the days around Pentecost.

Recently I have watched a congregation respond to a sharp rise in attendance. The members rejoiced in the blessings God poured on them, and at the same time they discovered some problems with growth. Welcoming new people to the church, and encouraging more to come in, can lead to neglecting those who have been a part of the church family for more than six months. Then outreach becomes the enemy of nurture.

Rejoicing in the new attenders can also lead people to focus on numbers, as if God only works when everyone turns up. Then outreach blinds us to the many ways God seeks to bless us.

Growth also raises questions about the nature of the congregation, the need for more building space, the size of the pastoral staff. Often more difficulties come with growth than with staying the same.

A congregation facing these problems has three basic choices: keep growing, and plan for the changes; stay the same size—and look for alternative ways to reach out to the community around them; turn inward—and ignore the changes.

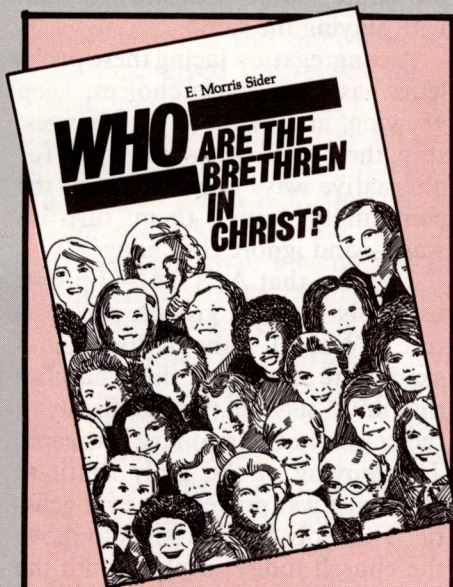
I believe that Acts 2:41-47 points us firmly towards growth *and* nurture. Verse 41, "about three thousand were added to their number that day," sets the passage firmly in the context of missionary outreach. The moving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was powerfully evangelistic. The Holy Spirit desires to move the church today to plead with the world around her: "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation" (Acts 2:40).

Verse 42 brings us just as firmly back to nurture. The new believers devoted themselves to Bible studies, small group meetings, communion services, and prayer as a community. In verses 44 and 45 they demonstrate their total commitment to each other; that is why they held everything in common. In all of these we see a church nurturing her members rigorously. Their needs were cared for—physical, social, spiritual, psychological. No part of their lives was untouched by the powerful love flow-

ing through them as they became the Church of Jesus Christ.

The Holy Spirit desires to move the church today to teach her children, care for her children, love actively all her children as dramatically as did the first church of Jerusalem. Mission is not the enemy of nurture. Mission is the beginning of nurture, just as nurture is the outworking of mission.

Verses 46 and 47, with the believers displaying their faith publicly in the temple and the resulting conversions, brings the point strongly to us. Mission gives birth to nurture; nurture creates more mission. Properly understood, energy spent in evangelism is not lost for nurture. Nor is time spent in nurturing lost for evangelism. Each feeds the other. The better our outreach is, the better our nurture must be.



A 32-page booklet by E. Morris Sider briefly introduces the Brethren in Christ Church. Price: 50¢.

"Every Brethren in Christ home should have 10 copies to hand out to persons asking questions about your faith and your church."—J. Wilmer Heisey

Available at your Christian Light Bookstore, or order from Evangel Press, P.O. Box 189, Nappanee, IN 46550

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In the case of the congregation I mentioned earlier, several applications of this passage suggest themselves. The great goal of the church is to tell everyone the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ. Neither numerical growth nor nurture mean anything if the kingdom of God is not growing. Accordingly, people in the congregation can take their nurturing times to challenge and encourage each other to evangelism. Small groups and Bible studies make good places to help each other in our public witness. Times of worship and of socializing can be shot through with the desire to proclaim Jesus Christ to all the world.

Yet we remember: growth brings problems. Problems came for the early church, too, as the accounts in Acts 6 and 15 make clear. So the congregation needs to be aware of the difficulties growth creates. These difficulties need not discourage the congregation; they can be a spur to work all the harder at nurturing and loving each other.

In that nurturing and loving, natural opportunities arise for evangelism. Outreach in the early church took the routes natural to her members. Outreach for the church today should take similarly natural routes: speaking about Jesus of Nazareth in the conversations of our lives. We will open the way for those around us to see God at work, and to come to him.

The conclusion of the matter is that neither evangelism nor nurture can live alone. Outreach without nurture is shallow and self-defeating.

Although it holds the front door open, it leaves the back door open also, and ushers people grandly in through the one and out the other. On the way it immunizes them against further witnessing: a service thrown in free for good measure.

Nurture without evangelism is equally deadly. Because it holds the front door closed, it is stagnating and stifling. It is like a pond that has neither a spring to feed it, nor an overflow: the water grows stale and the pond dies. Although such an attitude cares for the brothers and sisters already in the church, it shuts its heart to the world and suffocates in its own juice.

Let us resist the temptation to close the front door to protect ourselves. God has placed us here for this time and for the people around us. Let us resist also the temptation to concentrate only on the front door. We want to close the back door, so that we can truly care for and love each other. If we don't take care of each other, we may as well not invite anyone in. Let us turn aside the false conflict between mission and nurture and place our hearts, our efforts, our very selves where they belong—on both. We can resolve the church's dilemma by bringing these together, never by keeping them apart. ■

Until recently the pastor of the Speedwell Heights congregation near Lititz, Pa., Daryl Climenhaga is studying at Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Ky.

Congregational Anniversaries: Life Together in Christ

by E. Morris Sider

Anniversaries, whether in the family or in the congregation, are among the most joyful events of our lives. They can also be among the most significant. For the congregation, anniversaries are times when we rediscover our roots, renew our sense of spiritual family, discern what God has done through the congregation, and find purpose for the future.

The ways in which a congregation can celebrate its anniversaries are many and varied. Some suggestions for celebrating are made in this article. Whatever activities are chosen, a deliberate effort should be made to avoid celebrating for the sake of the past, or to make the celebrations only an exercise in nostalgia. Anniversaries should be made relevant to the present and the future, should provide meaning as well as evoke memories.

Anniversaries, it surely goes without saying, should be planned well in advance of the events (a year or more is a good rule of thumb). The planning committee should be representative of age and interests. A committee composed entirely of older people or of church officials is not likely to prepare an anniversary that is attractive to everyone. All groups need to feel that they are involved in the planning.

Early in its planning, the committee should decide on a theme for the anniversary. A theme will tie the various activities together and help to focus the significance of the events. The title of the theme can be used on posters and banners, and, for little additional cost, on letterheads printed for use during the anniversary year.

The committee should also early decide how extensive the celebration is to be. Some congregations may wish to devote only one day and perhaps only one or two events in that day to the anniversary. Other congregations may decide to take several days, or even to spread activities over several weeks, perhaps even several months. To encourage the latter, I describe a number of activities in the following paragraphs.

Some sort of publication, whether

short or long, should be a part of the anniversary. Ideally, a book on the congregation's history will be written (see the November issue of the *Evangelical Visitor*). If this is too ambitious, a shorter history could be included in the program brochure, or written as a booklet. In whatever form, such written histories make more obvious what is being celebrated, and help to preserve and interpret the historical record to future generations in the congregation.

Anniversaries are opportune times to do oral history (see the October issue on the subject). One person (perhaps two or three) can be designated to record on cassette tape or video tape the stories of older members in the congregation. These tapes could be used during the celebrations and should eventually be deposited in the congregational archives. This activity has the added value of again involving a number of people in the anniversary activities, most importantly the elderly.

Drama is an effective way of visually capturing the spirit of the congregation's past. And again it involves still more

people in the anniversary. Producing a drama, however, is very time consuming; it takes time to write the play, make costumes, probably prepare music, practice, and more. If all of this effort is beyond the interest or ability of a congregation, the planning committee might consider producing a monologue, in which one person, with perhaps changes in costume, represents people of the past and through them takes the audience through its history.

Someone could be assigned to write a series of small accounts—stories, biographies, customs, services—from the congregation's history. These could be typed on a sheet of paper and inserted into the Sunday bulletin, one for each Sunday for, say, five or six weeks. This makes an excellent background for the later main event or events of the anniversary.

Many congregations include a dinner with the anniversary celebrations. This is obviously very appropriate for Brethren in Christ. An anniversary dinner is reminiscent of the love feast meal, which nicely symbolized our coming together as a family in the Lord and highlighted our emphasis on fellowship.

One or more sermons or addresses is customary, undoubtedly the most common feature of congregational anniversaries. Here I only make three suggestions. First, the sermons and addresses could be spread over two or three Sundays. Second, one of the sermons could very profitably be used to relate the congregation to the history and life of the wider brotherhood. This is an effective way to give meaning to the anniversary, and to make it less an exercise in nostalgia. Third, after the anniversary, these sermons and addresses might be printed and brought together as a little book. An inexpensive edition could be produced by typewriter and xerox machine and bound together by saddle stitch.

Other activities can help to tie congregation to denomination during the anniversary. A series of lessons (say, one quarter) in Brethren in Christ history

For the congregation, anniversaries are times when we rediscover our roots, renew our sense of spiritual family, discern what God has done, and find purpose for the future.

Below, the brochure developed by the Manor congregation for its 100th anniversary.

Manor Brethren in Christ Church Centennial Celebration 1886-1986

The year 1986 is a special milestone in the life of our congregation as we celebrate our one hundredth anniversary. This brochure of historical information covering these one hundred years should call us to gratitude, greater commitment and more faithful service as we see "How the Lord has led us."

could be offered as an elective to an adult class around the time of the anniversary. The series could also be adapted to the level of youth and even of children. If the congregation is within driving distance of the denominational archives at Grantham, Pa., a session could be arranged in the archives in which the archivist talks about the church's history and illustrates it with historical objects from the archives. Or the archivist could bring the objects to the congregation and make his presentation to a larger group. The congregation itself may have some objects—photographs, documents, feet washing tubs—that could be brought together in an exhibit in a room in the church.

I recently read that a congregation made an anniversary quilt as part of its anniversary celebrations. The quilt depicted scenes, events, and people in the life of the congregation. This was appropriate not only because it related the congregation's past, but also because quilt making was very much a part of the life of the Brethren in Christ women of former years.

Music has been an important part of Brethren in Christ life, thus some special

musical activity at an anniversary is appropriate. Someone in the congregation could be commissioned to compose an anniversary song or hymn. A choir, singing a cappella (as earlier music groups did), could sing songs from former hymnals in one or more services, or be given an entire service in which to do so. Included in the choir's selections should be songs written by Brethren in Christ, including C. N. Hostetter, Jr., J. R. Zook, and Samuel R. Smith. Quartets, which were in vogue until recent years, could sing some of the quartet songs made familiar to many of us by the men's and ladies' quartets from the church colleges.

As all of this suggests, the anniversary of a congregation can be a significant time of reflection and renewal. This will most likely happen when the activities in the anniversary are planned with care and purpose. ■

This the fifth in a series of articles written by E. Morris Sider, archivist for the Brethren in Christ Church and member of the faculty of Messiah College.

Meeting growth needs

Since its original construction the building has undergone seven structural changes.

1. In 1909 the separate entrances for men and women were changed to a single entrance to the south. The pulpit was moved from the west side to the north side, and all pews were arranged to face the pulpit. (That early church building is the present Fellowship Hall.) In 1921 the pulpit was placed on an elevated platform.
2. Twenty-six years later, 1935, a vestibule was added to the main entrance on the south. In the prior year the coal stoves that the ladies blackened so faithfully at cleaning time were replaced with a furnace, and the kerosene lamps gave way to gas lights.
3. The first major addition to the church was made in 1942. Its need was mainly due to the growth of the Sunday School established in 1913. To provide extra classrooms and rest-room facilities, a 12-foot addition was built on the south side of the church building. A new floor and roof were provided for the entire building. The total cost of this project was slightly over \$5,000.00.

4. Extensive change came in 1954 when the basement was excavated under the existing church to provide additional classrooms. In the main church the platform area was recessed, new pews were installed, carpet was laid, clear glass panes re-installed, carpet was laid, a well was dug, and a new water system was installed. The total cost of these improvements and remodeling was \$27,370.
5. In 1964 an addition was built to the west side of the church. These new facilities provided ten additional classrooms. On the main floor the winged annex served as an overflow area for the sanctuary, and on the ground floor it functioned as a children's worship area and classrooms.
6. In 1973 the present sanctuary was added with classrooms in the basement, and a Youth Center (a full-size gymnasium) on the main level. The former full-size gymnasium was changed into the Fellowship Hall.
7. The most recent addition came in 1985 with the erection of a 22,400 square-foot addition on the north and west sides of the Youth Center. This addition provided seventeen more classrooms, five offices, four restrooms, four storage rooms, a Youth Lounge, Nursery and a new Junior Worship area.

Sharing the message

Manor Church has had a continuing concern for the areas of Christian ministry, missionary outreach,

and Voluntary Service (short-term assignments). Approximately fifty persons have gone out from this church to serve in the areas mentioned above. The first missionary to go out from Manor Church was Roy Mann, in 1922.

The church has given generous financial support to missions and relief work. In addition to budgeted giving to general missions, there have been special projects by Sunday School classes and, in recent years, projects for the whole congregation, such as providing Bibles for India, Bible dictionaries as study aids for Brethren in Christ pastors in Nicaragua, and blankets for refugees in Ethiopia.

Vision for local outreach led to the planting of a new church in Millersville in 1984.

Opportunities for growth and nurture

First records of revival meetings date back to 1903. These meetings were the evangelistic outreach of the congregation. Many visitors who were not members or not Christians attended and came to faith in Christ.

The first Sunday School was organized at Manor in 1913. These sessions were held bi-weekly on Sunday afternoon. Later the time for the sessions was changed to the morning, when for three Sundays out of four it would be held at this time; on the fourth Sunday, it would be held in the evening prior to the preaching service that was scheduled every four weeks. The first superintendent was George Frey, and the curriculum was exclusively the Bible.

The church also held singing classes, in which the members of the congregation were taught to read notes. This helped the church to move to hymnals with a musical score. It also led to use of parts in congregation singing rather than simple unison singing.

About three years after the implementation of Sunday School, young people's meetings were begun, first monthly, then bi-weekly. The youth of the congregation presented a program before the entire group of worshippers in the evening service prior to the "preaching service."

As years passed, mid-week prayer meeting or Bible Study, Vacation Bible School for a week or two during the summer, and Wednesday evening youth clubs were all added. In recent years there has been a growing number of small groups meeting in homes for Bible Study, prayer and spiritual nurture.



New entrance added on south



Pulpit was placed on raised platform in 1921. The above picture was taken in 1950.



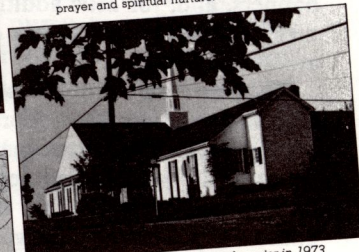
Platform area was recessed in 1954



Oldest members in 1964 (left to right) George Frey, Armor Frey, Jacob Schock, Sr., and Stoner Seitz



An addition was built on the west side in 1964



Addition of new sanctuary and youth center in 1973

God and the nations—Part II

Who are the nations?



by Grace Holland

Have you ever picked up an issue of the *National Geographic* and stared in fascination at the person on the cover? The clothes, the coloring, and perhaps even the expression all shouted how different he was from you—and yet to him, these characteristics and customs were the most natural in the world. To him, they constituted reality and indicated how well he fitted in where he was. So deep-seated is our ethnic identity that it is hard for us to imagine that others' cultures are valid, and the man in the picture would have just as hard a time accepting *you* if he could see you.

Perhaps the most surprising thing about this matter of culture for a Christian is that God knows all about it and celebrated it in his word before our nation was even thought of. The Greek word translated 335 times in the Bible as "nations" is *ta ethne* from which we get our word *ethnic*. Seeing this, we begin to understand that when God talks about the nations being blessed, and the nations coming to him, and the nations bowing down—or when he tells us to make disciples of every nation—he is not talking about the 200 or so geographical countries of the world that happen to exist now. He is talking about people groups that see themselves as units because they have common languages, traits, or customs.

Most geographical countries have many of these ethnic groups within them. China has thousands of ethnic groups, and even in the United States, eight distinct Indian tribes still exist

in the vicinity of Seattle, Washington. Each of these groups has a somewhat different perception of reality. For each group, as well as for us, other groups are foreign or impolite, or at least different. A Zimbabwean woman would not be so careless as to hand something to you with her left hand, and to a Venezuelan, any baby without earrings must be a boy!

But there are far greater differences than these customs which seem so right or wrong socially. There are deep-seated attitudes that may not be apparent at all. At the center of each nation or culture and at the center of each individual is the basic philosophy of life, or world view, which gives meaning to all that he or she thinks and does. This divergence in world views is one reason why it is so important to God to include *all* the nations in his appeal. It is this

world view that must basically be changed to apprehend a just and loving God if a person or a nation is to be saved. Therefore, we must think of the nations of the Bible as people groups and not just countries. It is true that there are at least a few Christians in almost every country in the world today, but there are still thousands of nations that are untouched.

Biblical "nations" are not only the tribes or ethnic groups which have existed for hundreds of years in their own lands. New ones are constantly being formed. When Turkish people go to West Germany to work (as they are doing by the thousands today), their needs and perceptions change. They are not German, and they are no longer traditionally Turkish in every way. Mexicans who come to the United States find that they live and think differently, even though they may cling to their group and to many of their old customs. Even Americans who move to the cities develop different attitudes, form new alliances, and have needs different from their country cousins. So, new people groups are formed constantly, and we need to think of them as "nations" in the biblical sense, since each needs a special missionary effort to get the gospel across the barriers that surround it.

With this kind of understanding about the nations, how many of them must there be in the world today? No one knows for sure; much depends on how you divide them. In some cases we would find it hard to agree on where one group ends and



Two Cuban ladies prepare an evening meal for guests.



Girls in India enjoy rice and curry.

another begins. Some, in fact, overlap. But 6,000 people groups without churches have already been identified and described by mission researchers. David Barrett, author of the *World Christian Encyclopedia*, is now working on an atlas in which he hopes to cover 11,000 peoples and languages. But leaders at the U.S. Center for World Mission in Pasadena, CA, believe that there are at least 22,000 different "nations" in the world. Surely if every nation on earth is to hear the gospel, a great many people are going to have to be aware of the distinctiveness of cultures and be willing to try to cross the barriers to get to them.

But why is God so excited about every little people group? We wonder why he allowed peoples to develop so differently, and then we think about the free will he has given man. We know that people's choices take them in different directions. When we think of the created, inanimate world without the freedom of choice, it seems as though God *likes* variety and that he has pleasure in the endless diversity of things like leaf shape—to say nothing of the many other varieties of life, color and complexity in his creation.

A study of language shows that words in different languages never cover exactly the same territory. Of course there are adequate means of expressions in every tongue for the

experiences of that culture; but Ndebele and Tonga, for example, contain wonderful words or descriptive exclamation that add excitement to the languages as they are spoken. English lacks such words. Many languages have words that sound somehow like their meaning. Can't you picture *squelch* even as you say it? Yet this quality of the word is lost in translation.

In view of this wonderful diversity of languages, it has been suggested that perhaps God will not be fully praised until he is worshipped in every language of earth. As God refers to the nations again and again in his word, it seems that he not only recognizes the different cultures but that he takes pleasure in their uniqueness.

Apparently God wants us to appreciate this uniqueness too. He has told us to go to all nations. There must be many reasons for this emphasis. We will look at three.

1. Looking at the world as people groups is a good way to *picture the job*. Since customs and language are so much a part of each person, introducing the gospel within each culture is surely important. How should we feel when we discover a cluster of people who have no way of seeing and hearing God's love in their own terms? Making just such a discovery is what has wakened some of the young overseas churches to

their responsibility to pass on the Good News.

2. Being aware of the nations helps us *get at the job*. When we look at a mixture of people, it is hard to describe their needs and the ways of communicating with them. If we concentrate on unique groups, we can discover their problems, find ways of relating to them, and plan means of introducing them to Christ. Elizabeth Elliot in *No Graven Image* describes a North American in patent leather shoes stepping into a swampy field to hand Spanish tracts to illiterate Indians in the mountains of South America. The incongruities here are so obvious that we laugh about them, but we are in danger of making such inappropriate advances if we do not see people in their national trappings.

3. Seeing the world as nations also helps us *define the extent of the job*. Although there are still about two billion people in the world who do not have the opportunity of hearing the gospel, it is not the task of the missionary-sending church to convert all of them. The job is rather to plant in each people group a church that is strong enough and sufficiently motivated to evangelize the group. The job of reaching the world seems much more feasible when we see the world as made up of people groups who have the potential of evangelizing themselves. Still, cross-cultural missionaries will have to go to all the groups. Nationals can evangelize better than missionaries, but missionaries must get the process started in each new group.

God's heart is for the nations. He knows each custom and the points of vulnerability for each group. Does he really expect us to reach all of them? Let's be open to what more he has to say to us about this. ■

This is the second in a series of articles written by Grace Holland. In the next article, look for the implications of these truths to ourselves.

A theology of tentmaking

by Rod Musser

Today's tentmakers are becoming very popular in current missionary strategy. Is this good? What is a tentmaker? Is this concept biblically based? Since there has been a rise in tentmaking ministries in the past number of years, we need to be aware of what is involved in tentmaking and how to use this approach efficiently.

J. Herbert Kane defines a tentmaker as "any dedicated Christian who lives and works overseas under nonreligious auspices, and who uses his secular calling as an opportunity to give his personal witness to Jesus Christ."¹ The stress on personal witnessing is the key motivation of a tentmaker. The secular call must be secondary on the mission field.

Tentmaking is a relevant and needed strategy in today's missions. First, since the end of World War II, the world has changed. Gone are the days of colonialism and imperialism. Unfortunately, many traditional missionary strategies have been associated with these structures; therefore, many countries have closed their doors to traditional missionaries. On the other hand, many of these countries want to be brought into the modern technological age and need qualified professionals to come to them. Countries that are hostile to traditional missionaries are at the same time pleading for professionals. Tentmakers are presently our best hope for spreading the gospel to the people in these countries.

Secondly, results of a recent census show that there are more than 100 American citizens living and

working overseas for every one missionary there.² If we could train those among them who are Christians to be tentmakers, we could increase our missionary personnel tenfold.

The biblical base

There are many examples of tentmaking throughout the Bible. One such example is found in 2 Kings 5:1-16. This is the account of the healing of Naaman, the Aramean. The entire miracle of healing was initiated because a Jewish slave girl spoke about the prophet of God. This is tentmaking: witnessing where the Lord places you.

A tentmaker: any dedicated Christian . . . who uses his secular calling as an opportunity to witness . . .

Queen Esther is another excellent example of a tentmaker. She used her influence and position to save the Jewish nation. This account shows a true struggle that all tentmakers face. All tentmakers must eventually decide what has primary importance in their lives: their position and profession or their obedience to God.

The main biblical support for tentmaking ministries is found in the New Testament as the first century church demonstrated this type of evangelizing. The church spread primarily through the witness of the common people. Initially, the apostles stayed in Jerusalem. Then "a great persecution broke out against

the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria" (Acts 8:1). It was the slaves, soldiers, merchants, and peasants who shared the gospel with their families, friends, and business associates. No country today has more severe laws against Christianity than did the Roman Empire of those days, and yet the church grew.

Of course, the greatest example of a tentmaker is Paul. The term *tentmaker* comes from the passage in Acts describing Paul's ministry in Corinth (Acts 18:1-15). Although Paul supported himself in spreading the gospel, his primary focus was not the making of tents. Tentmaking was the means to an end. He was primarily concerned with the "persuading of Jews and Greeks."

Paul emphasized that the gospel should be proclaimed freely if at all possible. He wanted nothing—especially not money—to stand in the way of its proclamation. Such passages as 1 Thessalonians 2:9, Acts 20:33-35 and 2 Thessalonians 3:7-10 show Paul's commitment not to be a financial burden to anyone on account of preaching the Word. Although Paul did on occasion accept gifts and help from churches, these were the exception to the rule.

Paul's example should speak to us today. Each situation must be evaluated in its own context. At times, Paul accepted support; more often he supported himself. Both ways are acceptable and right. We must be flexible and open to the gifts of the missionary in question and to the best way of spreading the gospel in the particular region.

Tentmaking today

Tentmaking has not been confined to biblical times and the first century church. In recent times, men like Robert Morrison and William Carey supported themselves by their abilities as interpreter and teacher respectively.

As was stated earlier, the church needs to utilize tentmakers in the missionary field. At the same time, we must be careful that we are aware of special problems that face tent-

Rod Musser is a third year student at Ashland Theological Seminary. This article is a condensed version of a paper he wrote for a course entitled "The Theology of the Christian World Mission."

makers in societies today. From the resources listed in the bibliography, I have compiled a list of nine problems that a tentmaker can face.

1. The tentmaker does not have the support and publicity that a church-supported missionary does. As a result, the tentmaker may lack prayer support. We can never forget that we are involved in spiritual warfare. However, with good communication between tentmakers and missionary prayer groups, this lack can be overcome.

2. The tentmaker faces a definite language barrier. He cannot spend as much time in language study as his "professional" counterparts do. Often the company employing him will provide a translator to assist him, thus giving even less motivation to learn the language of the people around him.

3. Secular companies with a profitable business overseas will do as much as possible to avoid tension with the host country. Therefore, when a country has a policy against "proselytizing," the company will usually adopt the same policy.

4. The tentmaker will soon find that he has limited time to help in mission activities. He feels he must give first priority for his time to his job, and most of his time will be spent at his secular profession.

5. The tentmaker will have limited strength. Burn-out is a real possibility. Involvement in mission work after putting in a full day at the office takes great stamina.

6. Lack of Christian fellowship is another drawback. The tentmaker who goes into a closed country may find himself completely alone. When this aloneness is coupled with the language barrier, it can be very discouraging.

7. Many "Lone Ranger" tentmakers are not accountable to any mission board. This lack of accountability can create problems, especially if the tentmaker's doctrine becomes tainted. The tentmaker is wise to subject himself or herself voluntarily to the oversight of a mission board.

8. Traditional missionaries usually have extensive orientation before

going to the field. The tentmaker usually has no such opportunity for orientation, which can lead to frustration and pain when drastic cultural differences are met.

9. Many companies provide housing on company compounds, eliminating most contact with nationals. This obstacle can be hard to overcome. The more common is daily contact with the nationals, the better are the chances a tentmaker has to impact the people with his testimony.

The tentmaker must be disciplined and committed to overcome these obstacles. They can be overcome with good communication and planning.

On the positive side, there are at least eight major advantages of tentmaking.

1. The tentmaker has access to closed or nearly closed countries. In some countries, such as Afghanistan, tentmaking is the only alternative presently open to us.

2. The financial remuneration is good. Companies often pay high salaries to those willing to move overseas. This creates three specific advantages for the tentmaker: (a) the ability to be self-supporting, (b) the ability to help support the local church or ministry in the area, (c) the ability to plan financially for returning home from service.

3. Traditional missionary work has concentrated on the lower classes. The tentmaker usually works with relatively untouched groups: the educated and the elite.

4. Because he is not part of an official missions organization, the tentmaker is free to respond to needs outside of the actual mission program or area.

5. The tentmaker is free from any suspicion of being paid to preach or being a tool of colonialism. When he shares his testimony with a fellow employee, he does so out of the context of love and concern.

6. Through employment or related factors, the tentmaker has a natural entry into people's lives. This can be more effective than knocking on doors to form friendships and share the gospel.

7. Many countries are hesitant to

issue visas to professional missionaries. A tentmaker has a far better chance of receiving a visa into many countries.

8. Since he is dealing with the elite in a country, a tentmaker can sometimes be influential in the government's decisions. Such influence can help to further the cause of Christ.

Conclusion

There is a strong biblical base for tentmaking ministries. History shows us the value of such disciples. We also must tap the vital reservoir of the laity to accomplish the missions task. As we educate our people from the grassroots up, and as we remain aware of the problems and advantages of tentmaking, we can overcome the disadvantages and capitalize on the advantages.

Tentmaking is not only a viable option in missions; it is a necessary instrument. If we are going to continue the great commission of Christ, the Christian church must make use of tentmaking disciples. If we can combine traditional and tentmaking missionaries, our effect on the world will escalate. If we concentrate on the task, the Lord will be glorified and praised throughout the world. The task never looked so big, and the future has never looked more promising. ■

¹J. Herbert Kane, *Winds of Change in the Christian Mission* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1973), p. 117.

²J. Christy Wilson, *Today's Tentmakers* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1980), p. 17.

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God at work in our world

Good things happening in Bogotá

Bob Geiger—Colombia

There has been a lot of good news. In two weeks five people accepted the Lord! A Sports Ambassadors team played here in the neighborhood and gave their testimonies during half-time. One of the women who heard them, Elsa, came over the next day and accepted the Lord. The next week she came back with her sister who also accepted the Lord. The sister has a lot of emotional hurts which need to be healed. If she lived near, we could do a lot for her and her husband.

Three people accepted the Lord in one of our evangelistic Bible studies. Two of them, a husband and wife, fully understood about needing to confess their sins to have peace with God. The third, a woman, also came. She just took a short-duration job that takes her out of Bogotá, so I won't have much contact with her for the next few months.

The Bible study which these people attend is doing quite well. There are about 15 who attend, with about 10 plus Carol and me at any one time. I continue to have Bible study with Julio and his wife. I started another Bible study for Elsa who just accepted the Lord and another family who, because of the father's cancer, were not able to continue coming.

I still have six more adults to visit who filled out response cards when the basketball team was here. The birth of the baby has pushed my schedule off a bit! (The Geigers have a daughter, Joanna Renée, born August 23, 1986.) There are also six children who filled out cards. I have Bibles to give to the children and hope to make good contacts with the parents.

The end of July we started having Sunday meetings in our home. It started with Loli and Sonia, a woman who accepted the Lord a few months ago through Loli and with whom Carol prayed for deliverance another time. Now five adults, all women, are attending with a few children. Pray that God will give us good contacts with the husbands and that they too will attend. When we reach about 20 we will rent a

building. I fully expect to do this either the end of this year or the beginning of next. So, our embroic state may be nearing its end.

We have also been having some healings. There is a group of women I met who are fasting and praying that the Lord will start his church in this barrio. They all live here.

Praise the Lord for the good things that are happening in Bogotá.

Rev. Samuel Hembrom named as chairman

Erma Sider—former missionary to India

Rev. Samuel Hembrom is the new chairman of the Brethren in Christ Church in India.

Samuel Hembrom's parents came to believe in Christ during the early years of their marriage. Then followed much opposition from their Santal tribal leaders, of whom Samuel's grandfather was chief. Thus, Samuel was raised in a Christian atmosphere. His father was superintendent of the Santal Brethren in Christ Church for many years.

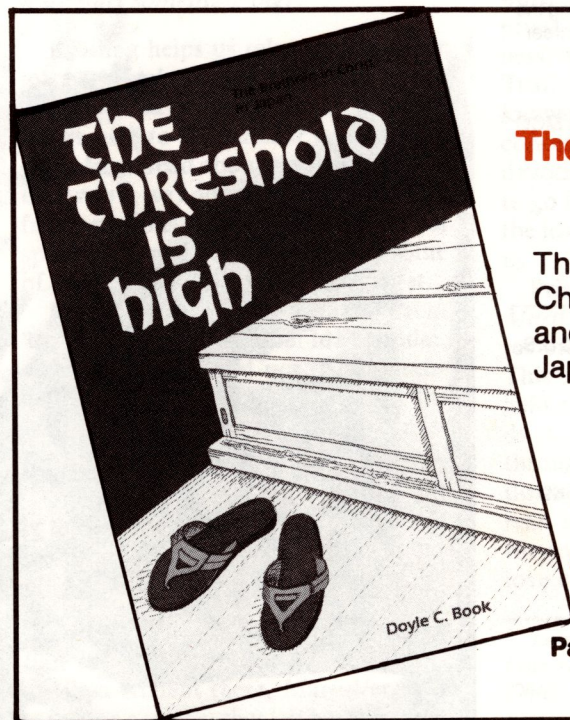
Samuel studied at the Barjora Mis-

New address for Missions office

The Brethren in Christ World Missions U.S. Office in Mount Joy, PA, has a new post office box number. Instead of P.O. Box 27, our mailing address is now *P.O. Box 390*. Our 9-digit zip code has been changed from 17552-0027 to 17552-0390.

sion School through the assistance of SPIC (Scholarship Program for Indian Children—a Brethren in Christ World Missions child support program). He completed high school work at his local city school and went on to study in English at the Allahabad Bible Seminary. Gifted as a singer and guitarist, Samuel made recordings for the Far East Broadcasting Company. He was offered a fine salary to continue in this capacity, but he chose to return to his home people and to work with his own church.

Rev. Samuel Hembrom has served as a church planter and is a much respected leader in the Brethren in Christ Church. His wife is a graduate of Kalvari Bible School, a school for the Christian training of young women. They have two children. Samuel has much enthusiasm, a warm delightful personality, the gift of leadership, and a humble spirit. We believe God has guided the church in



The Threshold is High

by Doyle Book

The story of Brethren in Christ missions in Japan and the growth of the Japanese church.

Available now from your
Christian Light Bookstore

Paper, 224 pages, \$7.95 (U.S.)

“Maybe we can’t go overseas to work, but it’s a great satisfaction to know that here I am at home supporting those who are working out there in the thick of it.”

— Mary Frances Drudge
Markham, Ontario

Down’s syndrome hasn’t stopped Carl Drudge from serving others. Carl weaves rag rugs from unsaleable clothes donated to the Care & Share Shoppe in Stouffville, Ont. His sister Mary Frances washes and cuts the fabric and ties the finished rugs. The rugs are sold at the shop and proceeds go to MCC. Carl and Mary Frances also worked for many years selling MCC SELFHELP Crafts. They are among the thousands who volunteer for MCC at home.

Everyone can be an MCC volunteer.



**Mennonite
Central
Committee**

**Mennonite Central
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21 South 12th Street
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MCC Canada
134 Plaza Drive
Winnipeg, MB R3T 5K9



making Rev. Samuel Hembrom their new chairman, and we pray for the anointing of the Holy Spirit upon his ministry.

"Our Nicodemus"

John Graybill—Japan

Just two days ago a third-year university student, living five houses down the street from us, came at noon and wanted to talk. He was sweating and seemed very burdened. He talked about his school problems, his girl friend, etc. And he is seeking God! I couldn't believe it!

He goes to school in the evenings and on the way home hunts for a church that has light, but all are dark at 10:30. He then asked if I would begin praying with him at that hour and lead him to know God.

We made a date for that night and at 10:30 we had our first 30-minute Bible reading and prayer. Last night, the second session, he asked to pray too, because he wants to become a Christian. I carefully explained what this will detail—a changed life-style, responsibility as a follower of Jesus, etc. He insisted he was ready for such a commitment. So we prayed and I led him in the sinner's prayer. He left smiling with a lighter load at 11:15.

He wants to come every night to pray and read the Bible with me. So, please pray for Mr. Takaoka, our Nicodemus.

Pray the Lord of the harvest

Ben Stoner—New Mexico

A few days before Rosa Eyster moved back to Oklahoma in November 1983, she told us of a dream she had the previous night. A wheat field was being harvested by hand by two or three people. Most of the grain was rotting and falling before it could be harvested. There were not enough workers with the right kind of tools.

Many times we see more needs than we can touch ourselves. When this happens we are reminded to pray for more workers—Navajo workers. Will you pray with us? Right now these needs are before us:

A health worker said, "The number one problem I see in my work is marriage problems."

A young newly-Christian couple in Farmington hears taps on their win-

dows and doors at night. This raises such fear that the wife wants to separate from her husband.

A mother in her 40s has recently become a believer in Jesus. Now her husband does not like her going to church and causes trouble for her at home.

One Theological Education by Extension student said, "People want hours of counseling when I need to get home and care for my own family. I'm glad I took *Christian Family Living* because now I know what to say to them."

Two Christian couples are having marital trouble right now. One is considering divorce, and the other couple is separated. The wife of the one couple and husband of the other have asked for prayer.

Far from the mission, near Newcomb, is a 25-year-old father who wrote the following (edited for your understanding -BKS).

"Need a change in life for good! With everything the way it is, I need to believe in Jesus Christ. I need to straighten out my life for good, not even to drink. I want to be a respected person and take care of my family in the right way, not abuse them, like the way I was, and make God my King and Jesus my Savior. I need a job to support my kids, Joshua, Junior, Jordan and my wife, Marleene, the ones I love with all my heart. And also quit the drug habit, like smoking pot. And I know that I love myself and care about my future.

"And I want to be a good father to my boys and a good husband to my wife, Marleene, and serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen
Thom"

This is the cry of many. People everywhere need people who care. Pray the Lord of the harvest to equip and call workers—Navajo workers.

Good missions books for your library

by Lois Book

Looking for a Christmas gift for that hard-to-please friend? If your friend is interested in missions, consider giving one of these books. Or better yet, give one to a friend who is not interested; you may start something big!

Reading helps us relax and learn. It teaches us about our work and about work we have never done. Reading draws us into the familiar and the foreign. As we read about missionaries and their work, we add to the benefit we gain from missions conferences and special speakers. I want to share with you some of the books I have enjoyed the most.

Dr. Ida, by Dorothy Clark Wilson. This book tells the story of Ida Scudder, who was determined not to be a missionary. Born and raised in India, she came from a family with years of missionary service. The way the Lord changed her heart and mind and drew her into his service makes a fascinating and challenging story.

Take My Hands, by Dorothy Clark Wilson. One of Ida Scudder's accomplishments was the starting of the Christian Medical College in Vellore, India. While a student there, Mary Verghese was in an accident that left her legs para-

lyzed. *Take My Hands* gives the account of her triumph over paralysis and of her work to become a specialist in rehabilitation.

Detour From Tibet, by David Woodward. Chekub was a Tibetan lama (high priest) who searched restlessly for holiness, truth and peace. He found the Truth in Jesus and discovered peace in knowing truth. He was filled with a deep concern for his own people. His story of devotion to the Lord and his willingness to go from the high position of lama to the low one of service challenge each of us.

Prisoners of Hope, by James and Marti Hefley. Today, we often hear remembrances of the Viet Nam war. This book describes the trauma of being held captive by the communists for 234 days. A group of missionaries suffered through the experience together, going through days that were a paradox of fear, suffering, illness, and tragedy on the one hand and faith, hope, peace, and love on the other. ■

Lois Book, missionary/nurse in Africa for four years, currently resides in Greenville, Ohio. She attends the Highland congregation.

Church News

1988 bicentennial planned in Canada

In recognition of two hundred years of the Brethren in Christ having come to Canada, the Canadian Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church is planning a 1988 celebration. The Conference Board has appointed a bicentennial committee to give attention to the various details. The theme chosen for this series of events is "Reflections for the Future."

One key item in the planning is the writing of a history of the Canadian Brethren in Christ. This is in process, under the capable hand of Dr. E. Morris Sider, Brethren in Christ archivist, and a son of the Canadian Conference. Local researchers are lending assistance.

Frank Wallace, an arts student at Wilfred Laurier University, and a member of the Bridlewood congregation, has agreed to author a dramatic presentation.

Other elements in the planning phases include an audio-visual depiction of the conference, a logo contest, and a hymn contest. A historical musical presentation is being considered.

Suggestions/requests are invited. Send correspondence to: Jean Climenhage, 3634 Highland Drive, Ridgeway, Ontario, L0S 1N0.



Stan Norman ordained

Stan Norman, pastor of the Red Star Brethren in Christ Church near Leedey, Okla., was ordained to the ministry on Sunday morning, June 29. The morning message was given by Rev. Charles Norman, Stan's father. Glenn Ginder, bishop of the Midwest Conference, conducted the rite of ordination. Letters of

congratulation and encouragement were read from Alvin Burkholder and Don Shafer, former bishops of the Midwest Conference. A number of Stan and his wife Beth's family members from Kansas were present for the service.

Stan and Beth met while attending Mid-America Nazarene College at Olathe, Kansas. Stan received a degree in pastoral ministries, and Beth received a degree in elementary education. They were married in 1979 and later moved to Oregon, where Stan received a Masters of Divinity degree from Western Evangelical Seminary. They moved to the pastorate in Oklahoma in August 1983. They have two children: J. C., who is four, and Kendra, two. In addition to his active involvement in the local community, Stan serves on the denomination's Board for World Missions.

Paul Keefer ordained

Paul F. Keefer, Jr., was ordained to the ministry June 29, 1986, in the Pequea Brethren in Christ Church, where he serves as associate pastor. Persons having significant influence on Rev. Keefer's life and call to ministry participated in the ordination service.

Rev. Gerald Wingert, senior pastor at Pequea, gave the welcome and invocation to the gathered family and friends. Mr. C. Lawrence Doyle read the Scripture lesson and Rev. Edgar Keefer, Paul's uncle, offered the pastoral prayer.



Dr. John Fries, pastor of the Dillsburg Brethren in Christ Church, delivered the ordination sermon. Dr. John Byers, bishop of the Atlantic Conference, directed the service and conducted the rite of ordination. Rev. Luke Keefer, Sr., Paul's uncle, presented a personal charge to the newly-ordained.

Prior to coming to the Pequea Church in August 1984, Paul attended Ashland Theological Seminary in Ohio, where he earned the Master of Divinity degree in pastoral psychology. Previously he received an A.B. degree from Lebanon Valley College and a Master of Arts in counseling from Shippensburg University.

Paul and his wife Lee were members of the Free Grace congregation, Millersburg, Pa., prior to their call to Christian ministry. They now reside in Willow Street, Pa., with their daughter Johanna and son John.

Congregational News Notes

Allegheny Conference

The **Air Hill** congregation, Chambersburg, Pa., had a ground breaking service Oct. 19 for their new multi-purpose building. On Oct. 26 the Don Seabolt Singers from East Berlin presented an evening of music. Clint Holden, manager of the Mansfield, Ohio, Christian radio station, sang in the morning service. • Fall revival services with Rev. Henry Chafin of Dayton, Ohio, were held Oct. 26-Nov. 2 at the **Antrim** church, Chambersburg. • The **Cedar Grove** congregation, Mifflintown, Pa., now had a Counseling Center run by Rachel Kibler. Oct. 12-19 was missions emphasis week. Louis Cober spoke Oct. 15 on "What In the World Is God Doing?" and the Hollands shared on Oct. 19.

On Oct. 26, the children in the **Chambersburg**,

Pa., church presented the musical, "The Bible Tells Me So." Following the musical, the General Conference video was shown. • A week of revival services was held at the **Clarence Center**, N.Y., church in October, with Doug and Belva McIntosh, a Canadian Revival Fellowship team. The youth, grades 6-12, planned a hayride party for Oct. 25. • Evangelist Don Agner preached in an evening service Oct. 5 to the **Dillsburg**, Pa., congregation. Joe and Lucy Kozlosky provided music. Clinical psychologist Dr. David Leaman and his wife Joyce spoke in both services on Oct. 12. A finger food fellowship preceded the evening service.

The fifth annual missions conference at the **Fairview Ave.** congregation, Waynesboro, Pa., began on Oct. 19. • Missionaries Abe and Kas Bert spoke Oct. 19 for the **Five Forks**, Waynesboro, Pa., missions conference. In the evening

service, Bobbi Ann Martin sang, and Ray Heisey spoke on behalf of Roxbury Camp. • The Chancel Choir of the **Grantham, Pa.**, congregation offered an evening of music on Oct. 12 featuring the works of John Ness Beck as well as music by Bach, Haydn, and other composers. Oct. 19 was Homecoming Sunday.

The **Hanover, Pa.**, congregation enjoyed a talent night and Ice Cream Social on Oct. 19. Bishop Kipe spoke in the Oct. 26 service. Four persons were baptized in an afternoon service. • On Oct. 25, a carry-in meal preceded an evening service of music by the Greiners at the **Hollowell church, Waynesboro, Pa.** • The **Jemison Valley** congregation, Westfield, Pa., planned a Family Life Seminar with Dr. Ken Markley on Nov. 8-9.

The **Marsh Creek** congregation, Howard, Pa., reports that a quilt made by the church sold for \$1,450 at the Gospel Tide Hour bazaar in Aug. The quilt was then presented to Rev. Charlie Byers to be hung in the Gospel Tide offices. • The film "Good News Is For Sharing" was shown Oct. 5 to the **Martinsburg, Pa.**, congregation. Pete and Mim Stern were present for the Oct. 15 evening service and a noon MPF luncheon on the 16th. • The **Mechanicsburg, Pa.**, congregation enjoyed Homecoming Sunday on Oct. 19. Seven persons were received as members on Sept. 21.

Rev. Albert Harvey, formerly serving with Brethren in Christ Missions in Zimbabwe, preached Oct. 19 to the **Messiah Village** congregation, Mechanicsburg. The Harveys now pastor in Australia. • Phil and Elaine Thuma of Macha Hospital, Zambia, were recent speakers on behalf of the WMPF at the **Montgomery church, Upton, Pa.** On the morning of Oct. 12, The Mountain Anthems, a mixed chorus, ministered in music. • During October, missions month at **Morning Hour Chapel, East Berlin, Pa.**, the congregation heard from Stan and Sherry Eyster about Senegal and from William and Mary Hoke. Three persons were received as members on Nov. 2.

Guests for the **Mt. Rock, Shippensburg, Pa.**, mortgage burning celebration and fellowship meal were Bishop Frank Kipe, Rev. Alvin Burkholder, Dr. Arthur Climenhaga, Ray Musser, and Rev. Avery Musser. • Bishop Glenn Ginder brought the morning message Oct. 12 to the **New Guilford** congregation, Chambersburg, Pa. A mother-daughter banquet was enjoyed Oct. 18 with Janet Shenk, speaker. The Gospel Tide Choir sang Oct. 26.

Revival services were held Oct. 5-12 by the **Spring Hope** congregation, Everett, Pa., with evangelist Marlin Moore of Woodbury, Pa., • Erla Stump, Director of Volunteers at Messiah Village presented a program Oct. 21 to the **Wesley** congregation, Mt. Holly Springs, Pa. • A farewell and commissioning service was held Oct. 19 at the **West Shore church, Enola, Pa.**, for John and Kathy Brubaker. They will be at Fuller, Calif., preparing for mission work in Thailand. A "Children's Praise Celebration" was held Oct. 28.

Atlantic Conference

"Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?" was the Oct. 19 fellowship activity of the **Cross Roads** congregation, Mount Joy, Pa. • The junior highers of the **Elizabethtown, Pa.**, congregation enjoyed a barn party on Oct. 26, complete with hay tunnel, games, food, and a movie. The Men's Fellowship had an informative "Get to Know Your Camera" night on Oct. 28. • The **Fairland** Sunday school, Cleona, Pa., experienced good growth during

their October campaign which was highlighted by a balloon release on Oct. 5. Balloon identification cards were returned from as far away as Atlantic City, N.J. During the month, special guests were featured for both adults and children. Mr. James Hess is the Sunday school superintendent.



The **Holden Park** congregation, Orlando, Fla., planned an afternoon of relaxation on Oct. 12 at Wadeview Park with a picnic and games. On Oct. 24-25, the congregation had a workday to repair the parsonage roof. • J. Wilmer Heisey spoke on Oct. 19 to the **Lancaster, Pa.**, congregation on the theme, "In the World Like Jesus." John and Naomi Lederach were the speakers for a Family Life Conference, Nov. 1-2. • Nov. 1 was Fall Workday at **Kenbrook Bible Camp.**

Guest speaker for an Oct. 11 Men's Fellowship Banquet at the **Manor church, Mountville, Pa.**, was State Senator Gib Armstrong. Pastor John and Jolene Hawbaker planned a trip to various missions stations in Africa from Oct. 22-Nov. 21. A love offering was taken to defray expenses.

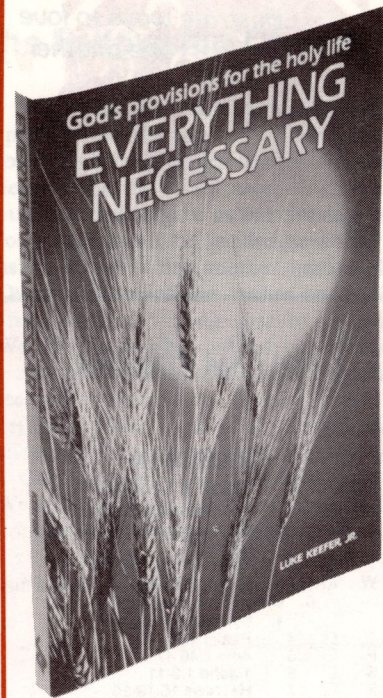
The Messiah College music team Spirit Sound and college chaplain Eldon Fry shared in an evening service Oct. 19 with the **Mastersonville** congregation, Manheim, Pa. • Oct. 15 was Pioneer Club Kickoff Night for the **Mt. Pleasant** congregation, Mt. Joy, Pa. Former Bishop Henry Ginder spoke in the service Oct. 26.

An appreciation brunch and seminar was held Oct. 25 for the Christian education workers of the **Palmyra, Pa.**, congregation. Twenty-six persons were honored with five dollar gift certificates from the Lebanon Christian Light Bookstore for 5-10 years of service; thirty-eight persons were awarded ten dollar certificates for over 10 years of service. • The **Paxton Street Home** fifth anniversary open house was Oct. 18 in Harrisburg, Pa.

The Christ Crusaders of the **Pequea** congregation, Lancaster, Pa., planned an October weekend train trip to New York City to sightsee and worship with Fellowship Chapel. Cindy Hess shared her experiences at Timber Bay Children's Home on Nov. 2. • The **Refton, Pa.**, congregation sponsored a Conference of Marriage on Oct. 26 with Rev. Merle Brubaker speaking on the themes, "A Redemptive Look at Marital Stress," and "Recovery of Hope for Troubled Marriages."

The Messiah College Singers presented an evening program for the **Souderton, Pa.**, congregation on Oct. 12. The theme of this year's couples retreat, Oct. 24-26, was "Building Bridges to Others." • On Nov. 9, "Noah," a marionette program, was presented by the youth to the **Speedwell Heights** congregation, Lititz, Pa., • Oct. 19 was the first of newly planned monthly fellowship meals for the **Stowe, Pa.**, congregation. Members recently participated in "Good News Proclamation," a joint music venture by area churches.

Mr. and Mrs. Abel Lehman, Collegeville, Pa., members of the Stowe congregation, enjoyed a 50th wedding anniversary celebration at Perkioem Valley Brethren in Christ Church. The festivities were hosted by their three children, Florence Gordon, Robert, and Vernon.



As a first time Sunday School leader . . . I welcomed the opportunity to share and discuss the book with the class as it clearly outlines and affirms the fact that God has made provision for the holy life to be experienced by all his children through Jesus Christ. The book skillfully brings into focus issues we as Christians deal with in our everyday lives and reinforces the fact that if we really desire our lives to be vital and growing, God has provided everything necessary to fulfill that desire.

*Mrs. Reatha McFadden—
Bridlewood congregation*

For a fresh approach to considering the broadest implications of the holy life, I strongly recommend Luke Keefer Jr's *Everything Necessary*. This work is faithful to and clear on scriptural truth concerning both the crisis and process involved in seeking and attaining that "holiness without which no one shall see the Lord."

Dr. Arthur W. Climenhaga

Available from your local Christian Light Bookstore or order directly from Evangel Press, P.O. Box 189, Nappanee, IN 46550. Price: \$4.95 for book, \$3.95 for leader's guide. Quantity discounts available.



"Love One Another"

DECEMBER

Day	Book & Chapter
M	1 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12
	3. Children's responsibilities to parents
T	2 Jeremiah 35:1-19
W	3 1 Timothy 5:1-7
	C. Unity of the Local Church
	1. Dynamic fellowship
T	4 Psalm 133:1-3
F	5 Acts 2:40-47
S	6 1 John 1:3-11
S	7 Hebrews 10:19-25
	2. Developing relationships
M	8 Ephesians 4:11-16
T	9 James 5:13-18
W	10 2 Timothy 4:9-16
T	11 1 Corinthians 9:19-23
	D. Unity of Believers
	1. Unity established
F	12 Ephesians 4:1-6
S	13 Ephesians 2:11-22
	2. Unity in practice
S	14 1 Corinthians 1:10-17
M	15 1 Corinthians 3:1-7
T	16 Colossians 3:12-17
W	17 Romans 14:1-13
	3. Unity with variety
T	18 1 Corinthians 12:1-12
F	19 Matthew 25:14-30
	E. Unity of Humanity
	1. Dignity of people
S	20 Genesis 9:1-7
S	21 Psalm 8:1-9
	2. Imperfection of people
M	22 Romans 3:9-20
T	23 Ecclesiastes 2:1-14
W	24 John 8:1-12
	3. Common characteristics of people
T	25 Acts 17:22-34
F	26 James 4:13-17
	4. Relating to non-Christians
S	27 1 Corinthians 5:9-13
S	28 Matthew 5:38-48
M	29 1 John 4:16-23
T	30 2 Corinthians 6:11-18
W	31 Colossians 4:2-6

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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Ravenna, Ohio

The first year at Peace Chapel

On November 30, Peace Chapel, Ravenna, Ohio, became a "real" congregation with the Brethren in Christ Church. Previously we were listed as a fellowship. It is more a technical switch than anything else, but it is an important move. On that day, we announce to all who wish to know that we are a part of the larger body of Christ known as the Brethren in Christ.

Since November 10, 1985, when we had our inaugural service, what have we done and where have we gone? In August of 1985, we borrowed \$10,000 from the Jacob Engle Foundation. I put \$5,000 down on our building, bought sound equipment, scavenged the attic and garage for furniture, had material printed, got a post office box, and away we went.

We had 123 persons at our first service. Praise God! Christmas Eve Candelighting Service saw 108 people worshipping in a beautiful service. At Easter we had 129 folks, and a fine breakfast afterwards. When a black gospel group performed with us, we had a total of 134 at church. And recently when the Kentland Strings accompanied our fine choir, we had 113 at services.

In one year, we completed the following things: church repaired and cleaned; new sidewalk; choir; seminars on death and dying, stress, and conquering loneliness; PAZ youth group formed with 12-35 kids; monthly support to the Geigers in Columbia; Christmas eve service; Thanksgiving eve service; monthly communion; monthly newsletter; two summer services weekly; loan on building approved; Children's Hour Sunday Morning started; Pastor's class.

During this year, our average weekly attendance has been 72 and our average weekly offering \$352. Church Council is almost complete. We're planning a trip to the Holy Land in 1988. We're developing a good reputation in the community; folks know that we're here and that we embrace a gospel of love and peace and forgiveness. I am working on a community presentation on the Holocaust and the First Annual Peace Chapel Peace Conference.

"Where there is no vision, the people perish." Well, we have vision, all of us here—visions for the future. God bless you all.—*adapted from the November 1986 "Peacetimes" newsletter by Pastor Coe Neil Cabe.*

Canadian Conference

Sheila Massey, with Trans World Radio in India, spoke to the **Bridlewood** congregation, Agincourt, Ont., in the Oct. 12 service. The youth were in retreat Oct. 24-26 at the Guelph Bible Conference. • The **Cheapside** congregation, Nanticoke, Ont., welcomed Rev. Willis Hunking as evangelist Oct. 14-19. There was a seminar Nov. 1 on "The Role of Faith in Healing." • Judy Becker, preparing for missionary service in Pakistan with The Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM), shared with the **Cross Roads Memorial** congregation, Guelph, Ont., on Nov. 2.

Bishop C. B. Byers preached the morning message Oct. 19 for the **Heise Hill** congregation, Gormley, Ont. The evening service was a concert by the Triumphant Sound Quartet. • Luke Keefer, Sr., was evangelist for Oct. 16-22 meetings at the **Houghton** church, Langton, Ont. • The **North East Community** congregation of Calgary, Alb., reports numerous fall fellowship activities and a child dedication on Oct. 26. • The Adult Fellowship of the **Ridgemount** congregation, Hamilton, Ont., had a hayride on Oct. 17. On Oct. 20, the women met to prepare for a Christmas bazaar.

The **Rosebank** congregation, Petersburg, Ont., enjoyed the Stanley Tam film series from Oct. 12-Nov. 2. • Jack and Dottie Yost of Berwick, Pa., led evangelistic meetings Oct. 26-29 for the **Sherkston**, Ont., congregation. Mrs. Yost hosted daytime coffee cup gatherings for women and also presented the children's ministry each evening. • The Kiddy Kollege of the **Wainfleet**, Ont., congregation now has 65 children enrolled—double the number of past years. A toy and pie sale was held Oct. 18, with proceeds going to support the Kollege. • The **Springvale**, Ont., congregation, held a bazaar Oct. 18 with money going to Timber Bay

Children's Home and the church expansion fund. A week of survival meetings with Rev. Ken Smith started Oct. 19.

Central Conference

The Horizon Youth Fellowship of the **Amherst** congregation, Massillon, Ohio, traveled in October to the 4th Annual Youth Group Night at Akron Derby Downs. Scott Fletcher, shortstop for the Texas Rangers, was the speaker. The junior church had a party on Oct. 26 to which the children came dressed as their favorite Bible character. • On Oct. 12, six persons were baptized and received as members of the **Ashland**, Ohio, congregation.

The children of the **Beulah Chapel** congregation, Springfield, Ohio, enjoyed a Hallelujah party on Oct. 30. Pastor Terry Priest planned to attend the GRADE Basic Leadership Seminar in San Diego, Nov. 4-10. • On the evening of Oct. 19, the **Christian Union** congregation, Garrett, Ind., viewed a slide presentation about the work of Jay and Judy Smith in Senegal. Ken Gibson, Central Conference Director of Evangelism and Church Planting, was the guest of the congregation in early November.

Eight-year-old Shannon Simpson was baptized in late September at the **Dayton**, Ohio, church. Rev. Charles Norman held revival services Oct. 5-11. • Ruth Dourte, family and marriage counselor, spoke to the **Highland** congregation, West Milton, Ohio, Nov. 9-12 on issues relating to family life. • "Turn Your Heart Toward Home," the James Dobson film series was shown by the **Mooretown** congregation, Sandusky, Mich., and

the neighboring Free Methodist Church, starting on Oct. 12.

A large gathering enjoyed the music of The Carpenter's Tools, a men's gospel quartet, Oct. 26 at the **Nappanee, Ind.**, church. The long-anticipated "Celebrate the Children" day was held Nov. 2. The morning service featured the many children of the congregation and set a worship attendance record for recent years of 143. • Lamar Rissinger shared Oct. 19 with the **Pleasant Hill, Ohio**, congregation about the work of the Gideons. A Christmas bazaar was held Nov. 8. • The **Western Hills** congregation, Cincinnati, Ohio, held a "Let the Church Grow Revival" with Ken Gibson on Oct. 24-26. It was culminated by a baptismal service for four persons.

Midwest Conference

Sandy Hoover presented a program Oct. 5 to the **Abilene, Ks.**, congregation about her friendship mission to China. The Sunday School Task Force planned a Fall Festival for Nov. 15 at the Abilene City Gymnasium. • A Forward Enlargement Campaign on the theme "Reaching for Growth" was held during October at the **Bethany Church, Thomas, Okla.** It featured a poster contest, potluck dinner and other activities. The Bethany youth group sponsored a garage and bake sale Oct. 11. • Five members were received into the **Dallas Center, Iowa**, congregation in late September. The Dallas Center churches recently joined to show the Dobson film series, "Turn Your Heart Toward Home."

A representative of Bethany Crisis Center explained the ministry of the center by way of a film to the **Mountain View** congregation, Colorado Springs, Colo., on Oct. 26. • The **Oklahoma City, Okla.**, congregation planned an Oct. 26 bonfire vesper service. Children and their parents were invited to an Oct. 31 Harvest Party. The congregation planned to host the Board for Congregational Life members in mid-Nov. • The **Zion** congregation, Abilene, Ks., gathered Oct. 19 to begin planning for their 1987 100th anniversary celebration.

Pacific Conference

The **Glendora** congregation, San Dimas, Calif., reports sending regular offerings for the support of Hope House, home for unwed mothers. • The women of the **Ontario, Calif.**, congregation are now in a second year of Coffee Break Bible Studies. The current session ran from Oct. 7-Dec. 9, with two opportunities: morning and evening discussions. Leslie Harvell, director of Heaven's Gate women's shelter in San Francisco, spoke in the Oct. 19 family service. The annual family camp at Mile High Pines Camp was Oct. 24-26. Special activities for the Ontario congregation included a film series, a square dance, and a fireside Sunday morning worship.

A practice during the revitalized Sunday school opening assembly at the **Pacific Highway Community** congregation, Labish, Ore., is a fourth Sunday offering by persons celebrating special occasions in that month. Those with birthdays, spiritual birthdays, anniversaries, etc., have opportunity to share an offering for Brethren in Christ missions. The day care center at the church is now under full operation for children from 30 months through five years. Sharon Wikoff is

Dallas, Texas

Things are happening at the Fellowship Church

We started services here in Cedar Hill on Sept. 14, nine months after we began our ministry in Texas. That first Sunday we held services in a day-care facility, with 67 people present. Needless to say, we were very happy and thanked God for his goodness. For the first four weeks we averaged 52 people per Sunday.

Some neat things have happened in these nine months. First, we needed an office downtown (instead of an office in our home) for daily contacts. We prayed and two days later our second contact in the community offered to pay the rent of an office for me, without a word on our part.

We decided to do some radio advertising and needed \$500. I challenged one of our core-group members to put up the money. But instead of providing \$500, he offered \$5,000.

director; Ronald and Patricia Vance coordinate the programing. The Pacific Highway congregation participated with other Brethren in Christ in the Third Annual MCC Oregon Fall Festival on Oct. 11.

In October, the **Upland, Calif.**, church sponsored "Impact '86," growth and sharing classes with the Steve Russo team. Some fifty musicians, all Azusa Pacific University alumni of the past 11 years, returned to present a choral program, "When We Walk with the Lord," at the church on Oct. 19 under the direction of Don Grant. The congregation held an all-church work day on Oct. 25.

For the Record

Births

Armstrong: Jordan Terry, Oct. 5; Terry and Sandra Armstrong, Wainfleet congregation, Ont.

Baker: Frank, Dec. 28, 1985; Bill and Nancy Baker, Boyle congregation, Ont.

Benedict: Tristan Sue, Sept. 22; Eugene and Joyce Benedict, Five Forks congregation, Pa.

Billings: Jessica Ann, Sept. 21; Bruce and Jeannie Billings, Fairview Avenue congregation, Pa.

Byers: Megan Whitney, Sept. 30; Curtis and Marti (Groff) Byers, London, England (Chambersburg congregation, Pa.)

Chow: Dennis Chi-Feng, Oct. 1; David and Karen Chow, Lancaster congregation, Pa.

Derkson: Mark, July 16; Jeff and Cheryl Derkson, Boyle congregation, Ont.

Eisen: Nathan, May 19; John and Jacqui Eisen, Boyle congregation, Ont.

Hayes: Erin Leah, Sept. 29; Lacy and Debi (Paul) Hayes, Skyline View congregation, Pa.

We contracted with a day-care facility for space to hold services. At the last minute—four days before our first service—the owner decided that he didn't want us to use his building. But he gave us one Sunday. After some persuasion, he decided he would give us one month to find another meeting place. During that month we looked and looked, and could find nothing equal to his facility. We prayed, begged, offered him insurance security, offered him more money—nothing seemed to shake him. Finally, three days before our last Sunday, he relented and is allowing us to stay until the first of next year.

God has been good to us here in Texas. We appreciate the Lord even when he does not give us visible signs of his love. But when his love can be seen visibly, it overwhelms our hearts.—*Bob Douglass, pastor*

Helfrick: Ashleigh Renae, Sept. 12; Rodney and Mary Helfrick, Montgomery congregation, Pa.

Henninger: Diane Elizabeth, March 4; David and Deborah (Buckwalter) Henninger, Stowe congregation, Pa.

Holland: Susan Ella-Grace, Sept. 5; Steve and Mary (Brubaker) Holland, Wheaton, Ill.

Lehman: Brandon Daniel, Oct. 25; Randy and Maryl Lehman, Amherst congregation, Ohio.

Long: Ryan, Oct. 9; Ken and Karen Long, Sippo Valley congregation, Ohio.

Martin: Janelle Elaine, Oct. 3; Lyle and Janice (Hensel) Martin, Clarence Center congregation, N.Y.

Martin: Justin Lee, Sept. 28; Ralph and Liz Martin, Antrim congregation, Pa.

Martin: Timothy Steven, Oct. 8; Steven and Patricia (MacKaracher) Martin, Mastersonville congregation, Pa.

Murphy: Lauren Janell, Sept. 26; John and Cathy Murphy, Manor congregation, Pa.

Peachey: Nicholas Warren, Sept. 25; Warren and Nina Peachey, Cedar Grove congregation, Pa.

Russell: Franklin Carey, Oct. 1; Larry and Sue Carey, Lancaster congregation, Pa.

Sabourin: Travis, April 20; Jerry and Judy (Woodward) Sabourin, Boyle congregation, Ont.

Sanchez: Catherine Alveria, March 20; Jaime and Barbara Ann (Buckwalter) Sanchez, Stowe congregation, Pa.

Sands: Emily Ann, Oct. 5; Edward and Jacquelyn (Shopf) Sands, Manor congregation, Pa.

Scott: Jeremy Douglas, Sept. 11; Brian and Pat Scott, Fairland congregation, Pa.

Smucker: Austin James, Nov. 1; Darrell and Marilyn (Wingert) Smucker, Morrison congregation, Ill.

Staub: Benjamin Edward, Sept. 27; Glenn and Tammy (Palmer) Staub, Mechanicsburg congregation, Pa.

Tassone: Stephanie Lynn, Aug. 29; Nic and Sherrin Tassone, Welland congregation, Ont.

Thrush: Barry Heisey, Oct. 1; Curt and Donna (Heisey) Thrush, Mt. Rock and Jemison Valley congregations, Pa.

Updegraff: Aaron James, Oct. 10; Kenneth and Donna Updegraff, Shenks congregation, Pa.

Visser: Brooke Allison, Sept. 25; Bill and Cathy Visser, Welland congregation, Ont.

Williams: Hannah Rae, Oct. 17; Robert and Karen Williams, Pacific Highway Community congregation, Ore.

Wolf: Carl David, Jr., Oct. 22; Carl and Cheryl Wolf, Elizabethtown congregation, Pa.

Weddings

Baker-Leister: Mary Pauline, daughter of Elwood and Marie Leister, Bedford, Pa., and Leslie Allen, son of Allen and the late Eleanor Baker of Bedford, September 13 at the Friends Cove Unit-

ed Church of Christ, Bedford, with Rev. Kenneth E. Mackie officiating.

Barry-Blubaugh: Michele, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Norman Blubaugh, Chambersburg, Pa., and David, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Shafer, Shady Grove, Pa., Oct. 11 in the Antrim Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Wilbur W. Benner officiating.

Coken-Lerew: Joni, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Bud Lerew, and Harry Coken III, son of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Coken II, Oct. 4 at the Harmony Bethel Church of God, Dillsburg, Pa.

Engle-Brooks: Julie M., daughter of Mrs. John Duncan, Hinsdale, Ill., and David L., son of Mr. and Mrs. Donald D. Engle, Mt. Joy, Pa., Sept. 6 at Christ Church, Pak Brook, Ill.

Evers-Anderson: Janice, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Anderson, Wellandport, Ont., and Andrew, son of Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Evers, Wellandport, Aug. 30 at the Wainfleet Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Douglas Moore officiating.

Herr-Roller: Anita, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Roller, Appleton, Wisc., and Thomas D., son of Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Herr, Lancaster, Pa., Sept. 27 at the Tuscola United Methodist Church, Tuscola, Ill, with Rev. Bill Werner and Rev. Tim Herr officiating.

Hilsmeier-Taylor: Dorcas E., daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Dwight Taylor, Brogue, Pa., and Derek A., son of Mr. and Mrs. Allen Hilsmeier, Delta, Pa., August 16 at the Pleasant View Brethren in Christ Church, Red Lion, Pa.

Killinger-Kuhn: Sherri Elaine, daughter of John C. Kuhn, Lebanon, Pa., and Elsie Ebersole, Annville, Pa., and John Henry Jr., son of John Henry Killinger Sr., York, Pa., and Susan M. Killinger, Cleona, Pa., Sept. 27 at the Fairland Brethren in Christ Church, Cleona, with Rev. Vern Bosserman officiating.

Lourdon-Custer: Camilla Marie, daughter of Bernard and Rhoda Custer, Waynesboro, Pa., and Scott Kevin, son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Lourdon, Waynesboro, Sept. 13 at the Fairview Avenue Brethren in Christ Church, Waynesboro, with Rev. Ephert Eckelbarger and Rev. Lynn Thrush officiating.

Monn-Willison: Elizabeth Sue, daughter of Gerald and Joann Willison, Waynesboro, Pa., and Dwayne Adam, son of Joyce Monn, Oct. 11 at Fairview Avenue Brethren in Christ Church, Waynesboro, with Rev. Lynn Thrush officiating.

News-wanger-Tweed: Bonnie J., daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Tweed, Lancaster, Pa., and Duane E., son of Mr. and Mrs. John M. News-wanger, Millersville, Pa., Oct. 4 at the Manor Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. John B. Hawbaker officiating.

Olsen-Bossert: Barbara, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Don Bossert, Fenwick, Ont., and Norman, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Olson, Strome, Alberta, March 29, 1986, at the Boyle Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Ronald Lofthouse officiating.

Rosenberger-Musser: Betsy A., daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Musser, Lurgan, Pa., and Daniel J., son of Mrs. Naomi Rosenberger, Dallas Center, Iowa, and the late Nathan Rosenberger, Oct. 11 in the Dallas Center Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Millard Haldeman officiating.

Sechrist-Grove: Carol M., daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Grove, Red Lion, Pa., and Mark S., son of Mr. and Mrs. Rodger Sechrist, Red Lion,

Money Matters

Truth bigger than facts

by Bishop Glenn A. Ginder

Our brother and fellow-servant, Ira Eyster, has died. His relationship to his family and friends and his ministry for the church were abruptly interrupted on Thursday, September 11. Pastors Warren Hoffman and Charles Rickel led in a very fitting memorial service at the Bethany Church, in Thomas, Oklahoma.

Those are the facts, painfully real. If they could be changed, the pain would go away. But such facts don't yield to change. So at this point it is helpful to realize that even though these may be the facts, they are not the whole story. The truth is bigger than these facts.

The truth is that what Ira was doing, his work in the church, continues. That reality touches the Midwest Conference most powerfully in the area of stewardship. Probably his last public assignment was the Saturday before his death. In a regional meeting at the Bethany Church he provided a vivid affirmation of Cooperative Ministries and also met with key leaders to introduce MIS-SIONS '87.

His enthusiasm for intelligent, cooperative, and sacrificial giving cannot be snuffed out because his life expired. In fact, in my mind,

his enthusiasm for robust stewardship rings even more clearly as I remember its strong tones in the last words I heard him speak.

We would do well to pray that the Lord will raise up someone else with the spirit and the skills that Ira exhibited. But that is certainly not our best response. The best we can do is make a strong commitment to become—ourselves—champions of biblical stewardship. Let pastors, church boards, Sunday school teachers, and others know, as Ira did, that money is a grand medium for expressing commitment to Christ.

This is the kind of commitment that can be expressed not only on Sunday morning during the offering, but in the marketplace through parental instruction and modeling in the home, in the writing of a will, and in the disciplines surrounding credit cards, leisure, and ministry to the needy. Let the Word and the Spirit—and the ministry of Ira Eyster—teach us to be faithful stewards.

The above tribute appeared in the "Midwest Newsletter." It is used by permission. Ira Eyster was serving as the Executive Director of Planned Giving for the Brethren in Christ Church at the time of his death.

Sept. 27 at the Pleasant View Brethren in Christ Church, Red Lion.

Sider-Smallridge: Jane, daughter of Colin and Betty Smallridge, Ottawa, Ont., and Mark, son of Rev. John and Ethel Sider, Langton, Ont., Aug. 30 in St. Bartholomew's Anglican Church, Ottawa, with Rev. John Sider and Rev. William Wright officiating.

Spoonhour-Mellinger: Marcia T., daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Harold Mellinger, Mt. Joy, Pa., and Alan, son of Mrs. Carol Spoonhour, Redland Valley congregation, Sept. 20 at Cross Roads Brethren in Christ Church, Mt. Joy, with Rev. Dale Engle and Rev. Adin Herndin officiating.

Taylor-Moore: Teresa Arlene, daughter of Glenn and Janet Moore, Englewood, Ohio, and Terry Lee Taylor, August 22 at the Fairview Brethren in Christ Church, Englewood, with Rev. Bob Verno officiating.

White-Menges: Grace Elizabeth, daughter of Rev. and Mrs. Walter Menges, Jr., Baltimore, Md., and Carl E., son of Mrs. Arlene L. White, Millersville, Pa., and the late Ira M. White, Jr., Oct. 4 at the Forest Park Reformed Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, with Rev. Walter Menges, Jr., and Rev. Dale W. Engle officiating.

Wise-McKee: Cheryl Lynn, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Terry McKee, Chambersburg, Pa., and Ronald Eugene, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ronald P. Wise, Blue Ridge Summit, Pa., Oct. 11 in the New Guilford Brethren in Christ Church, Chambersburg, with Rev. Maurice Bender officiating.

Young-Keefer: Donna Marie, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Keefer, Palmyra, Pa., and Edward Hamilton, Jr., son of Rev. Edward Young, Newark, Del., Oct. 4 in the Grantham Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. John W. Schock officiating.

Obituaries:

Crider: Cecil B. Crider, 70, of Hershey, Pa., died Oct. 2 at the Lebanon Valley General Hospital. He was a retired farmer for Milton Hershey schools, and a member, deacon, Sunday school teacher, and chorister at the Hummelstown Brethren in Christ Church. Cecil was also a member of the retired Hershey Employees and the Sojourners Club. Surviving are his wife, Alma B. Crider; a daughter, Ruth E., at home; a son, Harold R.; three brothers, Alfred, Carl, and Charles; and three grandchildren. Services were held in the Hummelstown church with Rev. John S. Bicksler and Rev. Andrew Slagenweit officiating. Interment was in the Blue Ridge Memorial Gardens.

Goodling: Esther Wolgemuth Goodling, 78, of Hummelstown, Pa., died June 26 in the Hershey Medical Center. Born in Mt. Joy, Pa., she was the daughter of the late Amos and Ada Gish Wolgemuth and was a member of the Hummelstown Brethren in Christ Church. She is survived by her husband, Clyde W. Goodling; a daughter, Darlene; 4 sons, Marcellus, Lavern, Walter, and Arthur; 4 sisters, Mary Heise, Rhoda Haas, Lois, and Naomi; 10 grandchildren; 5 step grandchildren; 1 great-grandson; and 5 step great-grandchildren. Services were held at the Trefz Funeral Home, Hummelstown, with Rev. John S. Bicksler officiating. Interment was at the Woodlawn Memorial Gardens.

Graybill: Martha E. Graybill, 96, died Aug. 8 in the Hershey Medical Center. She was a member of the Home Department of the Hummelstown

Brethren in Christ Church. Surviving are three sisters, Elizabeth M. Botdorf, Meta S. Foltz, and Ruth S. Graybill; and nieces and nephews. Services were held in the Hoover Funeral Home in Hershey with Rev. John S. Bicksler and Rev. Andrew H. Slagenweit officiating. Interment was in the Hummelstown Cemetery.

Groff: Kenneth E. Groff, Manheim, Pa., born November 25, 1953, died May 17 at the age of 33. He was a member of the Manheim Brethren in Christ Church.

Heister: Charles William Heister, 67, of Mat-tawana, Pa., died August 17 in Lewistown, Pa. He was born March 20, 1918, the son of Rev. Charles E. and Leah F. (Kauffman) Heister. He married Marion E. Allison on Dec. 4, 1938. She survives along with 8 children, Ronald W., Charles Darwin, Larry D., Robert L., Darl L., Carl L., Richard K., and Mrs. Jane Cramer; 15 grandchildren; and 2 sisters, Mrs. Elda Cooper and Mrs. Emma Suhr. Charles was a member of the Granville Brethren in Christ Church where services were conducted by Rev. Samuel Oldham and Rev. J. Richard Gottshall. Interment was in the Pine Glenn Cemetery.

Hoover: Ethel Reighard Hoover, born Jan. 1, 1898, in Troy, Ohio, died Oct. 9 at Camp Hill, Pa. She married Russell Hoover on July 4, 1918. He died seven months later. Surviving is one daughter, Mary Elizabeth (Mrs. Harold) Engle. Ethel was a member of the Pleasant Hill, Ohio, Brethren in Christ Church until 1947 when she moved to Palmyra, Pa., Funeral services were held at the Palmyra Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Marlin Zook officiating. Further services were at the Pleasant Hill Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Tim Herr officiating. Interment was at the Highland Brethren in Christ Cemetery, West Milton, Ohio.

LeGay: Laura D. LeGay, 78, of Cleona, Pa., died Oct. 4. Born in Lebanon County to the late George D. and Amanda Knapp Gingerich, she was a retired employee of King's Department Store. She was a member of the Fairland Brethren in Christ Church and the Kenbrook Ladies Auxiliary. Surviving are her husband, LeRoy K. LeGay, Sr.; two sons, Jay N. Dutweiler and LeRoy K., Jr.; five grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; a sister, Lucille Fetterman; and a brother, Nelson E. Gingerich. Services were held in the Fairland church with Rev. J. Earl Musser and Rev. Vernon L. Bosserman officiating. Interment was in Grand View Memorial Park.

Paul: Twyla F. Paul of Tipp City, Ohio, born Nov. 3, 1915, in Tannersville, West Virginia, died Aug. 15. She was a member of the Phoneton Brethren in Christ Church from the time of her conversion and baptism in 1965. She was known for her love and her devotional life. Surviving are her husband Don; two daughters; one son; and nine grandchildren. Rev. Gary Warden conducted the funeral service at Frings and Bayliff Funeral Home, Tipp City. Interment was in Bethel Cemetery in Phoneton.

Pye: Mattie Pearl Pye, Wainfleet, Ont., born April 21, 1892, died February 8, 1986. She is survived by her son, Rev. Arthur Pye; a daughter, Ruth Lehman; a foster daughter, Ethel Jones; 6 grandchildren; 23 great-grandchildren; two brothers, Rev. Earl Sider and Calvin Sider; and two sisters, Emma Gilmore and Mabel Tucker. She was predeceased by her husband, Vernon Pye in 1982. The funeral service was conducted by Rev. W. Edward Rickman and Bishop Harvey R. Sider. Interment was in the Maple Lawn Cemetery.


Seiple: James H. Seiple, born June 9, 1905, died July 24. He is survived by his wife, Anna Seiple; five children, Paul, Ruth, Larry, Warren, and Edna; seven grandchildren; and several great-grandchildren. James was a member of the Hummelstown Brethren in Christ Church where the funeral services were held with Rev. John S. Bicksler and Rev. Jay Boozer officiating. Interment was in the Stoverdale Cemetery.

Slagenweit: Paul Slagenweit, Martinsburg, Pa., died Sept. 27 at age 72. Born February 12, 1914, he was the son of David and Cora Shaffer Slagenweit. He was married to Naomi Smith on February 12, 1938. She survives along with two sons, Paul A., and Gerald L.; one daughter, Linda Oldham; nine grandchildren; and a great-grandson. Also surviving are five brothers and sisters: Ada Clapper, Rev. Andrew H., Kathryn Miller, Dorcas Climenhaga, and Rev. Mark. Paul was a member, Sunday school teacher, and deacon of the Martinsburg, Pa., congregation and a member of The Gideon's International. Rev. Earl Herr conducted the funeral service at the Martinsburg church assisted by Rev. Andrew Slagenweit and Mr. Jack Neil. Interment was at the Dry Hill Cemetery, Woodbury, Pa.

Stanton: Alice Barbara Stanton, born Dec. 23, 1906, at Kansas City, Mo., died at the Pomona Valley Hospital, Oct. 16. She is survived by one son, David. Alice was a member of the Upland Brethren in Christ Church. Funeral services were held at the Stone Funeral Home with Rev. Alvin C. Burkholder officiating. Interment was in the Bellevue Cemetery, Ontario, Calif.

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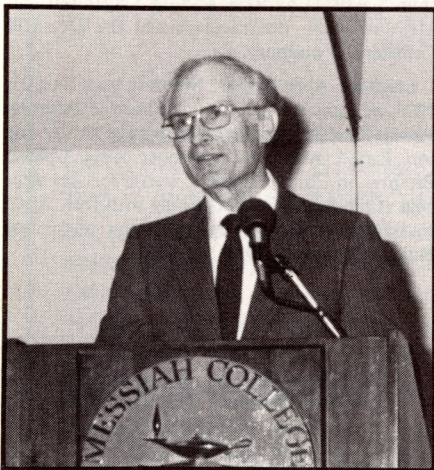
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Westours is Alaska

Messiah College News

Alumni flock to Homecoming

Homecoming 1986, a "family reunion" held October 17-19, brought back to the college and honored many alumni, friends, and former employees of the college. It featured a Trustee Chapel address by Bishop Owen H. Alderfer, former Professor of Theology and Chairman of the Department of Religion and Philosophy at Messiah, and climaxed with a sold-out alumni banquet.



Bishop Owen Alderfer

Three persons received special recognition from the Messiah College Alumni Association. Dr. Martin H. Schrag, Professor Emeritus in History of Christianity, received the Alumni Appreciation Award for more than 30 years of distinguished commitment to the ideals of the college. His academic career lists study at Bethel College, Kansas; Bethany Theological Seminary, Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Temple University, where he received the doctorate in History of Christianity; St. Andrews University, Scotland; Princeton University, and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

A member of Grantham Church along with his wife, Dorothy, who is assistant professor emerita in music, he serves on several boards, including the Brethren in Christ Board for Ministry and Doctrine.

Honored with the Distinguished Alumnus Award was Ardys Byer Heise, a 1949 graduate of Upland College in California—a school that merged its alumni association with Messiah's in 1965. She has had a varied career in



Honored by the Messiah College Alumni Association recently were Ardys Byer Heise, left, Distinguished Alumnus Award; Marlin Benedict, third from left, Young Alumnus Achievement Award; and Dr. Martin H. Schrag, right, Alumni Appreciation Award. John Z. Martin, second from left, presented the awards as president of the Alumni Council.

communications, starting in radio and television, moving on to open her own public relations firm, and eventually working in public affairs for the University of California, the San Diego School of Medicine, and the San Diego Community College District.

Now retired from full-time work, Heise lives in San Diego, Calif., and is a consultant for the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education.

The Young Alumnus Achievement Award was presented to Marlin Benedict, Akron, Pa., who is a partner in the Lancaster CPA firm of Simon Lever and Co. A 1976 Messiah College graduate, he served as a charter member of the College Board of Advisors from 1980-86, and was also president of the Alumni Council at Messiah from 1984-86.

Benedict's other volunteer duties have included roles of board member, treasurer and Sunday school teacher in the Manor Brethren in Christ Church, and presently include serving on the program committee of the Mennonite Economic Development Agency.

Presenting the awards was the new president of the Alumni council, John Z. Martin, of Indianapolis.

College names trustees, sets budget

The Messiah College Board of Trustees met over Homecoming and welcomed several new members: Nancy Reigsecker, Upland, Calif. (Upland congregation); Melvin Eyster, Thomas, Okla. (Bethany congregation); Henry Rhoads, Mechanicsburg, Pa.; Bert

Criste, Hunt Valley, Md.; Wendy Bower, Salford, Pa.; and Robert Washburn, Barrington, R.I.

Officers of the board re-elected for the current academic year were Chairman Ernest L. Boyer, Princeton, N.J.; Assistant Chairman Galen M. Oakes, Massillon, Ohio (Amherst Community congregation); and Secretary Mark S. Hess, Lancaster, Pa. (Pequea congregation).

Messiah College President D. Ray Hostetter (Grantham congregation) announced a projected 1986-87 total budget of \$20,888,185—an increase of nearly \$2 million over the 1985-86 fiscal year budget. A larger student enrollment—1,916—and increased giving were cited as some of the reasons why a monetary increase is possible.



Messiah College President D. Ray Hostetter shares a candid moment with new Board of Trustees member Nancy Reigsecker, Upland, Calif., who will serve on the student development committee.

Ambivalence and meaning at Christmas

I have a friend who "loves" Christmas. Most years she can hardly wait for Thanksgiving to be over so that she can turn her home into a Christmas showplace. I know of one person who likes to visit, just to sit and enjoy the atmosphere. My friend, however, also dreads Christmas because of the stress it creates.

Her ambivalence is common. When I think about another Christmas celebration this year, I can predict that I'll be asked the same frustrating questions I'm always asked, I know I'll have some of the stress many others experience, and yet I also look forward to repeating important traditions and experiencing again the miracle of Christmas.

Two questions

I am frequently asked what I want for Christmas and whether I'm ready for Christmas. I thoroughly dislike both questions! To begin with, I have real trouble knowing what I want. It's not that there's nothing I want, but like many women, I often don't feel good about wanting anything for myself. If I can reason that what I want is also good for other people or can be shared with them, then it's easier to say what I want. But if it's something for me only, I often feel like I'm being selfish.

When people ask whether I'm ready for Christmas, they are usually asking whether I've finished shopping, baking cookies, decorating, wrapping gifts, etc. The questions seem to focus on all the "things to do," rather than on the point of celebrating Christmas in the first place. I balk at the implication that a proper celebration depends on doing certain things.

Stress

Christmas is one of the most stressful times of year for many people. Feelings that we struggle with all year are often intensified at Christmas because we hope unrealistically that the joys of the season will make all our bad feelings go away.

That gap between fantasy and reality is a great cause of stress. Christmas is billed as a time for family togetherness, but those who have no family or have strained relationships with family members can experience intense feelings of

loneliness. When high expectations for celebrating Christmas in certain ways don't match reality, disillusionment results. The hectic schedule of parties, church and school programs, shopping, and family gatherings can be exhausting no matter how enjoyable it also is. And after all the activity is over, it's common to feel let down and depressed.

A particular source of stress for Christians is the conflict between secular ways of celebrating and what we often call "the true meaning of Christmas." We find ourselves trying to steer a middle course between, for example, Santa Claus on the one hand and Jesus on the other.

The true meaning of Christmas

Such a phrase sounds like an overworked cliché, but it's useful as a means of zeroing in on what's really important about Christmas.

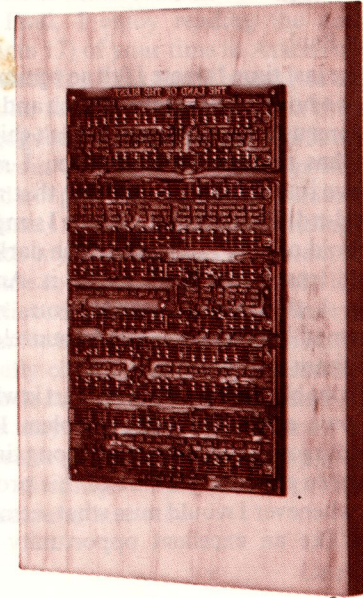
One of my favorite Scripture passages is in Ephesians 2. Paul says, "He [Jesus] came and preached peace to you." The context suggests that this isn't a warm-fuzzy kind of inner peace, but an active *peace-making* that reaches out to others. The conflict between the Jews and Gentiles was real and long-standing, yet Paul says that the coming of Jesus meant that the walls between them were broken down. Jesus "put to death their hostility."

Hostility is not easily "put to death." Jesus had to die, plus it almost always takes hard work to bring estranged people back together. But that's what the gospel is about. And that's what Christmas is about. When he sent Jesus to earth, God began the difficult task of reconciling people to himself and with each other. When we continue to allow barriers to exist between us and other people and don't work at reconciliation, I suspect we are in some way denying the meaning of Christmas.

My friend who loves Christmas still sometimes says she'd like to skip it altogether. I know she doesn't really mean that because she continues to celebrate every year. She and I both know that in spite of our ambivalent feelings about some aspects of Christmas, we want and need to be reminded each year of what the first Christmas means for the way we live today.

Phoebe

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Onesimus

Dear Paul,

The last time I wrote I felt so optimistic—so hopeful about the church and its movement toward revival! I don't think that has changed. And in fact, I still *believe* it and expect it. It's just that my mood is different today. Maybe I simply got hold of a pair of glasses with darker tinted lenses and didn't realize it. Anyway, I thought I'd write you, my esteemed brother and gifted counselor, and share my concern.

Probably the best place to start is with my own confession. The problem I'm wrestling with is silence. For a long time I've been especially aware of this problem whenever I would miss what seemed later like an excellent opportunity to

witness. How many times, after the opportunity had passed, I knew just the right thing to say!

Perhaps I'm making some progress in overcoming this weakness. At least, I received encouragement during a recent discussion with several dear brothers and sisters. They again reminded me (1) that I don't have to have "the right words"—just a willing and compassionate heart, (2) that *knowing* the personal reality of new life in Christ and simply sharing some small bit of how that is affecting my life is really the essence of a faithful witness, and (3) that having other sympathetic and committed Christians to talk with about my concern can

be a great help in overcoming the problem of silence in this area.

But you see, Paul, silence when I should witness is just one part of my problem. The other part is illustrated by what happened the other day when I visited a brother in his home. It had been a busy day, and as we sat together and talked, he offered me a wine cooler. It was a perfect opportunity for two brothers to talk about the issue of using alcohol. But I was silent. As I reflect on that evening now, I think my silence bothers me more than the presence of the wine. We could have talked—about the Scriptures, about lifestyles, about the church and our witness, about change.



"I think we as a church should not just look at the spiritual part of the person, but we should also try to encourage the welfare of the community — develop the mind, develop the body, and in this way we can have the wholeness that Jesus Christ himself did."

Pastor Henry Shikuku, Kenya

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It's not that I'm feeling that I should have launched into a crusade against the wine cooler that was offered. It is just that silence seems so inappropriate when conversation—searching, thoughtful, honest, probing conversation—would have enriched us both. Often, those kinds of conversations result in growth for the individuals involved.

This concern is certainly not a simple one, Paul. Take any issue facing the church: meat offered to idols (in your setting), women in ministry, purchasing lottery tickets, Sunday observance, response to divorce, etc. Deciding to speak is only one hurdle. *What* is said and *how* is just as crucial. For some, especially people with well-defined convictions on an issue, the tendency is to do all the speaking and to do it in such a way as to be most convincing about the validity of their view. I suspect this is the nature of a conviction and it is commendable. However, it also contains a

grave danger. The conviction holder may feel so "convinced" that he is fearful of entering into open and honest conversation with a brother who feels differently. Instead he feels the need to argue, defend, or convince, lest he find *himself* dissuaded or at least shaken in his own beliefs. Is it not true, Paul, that such fear must be overcome? Is that fear not, in fact, unfounded when we understand brotherhood as you expressed it? Since the body *is* many members needing each other for wholeness, and since the Scripture *is not* for private interpretation, it seems that we ought to find many opportunities, both structured and unstructured, for conversation. And when brothers and sisters come together for such conversation, they must first remember that Christ is in their midst. This will mean that all of us are learners and the Holy Spirit is our teacher. And one of his effective teaching methods is that searching, thoughtful, honest, prob-

ing conversation I mentioned earlier. When the Spirit uses this method there is certainly no need to fear the change or growth which results.

Paul, I enjoy reading the account (Acts 17) of your time in Athens as you waited for Silas and Timothy to arrive. Luke tells how you "went to the synagogue for discussion with the Jews and devout Gentiles." It is apparent that you did not give in to silence. So whether it is witness to the unsaved or spending time with my brothers and sisters exploring some controversy or unresolved issue, I believe discussion is an important medium for becoming what God intends. I'm really challenged by the statement you made in a letter to the Ephesians: "That we may be no longer children . . . but speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things" (Eph. 4:14-15). Thanks, Paul, and farewell.

Onesimus

Dialogue

The *Dialogue* by Nelson Steffy (October *Visitor*) calls for a reply on several points. In the closing paragraph it is implied that we need the experience of sin to fully speak to others potentially ensnared. How much stronger that article would have been had it been closed one paragraph sooner.

The article talks repeatedly about forgiveness for the sin of divorce and remarriage. May we suggest that this is not at issue. Both sides need to recognize absolutely that these sins are totally forgivable by God. Until this truth is stipulated by all, the issue will remain emotionally inflamed and therefore unresolvable.

The idea that Christians ought not to judge, however, is not stipulated. The two verses cited only introduce the paragraph and refer to unjust criticism. We are, in fact, given a grievance procedure for handling sins and offenses within the church. That is scriptural, and it is judging. It is specifically past acts and not motives which are to be judged. It is only past acts that we can know of a certainty. We have no means to look at the heart. It is this concept that is refined to action in 1 Corinthians 5 with expulsion from the fellowship the result. That was judgement that stopped

only at the point of condemnation. Condemnation is the preserve of God, but judgement in this sense is frequently committed to men under God's leading.

Frankly, we do not see the issue as one of sin and forgiveness. That is freely stipulated. But in the area of judgement, and that quite apart from condemnation, we see a different point. Does the minister in question fit the spiritual requirements for the job set forth in Scripture? If he does, endorse him. If he doesn't, refuse him. Refusal does not render him unforgiven, unable to serve God, or in some way second class status as a believer. It does not deny full fellowship with the church or even the ability to serve in the church. It simply says he is unqualified to hold a specific position.

We recognize this principle in other areas quite easily. In industry, we set out guidelines for applicants to a certain position. Someone who applies and does not meet those requirements does not get the job, but if he has something to offer our cause he is likely to be put to work in another capacity. Even within the church, we are not likely to hire a custodian who is allergic to cleaning materials or a secretary who can't read. Those are all acts of judgement that revolve not around the personal quality

of the individual, but around the qualification.

There is so much more involved in the question relative to the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy and Titus than the interpretation of "the husband of one wife" (1Tim. 3:1; Titus 1:6). From 1 Timothy we also read of "temperate" and "good behavior" (v.2), "patient" and "not covetous" (v.3), and "ruling well his own house" (v.4). These are all areas involved in the process not only of divorce and remarriage, but also of special elevation within the church. Titus adds "holy" (1:8). But Titus 1:9 ought to bring us up short. "Holding fast the faithful word . . ." is hardly open to much interpretation. How can we appeal to a value of experience when it is gained directly at the expense of God's Word in direct betrayal of a very special, sacred trust?

We would suggest that the delegates assembled were correct in refusing the statement. It is hoped that their concern will be fully reflected in the ongoing considerations of the Board of Administration.

Submitted by action of the church board of the Union Grove Brethren in Christ Church, New Paris, Ind., David McGarvey, Pastor.

Readers Respond

The "name game"

I have just finished reading your editorial in the August issue. (My apologies for reading the issue so late, but that is what happens when one moves to a new charge—things sort of get behind for awhile.) I just want to say thank you for the editorial note on the Brethren in Christ "name game."

As someone who does not have the "proper name" regarding Brethren in Christ names and who is married to a woman who also did not have the "proper name" (Linda Cooper), we have run into that feeling upon occasion. However, to give due credit, the interest has more often focused on why and how we found this denomination, than the fact that we don't have the "proper names."

Particularly, your point about keeping the traditions alive that we treasure in the denomination was appreciated. I quote: ". . . I know a number of people who have come to the Brethren in Christ Church in the last decade who are far more ardent in terms of our understanding of faith and practice than some people who carry a 'heritage name.'" Amen, brother! We find as a couple that the Brethren in Christ have a history they should be proud of, not one that they should run from. The trick is to take the old traditions (footwashing, separation from the world, plain dress, pacifism, etc.) and give those old traditions *new* meanings for a new generation of believers. It can be done.

In our present situation (ministry in an established but growing and energetic congregation), we are finding that this is exactly what we must struggle with. But the rewards are great and the sense of completeness that it brings to us

as a body of believers is truly worthwhile. Thank you for your understanding and forthrightness in the editorial—it has been greatly appreciated.

Myles W. Gardiner
Delisle, Sask.

Pass on the coffee

A statement in "The NEW Sunday School" (September *Visitor*) that a "modern" adult class "must" have a coffee pot leaves a bad taste in my mouth. I am part of a growing Christian minority that, for reasons of health or conscience, abstain from coffee.

In my own Brethren in Christ church and in other Christian fellowships, I have often found the only available alternative to a hot cup of coffee to be a glass of tap water—maybe warm, possibly foul-tasting, frequently in a different part of the building. Sugary fruit drinks or tea are sometimes supplied as alternatives to coffee, and I recall occasions in private homes when, after declining coffee, I was offered beer. At such times, my efforts to find an acceptable beverage (or the courage to simply refuse coffee and take nothing) markedly detract from the Christian fellowship purportedly enhanced by the coffee pot in the first place.

As health and social effects of tobacco and beverage alcohol were proven and documented, earlier generations of Christians found them unacceptable. Today's researchers are similarly amassing data on caffeine, and I foresee the day when coffee will be added to the list. Meanwhile, I challenge the need for a coffee pot in modern Sunday schools or churches.

Kenneth Kepler
Flesherton, Ont.

Returning to our roots

In response to Ronald J. Sider's article "Returning to our roots" (October *Visitor*)—the author possibly should have entitled the article, "Returning to the Scripture of our roots."

[After accepting Christ as savior and joining the Brethren in Christ Church,] I had the opportunity to graduate from Beulah Academy and attend Upland College. There I received the Christian love, leadership, and guidance given by God-fearing Brethren in Christ ministers and teachers with such names as Brubaker, Cassel, Engle, Lady, Buckwalter, Wagaman, Naylor, Hoke, Foote, Witter, and Climenhaga.

Later I moved to Texas where Mennonites and Brethren in Christ were unheard-of. I came to a realization of my early spiritual heritage, which was based on sound biblical understanding and anabaptist traditions. Then, through the years of undergraduate and graduate school, I began to seek a church that would meet my personal convictions and spiritual values. The Beachy Mennonites arrived and met my [needs for] spiritual renewal and personal fulfillment in Christ.

I appreciated the article, because it brought back many wonderful memories which were rewarding and inspirational. As Rev. J. C. Wenger once stated, "When separation and non-conformity from the things of the world are lost by the church, so goes non-resistance, peace-making, footwashing, prayer veiling, and other doctrines of the church."

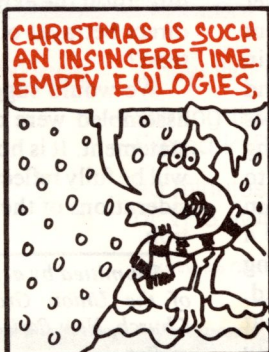
I pray the members and leaders of our Brethren in Christ and Mennonite Churches will return and/or remain faithful to the Scriptures and their roots in relation to a changing, sinful, godless, and lost world.

Allie (Al) C. Blount
Big Spring, Texas



Pontius Puddle

Bulletins and newsletters reprinting "Pontius Puddle" from the *Visitor* must pay \$5 for each use to Joel Kauffman, 1014 South Seventh, Goshen, IN 46526.



"Hey! Unto you a child is born!"

Be honest. Do you still feel a sense of wonder and excitement as you read the Christmas story? Do you find yourself caught up in the drama, the mystery? Or has the Christmas story become familiar, common, or even . . . (dare we admit it) . . . boring? Perhaps what we need to do is to experience the story in a new way, see the events through different eyes.

In *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, a delightful 80-page book published by Avon Books, Barbara Robinson describes the Herdman family. They were "absolutely the worst kids in the history of the world. They lied and stole and smoked cigars—even the girls—and talked dirty and hit little kids. . . ."

Mistakenly believing that the church served refreshments every Sunday, the six Herdman children showed up for Sunday school one week, just in time to hear about plans for the Christmas pageant. And when it came time to assign parts, only the Herdmans raised their hands. So, reluctantly, the director gave the lead roles to Ralph, Imogene, Leroy, Claude, Ollie, and Gladys.

During rehearsals, the Herdmans drove the director wild, asking questions about everything. All they knew was that Christmas was Jesus' birthday.

"What were the wadded-up clothes?" Claude wanted to know.

"The what?" Mother [who was directing] said.

"You read about it—'she wrapped him in wadded-up clothes' "

"Swaddling clothes." Mother sighed. "Long ago, people used to wrap their babies very tightly in big pieces of material, so they couldn't move around. It made the babies feel cozy and comfortable. . . ."

"You mean they tied him up and put him in a feedbox?" Imogene said. "Where was the Child Welfare?" [The Herdmans had a lot of contact with the Child Welfare department.]

They were really interested in King Herod—even signing up for library cards (to the amazement of the town librarian) just so they could read more about this king who wanted to kill the baby Jesus. Then they wanted to rewrite the pageant and lynch Herod at the end—they couldn't stand that he just died in bed of old age.

Since none of the Herdmans had ever gone to church or Sunday school or read the Bible or anything, they didn't know how things were supposed to be. Imogene, for instance, didn't know that Mary was supposed to be acted out in one certain way—sort of quiet and dreamy and out of this world.

The way Imogene did it, Mary was a lot like Mrs. Santoro at the Pizza Parlor. Mrs. Santoro is a big fat lady with a little skinny husband and nine

children and she yells and hollers and hugs her kids and slaps them around. That's how Imogene's Mary was—loud and bossy.

"Get away from the baby!" she yelled at Ralph, who was Joseph. And she made the Wise Men keep their distance.

Well, to make a short story even shorter, the night of the performance finally arrived. Angels and shepherds on stage were humming, "O, Little Town of Bethlehem," waiting for Ralph and Imogene, as Joseph and Mary, to make their entrance. But they just stood in the doorway for a minute,

as if they weren't sure they were in the right place

. . . . They looked like the people you see on the six o'clock news—refugees, sent to wait in some strange ugly place. . . . It suddenly occurred to me that this was just the way it must have been for the real Holy Family, stuck away in a barn by people who didn't much care what happened to them.

Later, as Imogene put the baby doll into the manger, she thumped it twice on the back to burp it—which made Alice Wendleken (who had *always* played Mary before) gasp in horror. Then from behind the angel choir came Gladys Herdman, the Christmas Angel, pushing shepherds out of the way and stomping on everyone's feet. The only person to have a speaking part in the pageant, she made the most of it, hollering out, "Hey! Unto you a child is born!"

It sounds like quite a different Christmas pageant, doesn't it? That's precisely the point. Perhaps Mary wasn't like Mrs. Santoro, but who said she was quiet and dreamy and sort of out of this world? And what would be more natural than burping a baby—even baby Jesus—before laying him in the manger? And shouldn't we want to make sure everyone hears the best news in the whole world—that the Savior has come?

In case you haven't guessed, I have come to really appreciate this little book. I think that as a family, sometime just before Christmas, we will try to read it out loud together—although it's hard to read when laughing. (The book has been adapted into a play, a copy of which I hope to locate before next December.) Perhaps one reason I find it so enjoyable is that our family knows some children who bear a faint resemblance to the Herdmans. As one neighbor girl said as I picked her up for Wednesday evening children's activities, "God, I love church!"

This Christmas, why not find someone who may be like the Herdman family. Try reading the Christmas story together and let them tell you what they see there. Or tell the story in your own words (it may be a real challenge to your memory). I have a hunch that as the Christmas story comes alive in a new heart, it will take on new meaning in your own.

G

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What's in the manger?

*What's in the manger,
The hay-filled manger,
Where cattle were eating an hour before?
Who's in the stable,
The small dark stable,
With sheep and donkeys and straw on
the floor?*

*Where is the star,
The bright white star,
That shimmered and glittered and shone
up above?
When will the angels,
The singing chanting angels,
Broadcast the news of God's gift of love?*

*Why are the shepherds,
The cold frightened shepherds,
Making their way to that stable so small?
How will the wise men,
The mysterious searching wise men,
Find the king who will be Lord of all?*

*These questions were answered
For all of the ages,
That long ago night in a faraway place.
When shepherds were sent
By heavenly pages,
And wise men the stars leadings did trace.*

*They came to that stable,
That small dark stable,
Found Mary, with Joseph so proud and
so tall.
And there in the manger,
The hay-filled manger,
Was the baby, the Christ-child, the Lord
of us all.*

—Carol A. Frey

Carol Frey, a member of the Palmyra congregation, lives in Hershey, Pa.