

evangelical

VISITOR

November 1983

Are you giving your gift?

Invitation to church planting

Love life for single people

Are you giving your gift?

by G. Roger Schoenhals

His eyes danced as he told me about his new found church. "There must be fifteen-hundred people there every Sunday morning. And the music is spectacular. And we sing praise choruses and prayer choruses and lots of easy stuff. The words are flashed on the wall by an overhead projector."

He said the preacher was enthusiastic and entertaining and that he taught more than preached. "He speaks at least forty-five minutes and everyone hangs on his every word. He has us flipping through our Bibles looking up the references. He makes everything so clear, so orderly."

He said the church began only a few years ago with a handful of people. Its phenomenal growth has come mainly from folks who have flocked there from other, less exciting churches. They appear to have lots of money and they are planning a mind-boggling building program."

"I really get a lot out of the church," he said. "When I leave, I'm fed and ready to begin a new week."

I could see the comparison coming as he completed his description. Sure enough, he proceeded to point out the flaws of his own denomination and the small local church he had been attending for many years. "We never have enough money or people or the right kind of leadership. We just plug on year after year."

I've heard my friend's story before. Not from him, but from others who likewise fell under the spell of a super-church. And it doesn't have to be a "charismatic" church either. Any large church with a silver-tongued preacher, and a going program will do. Any place where you can slip in and sit in the back and receive a blessing. Places where you can get something without the hassle of having to give. It's like attending a play or a

basketball game or some other production.

There are, of course, many persons involved in these super-churches. It takes a lot of people giving a lot of time, energy, and money to keep things rolling. But for every giver, there are those who go along just for the ride.

As my friend droned on with his unsympathetic analysis of the smaller church, I began to see more clearly what he was really saying. It made me think of something President Kennedy once said, only with a reverse twist: "Ask not what you can do for your church, but what your church can do for you."

Unfortunately, we are living in a society bent on seeking satisfaction for self. The historian Christopher Lasch captured this spirit a few years ago in his book, *The Culture of Narcissism*. He wrote: "To live for the moment is the prevailing passion—to live for yourself . . ."

We see this same self-seeking spirit seeping into the church where worth is measured by personal reward. The self-centered Christian tramps from church to church looking for the best deal. "I'll come if you can meet my needs and the needs of my family better than the church down the street."

This same spirit has infected the Chris-

**What are gifts for?
To bury in the ground?
To parade before
others? No,
gifts are for giving?**

G. Roger Schoenhals lives in Seattle, Washington.

tian home, causing unprecedented conflict and divorce. Each spouse seeks personal satisfaction from the other. They begin to measure the worth of the other by his or her ability to meet the other's need. "Ask not what you can do for your spouse, but what your spouse can do for you."

To expect something from your marriage or your friendships or from the church is, to a certain degree, healthy. We all have legitimate needs. But making the satisfaction of these needs our primary objective causes us to deny the very gospel we profess to believe. Indeed, the Spirit of Christ is diametrically opposed to the diabolical spirit of selfishness. We are sons and daughters of Him who gives and gives and gives again.

The Scripture teaches that God gives each of us gifts for the good of the church. The Spirit of God "apportions to each one individually as he wills." He may endow you with the gift of hospitality. He may give someone else the gift of teaching. Another will be given the gift of administration. And another the gift of encouragement. All of these gifts are placed in our hands as an expression of God's unsearchable love toward us.

And what are gifts for? To bury in the ground? To parade before others? Gifts are for giving! Like the parents who provide their child with a gift at Christmas to give to an older sibling, so God provides us with something to give to our brothers and sisters in Christ.

We find our happiness in giving "our" gifts to others. And as we give these gifts, others give their gifts to us. We partake in a continuing gift exchange whereby the whole church is nurtured and equipped for more effective service.

So the central question for the Christian is not what can I get from the church, but what has God given me to give to the church, and how can I best give my gift for the glory of God. We find fulfillment not in chasing after the church that can best meet our needs, but in giving our gifts to a local body of believers. It is in giving that we receive. Yet, we give not to receive, but to fulfill the will of God for us and to express our gratitude for his unspeakable gift to us.

What has God placed in your hands to give? Are you giving your gift freely, with no strings attached? Your church needs your gift. Without it your brothers and sisters in Christ are incomplete—handicapped, as a person without a foot or an arm or an ear. Your church needs you. ■

in this issue...

"The challenge was great; the risks were high." With that title, Anieta Hopper reports on their family's move to Calgary to plant a new Brethren in Christ Church. And in those words, she captures some of the dynamics present in beginning new congregations. A special six-page section in this issue (pages 8-13) highlights nine new church plantings across North America, while a missions article reports on church growth in Zambia. And an open invitation on page 13 outlines ways you can become personally involved in this exciting ministry.

Yes, you did read the headline on the cover correctly: "Love life for single people." Be sure to read the article, the last of five in a series, to see how Ruth Dourte develop that topic. That theme also surfaces in the short play by Jeanne Zornes, "Phoebe's Problem."

A common thread runs through nearly every major article in this issue: a concern for the proper development and deployment of people's talents and material resources in the task of building the Kingdom of God. This theme is most evident in such articles as "Are you sharing your gift?" (page 2), "Spiritual Malabsorption" (page 7), "A vision for the future" (page 16), and "Biblical undergirdings for Cooperative Ministries and Mission" (page 23). The editorial also takes this as its central focus.

Persons responsible for congregational budget-planning will want to note the projected costs for delegates attending General Conference, outlined in the box below. Detailed information about Conference, which will meet at Messiah College from June 30 to July 5, 1984, will appear in the *Visitor* beginning with the December issue.

1984 Budget

Advance planning for General Conference

Projected per person costs for registration, meals and lodging at the 1984 General Conference, to be held at Messiah College, Grantham, Pa., will range from \$22 to \$25 per day, depending upon the type of housing requested.

Paul Hostetler
Convention Director

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Love life for single people

by Ruth Dourte

In a recent article, I wrote that marriage is the most rigorous educational experience in the School of Love and Learn. That does not mean that the unmarried cannot excel in love. The sad fact is that excelling in love *in* marriage is the exception rather than the rule, that few people complete the course of marriage *with highest honors*. The course is too hard, too long, and many of us just barely “pass.” Many of us put as little real effort into it as possible and then feel frustrated that we get so little out of it. Many expect that it’s up to one’s spouse to generate and feed the eternal flame of fervent love, while the other basks in its glow. Increasingly large numbers fail the course of marriage altogether.

We live in such a consumer-oriented society that it is difficult not to view love as an object, a goal, a prize to be pursued, competed for, lusted after, and consumed in great globs of glee and greed. For many, love is something you go after and get, and when it’s all gone you look somewhere else for some more. In the path of such pursuit lie the rotting carcasses and bleached skeletons of relationships that miscarried or died at birth, without even a decent burial.

But I know single people who excel in love. They are to me Best Friends—the *summa cum laude* graduates of the School of Love. These friends are whole persons, fully in touch with themselves and others. They can move graciously and harmoniously between ministering (to themselves and others) and being ministered unto. They are truly more like Jesus than many married people (and some singles, too) who are forever

This is the final article in a series of five written by Ruth Dourte, who with her husband Eber, has a counseling ministry based near Dillsburg, Pa.

weighing on a balance scale their meagre portions of “give” and “get” and wailing because the scale doesn’t balance.

And it never does—neither for married or single people. No person ever was loved enough or loved right, except by God. Perhaps that’s the most elusive truth and reality that must be integrated into our understanding and practice of love.

We live in the era of categories and specialized ministries. We put labels on people and give them job descriptions (such as “married” or “single”). Some of this is inevitable. We are all human. We are all people with physical-material, emotional-social, and mental-intellectual capacities and needs. That’s our similarity. But we do live out our lives in a progression of categories and circumstances which both challenge and limit us in unique ways. That’s our difference. Do we respect and cherish these differences enough? Are we comfortable with our present category, content with our present circumstance? Can we say with Paul, “I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content” (Phil. 4:11)? Such an attitude is not passive resignation, but an active trust that God is living his life and loving his people right now, through me!

We begin life single and will likely end it single. We progress *ex utero* to separation and varying states of aloneness and loneliness all the way from cradle to grave. We crave the comfort and nourishment of the all-sufficient womb and the all-sufficient God. We don’t want to give. We want to get. We don’t want to work. We want to play. We don’t want to serve. We want to be served. We want to sit at the head table and bask in the admiration of others. We don’t want to wash pots and pans in the kitchen. We don’t want to love. We want to *be* loved!

One man, overwhelmed by the bur-

dens of expectations and demands of his family, recently cried out to me, “The problem is, I never was a single person. I went right out of my father’s house into marriage. I never even had to take care of myself, and here I am with three people who want me to take care of them.”

We don’t really need to learn how to be single, or how to be married, so much as we need to learn *how to love*. Churches everywhere are trying to teach and practice loving. But we can’t teach everybody everything all together and all at once, and everybody can’t possibly practice everything all together and all at once. So we have categories and classes and ministries specialized and focused on the bits and pieces of our daily lives.

Some people express radical objection to these specialized categories and ministries. Some people want to be in on everything that goes on for everybody. Some people can’t accept reality. They resent their category and circumstance and that of other people. They deny to other people the right, the necessity of minding the specifics of their own business. They spoil open discussion on marriage, child rearing, and male-female sexual adjustment by complaining about having to listen to so much stuff that’s not relevant to their life experience.

Let me suggest emphatically that churches that try to make every event meaningful and helpful to everybody may succeed only in making very little meaningful and helpful to anyone!

It takes a very mature, unself-centered person—single or married—to participate wholeheartedly in activities and discussions that are not relevant personally, but are helpful to others. Teaching a child that two plus two equals four is love. Fathers, mothers, and friends reading “Humpty Dumpty” over and over again is love. Sitting on the floor and playing with blocks, or building sand

castles on the beach is love. Tying shoes and buttoning sweaters and wiping noses is love! And some people say, "I wish I had someone to love."

Inviting friends for soup and crackers is love. Carrying in casseroles and salads and brownies for overburdened people is love. Doing it just for the sheer joy of surprise is love. Sitting up all night while a tired friend sleeps, pouring medicine and cups of cold water is love. Of course we know all this, but we forget so quickly in our practice of love.

Who will describe the love life of my Single Lovers? I will! They don't even see it in themselves. But their love is in the eye of this beholder. The voice of this beloved one proclaims their love.

My Single Lovers—male and female—have painted walls, washed windows and floors, cut down trees, chopped wood, helped tear down and build up again. They carry big dishes to carry-in suppers even though they alone could not eat that much. They call up frazzled mothers and overly busy pastors' wives and say, "I have only myself to get ready tonight. You have a family to get ready, a baby to carry. Let me bring an extra dish for your family." (I once heard one single person say apologetically, "I didn't bring anything because I'm only one, and I knew there would be enough food without mine.")

My single friends have rescued me from my young children, inviting me to their home so that we could have grown-up conversation, rather than always expecting me to ask them to come to my house. When our youngest was a baby, one Single Lover gave me money every week for many months to pay for help with cleaning and ironing so that I could have more energy for a ministry with community Bible clubs. Other singles were always ready to give childcare on short notice.

My Single Lovers loved others, too—their nieces and nephews, aunts, uncles, etc., but especially their feeble, tottering, confused parents—gently guiding, nurturing, encouraging, ever calm and secure in the most exasperating and

embarrassing circumstances. This article can never do justice to the quality, the genuineness of their love.

The love of my single friends is highly visible because it usually reaches beyond the boundaries of the four walls where each lives. They know they have more time, more energy, even more money left over after they have cared for their own single self. They are committed to caring for other selves. Their love is visible because it gets spread around farther. It touches more people numerically because they are not committed so specifically to spouse, to children. They love, and they are loved for their loving, and the circle of their love broadens and deepens.

That is not to say that the circle of love for married people cannot also broaden and deepen. It is broader and deeper than many singles realize. Love isn't love just because of who you do it for. It's love because you do it—for your neighbor ("the one nigh thee"). Thus it often happens that more true loving goes on *within* families than without, because there is more than one person there. So lots of love is done unseen and unappreciated by people outside those four walls.

My single friends do not sit at home and pine for a lover to love them. They do not complain against God and fate. They themselves are the Lovers of many people. They are whole people without spouse, children, or sex. They are what Maslow describes as self-actualized people who are fulfilled without sex though, if it were there, they would enjoy it more than most people. Celibacy may actually heighten and intensify the experience of love. There is an ecstasy in the union of hearts and minds that the union of bodies can never match. Sex does not make people one. Sex often splits people apart just as they were about to achieve oneness. Many married people never become one because they have never learned to love. My single friends have become one with other people, because *oneness* is available to all people in Jesus.

Lots of single people don't know these things. They do not realize how whole, how skilled in love they already are. We must tell them. We must affirm their lovingness, their unself-centeredness, their patient acceptance of more aloneness and loneliness than is their due. We married people must include them more often in our activities, our decision making, even ask their opinion of our marriage, our childrearing, our

lifestyle. They know more about these matters than we think. I have benefitted gratefully from the counsel and encouragement of my single friends. Only a few of them have analyzed me behind my back, and that possibly because I seemed so unapproachable.

We must never take them for granted or use them as the convenient means to our singular pleasures or purposes. They are not ready-made babysitters and committee members. They too have schedules, priorities, physical-emotional limitations, and the right to say "no."

My single friends are open to me. They accept that they cannot have a hand or a voice in *everything* I must attend to. They encourage specialized ministries for categories like teens, young married, separated/divorced, and they take the initiative in providing ministries for their own category. Married people don't expect singles to plan retreats for them. My single friends don't expect married people to plan retreats for them.

The church isn't just the married people, even though they may be the majority. The church is whoever you are! Each person must bear his own burden (the nitty-gritty details of daily life) as well as "one another's burdens" (Gal. 6:1-5). Sometimes we expect others to do for us what we really can and should do for ourselves. Expectations and demands (even unspoken ones) may spoil the beauty of the gift of the love of God which is poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit and flows like a river of living water to thirsty people all around and very close to us.

My Single Lovers are like these rivers. Patiently, quietly, humbly, and graciously, they do all kinds of unglamorous, unrewarding, unexpected things. Their faces now pass before my mind's eye. Their love ever warms my heart, though already the voice of Jesus has said to some of them, "Well done, good and faithful one. Enter into the joy of your Lord." There they are loved with pure and everlasting love.

"This article is dedicated to Miriam Bowers, who bears witness in the daily, gracious, loving gift of herself to others that godliness with contentment is great gain. As librarian at Upland College, Miriam became a dear friend of ours while we pastored the Upland, Ca., church (1957-66) and remains a treasured friend, working as librarian and archivist at Messiah College since 1970." —Ruth Dourte ■

**I know some
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They are to me
Best Friends . . .**

Phoebe's Problem

by Jeanne Zornes

Characters: *Phoebe Workman, a single woman and faithful member of First Church of Stewardship; Della Sampson, a visitor who recently moved to town and met Phoebe at work.*

Setting: *Lobby of First Church of Stewardship, about 9:15 a.m. Sunday. As scene opens, Della is pacing back and forth in front of a large missionary bulletin board, fussing with her hair and anxiously checking her watch. Phoebe enters, bearing load of folded crib sheets.*

PHOEBE: Good morning, Della! I'm so glad you found the church okay.

DELLA: Oh hello, Phoebe! You draw excellent maps—found it right off. I know I'm a little early but I didn't want to miss a thing.

PHOEBE: How was your first week at work?

DELLA: Just fine. I'm excited about moving here and getting into, uh, a *bigger* church.

PHOEBE: I really like it here. The program's top-notch.

DELLA (fussing with hair): Oh yes, just lead me to the men, uh, I mean the *young singles* class.

PHOEBE: I'm sorry, but we don't have a young singles class. We're not quite set up that way.

DELLA (shocked): Don't tell me your church isn't big enough for one! From the size of your building you ought to have at least a dozen bachelors, uh, I mean young singles.

PHOEBE: Oh, there are plenty of us in that category, but we haven't hung together in a certain class.

DELLA: Why not?

PHOEBE: I guess we never had any reason to.

DELLA: So what do you *do*?

PHOEBE: Most of us teach or help in some way. (Juggles stack of crib sheets.)

DELLA: How boring that must be! In my old church we *had* to hang together for moral support. We were victims of unfair statistics.

PHOEBE: Statistics?

DELLA: Ah yes, *men*. Our motto was Isaiah 4:1: "Seven women will take hold of one man in that day."

PHOEBE (laughing): That's clever, but—

DELLA (interrupting): If you don't have a singles class, what do you do to, uh, support or remedy your singleness? You know the Bible says it's not good for man to be alone. That's *such* a good slogan for our age level.

PHOEBE: Well, some attend Bible studies during the week. They're a good way for us to deal with ourselves and keep accountable to each other. Mine's like a second family.

DELLA (eagerly): Oh tell me about yours!

PHOEBE: Let's see, there are the Masons—he's a teacher and she takes care of their three children. And the MacArthurs—he's a retired plumber and his wife is a school nurse. And—

DELLA (interrupting): Any unmarried men?

PHOEBE: I guess Paul would qualify.

DELLA: Paul! Tell me more!

PHOEBE: He's been widowed for twenty years. He's a precious man.

DELLA: But definitely not our league, my dear! You'll stay an unclaimed blessing *forever* if you don't get out where the young single men are.

PHOEBE: But you don't understand. Our church *has* nurtured some really fine young single men. Here (points to missionary map picture)—here's John. He helps run a clinic in Zaire.

DELLA: Is he *it*? Aren't there any more single men around?

PHOEBE: Relax. There *are* other singles here. Tim—he's a Christian ed intern—is down in the primary classrooms helping teach there. Hans, who drives cab during the week, drives our church van to bring senior citizens and the handicapped for services. Melody is our church organist. And Matt is involved with our deacons and has a big job dispensing funds and food to the needy. He's a high school teacher and coach—I don't know where he finds the time.

DELLA: And what do *you* do?

PHOEBE (smiling and showing stack of crib sheets): I'm in charge of the nursery.

DELLA: With all those dreadful snotty noses and smelly diapers?

PHOEBE: Oh, that's part of it. But I simply enjoy children and I'm glad I can give their moms a break to appreciate the services more.

DELLA: So you chase other people's kids while your best years pass by!

PHOEBE: Oh, I don't look at it that way!

DELLA: Oh dear, how you've been deluded. Anybody with an ounce of sense knows that singles belong together in a Sunday school class. How else can prospective couples meet?

PHOEBE: I guess I never considered that angle seriously.

DELLA: Oh you must, you must! Well (checking watch), I really don't want to stay if you don't have a singles class.

PHOEBE: But you may like our classes for all adults. One is studying New Testament Greek and the other is into the minor prophets and a third is doing a topical study of Proverbs and—

DELLA: Phoebe, I'm afraid those don't meet *my* needs at all. I *must* go. Sorry to have taken your time. See you at work next week. (Starts to exit.)

PHOEBE: Do consider coming again.

DELLA (from side): Maybe someday, when you have the type of program that will bless *me*. (Exits.)

PHOEBE (aside, to audience): "Unclaimed blessing"? Who's not claiming the blessing? (Exits.) ■

Jeanne Doering Zornes is a freelance writer living in Wenatchee, Washington.



Spiritual Malabsorption

by William L. Poteet

Eighteen-year-old Amy Brown of Jackson, New Jersey, eats a dozen eggs for breakfast and two steaks for lunch in order to keep her weight up to 90 pounds. Doctors tell her there is little she, or they, can do about her metabolic disorder—except for her to keep on eating.

Amy suffers from malabsorption, an unusual syndrome that usually afflicts younger children, which requires her to eat almost hourly to replace lost potassium in her body. Doctors predict her condition will change, for better or worse, as her body completes maturity in the next few years.

Meanwhile, her meals equal those of four adults. Her food bills alone take \$170 a week out of her father's \$13,000 annual salary as a township public works employee.

Until the illness struck at age 14, she was a healthy, energetic teenager. Now, in and out of hospitals periodically, she is weak unless she eats constantly.

The sad fact is that numbers of people who sit among us Sunday after Sunday suffer from a syndrome similar to Amy's—not a metabolic disorder resulting from loss of potassium, but spiritual malabsorption.

The prophet Micah wrote, "You will eat but not be satisfied; your stomach will still be empty" (Micah 6:14). J. B. Phillips paraphrased those words, "There will be famine in your heart."

There are folks in your church and in mine who attend regularly, ingesting a prodigious diet of spiritual food, yet never growing spiritually as a result. Some have never even come to the place of acknowledging Jesus to be the Lord of their life, even though they have given mental assent to the gospel and perhaps supported the church with their attendance and giving for years!

Paul warned Timothy that in the last days there would be those who, "having a form of godliness but denying its power," are "always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth" (II Timothy 3:5, 7).

It breaks a pastor's heart to greet folks at the door Sunday after Sunday who express appreciation for "good preaching" but whose absorption of spiritual food leads them neither to faith in Christ nor to spiritual development.

But not only can individuals suffer from spiritual malabsorption; entire congregations can be afflicted by the syndrome as well.

Ray Stedman tells the story of a man who was taken through an oil refinery and shown acres of fabulous machinery. When his tour was over he said to his guide, "You've shown me everything except your shipping department. Where is that?"

"Oh," the guide replied, "we don't have one."

"You don't have a shipping department?" the man asked in amazement. "Why not?"

"Well, you see," the guide said, "it takes all the oil we produce to run the machinery we have here."

Unfortunately, that's a parable of the church in many places—operating only for its own benefit, absorbing all the physical and spiritual energy produced to maintain itself.

How does one overcome spiritual malabsorption? First, eat the right food—that which is capable of producing spiritual maturity. Peter urges us "like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good" (I Peter 2:2, 3).

It is healthy to have a voracious appetite for the Word. But if it does not result in measurable growth, it may be a symptom of spiritual malabsorption.

But like its physical counterpart, reaching spiritual maturity involves far more than achieving and maintaining homeostasis (the state of stability and equilibrium toward which all nature strives). Mere maintenance of the status quo is not enough. We have within us an innate, God-given urge to develop our abilities, to grow. So the Word commands us to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (II Peter 3:18).

This growth, whether on a personal or congregational level, has three dimensions: spiritual, organic or functional and reproductive.

Spiritual growth in a congregation is measurable in terms of victorious prayer, fervor of evangelism, a relevant message, triumphant faith, an attitude of expectancy, membership involvement, a dynamic fellowship and the reality experienced in worship. For the individual there will be a deepening of relationship with the Lord, a sensitivity of spirit, and a desire to share one's faith in meaningful ways.

Organic or functional growth relates to the development of leadership skills and the discovery and utilization of the gifts of the Spirit. God has given every born-again believer one or more spiritual gifts for use within the context of his body, the church. The congregation grows functionally (as does the individual believer) when the gifts of the many members are used interactively to promote the cause of Christ, according to God's "body building" program laid out for us in Ephesians 4. His body "grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work" (Ephesians 4:16).

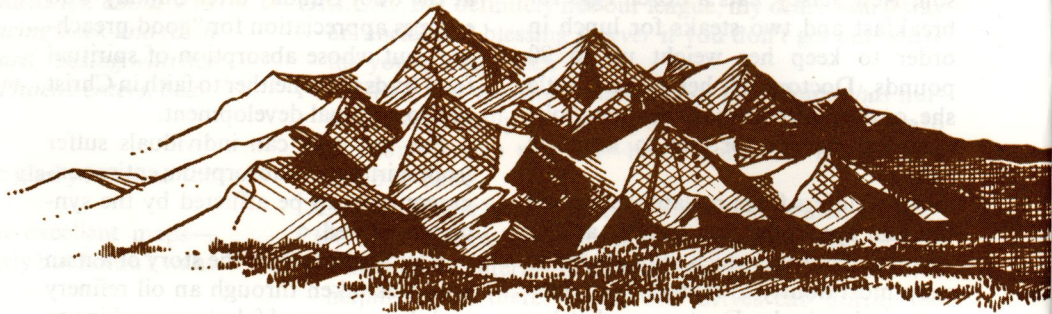
Amy Brown, fighting to maintain her weight at 90 pounds, says of her physical problem, "I'm not going to let this thing beat me. I wanted to become a cop, but that's definitely out of the question. I may want to be a secretary or possibly a singer. I want to also have children."

Both the Church of Jesus Christ and the individuals who comprise it are born to reproduce. Without the birth of new believers into the family of God, a local church soon dies. Without the exhilaration of being a personal soul-winner, one's spiritual vitality begins to diminish.

It's healthy to have a voracious appetite for the Word. But if it does not eventuate in measurable growth, it may be a symptom of spiritual malabsorption. ■

William Poteet, a Messiah College alumnus, lives in Bernie, Missouri.

The challenge



The rain was dancing on the windshield as the lights of the city came into view on the horizon. Miles and miles of small specks of gold seemed to sparkle in the darkness. This was it . . . Calgary, Alberta; Boom Town, Canada. For many, it had appeared to be the land of promise, the land of prosperity, the place where all hopes and dreams would be fulfilled. In reality, the prosperity was enshrouded in darkness and Calgary became a place of disillusionment and broken dreams.

Our hearts were beating with excitement as we approached the city. It seemed almost certain to us that God was calling us to the people of Calgary to be ministers of his love, grace, and forgiveness. The need was apparent everywhere; the challenge was great; the risks were high. But all seemed insignificant in comparison to the greatness of our God.

So it was that in late August 1981 we moved to Calgary, commissioned by God and the Brethren in Christ, to a church-planting ministry there. Our target group was the unchurched, unsaved people of the community. The only way to reach these people was to get out into the "highways and byways" and to rub shoulders with them. All around us we began to hear lonely, hurting, desperate voices calling out to us for love, hope, and answers. "Oh, Father," we prayed, "give us ears to hear what they are really saying. Give us eyes to see past the externals, that we may see people as you

see them. Give us minds full of your wisdom to know how to relate and respond to their desperate pleas. Give us a heart full of compassion that we may love them for you, and to you. And help us, Lord, to accept them just as you do, unconditionally and just as they are. Teach us how to communicate your truths to them in words and ways that they will understand."

In January 1982 we began public worship services with only one other Christian family to help us. In the people came with their "dirty laundry." We could see right from the start that this was not going to be a typical evangelical church. We would need to be patient, loving, and accepting of them in order to give God time to work in their lives. They had a wealth of contacts that they brought with them and we did not want them to lose contact with people outside the church. We would need to win them, disciple them, and train them to keep on reaching out beyond the fellowship of the church to their friends and neighbors. These were not people who would accept what we said at face value. We would be tested to see if we were for real. We would suffer criticism from other Christians for being friends to sinners. It would not be without challenge, but it was exciting to see God build his church.

We began Sunday evening Bible study and the pastor chose to begin with a series on Christian living based on the Sermon on the Mount. One particular evening, the lesson was based on Mat-

thew 5:27-32, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Three ladies came for the first time this evening. We recognized them from Sunday morning, but had not had the opportunity to learn much about them. They sat quietly through the study, but afterwards were full of questions. "People out there do not live according to Bible standards. They are involved in adultery, divorce, and all sorts of sins. What are you going to do with them?" Whom were these women talking about? We soon discovered they had been involved in just about everything imaginable. They were not proud of their pasts and they had no desire to continue in that lifestyle. They had tried several churches, but they left feeling that there was no place for them because they were too sordid, too unholy. They needed to see God's love, acceptance, forgiveness reflected to them through his people, the church, before they could really see themselves as new creatures in Christ. They needed to view themselves as made new, with a future as bright as their commitment to follow Christ.

What has become of these three ladies? One has since straightened out her marital situation, and she and her husband have become a key couple in the ministry of the church. Another is now teaching Sunday school and is a leader in the newly formed ministry to singles. The third has just recently returned to the church after a brief absence and has dealt with many of the issues from her past which were keeping her from being

was great; the risks were high

by Anieta Hopper



truly free in Christ. Her potential for Christian ministry is great.

We had worked hard those first few months to launch the ministry in Calgary. We were tired and a vacation was a welcome experience. The solitude of the mountains of Alberta seemed like a delightful and refreshing contrast to the ringing of the phone and the demands of people which had been so heavy upon us. One day, we crossed the lake by boat to reach the starting point of a five and a half mile trek up the mountainside. The scenery along the way was beautiful. The last half mile had its dangerous spots, especially for our youngest son who was about to have his seventh birthday. But finally we reached our destination, a glacier-fed lake at the top of the mountain. There, surrounded by

God's magnificent creation, we met a man. He was young, well-educated, and heading for a promising career in the oil business. Before beginning our journey back down the mountain, my husband Allan exchanged phone numbers with him.

Back in Calgary, Allan made contact with this young man again. He was cautious. He clearly stated that the church had nothing to say to him, but being open-minded, he began to read the books Allan gave to him. Over the months, the contacts continued and he became more and more interested. In March 1983 we began a singles' ministry and he attended the first few meetings. He was impressed with the people. They were clearly born again, had good minds and high morals. In a recent phone conversation, he stated that he had not accepted the Lord as yet, but that he is really looking at the question. We praise God that he is at work in this young man's life.

It was late January 1983. Another man walked through the door about half an hour before the service was to begin. He was unshaven and completely unkempt. I noticed his appearance, but it did not matter. I was so glad to see him at church that I enthusiastically let him know. He walked into the auditorium where we have the worship service and lit a cigarette. For the next several minutes, he continued to make himself very visible, but not disruptive. It was almost time for the service to begin, so he found

a seat. A couple came in and sat behind him. She noticed his appearance and was reminded of a conversation that she and her sister had just the day before about accepting people just as they are. After the service, she made a point of introducing herself and her husband to him and of telling him how great it was to have him worshipping with us.

What was he doing? He was testing the congregation to see how they would respond to a "grubby looking character." He has since shared with me that he accepted the Lord three years ago through Alcoholics Anonymous, but had not really been living a Christian life. Over the month that he had been worshipping with the congregation, he had developed a deep desire for the Word and had committed himself to a growing relationship with the Lord. He saw in the congregation the love and acceptance of Jesus. That is what he was looking for in a church. That love and acceptance is encouraging him to become the person God wants him to be. His life is having an impact for Christ, especially to other singles.

The ministry of the North East Community Church in Calgary, Alberta, is reaching out and touching lives for Jesus Christ. It is leaving an impact on our corner of the world as a cooperative ministry of the Brethren in Christ Church, made possible by your prayer and dollar support. To God be the glory. Amen.

**All around us we
began to hear
lonely, hurting,
desperate voices
calling out to us
for love, hope
and answers.**

Church Planting Vignettes...

Calgary (Alberta)

Pastors Allan Hopper (Calgary) and Terry Friesen (Massey Place) will never forget the severe subzero temperatures the first week of January 1982. In spite of minus 30 to minus 40 degree temperatures, (centigrade), together they blitzed the new and developing suburbs of Castleridge and Falconbridge, inviting people to the first public service of the new Brethren in Christ Church.

Sunday, January 10, with the thermometer continuing to dip to the minus 40 degree point, there was great rejoicing as more than 80 people streamed into the school. Fourteen months later, March 6, 1983, the first reception service was held. Eighteen people became charter members, forming the core group of the first Brethren in Christ Church in Canada west of Saskatchewan.

Here was a church planted by design, far removed from any other Brethren in Christ congregation. Allan and Anieta Hopper had responded to the call of the church to leave a successful and growing pastorate. Ahead lay the unknown. They rose to the challenge, placing their future in the hands of God.

There have been amazing conversions. However, discipling a body where the background has been almost totally secular has entailed much hard work, prayer, and acceptance. Now from these new babes in Christ, a committed body of believers is emerging.

Cumberland Valley (Pa.)



Back in the 1960's, two Grantham congregation members, Danny Keefer and Avery Heisey, saw an opening for service and answered the call. In the local amusement park was a little church building placed there in the 1930's by someone with a concern for the spiritual welfare of park visitors. The building was in active use in the summertime, but by the 1960's needed leadership and Sunday school teachers. Under the guidance of Keefer and Heisey, young people from the church and college began holding services. Soon the chapel was winterized and year-round services were begun. In 1968, Ray Bert, a junior at Messiah College, was asked to assume pastoral leadership.

The little church eventually became inadequate for the needs of an established, growing congregation. Although the building's use was given free of charge by the park owners, it was situated on a floodplain. So in 1979 two acres of land were purchased nearby. In February 1981, the Williams Grove congregation moved from the amusement park chapel into a new facility, and became the Cumberland Valley Brethren in Christ Church.

By 1982 this group of believers, with Ray Bert still their pastor, was the fastest growing congregation in the Allegheny Conference with 97.7 percent growth. At the beginning of this year, they were granted full conference status. They are giving full support to their pastor, supporting a young couple in Brethren in Christ missions in Zambia, giving partial support of a family ministering in Israel, and are involved in the local "New Hope Ministries." Presently they are negotiating the purchase of additional acreage.

Clearwater (Florida)

For some time there had been a number of Brethren in Christ people living on Florida's west coast. A survey of the area pinpointed the greater Clearwater community as the best area for starting a new church.

In the Fall of 1977 Rev. Elam Dohner and eight Brethren in Christ people began a ministry in the countryside community of Clearwater. In 1979 Rev. Dohner retired and Rev. Levi Brubaker assumed the pastoral role. After meeting in homes, the group moved to the Quality Inn. They have been conducting Sunday school and worship services there with a Thursday evening Bible study meeting in homes. They are currently in the process of finding a more flexible facility. A pastoral change is also in process. This community is full of opportunities for ministry. Mr. and Mrs. Henry Hess have moved to Clearwater to be a lay self-supporting leadership couple.

West Shore (Pa.)



The mortgage was burned 30 months after the first Bible studies began. From left: Monroe Crider, Don Nace, Pastor Simon Lehman, Charles Haring, Carlton Shank.

Early in 1980, a concerned brother spoke to a member of the Allegheny Conference Extension Board, indicating that he wanted to see a Brethren in Christ Church in the West Shore area (across the river from Harrisburg, Pa.) and that he had \$163,000 which he wanted to give towards a building. Gladly the extension board accepted his offer and Rev. Simon Lehman, chairman of the Board, was asked to pastor this projected congregation. Si and Betty moved into the area and began inviting neighbors into their home for Bible study. Land was purchased and friends and neighbors gathered under a little tent on a cold March Sunday afternoon in 1981 for the groundbreaking.

By May 3, 1981, the first Sunday morning services were held in a local restaurant and in October, the church building was dedicated. By the end of 1981 there were 46 charter members received into the fellowship. In 1982 the extension board subsidies were discontinued and the church was granted full congregational status early this year.

This exciting young church is now averaging more than 100 on Sunday morning. One young man is enrolled in the Brethren in Christ ministerial reading course; others are involved in special Bible studies. In his report to the Congregational Council in January of this year, Pastor Lehman indicated that his purpose is "... to keep a 'hot pulpit,' an 'open altar' and a Christ-centered ministry. I desire the congregation to keep *off* their seat, *on* their feet and *in* the street with a yearning compassion for the lost"

Glendora (Calif.)

"There was a young man by the name of Fred (Pastor Fred Carter) who was instrumental in bringing my family and me to church. You see, Fred had a window cleaning business, and I am a dentist. For a year or more he would smile by on the outside, and I would smile back on the inside of the office. Finally one day he came by to introduce himself and invite me to his church. Well, of course, I wasn't ready, but the seed was planted.

"I hadn't been to church for about 25 years. I didn't feel I needed to go to church. I didn't want to get involved with religion. However, my wife and I felt a need for our children to go to church and learn God's will, so naturally we decided to try out Fred's church. We walked in cold on a 20-week Sunday school class on Revelation that Fred was teaching. I still don't understand it, but stuck it out, and one evening I accepted the Lord Jesus as my Savior. Since then we have followed Fred to the Brethren in Christ Church and are planting a new church in Glendora, Calif.

"Fellowship in the church is important to me because I continue to learn through God's Word. It is easy to stray without the fellowship. Our lives are at times very congested—just having enough time to stamp out fires—yet with the Holy Spirit in our hearts life has new meaning and joy. —Dr. Ron Darden

Covenant (Ontario)



Children being dedicated during a worship service in Penetang.

Penetanguishene is a town of 5,500 people, 80 percent of whom relate to the Roman Catholic Church with French as the mother tongue of many.

Five years ago, Glenn Robitaille, a young Christian salesman from the town, met Pastor Dale Shaw of the New Life Church at Collingwood. Glenn was excited about the Brethren in Christ. An immediate bonding developed. Glenn and his family began driving the 90-mile round trip to Collingwood each Sunday. Soon others from Penetang joined in the Sunday odyssey. Before long, Glenn had been "adopted" by the New Life Church and began to serve as a "pastor-in-training."

At this point, the Canadian Conference Board for Missions (the conference's extension board) heard of Glenn's passion for the people of his own town. Negotiations began to ascertain how they could cooperate in starting an extension church. Contacts were made with local prospects. Keen desire was expressed for the establishing of an evangelical witness in Penetang.

Glenn began to serve as a bivocational pastor. Within a year the Separate School (Roman Catholic) became available as a public meeting place. Slow but steady growth has occurred both through conversions and Christians who moved into town or whose roots were already there. From a simple beginning, attendance at the services now averages nearly 60 with a membership of 29.

The congregation has purchased a four-acre site for the construction of a church. Glenn is now being supported half-time. The congregation has established a goal of full-time pastoral support by 1985.

Walkersville (Maryland)



Walkersville, Maryland, is a suburb of Frederick, about 50 miles from Washington, DC. In July 1980, Rev. and Mrs. Richard Long and family moved into the community for the purpose of starting a Brethren in Christ Church. There was no core group and no nearby Brethren in Christ church. The call of God and the Allegheny Conference was their motivation and encouragement.

Pastor Long began calling on his neighbors and inviting them to his home for Bible study. They came. Early in 1981, Sunday worship services were begun in the Long home. In August 1981, he wrote, "Thank God for the 25 people thus far involved in Bible study and/or Sunday worship . . . Thank God for 30 children (from 20 homes) who are attending Backyard Bible School this week . . ." On October 4, 1981, the Sunday morning worship service was moved into the local high school, meeting in the choral room. A Bible story hour was provided for the children in another room.

Charter membership and organization Sunday took place on May 1, 1983 with 64 in attendance and 24 becoming charter members. Pastor Long states his purpose in being in Walkersville: "We are here to share with people the gospel of Jesus Christ, to win them to Christ and bring them into his kingdom, to teach them to live a holy and disciplined life, to challenge and support them in giving witness to Christ in their own sphere of influence. I believe God is pleased to establish and work through a Brethren in Christ congregation to achieve this goal.

Good News (Ontario)

Howard and Della Tyrrell live in Burlington, a city of over 100,000. Every Sunday they drove 10 miles through the adjoining city of Hamilton to worship at Ridgemount. Three years ago, they led two of their neighbors to the Lord. Now, two families were commuting from one city to the other for worship.

As time went on, the two couples became concerned about their own community. They also questioned the distance and time involved in driving across the city. They felt it was time to build bridges and begin a witness in Burlington. First, a hall was rented for services and last fall a school gymnasium became their meeting place.

The Ridgemount Church, the parent body, not only gave them their blessing but also provided pastoral leadership. Pastor Vern Bosserman conducts a 9:30 a.m. service in Burlington and, after a 25-minute ride, arrives just in time to lead the Ridgemount congregation in its morning worship.

Minimal financial assistance is being provided by the Canadian Conference Board for Missions to help develop a core group. Checkpoints have been established to monitor the progress of this emerging church. If growth occurs, significant funding will be given to provide a full-time pastor by the summer of 1984.

Blue Mountain (Pa.)



More than 100 years ago in a wooded area north of Roxbury, Pa., a one-room church was built. Originally it belonged to another denomination and for many years its members regularly worshipped there. But as has happened to many small country churches, the doors were finally closed. People no longer entered to seek God and praise him, but the little church still stood.

Many years passed and concerned people at the nearby Mowersville Brethren in Christ Church took note of the empty church and the need of the community. They asked permission to use the church as the site for a hymn sing. The community responded with enthusiasm. The next year, a Sunday school and midweek services were begun as an outreach ministry. Rev. Mervin Potteiger, the Mowersville pastor, led well-attended evangelistic services in September of 1981.

The building was winterized and, by the end of 1981, a fund to buy the church had been established by concerned individuals who wanted to see the little stone church used again as a place of worship. They succeeded in purchasing the building in April 1982. Ninety-one attended Easter services that year to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord. Regular Sunday morning services are being held under the pastoral leadership of layman William Holtry, assisted by Rev. Henry Heisey.

A new floor has been installed in the little old church, along with insulation in the ceiling, floor, and windows. A mobile home is now parked on the church lot to add more space for Sunday school. Two vans and a bus go out every Sunday morning to pick up those who want to come to church. All monies have come from individuals in the community and concerned friends. The Allegheny Conference Extension Board has given its support but has not financed the venture. The self-supporting pastors and a people who are open and seeking the Lord have planted a church.

**NEXT MONTH:
An interview with three
church planting pastors**

You are invited...

When we receive our mail, we can often guess the nature of the contents by the envelope size, appearance, or a quick look at the return address. One of the familiar pieces of mail is the formal invitation. It may be an invitation to a wedding, a baby shower, a housewarming, a graduation, or some other significant event. For a child, an invitation to a birthday party is often an exciting experience. Many times the invitation will carry a request for us to respond by return communication as to whether we will be present at the significant event. Then there are other times when we are invited by an announcement or a personal friend to be a guest.

This is an open letter of invitation for you to consider a challenge.

As many of the readers of the *Visitor* are aware, the Brethren in Christ people want all people to come to the Lord Jesus. We are involved in praying, giving, sending, and many other activities which are intended to invite others to become a part of Christ's Kingdom.

No matter where in the world it happens, people who are invited to become Christians need to be a part of a local group of believers. In short, there is no more important part of Christ's Kingdom than the local church. Local churches should be a visible expression of the Body of Christ. One of the most tangible ways of reaching new people is by planting new churches.

The Board of Bishops would like to extend an invitation to the readers of the *Visitor* to consider involvement in church planting. Some of you may be living in heavily populated areas. Some may be in areas where there are other Brethren in Christ churches. Others may be in isolated areas. Some of you may be comfortable in a large or small church. But this invitation is to *all*.

We invite you to consider the challenge of being involved in a church planting. It can be one of the most exciting experiences of your life. The possibilities include helping with a Bible study, a prayer group, a Sunday school class, a financial partnership, a support group, music, a leadership team, and visitation.

If you would consider the possibility of accepting such an invitation, would you please respond to your regional bishop? We can then see if we can correlate such responses for an exciting event. It could mean the opening of a new church or the encouragement of a church just being planted. We invite you to accept the challenge. Now we await your response. It would be an honor to hear from you.

YOU are invited to become a participant in the adventure of church planting. There are many ways to be involved. If you are interested, please write to any one of us. We would like to assist you to an active role in building Christ's Church.

Bishop Alvin Book
10 Nittany Dr.
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

Bishop David Climenhaga
P.O. Box 8
Nappanee, IN 46550

Bishop John Byers
501 E. Mulberry St.
Elizabethtown, PA 17022

Bishop Don Shafer
P.O. Box 245
Upland, CA 91785

Bishop Harvey Sider
2519 Stevensville Rd.
Stevensville, Ontario
Canada LOS 1S0



A typical "river bus" goes by, loaded with cargo and passengers. This is the only way to reach some of the churches in eastern Nicaragua.

A hard day's a spiritual

The 45-minute wait at the bus station at 4:30 a.m., the scramble to push one's self onto the bus and to find a seat unoccupied by bags thrown in windows (to save seats)—this is the way our journey to the churches in eastern Nicaragua always starts.

In May, Maritza Estrada and I were on our way to the first seminar for the women of the churches in Zelaya. My situation on the bus was worse than usual because I had found no seat. As I faced the prospect of standing for the next four and a half hours with the 30 others who also had no seats, I thought, "What a waste of time. I can't sleep standing up; I can't read in this bouncing vehicle, and I can't write because I have to hang on with both hands. I hate crowded buses. Why do I ever do this?"

After awhile I decided to try praying for each person in Marshall's family and in mine. I had to "watch" as I prayed in order to keep my balance, but the watching interrupted the praying with many distracting sights:

- There's the sun beginning to appear.
- Aren't those hills neat!
- There's been no rain here either.
- I pity that poor lady traveling in this bus with a tiny baby.
- Isn't it interesting how that pushing, shouting mob of people who entered this bus an hour ago has settled into a compatible group of fellow travelers.

Suddenly I realized that we had reached the halfway point of the journey and it had taken me two hours just to pray for our families. About that time, a kind gentleman offered me a one-gallon paint tin for a seat. And thus, two more

hours passed and the bus journey ended.

How comforting it was to get out of the bus and walk 10 minutes to the river. There we squeezed into a long narrow motor boat with about 20 other people. After about a half-hour, I began wondering which was better—that paint tin or this narrow plank!

At least, now we were in the open air and could enjoy the beautiful scenes moving past us on the calm river. Being one of the river "buses," our boat stopped frequently to pick up or leave off people near their isolated houses. Two hours upstream, we all had to get out as we had arrived at Salto Mataka where huge rocks obstruct most of the river. While the men lifted and pushed the boat over the rapids, we passengers bought a plate of food and a drink at the "restaurant," a shelter built on the rocks in the river.

After two more hours of conversation, as we traveled in the midday sun, Maritza and I, along with the six remaining passengers, climbed out of the boat

for the fourth time. We had come to yet another shallow part of the river. (The river was lower than usual because of an exceptionally long dry season.) As three men maneuvered the boat upstream over and around the rocks, we passengers followed a path which appeared to lead us directly into the wilderness. We walked 20 minutes until we reached the river again. Since the boat could not go farther because of the shallow river, we picked up our bags from the boat and carried them the last half-hour to Huapi.

We walked under tall straight trees, up and down hills, over a high ridge, through a small stream—always through the silence of the forest with distant sounds of monkeys and birds. In that vast stillness, we had the feeling that we were the only human beings alive. What a contrast to the beginning of our journey 10 hours earlier!

Across a deep ravine, we saw our destination—Huapi, a village of more than 100 wooden houses. And soon we were standing in a circle of sisters in Christ, praying and worshipping our God together. No longer were we the only human beings in the wilderness. Not only had we discovered other people in the forest, but we had found Christian ladies who were eagerly planning for the women's seminar of the next two days.

That night as I lay in my hammock after a joyful community worship service, I realized that the discomforts of the day had faded. Now I knew why Maritza and I did this. These people had invited us to share with them. Families had permitted wives and teen-age daughters to travel isolated mountain

**What happened
the next two
days was far
beyond our
expectations.**

journey— pilgrimage

by Eleanor Poe

paths to be away from home at least four days in order to study together these two days. I could only thank our Father who had brought all of us together and humbly ask for his guidance in making the days meaningful for the ladies.

What happened in those next two days was beyond Maritza's and my expectation. Because this was the first attempt at such a seminar, we had told ourselves, "Let's not be disappointed if only 10 come." There were 26. The women of Huapi prepared the food, but still attended every session. The women, who had traveled by horse, foot, and boat to get there, drank in the rare privilege of fellowshiping with sisters in the Lord. During those long hot days when it was easy to doze, the ladies remained alert, writing down every Scripture verse we mentioned. They kept busy memorizing, singing, sharing, listening, and asking practical questions.

Now it is August. As Maritza and I anticipate another two-day seminar in Huapi with the women in mid-September, we have nagging little concerns about the many hours of travel, but we joyfully look forward to the privilege of again sharing a few more days with our sisters in eastern Nicaragua. ■

Training of leaders in the Nicaraguan Brethren in Christ Church is the assignment for missionaries Marshall and Eleanor Poe. An essential part of Eleanor's ministry is providing Bible teaching, fellowship opportunities and worship experiences for the women of the church.

November 1983

Ministering at La Ronge

by Marlene Comfort

Three days ago, George and I visited a family at Rabbit Creek a few miles south of town. We parked our car along the road and walked down the narrow footpath that leads to the cabin. It was a beautiful walk—cool, quiet, and relaxing. The path had been packed by a snowmobile, but stepping to either side we would have found the snow to be knee-deep. There were fresh tracks in the snow, so our hearts beat a little faster with the thought of finding someone home. As we came closer, we could see smoke coming from the chimney.

Our friends saw us coming and called for us to come in as we knocked on the door. They were happy to see us. Bill was sweeping the chips away from starting a new fire. Jemima put the kettle on, and soon we were enjoying tea as we talked. The small talk turned to serious matters like the price of furs and the success which they were having this year on their trapline. Bill was proud of his wife who had trapped a fisher (a weasel-like animal) that had brought in \$135. Bill said trapping used to be a good way to make a living, but the prices had dropped so much that he sometimes wondered if it was worthwhile to continue.

Jemima got up, stoked the fire, and added more water to the pot on the stove. She was cooking some meat and it began to give off a delicious aroma.

When Bill finished talking, George asked him if it was okay to read some Bible verses. "Sure, we'd be glad to have you read to us," Bill said as he removed his hat. George read from Matthew, how God looks after nature. The birds are fed, and the flowers are clothed, so we should not worry



George and Marlene Comfort share with Sara at the Home.

for God loves us more and will take care of us. After prayer and words of farewell, we returned to our car happy for the friends we have, rejoicing that once again we had shared the Good News.

Today, Saturday, starts off like many others: cleaning and preparing for staff that come and spend their days off at our home. It's rather early, about 8:30, when the phone rings. Mrs. Charles is wondering if George can go to Timber Bay to pick up his two grandchildren. Their parents were both killed in a shooting incident yesterday. What a shock to us! We had become close to this couple, Alice and George. It was Alice who had taken the initiative to phone the police to report that our stolen car was out behind the school. My husband George had spent time talking with her husband George about the Lord. They both had sensed that Christ had made a difference in their children's lives. Coming home from Timber Bay, Rosie and Darren would ask for prayer before meals and had become peacemakers in the family.

The stories of these two families are not unusual. In fact, they are very common. Children from both of these homes live at Timber Bay Children's Home. Our hearts are often heavy when we see the violence in the North. Even though the peacefulness of working the trapline appears to be an answer for these people, we sense the hunger and loneliness that they experience because Christ is not first in their lives. We ask for your prayers that Rosie and Darren would continue their witness as they return to their reserve and live with their grandparents. Pray for Bill and Jemima that they would realize they need Christ in their lives so that they in turn can instruct their children and help their people. ■

The ministry of George and Marlene Comfort in La Ronge, a town 75 miles north of Timber Bay, consists of being liaison between the Children's Home and the parents of the children who go to Timber Bay for school. They also endeavor to keep in touch with past and present students, letting them know they care about them. Another part of the Comfort's ministry is welcoming staff members into their home to spend their days off. This fall, as the group home for girls opens in La Ronge, they will give support to director Cheryl Bert.

A vision for the future

by Don Zook

I have the delightful privilege of listening to many people talk about Brethren in Christ Missions. Missionaries, former missionaries, pastors, Board for Mission members, and national church leaders have helped me in my perspectives. But I feel there is one source more important than any of these for discerning God's plan for our future ministries. It is the Word of God. In Acts 13, we find the Holy Spirit working through the church. This role model of missions provides some exciting principles for us as God's people.

The Church

We are not given much information about the Antioch congregation which sent these missionaries. In Acts 13 there is no indication of the size of the congregation, or the age of its members, or the style of worship and organization. On the other hand, we are given several facts: this congregation contained both prophets and teachers, it practiced praying and fasting, and it was obedient to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Paul and Barnabas, as the missionaries sent by the Antioch congregation, manifested these same characteristics. Thank God for congregations today with these characteristics.

I am optimistic about the future of Brethren in Christ Missions because I feel good about the Brethren in Christ Church. The health of the mission program and the church are very closely related. We will fulfill our biblical responsibilities to participate in evangelizing the world as we are obedient in being the people God wants us to be.

My view of Brethren in Christ Missions and the Brethren in Christ Church

includes brotherhood—not only among members in North America, but also among brothers and sisters overseas. Certainly there will be communication from North America as the Holy Spirit calls missionaries and sends them out. But I believe there will also be communication from the churches overseas. They will contribute to our spiritual life here.

What can we learn from these overseas churches? I believe they can teach us to increase our faith for evangelism and church growth. In 1982, church membership in both India and Japan exceeded 10 percent. In Zimbabwe, Christians have been going through very difficult times. Some church members have been killed. But the church in Zimbabwe has grown by more than 20 percent during the last two-year period. In Nicara-

gua, the church reported a church membership in 1980 of 522. In 1982 they reported 1,387 members. This was an increase of more than 150 percent during the two-year period.

Our overseas churches can also give us helpful insights about the Brethren in Christ Church. In a recent interview, Enrique Palacios mentioned four characteristics of the Brethren in Christ Church which have helped that growth in the Nicaraguan church. First, he said, the Brethren in Christ emphasize regeneration. Churches in Nicaragua which do not teach the new birth are in trouble. They are not depending on God to change lives.

Second, Enrique mentioned that the church in Nicaragua emphasizes the power of the Holy Spirit. They spend

In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus. When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. John was with them as their helper.

Acts 13:1-5

Don Zook is executive secretary of the Board for Missions of the Brethren in Christ Church.

much time in prayer, expect miracles, and practice intercessory prayer. The problems are so great in Nicaragua that the people depend upon the Holy Spirit to do God's work.

Third, Enrique noted that one of the strengths of Brethren in Christ theology in Nicaragua is the ministry to the whole man. Churches in Nicaragua which emphasize only evangelism and personal salvation are suspect by the government.

Fourth, he also mentioned that the Brethren in Christ Church in Nicaragua has a strong emphasis on nonresistance. In Nicaragua, the teaching on nonresistance means noninvolvement in politics. Now that has special meaning in Nicaragua. Governments change often. Those choosing political sides may find themselves on the wrong side next year. Noninvolvement in politics has resulted in faster growth. Our brothers and sisters overseas can give us insights about our church and its message which help us understand and appreciate it more.

Overseas churches can teach us about the maturity that comes through suffering. When Bishop Ndlovu was in Pennsylvania last summer, he mentioned that the North American church does not know much about suffering. For us in North America, a little suffering goes a long way! We are not very eager for it. But some Christians in overseas countries have gone through difficult times and they have resulting spiritual insights to share with us.

We also can learn from our brothers and sisters from other ethnic backgrounds in North America. Recently I attended the annual missions service at Pilgrim Chapel in Brooklyn. Their meeting started at 4 p.m. and ended at 7:45. There was plenty of time for singing, testifying, celebrating, taking the offering, and delivering the main message! The generosity of their time was evidence of their commitment to Christ and his mission.

At Pilgrim Chapel, in 1980, the congregation gave \$1,000 to Brethren in Christ Missions. In 1981 that increased to \$3,500. In 1983 they have a goal of \$9,000. Now I do not know if they are going to reach \$9,000 this year, but I do know that by July they had already sent \$5,000 to the missions office. Their growing commitment, faith, and stewardship are an example to all of us.

Our brother, Freddy Negrete, tells us why he feels that the Brethren in Christ should be ministering to Hispanic people in southern California. He senses there is a message more complete and

more relevant than that of the other denominations ministering in the area where he is living.

Author Dr. George Turner of Asbury Seminary suggests that the Brethren in Christ blend of theology may be closest to that of the New Testament church. As we minister beyond our traditional borders, we will learn some good things about ourselves that will make us more effective in ministry and that will help us not only in our missions outreach, but also in our ministry to our own congregations.

The Missionary Call

In addition to the character of the Antioch church, the second thing to observe in Acts 13 is the nature of the missionary call. Recently the Board for Missions executive committee approved 25 new voluntary service workers who are going to serve in North America. When you talk with 25 young people about giving a portion of their lives for missionary service, you can be sure there is a lot of talk about how to discern God's call.

What constitutes a missionary call? The book of Acts gives us some help here. Did Barnabas and Paul receive the call before they got to that prayer meeting? Or were they caught by surprise when the Holy Spirit spoke to the church? The Scriptures do not tell us. We do know they obeyed. The Holy Spirit asked the Antioch church to obey by sending out missionaries and they did. Likewise the Holy Spirit asked Barnabas and Paul to obey by going, and they did.

What is the pattern operating today? The Holy Spirit has his plan for proclaiming the gospel of Christ around the world. This plan includes his calling missionaries to go and calling churches to send.

Acts 13:3 states that two missionaries were sent by the church. Verse 4 says they were sent by the Holy Spirit. Both statements are true. I believe that we have a God who is great enough so that the Holy Spirit who calls individuals can also confirm that call in the life of the church.

next page, please

Brethren in Christ MISSIONS CONVENTION

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A vision for the future

continued from page 17

Look at what happened in Acts 13. The message from the Holy Spirit must have been quite a severe shock. In the first part of Acts 13, there are five leaders mentioned and two of them were called to go out as missionaries. In fact, it appears that the two sent as missionaries were those best known in the local congregation.

Sometimes the Holy Spirit pulls surprises on us. A few decades ago in Brethren in Christ Missions, the Holy Spirit and the church called a college president, Arthur Climenhaga, to go to the mission field. Some may have thought, "What a waste of talent and gifts." But God used those mission field experiences in order to prepare Arthur Climenhaga for service—not only overseas, but in North America as a bishop, a speaker, and a General Conference Secretary.

More recently, the Holy Spirit called Luke Keefer, Sr. to Africa. Some no doubt felt that Roxbury Holiness Camp needed him. But I do not think Roxbury suffered because Luke Keefer went to the mission field. He even came back from Africa to be the Roxbury evangelist one year. The United Christian Church gave one of their most gifted speakers, John Graybill, to go to Japan a couple decades ago. I do not believe that the United Christian Church suffered because John Graybill went to Japan. The Holy Spirit used those experiences in Japan to prepare him for ministry to the United Christian Church in Pennsylvania. And now during his deputation ministries he challenges them, as well as the Brethren in Christ, to a closer walk with God.

I will not be surprised if the Holy Spirit calls some of our top leadership—some of our pastors, and even some of our administrative officials—to mission service. We can rejoice when the Holy Spirit calls people and the church confirms that call in order to get them where God wants them to serve.

In Acts 13, we find those called by the Holy Spirit to go to the mission field were people of prayer. They were filled by the Holy Spirit. I sincerely hope, as

we think about the future of Brethren in Christ Missions, that every missionary we send will have both a testimony and evidence of the filling of the Holy Spirit and that they will go fully equipped for the work God wants them to do. Where are they going to get this experience? Usually it will come as they worship and serve in the local church. I hope the church will have the message of holiness and the fullness of the Spirit, and that those attending church services will be prepared by God to fulfill his plan for his church.

Types of Missionaries

What type of missionaries are needed? It depends upon the needs of the church. God uses American Christians to help Christians overseas so that his church can be complete. Church growth in Nicaragua causes problems. They are

asking us as a church in North America at this particular time to help them in leadership training—to prepare new converts for pastoral responsibility so that the church can grow in all of its fullness there.

In Japan it appears that the church is asking missionaries primarily to fulfill the role of evangelists. The Christians who are in Japan take responsibility for pastoral care and administration, but they ask Americans to serve as evangelists. One of the avenues for this evangelism is the teaching of English to Japanese eager to learn.

The churches in Zimbabwe and Zambia are asking for people like Fred and Grace Holland not only to do church planting, but to train church planters. These churches are also calling for missionaries to come with professional skills such as teaching to help

Church growth on Zambia's

Gardeners easily understand Paul's description of church planting in I Corinthians 3:6. Paul planted, Apollos watered, and God gave the growth. God's pattern is still the same, and he is giving growth in Zambia's Copperbelt towns as we plant, water, and pray.

As Brethren in Christ people moved to Ndola and Kitwe, they banded together in small fellowships. The church responded by sending George Hansumo as a church-planting pastor. Then we were sent by Brethren in Christ Missions to teach at the Theological College of Central Africa (TCCA) in Ndola, and Edith Miller went to a government teaching position in a teacher training college in Kitwe. So the planting and watering team is expanding.

And we've seen signs of growth. There are several strong, stable families, including George Hansumo's, who are good examples to others. Three home Bible studies meet weekly in various areas of Ndola, and Rich has been encouraged by the insights and concerns expressed in the one he attends. Attendance at services is gradually increasing, and baptismal classes have been started in both Kitwe and Ndola. We plan to have a baptismal service with a Bible conference in September.

Kitwe congregation gathered in front of school where they meet.

But the weeds or problems are also evident. Several homes are experiencing difficult problems in their marriages and families. Some people's faith seems to be more traditional than personal, and a deeper commitment to Christ is needed to bring greater growth and health to the fellowship. Badly in need of growth is the area of tithes and offerings. A lack of funds hampers the church's growth, resulting in gaps in the support of the pastor, stagnation of plans for a church building, and the lack of transportation for Rev. Hansumo to begin outreach in other towns.

Since Brethren in Christ work in Zambia centers in the Southern Prov-



Evangelical Visitor

The Holy Spirit has a plan for proclaiming the gospel of Christ ... including calling missionaries to go and calling churches to send.

prepare committed Christians for more effective service. Spirit-filled Christians with various gifts and talents are needed to make the church complete.

But my vision for Brethren in Christ Missions is not only for missionaries in

North America to go overseas. It includes the vision of having Christians from overseas coming to North America to share the benefit of their spiritual experiences. As we talked with the church leaders in Nicaragua, they indicated they were willing to send missionaries to Venezuela and Colombia. They have learned a lot about evangelism and church planting. In fact, they even suggested that we might benefit by inviting evangelists from Nicaragua to go to California to help minister to and evangelize the Spanish-speaking people. There are things we can learn from Spirit-filled Christians overseas. The sharing of their experiences with us can make us a more complete church.

Just as they request North Americans to come and teach in their schools and preach in their churches, perhaps we should be requesting some of them to

teach in our schools and preach in our churches. My vision for the future includes Christians from Zambia and Zimbabwe, equipped with masters and doctoral degrees, teaching at Niagara Christian College and Messiah College. These teachers will also be preaching in our pulpits and conducting seminars on the topics of prayer, suffering, and evangelism.

The Brethren in Christ are obeying God like the church in Antioch. As a result we have become a more complete church. Overseas churches are requesting missionaries to equip and train church members and to make the church more complete. We can also benefit from their insights learned about dependence upon God in difficult circumstances, sacrifice, and prayer. Together, we are better able to minister to the needs of our world. ■

Copperbelt

Apartment complex
in the city of Ndola.

by Kathy Stuebing

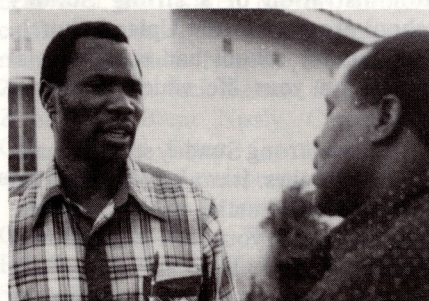
ince where Tonga is the predominant language, the Brethren in Christ people who have moved to the Copperbelt have Tonga as their mother tongue. But the predominant language of the Copperbelt is Bemba, and Bemba-speaking people find it hard to fit into the fellowships when Tonga is used for the hymns and other portions of the service. Community outreach will necessitate some accommodation with the Bemba nature of the community.

Several people have banded together with us to pray intensively for the Copperbelt work, and we've seen some exciting new growth in recent weeks. As a result of one woman's participation in my evening course at TCCA on the Christian home and family, I was invited to talk to the Ndola fellowship women's meeting on money management in the Christian home. We looked at many Scriptures related to money, including those on tithing and seeking God's kingdom first. There was good discussion, and the women thought it would be good to continue meetings on home and family concerns. We're currently working out a schedule for these. Please pray that the Lord will lead us all into his truth in ways especially helpful to those with problems.

Several weeks ago Rev. Hansumo gave a particularly clear and urgent call to repentance and deeper commitment,

and several members requested special prayer for this. Please pray that the Lord will continue to move among us, convicting, challenging, and building us up in him.

Rev. Hansumo alternates between Ndola and Kitwe on Sundays (they are about 40 miles apart), so the Ndola fellowship was looking for the best way to cover the Sundays when he is in Kitwe. They had been using a variety of speakers until Dennis Mweetwa, the Brethren in Christ student at TCCA, gave two particularly challenging sermons. The fellowship responded by asking Dennis to preach regularly when Rev. Hansumo is away, and he has agreed to do this. Please pray



Church planter George Hansumo (left) with Overseer Jonathan Mwaalu.



that the Lord will continue to strengthen and guide Dennis as he takes on this responsibility along with his studies.

Dennis is also fluent in the Bemba language, having lived in the Copperbelt for several years earlier. Please pray that the Lord will show us how to adapt as a fellowship to meet the needs of the community around us, and what part Dennis should play in this.

Rejoice with us in the timelessness of God's methods. You can be a vital part of our planting and watering team through faithful prayer for all of us and the work here. Then we can all rejoice together as God gives the growth. ■

Kathy and her husband Richard Stuebing are serving the Brethren in Christ of Zambia at the Theological College of Central Africa. Kathy teaches courses related to the Christian Family. Rich lectures mainly in New Testament Studies.

The importance of Sunday School

by Ruth Heise

Paul Schrock



Stan Long, West Coast manager of the Christian Light Bookstores, is actively involved in the ministry of the Upland (Calif.) Brethren in Christ Church. Currently he serves as Director of the Children's Division of the Sunday school. However, Stan's involvement in Christian education goes far beyond his activities at the Upland church. As a member of the Greater Los Angeles Sunday Schools Board (GLASS), Stan served as chairman of the 1983 GLASS Convention held in September in Long Beach. He also serves as the Board for BRASS (San Bernardino-Riverside Area Sunday Schools), an institute under GLASS.

Recently Stan was interviewed for the Christian education page by Ruth Heise, a member of the Upland congregation.

Stan, tell us a little about GLASS.

GLASS holds a convention every September for the Los Angeles area churches. It includes workshops for all areas of Christian education in the church. There are also many exhibitors who display materials and equipment to enhance teaching. Over 6,000 people from many different denominations, including our own, attended the sessions.

What is your personal involvement with GLASS?

As a member of the GLASS Board, I serve on a 44-member board representing 25 denominations involved in

GLASS. This year I served as chairman of the annual convention which is a great responsibility. We delegate to five committee chairmen in the areas of publicity, facilities, music, registration and hospitality. We also rely on a GLASS office staff to assist with the work load.

After working with training for Christian education through GLASS and serving as Director of the Children's Division at Upland, can you give us your definition of Christian education?

Christian education is a Bible-based, Christ-centered teaching and learning process. This learning process seeks to guide individuals at all levels of growth to know and experience God's purpose and plan, and to equip them for effective ministry. The overall emphasis is on Christ, the master example, and his command to make disciples.

For years you have given so much time and energy to the development and administration of a strong Sunday school program at the Upland church. Has Sunday school had some special impact on your life which motivates you?

I believe strong Sunday schools make strong churches. It can also be said that strong families make strong churches. Recently, at a tryout for a game show, I was asked where I met my wife. I told the interviewer that I met her in the kindergarten class of Sunday school. As a Christmas gift that year we each

received a relish dish with a Hershey candy bar in it. You guessed it! The candy bar is gone but we are sharing two relish dishes in our home.

Specifically what do you see as the function of the Sunday school?

The family is consistently viewed in the Old Testament as the primary focus for instruction. Each parent is called by God to impress God's words on "your children." The Sunday school is a "bridge" and an "arm" reaching out to assist the parents in scriptural teachings. Teaching is woven into the daily experience of adults and children.

Why does a man of your age want to be so involved with the small children of the church?

I love children! I have four children and four grandchildren at the present time. I see children as "possibilities!"

You have also spent time as the Adult Division Director of Sunday School in the recent past here at Upland. What is the importance of adult Sunday school and how do you think the church can make it effective?

The children's division needs a strong adult department. Twenty years ago Dean Dalton said that adults should be helped to feel comfortable. Classes should be structured according to age or marital status (e.g. young marrieds). Have a few electives based on interest and/or social issues. If room permits, classes need not be large in attendance;

also they can be short-term (for a month or six weeks). The adult department should appoint a council composed of members of each adult class with the adult director as chairman. Yes, someone has to be in control.

My favorite Bible passage relating to Christian education points out the relationship between adults and children learning the Bible. In Deuteronomy 6:5-7 we find: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."

With this Scripture in mind, what do you look for in selection of Sunday school teachers?

The personal spiritual life of the teacher is the first consideration. Instruction in God's Word calls for a teacher who is himself or herself personally responsive to God. Thus the one who communicates the Word must be one who lives it. Communication of a living faith calls for living faith in the instructor.

Share your plans for the Children's Division for the new school year.

First, we are grateful for a complete staff which began its duties on Promotion Sunday, September 4. Our theme for the year is "Ready-Set-GROW." Each department is gearing the promotion to its own age group. This is the "Year of the Bible," so we are encouraging growth through increased use of the Bible in class and at home. We want parents and children to read the Bible together and to memorize selected portions of Scripture.

We are also placing emphasis on Churchtime (also referred to as Children's Church), which we refer to as the second hour of Sunday school. In this second hour we can accomplish what we do not have time for in the regular Sunday school hour. Creativity is an important ingredient but there are also materials available that will give us consistent learning throughout the entire year.

This is a difficult area to staff for many churches. It takes a little more dedication and commitment. It means missing the good music and the sermon of the adult morning worship. We have appointed a Churchtime council to staff and give direction to the three departments of this program. Parents assist on

a scheduled basis in the toddler and kindergarten departments.

What can the church do to get the individuals committed to become involved in the Churchtime program and see it as an important ministry arm of the church?

Bulletin notes are important! When a congregation becomes informed, they become interested and involved. A recent insert in the church bulletin read, "Parents, do you know where your children are at 10:45 a.m. each Sunday?"

Stan, do you have anything to add regarding your plans for continuing to improve the Sunday school program at Upland?

Training is tremendously important. We are planning a six-week training session for prospective teachers. It will be

held after January 1 during the Sunday school hour.

I would also like to add that the crib nursery is continuing to grow. We are proposing that an additional room adjacent to the present facilities be used for children nine months through two years. By this age, a child certainly is ready for a setting which provides opportunity for more activity and specific training.

In closing, could you state what you feel is the goal of Sunday school?

A poster at the entrance to the Christian education building sums it up very well. It says, "Children are a welcome and important part of the Upland Brethren in Christ Church. They are taught with lots of love and concern." Through our example others see the love of God. This is what it's all about! ■

Messiah College News

Enrollment

The fall enrollment at Messiah College is 1,612 students, up 110 from last fall, and represents an increase of just over seven percent. A total of 464 first-time freshmen enrolled, a ten percent increase over last year.

In the above totals are 151 Brethren in Christ students, of which 36 are first-time freshmen as follows: William Baublitz, Spring Mills, PA; Jeffrey Bingham, Greencastle, PA; Brenda Brubaker, Refton, PA; *Mindy Brubaker, Mechanicsburg, PA; Daryl Bundy, Mill Hall, PA; Ronald Crawford, Chambersburg, PA; David Deyhle, Springfield, OH; Philip Engle, Grantham, PA; Travis Fraser, Mechanicsburg, PA; and Jeffrey Garis, Hatfield, PA.

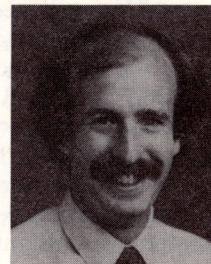
Also Betty Harter, Madisonburg, PA; Scott Hartman, Red Lion, PA; *Jeanne Hess (SAT score of 1300+), Lancaster, PA; Kyle Hostetler, Getzville, NY; *Carol Lilly, Nevada, MO; Mary Long, Walkersville, MD; Eric Mann, Elizabethtown, PA; Karen Meyers, Greencastle, PA; Annette Mullen, Duncannon, PA; Lande Ndebele, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe; Shylock Ndlouv, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe; Brent Nissly, Cincinnati, OH; *Naomi Paine, Grantham, PA; and Steve Patil, Lewisberry, PA.

Also Christine Peterson, Waukena, CA; Thomas Prior, Boiling Springs, PA; Barbara Sides, Elkhart, IN; *Dianne Spoonhour, Lewisberry, PA; *Georgia Steinbrecher, Greenville, OH; Larry Stoner, East Berlin, PA; *Marlene Strite

(valedictorian), Waynesboro, PA; Sheryl Thomas, Conestoga, PA; *Karen Ulery, Elizabethtown, PA; Sheryl Westcott, Landisville, PA; Sandra Winters, Lancaster, PA; and Brian Zook, Mechanicsburg, PA. (*In the top five percent of high school graduating class).

Brethren in Christ transfer students are: Leiauanna Allen, Roanoke, VA; Bruce Bundy, Mount Joy, PA; Martin Climenhage, Fort Erie, Ontario, Canada; Karl Hostetler, Upland, CA; William Shank, Waynesboro, PA; and Felix Wei-Lian Sung, Waynesboro, PA.

Professor participates in new program



Dr. Dean Curry, assistant professor of political science at Messiah, spent a seven-week sabbatical in a new program sponsored by the Christian College Coalition, an association to which Messiah and 70 other colleges and universities belong.

The focus of his time and research was the conference on "The Church and Peacemaking in the Nuclear Age," held last May in Pasadena, California. As the editor, Curry began research for one of two books which are scheduled for publication, the first one next spring. ■

Stewardship Sunday, November 13

The readers of the Evangelical Visitor are encouraged to take advantage of the information which will be available to you through your church bulletin, literature and the ministry of your pastor. Our *Manual of Doctrine and Government* reminds us that stewardship deals with more than money. It should affect all of our life. It is one way we as Christians can live out our non-conformity to the world and its pattern of life.

Current Tax Strategies for Christian Stewards

If you pay United States taxes and the calendar year is your tax year, then now is the time to make some important moves. Here are some suggestions.

1. Invest in an IRA. Each wage earner can use non-taxed funds to invest up to \$2,000 each year. If a spouse does not have earned income, then an additional \$250 can be invested. If you withdraw before age 59½, there are substantial penalties. Our own Jacob Engle Foundation, Inc. is authorized to serve you on this while at the same time they are investing in our church ministries. Contact the Upland or Grantham offices.
2. Since income tax rates are scheduled to go down next year, money contributed to church ministries will cost

you less if you give now. If you aren't sure where you want to give, you can get tax deduction by placing it in a Gift Deposit Account with the Jacob Engle Foundation, Inc. and decide later where to give it.

3. Defer taxable income until the tax rates are lower. This may be an option.

4. Give to church ministries now. As you see whether your giving has kept pace with your income, now is a good time to give to our ministries. In addition to cash, contributions of stock or other appreciated property can be given with considerable tax advantage. Your tax advisor or the Stewardship and Finance office is available to help you.

5. Some addresses you should have:

- a. Jacob Engle Foundation, Inc. (also Brotherhood Loan Fund)
P.O. Box 1136
Upland, CA 91786
Phone (714) 985-8200
- b. Stewardship and Finance Office (also JEF Eastern Office)
P.O. Box A
Grantham, PA 17027
Phone (717) 697-2634

Principles from Proverbs #3

"Honor the Lord with thy substance and with the first fruits of all thine increase" (Proverbs 3:9).

One of the most tangible ways to show that we accept God's ordained order (God being the owner and we being the stewards) is to follow these instructions. Some people do it by the regular presentation of the tithe to the work of the Lord as part of their Sunday morning worship experience. Others do it by the presentation of both tithes and offerings.

Any Hebrew who would bring the first fruits offering and present it as outlined by Moses went away with a new sense of appreciation for God's deliverance from Egypt and other associated blessings, as well as honoring the Lord in worship (Deuteronomy 26:1-10). One of the unusual things about good stewardship is its tendency to enrich life in all of its dimensions. This is especially true when one remembers God as Jehovah-jireh—the One who provides (Genesis 22:14).

Associated with this exhortation to honor the Lord is

a promise that has often been proven true, namely, "So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst forth with new wine" (Proverbs 3:10). Two underlying causes can account for this increase. First, deep appreciation for any object generally results in careful supervision and good cultivation. Secondly, God often expresses his approval by continued growth and prosperity. If this is not our experience, then there may be other negating factors, such as circumstances similar to that which affected Job, or failure because we are part of a wayward people or nation, or perhaps even personal pride such as expressed by Nebuchadnezzar in the Book of Daniel.

Nevertheless, being a good steward will bring a sense of personal satisfaction plus the approval of God. One can still experience joy in the Lord, even though our material prosperity may not be all that one envisions possible. *Henry Hostetter, field representative for the Commission on Stewardship and Finance.*

Biblical undergirdings for Cooperative Ministries and Mission

by Walter Winger

What an awesome title: "Biblical Undergirding For Cooperative Ministries and Mission!" One should be able, I suppose, to begin a message that carries such a title with an authoritative "Thus saith the Lord." It is tempting to approach this subject by way of a single text or a passage of Scripture from which one could produce an expository message speaking to the concepts raised by the title. But texts are not the whole witness of the Word—and time would not permit even a listing of the multitudes of Scriptures relating to financing the work of God's kingdom, let alone an exposition of them.

Then too, there have been many articles written, sermons preached, and statements made regarding stewardship in general and our denominational responsibilities in particular. Like the graduation speaker who said, "Since there is so much unused advice left over from previous years, I shall dispense with my speech," I am tempted to say, "Let's dust off the ideas that are already well known to each of us—and use them, rather than talk or debate about them!" That would, I suppose, be the easy way out of an assignment, but the easy way is not necessarily the best way.

At this point in our pilgrimage toward Cooperative Ministries and Mission, let us step back a bit and attempt to grasp the broader scope of scriptural intent with regard to financing God's kingdom, and thus take a look at Scripture (as well as ourselves as a denomination) through a wide-angle lens.

Toward a Biblical base

Historically, Brethren in Christ have prided themselves in being "People of the Book." Most Christians have a similar kind of pride. But as frequently happens when Christians resort to clichés

to express profound concepts, the same words are loaded with different meanings. For Brethren in Christ, being "People of the Book" means (it seems to me) that we are persons who base our beliefs and practices on the whole witness of the Word, on the Scriptures taken in their totality rather than on a particular theme, emphasis, or doctrine of the Bible. Further, we like to think that we tend toward an understanding of the spirit of the Law, rather than an emphasis on its letter. Such a view of the Bible has shielded us from excesses in the charismatic movement, for example, or from a dogmatic position with regard to prophecy.

**If we are a family. . .
then our hands
should be joined
together in all aspects
of our response to
God's commands. We
should respond as a
family together
cooperatively.**

If this accurately describes the Brethren in Christ attitude towards Scripture, then perhaps we should be looking for a wholistic theme from Scriptures to guide us as we move toward Cooperative Ministries and Mission. Perhaps we could find some guiding stars which will serve us well as we move toward a somewhat new emphasis in financing the Brethren in Christ corner of the vineyard of God. This article, then, may be interpreted as a call to some very basic considerations. It is an attempt to focus attention on some foundational truths which, when seen in the light of our present situation serve, as guideposts toward Cooperative Ministries and Mission.

Three of the bearing stars referred to above are as follows:

- (a) God is the owner of the earth with all of its fullness, and of the universe of which the earth is a part.¹
- (b) Mankind has been given the role of steward of the earth's resources and is therefore accountable to the owner.²
- (c) The relationship of one Christian to another is a familial relationship—we are brothers and sisters, because God is our Father.³

God's ownership

We sing about it, preach about it, pray about it, and in general agree about it: "This is (our) Father's world." Perhaps there is no scriptural truth to which there is more nearly universal Christian assent. One does not need to offer proof texts in support of this idea, it is foundational to the witness of the entire Bible. It is a star which all Christians recognize.

But to recognize a star and to then use that star as a basis for steering one's life are two different ideas. If Christians everywhere would seriously guide their lives by the concept of God's ownership of everything, what an antidote we would discover for the sins of materialism, greed, selfishness, and disinterest in the plight of those who are needy—whether spiritually or physically.⁴

The past few decades have not prepared us very well for the economic times in which we now find ourselves. As a more-or-less thrifty people, we suffer very little more than self-imposed pain in good economic times. But in these days, there are places where even the most thrifty are hurting. And for those who hurt in these difficult times, the Christian response is too often (it seems to me) a response of disinterest at best and disdain at the worst. To illustrate this point, let me tell you of two friends of mine who have suffered financial bankruptcy during the past number of months. For one there was a hesitancy to continue a relationship with the church. "They all believe that I have failed spiritually as well as financially, that God has somehow abandoned me. I can't face them again. They equate my financial success or failure with my relationship to God." For my second friend, the response to her economic collapse went something like this: "I am deeply grateful for my brothers and sisters in the church. Without their support at this time, I could never make it!"

Now, it is to my first friend's dilemma
next page, please

Walter Winger is secretary of the Commission on Stewardship and Finance. This material was first presented as an address at "Ministry '83" in July.

Biblical undergirdings for CM&M . . .

from page 23

that I refer. Is there indeed a tendency among many of us to see financial gain as somehow related primarily to our wisdom, our planning, our choice of the best growth stocks, or our expertise at accumulation? And isn't there something in that idea (if you grant it, of course) that runs directly counter to the scriptural concept of God's ownership of everything, to the idea that "The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away: may the name of the Lord be praised"?

Perhaps a good place for us to begin in preparing our people for an alternate method of financing God's work among us is to re-emphasize the basic fact that God is the owner of all of the earth's wealth.⁵ If we help our people to fix the sextant of their lives on this star, then perhaps they can steer toward a safe harbor. Indeed, any financial course on which a church or a person embarks that is not charted in reference to this particular star is an inadequate, inappropriate course.

We must come to a place of more than lip-service to the fact of God's ownership of all. Materialism is an insidious sin⁶, as well as an increasingly pervasive one. A sincere commitment to this fundamental concept is essential to

an understanding and acceptance of the truth to which this concept leads.

Man's stewardship

While it is true that the ideas of God's ownership and of man's stewardship are somewhat interlocking concepts, it is also true that each idea has its own distinctives. Perhaps these distinctives can be focused by the waggish statement that "God owns everything, but mankind is in charge of the delivery system!"

We get a feel for the idea of stewardship when we remember that God entrusts His wealth, His world, to us for similar reasons that we entrust "our" money to the stock market or to real estate investments. The purpose is to make a profit!⁷ In other words, stewards are to make a profit for the owner, not for themselves.

This idea is the logical and scriptural extension of the first idea in this article, God's overall ownership. Here again we have a concept which is basic to an understanding of our relationship with our heavenly Father. And, like the previously discussed idea, it is a concept which is revered more in the telling than in the doing.

The parable of the talents⁸ makes it clear that the Master is justified in expecting double on his investment. To have only his own returned is a punishable offence. As stewards, we are responsible for a 100 percent increase on the Master's investment.

Without laying a heavy load of guilt on people, perhaps we need to stress this truth a bit more. It is only as we recognize our responsibility as stewards to double the Master's investment in us that we begin to grasp something of the significance in the scriptural job description of "steward."

The Master's investment in us as his children embraces the trilogy often referred to by our brother Alvin Burkholder—time,⁹ treasure,¹⁰ and talent.¹¹ How, then, can we ever hope to return double on his investment of time? Of treasure? Of talents? It seems to me there are two answers to this question. First, most of us can give more to God in each of these categories than we presently give. Secondly, both by example¹² and by direct encouragement, we can lead others to a commitment to Christian stewardship, as seen in a return to the owner on His investment and a careful use of what is retained so that there will be additional dividend for the investor.

Brethren in Christ have hesitated to preach tithing in a legalistic, doctrinaire way. Rather, we have encouraged people to give "as the Lord prospers"¹³, and have seen tithing as advisory rather than imperative. Perhaps this is wise; we are, after all, blessed by grace rather than burdened by law. But we dare not lose sight of accountability in our enjoinders to giving. "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded"¹⁴ is a New Testament, grace-related principle. Not only must we teach financial accountability in terms of honesty and ethical business practices,¹⁵ we must also teach our people about their accountability to God for the resources with which he has entrusted them.¹⁶ It is not to induce a pseudo guilt that we stress this area of accountability. We must do so because it is a scriptural teaching; it is a clear corollary of the basic scriptural truths relating to God's ownership and man's stewardship.

In a sense, all of the above may be seen as "preaching to the converted." There is very little that is either new or startling in this article so far. Perhaps some truths have been focused in a slightly different light or seen from a different angle. But the third point of this article, the third star in our constellation as a focus for guidance, gets somewhat closer to the heart of our uniqueness as a denomination.

Our family relationship

For the Brethren in Christ, General Conference is seen as the gathering of

SCRIPTURES to live by '83

Sunday, Nov. 6 • Psalms 126-128

Monday, Nov. 7 • John 13-15

Tuesday, Nov. 8 • John 16-18

Wednesday, Nov. 9 • John 19-21

Thursday, Nov. 10 • Acts 1-4

Friday, Nov. 11 • Acts 5:1-8:3

Saturday, Nov. 12 • Acts 8:4-11:18

Sunday, Nov. 13 • Psalms 129-131

Monday, Nov. 14 • Acts 11:19-14:28

Tuesday, Nov. 15 • James

Wednesday, Nov. 16 • Galatians

Thursday, Nov. 17 • Acts 15-17:10

Friday, Nov. 18 • Philippians

Saturday, Nov. 19 • 1 Thessalonians

Sunday, Nov. 20 • Psalms 132-134

Monday, Nov. 21 • 2 Thessalonians;
Acts 17:11-18:11

Tuesday, Nov. 22 • 1 Corinthians 1-3

Wednesday, Nov. 23 • 1 Corinthians
4-7

Thursday, Nov. 24 • 1 Corinthians
8:1-11:1

Friday, Nov. 25 • 1 Corinthians
11:2-14:40

Saturday, Nov. 26 • 1 Corinthians
15, 16

Sunday, Nov. 27 • Psalms 135-137

Monday, Nov. 28 • 2 Corinthians 1-5

Tuesday, Nov. 29 • 2 Corinthians 6-9

Wednesday, Nov. 30 • 2 Corinthians
10-13

Thursday, Dec. 1 • Acts 18:12-19:41;
Ephesians 1, 2

Friday, Dec. 2 • Ephesians 3-6

Saturday, Dec. 3 • Romans 1-3

Sunday, Dec. 4 • Psalms 138-140

Monday, Dec. 5 • Romans 4-6

Tuesday, Dec. 6 • Romans 7-9

Wednesday, Dec. 7 • Romans 10-12

Thursday, Dec. 8 • Romans 13-16

Friday, Dec. 9 • Acts 20-22

Saturday, Dec. 10 • Acts 23-25

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The essence of the Brethren in Christ is that we see ourselves as family. The essence of CM&M is that we see that family working together in all areas where God leads.

the brothers and sisters, the family, from the four corners of the world. While we may not use the title "brother" or "sister" as much as we used to (now that we are less inhibited about calling people by their first names) the bond is still there. We sense that all members of the Brethren in Christ are part of the same family. This teaching is based on our understanding of God's word: by grace we are born into the family of God.¹⁷ God is our Father,¹⁸ and all of his children are brothers and sisters. The closer family, by virtue of our heritage, is the denomination, the Brethren in Christ.¹⁹

Some of our denominational leaders worry a bit over the fact that some Brethren in Christ congregations tend to see the family in terms of local identity, rather than in terms of denominational bonding. One could make an argument, I suppose, for the local church as the locus of family. Brethren in Christ, however, have consciously chosen the larger group as indicative of the family unit. We insist that what happens at Timber Bay, Saskatchewan, is important to the brothers and sisters in Pharr, Texas; that the worshippers at Redwood Community Church in Oregon should be concerned about those who worship in Roanoke, Virginia; that only geography separates Holden Park, Florida, from Hunlock Creek, Pennsylvania.

Further, we argue that family decisions can best be made when representatives of the family get together—and here we are at the very heart of Cooperative Ministries and Mission. If we are a family—if we are bound together by historical, theological and familial bonds—then our *hands* should be joined together in all aspects of our response to God's commands; we should respond as a family, together, cooperatively.

The essence of Cooperative Ministries and Mission is simply this: we place the results of our stewardship together and jointly decide how our contributed resources will be used in the Kingdom of God.²⁰ We will make these decisions prayerfully, with a prior commitment to the claims of God as we understand

them in his Word. And we will make these decisions with desire to minister effectively in our generation, cooperatively through the various agencies we will create, consistently through regular and predictable support from the far-flung family members. Simply put, Cooperative Ministries and Mission is the practical out-working of our theology of the church.

The first two points of this article relate to a general Christian understanding of God's ownership and mankind's stewardship. This third point seeks to emphasize our uniqueness as a brotherhood. Indeed, a measure of how clearly we grasp this point will be seen in our collective endorsement of Cooperative Ministries and Mission. Stated another way, a financial program like Cooperative Ministries and Mission is a predictable result for any denomination that takes seriously the focusing of its essential family nature in the denomination rather than in the congregation.

As in any family, all family members will not be 100 percent pleased with how the family fortunes are invested. (I remember marvelling at my dad saying that he had no money for me to spend at the Crystal Beach amusement park, when I knew he had several hundred dollars in his pocket. It was only as I matured a bit that I began to understand certain priorities in family financing.)

And as in any family, there will be those family members who will insist on their right to a certain amount of control of their spending or investing. Most families provide for that, as does Cooperative Ministries and Mission. We must communicate, however, that the family-type decision is closer to our understanding of the heart and will of God. There is, of course, room in the Brethren in Christ denomination for the singular prophetic voice, but even such a voice must pass the test of God's Word, and possible modification by his people assembled in General Conference. As a rule, Brethren in Christ are not content until they can say "It seems good to the Holy Spirit . . . and to us."²¹

The essence of the Brethren in Christ

denomination is that we see ourselves as brothers and sisters, as family. The essence of Cooperative Ministries and Mission is that we see that family working together in all areas of endeavor where God leads.

Conclusion

There are some scriptural truths which may be seen as givens when Christians seek direction from God's Word. Just as it is not required that we re-invent the wheel in order to make a new machine, so certain ideas from Scripture are seen as foundational to an understanding of God, his creation and his creatures. These truths—among which are God's ownership and mankind's stewardship can be seen as stars by which a person, or a denomination, may steer a course.

As the Brethren in Christ move toward Cooperative Ministries and Mission, we have another star which guides us: our understanding of brotherhood, of God's family, of denominational cooperation. When these stellar reference points are examined in sequence, they lead directly to cooperation in ministries and in mission—to Cooperative Ministries and Mission.

If Cooperative Ministries and Mission is to be the vehicle through which Brethren in Christ are to express their understanding of God's ownership, man's stewardship, and something of their theology of the church, all that remains is for us to discover the mechanics by which the vehicle runs, and how to get the family to provide the fuel. ■

References

- ¹Psalm 24:1; 8:3
- ²Psalm 8:6, 7; Genesis 1:28; Luke 12:42ff; I Peter 4:10
- ³Luke 11:2; Romans 8:15-17; Matthew 12:50
- ⁴I John 3:17; James 2:15
- ⁵Matthew 25:14ff
- ⁶Matthew 6:19-21; Matthew 13:22; Mark 10:23, 24; Luke 8:14; I Timothy 6:17
- ⁷Matthew 25:14-28
- ⁸*Ibid.*
- ⁹Luke 14:20; Exodus 20:8
- ¹⁰Malachi 3:10; Matthew 2:11; I Corinthians 16:1, 2
- ¹¹I Corinthians 12:1ff; I Chronicles 28:20, 21
- ¹²Hebrews 10:24
- ¹³I Corinthians 16:2
- ¹⁴Luke 12:48
- ¹⁵Romans 12:17
- ¹⁶Revelations 20:11ff
- ¹⁷I John 3:1, 2; Hebrews 12:7, 8
- ¹⁸Luke 11:2
- ¹⁹This concept is the basis of *The Pilgrimage of the Brethren in Christ*, the 200th anniversary book published by the denomination in 1978.
- ²⁰Acts 6:2, 3
- ²¹Acts 15:28

church news

Allegheny Conference

The **Allegheny Conference** held two mini-Christian Education seminars this fall. They were hosted by the **Martinsburg, Pa.**, congregation on Saturday, Sept. 17, and the **Green Spring** congregation, Newville, Pa., on Saturday, Oct. 22. The theme for the conference was "Education Unlimited—More for More." The sessions covered the Sunday school, retreats, and camping.

A dedication service was held by the **Colyer** congregation, Centre Hall, Pa., on Sunday afternoon, Sept. 11, for their new parsonage. • Lynda Wilson was installed Sunday morning, Sept. 11, as the Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries at the **Carlisle, Pa.**, congregation. • The **Cedar Grove** congregation, Mifflintown, Pa., informs us that one of their youth, Tammy Oberlin, recently began a one-year assignment with the San Francisco Mission.

In a special ceremony, Rev. Curtis E. Bryant, pastor of the **Clear Creek** congregation, Everett, Pa., presented Elsie Hann and Nellie Clark with Bibles, in honor of their teaching Sunday school for nearly 60 years together. A plaque was hung in the Sunday school with names of many of the 185 children they had taught. • A new roof and spire were recently put on the **Messiah Village Chapel**, Mechanicsburg, Pa. Recent guest speakers for the congregation were the Dave Carlson family and Miss Dorothy Martin.

The **Montgomery** congregation, Mercersburg, Pa., held a barn harvest meeting. Members of the congregation brought gifts of food which were given to several needy families of the community and the remainder going to the Hagerstown Rescue Mission. An offering was taken for the Paxton Street Home in Harrisburg. • A van has been rented by the **Mt. Rock** congregation to provide regular transportation for students of Shippensburg University to attend Sunday school and morning worship services at Mt. Rock.

The **Shermans Valley** congregation, Hopewell, Pa., reports holding a baptismal service on Sunday, Sept. 11, when six persons received baptism. • The worship service of the **Springhope Chapel**, Fishertown, Pa., was conducted by two students from Hobe Sound Bible College on Sunday, July 17. Four persons were baptized in an August afternoon service.

Atlantic Conference

On Sunday evening, Sept. 11, Rev. Joy Hyatt was installed as associate pastor of the **Elizabethtown, Pa.**, congregation. He will serve as Minister of Youth and Christian Ed. A Lay Witness Mission was held by the congregation on the weekend of Sept. 23-25. • The Children's Sunday School Department of the **Holden Park** congregation, Orlando, Fl., held a spaghetti dinner in August. The funds will be used to purchase a film projector. The church reports good attendance for the dinner.

The **Skyline View** congregation, Harrisburg, Pa., observed their 20th anniversary in September by having four members share some of the church's history. Those sharing were: Mel Shank who was the first teacher, Deanne Kauffman, Marj Bowers and John Eisenhour.

A money tree was presented to missionaries Ray and Darlyss Kipe by the **Speedwell Heights** congregation, Lititz, Pa. The Kipes shared in the Aug. 28 morning worship service which was followed by a fellowship meal.

Canadian Conference

A recent guest speaker for the **Bridlewood** congregation, Agincourt, Ont., was Rev. Ronald Faw. Rev. Faw, a paraplegic, shared about his missionary experiences in Brazil. • Recent guest of the **Cheapside** congregation, Nanticoke, Ont., at their monthly hymn sings were "The Nations" from London, Ont., and "Homeward Bound" from Houghton, Ont.

Rev. and Mrs. Paul Storms began their pastoral ministry at the **Cross Roads Memorial Church**, Guelph, Ont., on August 1. An induction service was held on Sunday, Aug. 14 by Rev. Wayne Schiedel. • The **Westheights** congregation, Kitchener, Ont., reports that Rev. John Zuck from the **Rosebank** congregation, Petersburg, Ont., shared the morning message with them on Sunday, Aug. 14. A sacred music concert was hosted on Sunday evening, Sept. 25. Special music was provided by the **Cross Roads, Rosebank, and Westheights** congregations.



Reverend Earl and Elsie Sider celebrated their sixtieth wedding anniversary with an open house at the Wainfleet Brethren in Christ Church on August 18, 1983. Their five children with spouses, Rhoda and Austin Heise, Morris and Leone, Harvey and Erma, Robert and Lura Mae, and Anna Ruth and Harley Osborne, with a number of the grandchildren, were part of the large group of relatives and friends who helped to make this a memorable occasion. As founding pastor, Earl served the Cheapside congregation, until his retirement in 1957. For a number of years, in addition to his bi-vocational ministry, he conducted a Sunday afternoon radio broadcast, as well as initiating services in the county jail. Upon retirement, the Siders gave leadership to the development of the Wilson MacDonald Museum, serving as curators for nearly two decades.

Central Conference

Installation of Rev. and Mrs. Dale W. Engle as pastoral family was held by the **Ashland, Oh.**, congregation was Sunday, Aug. 21. The sermon was delivered by Bishop David Climenhaga. Bruce Khumalo from Zambia will be a part of the congregation while attending Ashland Theological Seminary. • A yard sale was held by the **Beulah**

Chapel congregation, Springfield, Oh., on Saturday, Sept. 17, for raising funds to repair the church van. The goal was \$1,000.00.

An ordination service was held on Sunday morning, Sept. 11 for Rev. Henry Chafin in the **Dayton, Oh.**, Church. Bishop David Climenhaga presided at the service which was followed by a church picnic at the Memorial Holiness Campgrounds. • The film series, "His Stubborn Love" by Joyce Landorf was begun by the **Mooretown** congregation, Sandusky, Mi., on Sunday evening, Sept. 25. They are showing the films jointly with the Faith Free Methodist Church.

The **Morrison, Il.**, congregation reports a weekend retreat on Sept. 10 and 11. Speaker for the adults was Dr. Andrew Stoner, speaking on marriage relationships. Rev. Rick and Bonnie Mailoux, pastoral couple at **Christian Union Church**, were speakers for the youth. • "Up with Sunday School" was the theme for five Sundays, beginning with Sept. 18, for the **Nappanee, In.**, congregation. Rev. Bob Verno, pastor of the **Lakeview Community Church**, was the speaker for the first service. Skits, testimonials, and other special features were given on the other Sundays.

Midwest Conference

On Wednesday, Aug. 17, the **Dallas Center, Ia.**, congregation held a one-day retreat for their Sunday school children with guest speaker Rev. Leslie Black, from Boone, Ia. A carry-in dinner climaxed the day. On Aug. 28, the church held a farewell service for Dan Rosenberger, who has begun a VS assignment in San Francisco. Also, on Sept. 11, the congregation cooperated in the second annual community worship service held in connection with the town's Fall Festival.

Jan Engle shared with the **Mountain View** congregation, Colorado Springs, Co., on Sunday evening, Aug. 21. She showed slides and told of her work with the Zambian Nurses Christian Fellowship. • Warren Hoffman, pastor of the **Oklahoma City, Ok.**, congregation reports continued interest and growth in this newer congregation. They recently commissioned their first lay evangelist. To date, ten persons are praying regularly, fifteen minutes a day for this fellowship.

The **Red Star**, Leedey, Ok., congregation installed Rev. Stan and Beth Norman as their pastoral couple on Sunday, Sept. 25. • A Lay Witness Mission was held by the **Rosebank** congregation, Hope, Ks., Sept. 9-11. A prayer vigil was held for the program.

The Sunday School Commission of the **Zion** congregation, Abilene, Ks., sponsored an appreciation breakfast for all Sunday school workers and their families on Sunday, Sept. 4.

Pacific Conference

Rev. Bruce Finrock has accepted the position of Associate Pastor of the **Upland, Ca.**, congregation. He will be assuming responsibilities in Christian Ed and Youth Ministries.

The **Labish** congregation, Salem, Or., held an outdoor concert on Sunday evening, Sept. 11. The Sheet family provided the special music.

For The Record. . .

Births

Bachman: Brian Jason, July 24; Bob and Carla (Dahlstrom) Bachman, Zion congregation, KS.

Barnes: Timothy Michael, June 4; Michael and Anita (Lofthouse) Barnes, Dunville, Ont.

Benedict: Alex Jeffrey, Aug. 6; Marlin and Nancy Benedict, Manor congregation, PA.

Cole: Erica Rae, May 20; Steve and Martha Cole, Lancaster congregation, PA.

Dick: Crystal Ann, Aug. 10; Bill and Valorie Dick, Waynesboro congregation, PA.

Feaster: Amanda Lee, Aug. 8; Mark and Jenny Feaster, Clear Creek congregation, PA.

Gardner: Zachary Scott, Sept. 3; Jeff and Eileen (Simmons) Gardner, Mechanicsburg congregation, PA.

Huntoon: Amy Jean, Aug. 20; Dave and Carol Huntoon, Air Hill congregation, PA.

Kerkdyk: Heather Marie, July 29; Hank and Edith Kerkdyk, Wainfleet congregation, Ont.

Kipp: Justin Wayne, June 20; Bernie and Penny Kipp, Clear Creek congregation, PA.

Martin: Matthew Gaetan, July 31; Gates and Cathy Martin, Port Colborne, Ont.

Mast: Travis Gordon, Aug. 31; Ronald and Waneta Mast, Cedar Grove congregation, PA.

Musser: Michelle Yvonne, Aug. 25; Carl and Fran Musser, Upland congregation, CA.

Rineer: Shaun Michael, Aug. 24; Randy and Elaine Rineer, Manor congregation, PA.

Sherk: Brian Douglas, Aug. 2; Douglas and Faith (Matthews) Sherk, Cheapside congregation, Ont.

Snyder: Anthony Lynn, Aug. 11; Stephen and Connie Snyder, Cedar Grove congregation, PA.

Stotler: LisaBeth Joy, chosen Sept. 6; by Dave and Rachel Stotler, Elizabethtown congregation, PA.

Weddings

Brady-Perry: Mary Perry and Dave Brady, Aug. 6 in the Dayton Brethren in Christ Church.

Foresman-Murtland: Ruth Ann, daughter of Sam and Jenny Murtland, and Dana Foresman, June 11 in the Cheapside Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Steven Martin officiating.

Gillespie-Greening: Angel Sylvia, daughter of Audre Greening, and Steven Robert, son of Mrs. Dorene May, both of Scarborough, Ont., Aug. 27, in the Bridlewood Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Leonard Chester officiating.

Maslen-McVicar: Sharon Louise, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James McVicar, Scarborough, Ont., and Roger Bannister, son of Mr. Kenneth Maslen, North York, Ont., Aug. 12 in the Bridlewood Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Leonard J. Chester officiating.

Miller-Richards: Cynthia Lee, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Asher R. Richards, Reading, Pa., and James Owen, son of Mrs. Beulah Miller, Lancaster, Pa., and the late Kenneth C. Miller, Aug. 27 in

the Manor Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Henry Hostetter officiating.

Misner-Wingert: Denise, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Leroy Wingert, Greencastle, Pa., and David, son of Mr. and Mrs. Russel Misner, Mount Alto, Pa., Aug. 20 in the Antrim Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. David Cluck and Rev. Wilbur Benner officiating.

Patterson-Fazekas: Daryl, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Fazekas, Piscataway, NJ, and Robert, son of Mr. and Mrs. Gary Patterson, Hollidaysburg, Pa., July 11 in the Community Baptist Church, Somerset, NJ, with Rev. David Olsen and Rev. Mark Slagenweit officiating.

Shank-Brechbill: Tina, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Brechbill, St. Thomas, Pa., and Roy, son of Mr. and Mrs. Marlin Shank, Marion, Pa., Aug. 6, in the Antrim Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Wilbur Benner and Bishop Merle Cordell officiating.

VanBortel-Ditmer: Deanne, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Ditmer, and Richard, son of Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth VanBortel, Aug. 6 in the Cedar Grove Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Kenneth Hepner officiating.

Our apologies! The correct wedding date of Kenneth and Sharon Winger (Oct. *Visitor*) was June 18.

Obituaries

Bartlett: Ruby Stengel Bartlett died Aug. 8, 1983 at the age of 86. She was married to Lloyd Bartlett who preceded her in death. She is survived by nine children; 42 grandchildren; 23 great-grandchildren; a sister; and three brothers. Rev. Carl Croker and Rev. Charles Byer conducted the funeral service in the Hyde and Mott Funeral Home, Hagersville, Ont. Interment was in the United Church Cemetery, Cheapside.

Dicken: Mrs. Dorothy J. Dicken, Clearville, Pa., born Oct. 17, 1940, died May 21, 1983. She was the daughter of James P. Steele and the late Mary (Pressel) Steele. In addition to her father she is survived by her husband, William E. Dicken; three children: Barbara Beegle, Robert E., and Timothy Lee; two brothers: Melvin G. and Glenn E. Steele; a sister, Ruth Myers; and a grandson, Andrew. Rev. Curtis E. Bryant conducted the funeral service. Interment was in Rock Hill Cemetery.

DuVall: Herbert Benjamin DuVall, born Oct. 27, 1905, died Sept. 2, 1983. He is survived by a son, Joseph; a daughter, Joanna Barkman; and four grandchildren. The funeral service was conducted by Rev. Earl Lehman and Rev. Darleigh Replege.

Foor: Phillip Foor, born Feb. 1, 1911, died Sept. 6, 1983. Rev. Walter Blackstone and Rev. Earl Lehman conducted the funeral service. Interment was in the Pleasant Union Cemetery, Clearville, Pa.

Haas: Marvin L. Haas, born Nov. 29, 1911, died Aug. 31, 1983 in the Upland, Ca., Convalescent Hospital. He was married to Ruth Hoover who survives. Also surviving are a son, Duane; a daughter, Corrine Sharp; and two grandchildren. He was a member of the Upland Brethren in Christ Church. Rev. Robert Hempy and Rev. Alvin C. Burkholder conducted the funeral service. Entombment was in the Bellevue Mausoleum.

Hafer: Franklin D. Hafer Sr., born Jan. 1, 1933, died Aug. 13, 1983. He is survived by his wife, Carol; eight children: Terence, Jeffery, Franklin Jr., Thomas, Ronald, Deborah, Jonny, and David; four brothers: Neil, Norman, Daniel and Sheldon; and a half sister, Annie Miller. A brother and sister preceded him in death. The funeral service was conducted in the Clear Creek Brethren in Christ Church by Rev. Curtis Bryant. Interment was in the Union Cemetery.

Mast: Iva Belle Valletine Mast, born Aug. 16, 1898 in Vassar, Mi., died Aug. 25, 1983. On Nov. 23, 1918 she was married to Noah Mast who preceded her in death on July 4, 1972. She is survived by a son, Gerald; eleven daughters: Lottie Youngdahl, Iva Ross, Ruth Pagliasotti, Margaret Kauffman, Pat Wilson, Grace, Beatrice Kindy, Virginia Altman, Leatha Curtis, Carol Trader, and Gladys Ranger; 48 grandchildren; 71 great-grandchildren; and 17 great-great-grandchildren. Two sons preceded her in death. Rev. Bedsaul Agee and Rev. Virgil Hershberger conducted the funeral service. Interment was in the Fairview Cemetery.

Miller: David L. Miller, born June 3, 1933, died July 18, 1983. Rev. Earl Lehman and Rev. Robert Timmons conducted the funeral service. Interment was in the Fairview Cemetery, Mercersburg, Pa.

Morse: Mrs. Hazel A. Morse, Everett, Pa., born Feb. 28, 1908, died June 25, 1983. She was married to Edgar F. Morse who preceded her in death Jan. 31, 1970. She is survived by two sons: Joseph and Lorrain; seven grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. A brother, a daughter, and an infant son preceded her in death. Rev. Curtis E. Bryant conducted the funeral service. Interment was in Union Memorial Cemetery.

Scheel: Wilfred F. Scheel, Scarborough, Ont., born June 21, 1919, died July 31, 1983. He is survived by his wife, Doreen; a son, David; and a daughter, Diane. He was a member of the Bridlewood Brethren in Christ Church. The funeral service was conducted by Rev. Leonard Chester.

Smith: Ray W. Smith, born May 13, 1941, died July 19, 1983. Rev. Earl Lehman conducted the funeral service. Interment was in the Evans Cemetery, Six Mile Run, Pa.

Whiteside: Mrs. Marjorie Whiteside, Wainfleet, Ont., born Feb. 22, 1921, died Aug. 27, 1983. She was the daughter of Jesse and Lydia Moore. She was married to Thomas Whiteside who survives. Also surviving are five children: Ruth Rogers, Richard, Wayne, Kenneth and Edith Kerkdyk; 12 grandchildren; and a great-granddaughter. An infant daughter preceded her in death. Rev. W. Edward Rickman conducted the funeral service in the Wainfleet Brethren in Christ Church. Interment was in the Maple Lawn Cemetery.

Wrightstone: Pearl C. Wrightstone, born July 16, 1888, died July 9, 1983. She is survived by several nieces and nephews. Rev. Charles R. Burgard conducted the funeral service.

Putman: David J. Putman, Wainfleet, Ont., born April 3, 1910, died June 13, 1983. He was married to Mary Bretzler Putman who survives. Also surviving are a son, Arthur; two daughters: Jane Boyington and Mary Burnett; 14 grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his first wife, Audrey Horton. The funeral service was conducted in the Wainfleet Brethren in Christ Church by Rev. Roy V. Sider. Interment was in the Maple Lawn Cemetery.

Every good gift and every perfect gift
is from above. James 1:17



Good gifts

In the coming holiday season we remember the gifts God has given us—food, health and the gift of His Son.

In response to that love we encourage families, Sunday schools and churches to choose one of the following projects for holiday giving. Be sure to specify clearly for which project your gift is designated.

MCCers train Haitian *health agents* to treat common illnesses in villages far from clinics. \$2 buys a health manual or a thermometer. \$73 buys the materials needed by one agent.

At Christmas MCC provides food for poor families in the U.S. \$15 sends a bag of groceries.

Women of the Mennonite Church of Zaire hold *women's seminars* that include Bible study, nutrition and sewing. Participants then lead seminars in surrounding villages. \$15 trains one leader. \$175 buys materials for one seminar.

Covered *cisterns* in West Bank hold water from the brief rainy season for irrigation in dry months. \$235 builds one cistern.

In Prince Albert, Sask., VSers offer a *program for youth* prone to delinquency. \$50 pays for group activities for a month. \$15 sponsors a youth camper.

There are few *school supplies* in rural Bolivian classrooms. \$15 buys maps, a blackboard or textbooks. \$100 equips one classroom.

MCC is sending *canned beef* to drought victims in Zambia. 44¢ ships one pound. \$18 sends a 42-pound carton.

MDS is *repairing 20-30 flooded homes* for low-income families in Louisiana. Materials to repair one home cost \$3,000. Donations of any amount will help a family return home.

In Bangladesh women piece *blankets* for hospitals and orphanages. \$5 provides materials for one blanket. This year's goal is 6,000 blankets.

Mennonite Central Committee, 21 South 12th Street, Akron, PA 17501
MCC Canada, 201-1483 Pembina Hwy., Winnipeg, MB R3T 2C8
MCC Central States, 106 West 24th Street, N. Newton, KS 67117
MCC East Coast, 21 South 12th Street, Akron, PA 17501
MCC Great Lakes, Box 822, Goshen, IN 46526
West Coast MCC, 1108 G Street, Reedley, CA 93654
MCC (Alberta), 76 Skyline Crescent N.E., Calgary, AB T2K 5X7
MCC (British Columbia), Box 2038, Clearbrook, BC V2T 3T8
MCC (Manitoba), 101-1483 Pembina Hwy., Winnipeg, MB R3T 2C7
MCC (Ontario), 50 Kent Avenue, Kitchener, ON N2G 3R1
MCC (Saskatchewan), 2206 Speers Avenue, Saskatoon, SK S7L 5X7



Evangelical Visitor

Canadian Conference group studying abortion resolution

The Canadian Conference Peace and Social Concerns committee has adopted a "Resolution on Abortion," which was then presented to Canadian Conference for consideration earlier this year.

The resolution was taken in large part from "Affirming the Sanctity of Life in Relation to Abortion," adopted by the Peace Section of the Mennonite Central Committee Canada and U.S., and from "Abortion Statement of Canadian Mennonite Brethren."

The text of the resolution follows:

Resolution on Abortion:

Abortion has become a public issue with lines of debate often sharply drawn. Much debate stems from different perceptions of when individuated life begins. Many differences reflect varied convictions about primary values: for some the priority consideration is preservation of human life; for others it is quality of life.

The Mennonites and Brethren in Christ churches have long affirmed that God wills abundant life for all people, and have been concerned with both the preservation and the quality of life. These concerns have been expressed in opposition to war, capital punishment and other negations of human life. They have also been expressed in positive efforts to enhance the dignity and sanctity of human life.

With increasing public attention to abortion, the Mennonite Central Committee and some constituent conferences have addressed this issue. In harmony with these statements, we affirm the following principles:

- 1. We accept the Bible as the written form of God's revelation to us and the ultimate guide for faith and practice.*
- 2. We understand the Bible to teach that people are created in the image of God and that all human life is sacred.*
- 3. We believe that abortion, that is,*

the deliberate termination of a pregnancy except where the mother's life is seriously threatened, violates the sanctity of human life.

4. That we encourage biblical studies and teaching in our congregational life and ministry toward

(a) the strengthening of the home and family, and

(b) an understanding of biblical principles and their application relating to the abortion issue.

5. That we recognize our responsibility for the social, moral, and spiritual conditions in our communities, and the shaping of attitudes, and that we seek to fulfill such responsibility by:

(a) Lending support to whatever preventive measures we can conscientiously support.

(b) Seeking to develop attitudes of social acceptance of the single parent without endorsing their action leading to the pregnancy.

(c) Helping to provide caring facilities for those who choose to let their pregnancy go full-term rather than choosing abortion, by offering alternatives such as counseling resources, adoption, and economic assistance.

6. While affirming the sanctity of human life, we recognize that there may be some pregnancies where the right application of this biblical principle is not clear. In such cases, the affected individuals have both the privilege and responsibility to counsel with fellow believers in discerning the appropriate course of action.

7. That we as individuals and as church(es) share the above concerns with the elected representatives of our governments, influencing the formulation of the laws of our land with respect to abortion, and the provision of necessary social services.

8. We appeal for prayerful support of those who are confronted with hard decisions and a spirit of sensitivity and Christian love toward those who view this issue from a different perspective.

After discussion on conference floor, the resolution was referred to the Peace and Social Concerns committee for further study.

The committee is inviting responses from congregations and individuals from across the denomination on the resolution. Comments should be submitted (before January 15, 1984) to: Daryl Sider, 55-379A Niagara Street, St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada L2M 7S1. ■

dialogue

continued from page 30

anti-Sandinista actions of the Reagan administration are driving the fledgling Sandinista government into the embrace of the communist nations, and thus are almost certain to produce the outcome which they are intended to prevent.

I believe that this is a time when we evangelical Christians must respectfully but clearly disagree with our government. Communist influence in Nicaragua will not be thwarted by pro-Somoza counter-revolutionary activities supported by the United States. Communist domination of Nicaragua is being enhanced because of present United States

policies. Our government leaders should be made aware of the insights of Nicaraguan people such as Gustavo Parajon. They should demonstrate an openness to truth. We should be urging them to discontinue the flow of American arms into the region. We should urge them to turn aside from pursuing North American political and economic interests, and allow the people of Central America to follow their own pursuit of a society more in harmony with biblical principles of social justice.

Samuel M. Brubaker
Arcanum, Ohio

dialogue

In the August 1983 issues, Pastor Jerel Book writes a letter raising some questions regarding the problems of Central America and the U.S. Government's present policies in that region.

We in this country have been fortunate over the generations to have had many leaders who were at least sympathetic to, if not in agreement with, Christian principles, and did their best to apply them to government policies. However, there have been times when national policy has been conducted on the basis of certain biases and misinformation, with resultant unfortunate effects. Because of the generally favorable history, we evangelicals find it very difficult to even question our government's policies, much less to disagree openly with them. Pastor Book's letter seems to reflect that hesitancy, and also I believe reflects a desire to follow the biblical instruction that we honor and respect our national leaders.

Nevertheless, we must recognize that

at times the policies of our government are based on selfish economic interest, on the idolatry of national egocentrism, on falsehood, on misinterpretation of truth, or any combination of such factors. The whole Vietnam experience is an example. Yet how often during the Vietnam war years did we hear lofty endorsements of the righteousness and rightness of our policy, even from the evangelical religious establishment. It is my recollection that very few evangelicals raised questions about our involvement in Vietnam. Those persons who did, who challenged the policies of those years, were branded as liberals and defectors from the faith.

It most certainly is difficult to ascertain the facts regarding the present dilemmas in Nicaragua. However, we Brethren in Christ have brothers and sisters in that country. A few of them have visited us. Some of our people have served there as missionaries. Some of our church administrators have visited

there. We are not without access to some information.

In March of 1983 I had the opportunity, along with Ron Sider, Donald Zook, and a number of evangelical friends, to fellowship with a Nicaraguan brother, Dr. Gustavo Parajon. Dr. Parajon is a native Nicaraguan, a medical doctor, and an active evangelical. The evangelical nature of his religious outlook was unmistakable. I discovered when I spoke the names of Enrique Palacios, Bert Sider, Chuck Musser, and Marshall and Eleanor Poe, that he knew them all.

Dr. Parajon told us that the Nicaraguan people consider themselves to be in better circumstances under the present Sandinista government than they were under the former regime. He stated that Nicaraguan evangelical Christians cannot understand why America's evangelicals tend to support the present anti-Sandinista policies and activities of the U.S. Government. He indicated that the

continued on page 29

Onesimus

Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you . . . will tell you everything that is happening here.

Colossians 4:9

Dear Paul:

When I hear a new sound I make an instant reaction—I like that, or, I don't like it. Is God like that too—"That's a good sound," or "that's a bad sound"? Or, does he have other ways of judging the music of today?

Actually, David inspires and stimulates me about music-making even more than you. He seems so open to experimentation, suggesting that we could even praise the Lord with sticks and stones.

I wonder how you would react to the music we sing here. Ours is a very open and expressive society; it seems that almost any combination of sound and word passes for music. In your letters you referred to "spiritual songs." Just what is a spiritual song? I'm sure David would smile if he knew that the dance music of one time and place sometimes becomes the musical foundation for the

"spiritual songs" of another time and place.

How is our music made? Creative experts in sound select from nightingales, song sparrows, grackles and other musical instruments to achieve the blend of sounds they want. Then they enfold chosen words with these sounds and we judge the results. Many new songs don't last long, but some prove to be of enduring quality and survive for future generations. Bothersome to many is the new power to amplify the sound dramatically, invading and overpowering the victims with sensitive ears.

The church here is not immune to the present revolution in music. The same instruments and skills used to excite people in the world are used by believers to create music for Christian praise and worship. Careful efforts are made to select new music that combines scriptural truth with pleasing sound. Periodi-

cally, we publish new books with new as well as the well-loved old songs so that we can respond to David's call for freshness in our praises. Fortunately, no one must give up good music to accept something new. Music, like Scripture, can be hid in our hearts where it does its restoring work.

Too much music today is performed by artists for passive listeners and some believers are in danger of losing the ability to employ this gift of praise. We need a new stirring, to make our hymn books the companion to our Bibles in our homes. Then we can make more music there and not just listen to it from other lips and instruments.

Thanksgiving receives seasonal emphasis in our nation this month. But for us pilgrims, "giving thanks always" calls for more singing in our gatherings and better melody-making in our hearts to the Lord year-round.

—Onesimus

Evangelical Visitor

"Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish' " (Luke 14:28-30).

Starting something you can't finish . . . over-extending your financial capabilities—some of the things you must guard against as you plan to build a tower. But maybe a tower isn't really what you want to build. Maybe you feel that a grape arbor is more your style, and easier to finance. A grape arbor—shade to protect you from the heat of the sun, delicate fruit to delight the palate, a place of rest and relaxation.

On the other hand, perhaps a tower is precisely what is needed. A fire tower on some peak in northern timberlands . . . a beacon tower near treacherous shoals . . . an antenna tower for broadcasting—sometimes a tower is the only logical structure to build. So you carefully tend your financial resources, practicing economy and wise investment, so that the crucial tower may be completed on schedule, and not suffer the fate of being half-built, then abandoned for lack of funds.

Starting something we can't finish . . . over-extending our financial capabilities—some of the things our congregation, our denomination must guard against as we plan a program of outreach and ministry in our world. But maybe a tower—a program of outreach—isn't really what our church wants to build. Perhaps some feel that a grape arbor is more our style, and easier to finance. A grape arbor—a little shade for the local saints, a little fruit to delight our surfeited souls, a place of quiet repose away from the nagging needs of our neighbors.

*On the other hand, perhaps a vigorous program of ministry and outreach—a tower—is precisely what is needed. Sensitive Christians sharing their lives and testimony out in the masses of humanity . . . obedient to the still-valid Great Commission of "Go ye" . . . being God's people living in the middle of scattered communities across the globe—sometimes a tower is the only logical structure to build. So the church carefully tends its resources, practicing economy and wise stewardship, so that the work of the kingdom of God may be done on earth, and not suffer the fate of being half-started, then abandoned for lack of funds.**

"Counting the cost." There is something quite appealing about that phrase, which gets right down to everyday realities of life. Those words of Jesus and an old article I had written about stewardship planning came to mind as our local Christian education committee prepared our 1984 budget requests.

We wanted to affirm a vision for church growth which has been building in our local congregation recently. As that

Of Towers and Grape Arbors

church growth occurs, our Christian education expenses will increase—more Sunday school materials, new beds for the crib room, youth group expenses, etc. Conclusion: we must project a budget increase next year.

However, congregational income is seriously lagging behind expenses right now. While the current budget reflects a hefty increase over previous years, our giving is not keeping pace. Quite properly, the church board is emphasizing the Christian grace of giving, while at the same time trying to trim costs wherever possible. Conclusion: we need to cut our budget next year in order to live within our means.

Dilemma: Increase the budget in faith, so that we plan to grow in size? Or cut the budget, attempting to "live responsibly" within present and foreseen congregational giving? How do we keep our vision for witness and ministry linked securely and effectively to our stewardship? What does it mean in this local situation to "count the cost"?

In other settings as well, we are faced with similar questions. For example, congregations now are determining the amounts they plan to share next year with those vital ministries we operate together as a brotherhood. (Walter Winger addresses this issue on pages 23-25). And the article on page two allows us to check our personal attitudes toward stewardship.

For me, "counting the cost" does not mean simply adding up the funds on hand (which never seem to be quite enough), and thereby conclude that "it can't be done." That falls short of a Christian response of faith.

Instead, "counting the cost" speaks to me of evaluating what resources (people, time, and money) will be required to implement the vision God gives us for ministry. This kind of cost-counting, if done well by the group, helps us all to exercise faith, expecting God to add to those resources he has already provided, so that we may do the work to which he has called us. "Counting the cost" also forces us to seek God's priorities, dropping those things of lesser importance which we decide we can't afford now, so that we may work together on that which is of greater value.

We should also "count the cost" in terms of what will happen if we fail to respond to God's call. For example, the congregation which is unwilling to compassionately share the Good News in their community (or the denomination slow to respond to the challenge of missions, both home and overseas) will soon experience stagnation and decline, followed by slow yet certain death.

Twelve years ago, "Of Towers and Grape Arbors" ended with a "moral." Does it still apply today? *Grape arbors are nice—but in spiritual warfare, towers are better.* G

**Adapted from October 10, 1971, missions insert.*

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the contemporary scene

Surveys show clergy, laity hold varying notions about basic church doctrine

by George Cornell, AP Religion Writer

NEW YORK (EP)—Christians go to church for different reasons and expect different results from it, a Lutheran study has found. They also have varying notions about basic church doctrine. So do the clergy. Similar findings have appeared in several denominations. Such divergence in attitudes from official church standards long has been assumed but recently gathered statistics bear it out.

For example, a new Presbyterian survey found that half the members and nearly two-thirds of the pastors think that their church defines marriage as a "sacrament." But neither Presbyterians nor other Protestant denominations do so. Ironically, although Baptists long have disavowed any creed except the Bible, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville recently dropped a noted professor from teaching duties after he was accused of discounting a required concept.

"Once saved, always saved," the particular tenet usually is phrased, meaning that once a person accepts Christ, he cannot fall from grace and his salvation is assured in eternity—a view mainly distinctive to Baptists. The seminary put the Rev. Dale Moody, a long-time professor, on salaried leave without classes after some Baptist conservatives objected to his teaching and cut their support.

"When things contradict the Scripture I reject them, I don't care how hoary they are with antiquity," Mr. Moody said, maintaining that some other rules of the century-old requirements generally are ignored. One of them he said, specifies the use of "wine" in the Lord's Supper, although Baptists use grape juice, and another forbids "worldly amusement" on Sunday, which would exclude watching Sunday afternoon sports. He said he's "tired of creedalism," which some moderates claim is rising among Southern Baptists, the nation's largest Protestant body.

In a Lutheran Church in America survey, about a third of nearly 4,520 respondents said they primarily seek "meaning for daily

life" in Sunday services. Another third seek "experience within the worshiping community." The two most frequently cited purposes of church attendance were "to get a sense of direction and guidance for my life" and "to receive Holy Communion." Other objectives included "to hear God's message," to "feel a sense of inner peace and reverence," and to "enjoy the music and hymns."

A previous study by the Aid Association for Lutherans found that Lutheran pastors and laypeople have widely varying views of basic church teachings, with clergy views being more orthodox.

For instance, 42.8 percent of 4,371 laypeople believe that of the "many religions in the world, most lead to God," while fewer than 5 percent of 886 pastors hold that view. About 93 percent of the pastors believe "a child is sinful at birth," a view of only 57 percent of the laity. Also, 41 percent of the laity consider the Gospel "God's rules for right living," a view rejected by 95 percent of the clergy. Formally, Christianity sees the Gospel primarily as communicating Christ's action to save humanity.

Large majorities of laity and clergy say "becoming a Christian is an ongoing spiritual journey," with only a few—11 percent of laity and 2 percent of clergy—saying it is a "once-and-for-all decision." A Presbyterian survey found that 31 percent of the pastors rebaptize people who request it, although the general church position is that baptism is unrepeatable.

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