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EDITORIAL

In this issue, Martin Schrag writes the second of two articles on Benjamin H. Irwin, a holiness preacher who was active in the closing years of the nineteenth century. In the first article, which appeared in the June, 1981 issue, Schrag traced the story of Irwin's early life, conversion, and wider ministry, particularly in the Midwest. In this second article, he shows the impact Irwin made on the Brethren in Christ, particularly in Kansas, but also to a degree in Pennsylvania. In these two articles, Martin Schrag has made a significant contribution to our understanding of an important chapter in Brethren in Christ history.

The Brethren in Christ are becoming increasingly aware of the implications of how we look at Scripture--of the significance of our hermeneutic. The first issue of this journal (June, 1978) carried an article on the subject by Arthur Climenhaga; among other things, it forced readers to a recognition that a hermeneutic is unavoidable. David Hall picks up the subject again in this issue, and examines it particularly in terms of the Anabaptist view of the New Testament church.

In the third article, Mark Charlton publishes the results of his updated study of the political activities of Brethren in Christ ministers. His first study was conducted several years ago and a summary included in Carlton Wittlinger's *Quest for Piety and Obedience*. Several new trends are evident in his study; this undoubtedly suggests the value of making similar repeated assessments in the future. As

Charlton indicates, his study raises a number of questions about the Brethren in Christ and political involvement. This journal welcomes for publication the results of the exploration of these questions.

Ray Zercher in the final article breaks ground in a subject that has remained virtually untouched to the present--Brethren in Christ church architecture. His training and interests uniquely qualify him to make the careful study that the article reveals itself to be. He has made an excellent beginning; subsequent studies by him and others will not only increase our knowledge of what has occurred in our church architecture but may also be useful in suggesting some directions for the future.

E. Morris Sider

BENJAMIN HARDIN IRWIN AND THE BRETHREN IN CHRIST

By Martin H. Schrag*

The June, 1981, issue of *Brethren in Christ History and Life* carried my article on the spiritual pilgrimage and preaching of evangelist Benjamin H. Irwin. The article noted that Irwin's ministry centered on his emphasis on the baptism of fire--a work of grace distinct from and subsequent to entire sanctification. In his ongoing radicalization, Irwin eventually added further experiences--"dynamite" and heavenly lyddite"--to that of the baptism of fire. This article develops the interaction between the fiery evangelist and the Brethren in Christ.¹

The early Brethren in Christ were not influenced by Wesleyanism, although given their background in Pietism and Anabaptism they were committed to the importance of discipleship and holy living. In the 1870s and 1880s, however, traces of perfectionism begin to be found in the literature of the group. The first official action moving the Brethren toward Wesleyan holiness was a statement on sanctification by General Conference in 1887. From that date to 1910 the nature of sanctification was a major point of contention. The controversy was aired in the denominational paper, *The Evangelical Visitor*, and repeatedly discussed at the annual General Conference. Finally, in 1910 the Brethren accepted a statement that was Wesleyan in its

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understanding of the holy life.

Wesleyan holiness first gained a firm foothold in the Brethren in Christ church in Kansas, the state in which B. H. Irwin had his first contact and fullest impact on the denomination. The holiness movement had, in fact, reached Kansas at about the same time that the Brethren in Christ arrived in the state in the late 1870s. In June, 1879, the first "national" Kansas camp meeting was held at Bismark Grove near Lawrence, Kansas.² In the same year and place, the Southwestern Holiness Association was organized to carry on holiness teaching in Eastern Kansas and Western Missouri. The Northern Kansas Holiness Association was active by 1892, and the Kansas Holiness Association, organized in 1889, held its annual meeting in Abilene in 1892 and 1893.³

This reference to Abilene is instructive, for most of the Brethren in Christ had settled in Dickinson County, with its seat at Abilene. The area was, in fact, a strong center for the Kansas holiness movement. As early as 1890, a Pentecostal Band (a holiness group) existed in the northern part of Dickinson County.⁴ The Dickinson County Holiness Association was active by at least 1893. A strong promoter of holiness in Abilene was A. E. Flickinger, pastor of the Evangelical Church. Also living in Abilene was the treasurer of the Kansas Holiness Association, R. J. Finley, who reported in July, 1893, that sanctified individuals were to be "found in the Evangelical, Methodist, Presbyterian, River Brethren Baptist [*sic*] and Lutheran Churches."⁵ Union holiness services were being held in the Abilene Evangelical Church as early as September, 1893.⁶

This holiness movement made a strong impact on the local Brethren in Christ. In 1892, when the *Evangelical Visitor* was being printed and edited in Abilene, the first decidedly holiness articles appeared in the paper, most of them written by Kansas Brethren, and one by Finley of the Evangelical Church.⁷ In 1894 the Kansas

Brethren at their state conference affirmed that the holiness doctrine was on a par with "other vital gospel doctrines."⁸ In 1895 there was, according to Katie Bollinger, an eyewitness, "a moving of the Spirit of God" in the Bethel Brethren in Christ church, located a few miles north of Abilene. Katie herself claimed to have received a new outpouring of grace.⁹

The year 1895 was, in fact, a pivotal year for the holiness movement among the Kansas Brethren. In that year, young David W. Zook returned to Kansas after having spent part of 1894 and much of 1895 at the Hepzibah Faith Missionary Association school at Tabor, Iowa, absorbing a passion for missions and holiness, and experiencing a "deeper work of grace." He held a ten-day meeting in his home congregation of Zion (located a few miles north of Abilene) where he enthusiastically preached sanctification as a second work of grace. A number of people responded, so that the meeting resulted in a breakthrough for Wesleyan holiness in the Brethren in Christ Church.¹⁰ Others, including Noah Zook, David's father, accepted the teaching; thus by 1896 some Brethren were committed to Wesleyan holiness and an increasing number of holiness testimonies were printed in the *Visitor*.

At the same time the Brethren began to link the Holy Ghost with the fire of Matthew 3:11 ("and he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." KJV), which the denomination had not previously done. R. J. Finley reported that at an August, 1893, camp meeting held at Ellsworth, Kansas, "Lutheran, Evangelicals and River Brethren caught fire," and then went on to generalize that "the Holy Ghost fire is sweeping across the Kansas prairie in every direction."¹¹ (The reference does not appear to refer to fire-baptism as a distinct separate work.)

Similarly with several articles in the 1896 *Visitor*, Noah Zook castigated those "educated men who know nothing of the Holy

Ghost and fire baptism."¹² Two sons of Noah, David and Eber, both called for Holy Ghost fire-baptized missionary workers.¹³ Jesse Engle, respected elder and later missionary to Africa, in telling about his visit to the Oklahoma Territory, asked that the Lord may make the two Brethren workers located there to be "true lights and real firebrands."¹⁴ Annie Brechbill, later a leader of an Irwin Fire-Baptized Band, stated that those "baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire have a safe leader in the Holy Spirit."¹⁵

Several observations may be made about these statements and their authors. First, all the writers are from Kansas, the first center of holiness in the denomination. Second, all but Jesse Engle were soon strong advocates of entire sanctification, but only Annie Brechbill followed Irwin. Third, none of the articles partake of the mood and content of Irwin's Fire-Baptized movement. And fourth, all of the quotations appear to be a part of that larger holiness movement taking place in the last years of the nineteenth century that believed a true holiness revival would come by an emphasis on the first aspect of entire sanctification.

Thus it is apparent that by 1896 the Kansas Brethren were deeply involved in the issue of sanctification and that at least some of their leaders were abreast of the latest thinking regarding fire. The Brethren in Christ Church elsewhere and as a whole, however, was still given to a non-Wesleyan interpretation of sanctification.

It was in the context of these developments that B. H. Irwin did his first preaching among the Brethren in Christ. We have seen in the previous article that at the beginning of 1896 Irwin was still working within the Wesleyan Methodist Church but by the late summer of that year he began to travel as an independent holiness evangelist.

Beginning on November 2, Irwin held meetings, apparently for a week, in both the Zion and the Bethel churches, residing for at

least part of the time in the home of one of the ministers, D. H. Brechbill. Irwin reported that on Monday evening in the Zion church one "infidel young man" was converted and over fifty were at the altar for entire sanctification. His Sunday evening preaching at Bethel resulted in over thirty at the altar for the experience. Irwin wrote in summary that "a number had been sanctified during the work and some had received the fire. Hallelujah." Others were earnestly seeking the same. He characterized the Brethren as "a single hearted, peculiar people," whose men wear their hair long and parted in the middle, and whose women wear "neat little white bonnets." Their faces "shine with salvation." He suggested that if he wanted to draw pictures of biblical saints he would go to the River Brethren for models. In total, Irwin was well impressed with the Brethren in Christ.¹⁶

Irwin's analysis of the attitude of the Brethren in Christ toward holiness differs from mine above only where he indicates that some Brethren have been fire-baptized in a work distinct from entire sanctification. During the next two years the holiness movement gained momentum elsewhere in the denomination, including Pennsylvania, in large part through the work of holiness evangelists such as Noah Zook, as well as through the growing number of articles on and testimonies to the experience of holiness in the *Visitor*.

No explicit mention is made in Brethren in Christ sources to Irwin's ministry in 1896, although *Visitor* editor Henry N. Engle probably was referring to Irwin's activities when he wrote of meetings of "unusual interest" in Dickinson County that "were difficult of interpretation by the carnally-minded and even to such who are believers, yet the real stirring up of the Spirit in many. . .are features in this work which our soul cannot but admire."¹⁷

But the sources are more explicit for the following two years.

In 1897 Irwin held meetings in four Kansas churches--Bethel, Zion, Abilene, and Belle Springs. *Visitor* editor Engle informed his readers in the May 15, 1897 issue that Irwin testified to the "definite experiences of baptism by the Holy Ghost and Fire." (Note that he wrote of experiences in the plural form.) Engle firmly believed that Irwin was fulfilling his God-given call. He liked Irwin's marvelous delivery and his manner of exposing sin in its many "forms and hues:" the "awful rottenness in ecclesiastical and nominal circles" was pointed out along with the evils of Romanism, tobacco, and rum. In the next issue, Engle wrote that the visit of Irwin had "been helpful to our people," but at the same time he implied that he did not understand the meaning of all that had transpired.¹⁸ Thus Engle's evaluation was one of approval coupled with some reservations.

Other Brethren in Christ people heard Irwin in various places during these two years (1897 and 1898). Sarah Ferguson attended Irwin's meetings in Oklahoma in October, 1897. She reported in the *Visitor* that Irwin's messages taught her that her child could be healed, and that miracle happened the next day. She herself was healed of a nervous condition of two years standing.¹⁹

From November 20 to mid-December, 1897, Irwin held revival meetings at the King Street United Brethren Church in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, where some area Brethren in Christ members heard him speak.²⁰ A "weak sister" thought at first that "strange doctrine" was being proclaimed, but she soon saw the doctrine as being biblical. She regretted that not more Brethren had heard him.²¹ Amos Musser became a follower of Irwin. He had experiences common to Irwinism: having visions and revelations, being critical of the established churches, having devils cast out, and experiencing a unique relationship with Jesus ("it was the Father, the Son and myself in company").²² A member living in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania,

indicated that he heard Irwin in 1897. Another member, J. O. Lehman, wrote that he was sanctified in a meeting in which Irwin asked him to pray.²³

Up in Toronto, Canada, traveling evangelist John H. Myers and his wife heard Irwin preach six times in July, 1898. They were favorably impressed. At the same time, Myers's summary statement in his report to the *Visitor* is somewhat ambiguous, since it can be read as affirming that entire sanctification is one work of grace and there is no other work, or as an affirmation of entire sanctification. "We stand on Christ the solid rock," he wrote, "justified, cleansed through the blood, consecrated, baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire; and praise the Lord our God that the outcome is a definite work of sanctification and holiness as well as a progressive work."²⁴ In a second contact with Irwin in Lancaster in October, 1898, Myers appeared to be of one accord with or close to Irwin. He spoke one night when Irwin was not able to preach.²⁵

The last known contact with Irwinism in the years 1897 and 1898 took place in Brown County in the northeast corner of Kansas. Here in the Brethren meetinghouse it was Irwin's assistant, George M. Henson, a minister from Oklahoma, who did the preaching. Noah Zook wrote that the Brown County church had been "greatly awakened from their luke-warmness in the past year or more," but since his report covered a period much longer than the Henson ministry there may have been other factors contributing to the awakening.²⁶

In summary, a number of Brethren heard Irwin in 1897 and 1898, and on the whole were positive toward him. At least none of those hearing him made explicit negative comments. This is somewhat puzzling in light of Irwin's teaching about the baptism of fire being a distinct work of grace beyond entire sanctification. Perhaps one explanation is that Irwin in his preaching did not always make clear the distinction between entire sanctification and the baptism

of fire. Possibly of equal import was the fact that the teaching of Wesleyan holiness was so new to the Brethren, especially to those of limited theological insight, that they did not have the understanding needed to make the required distinctions.

During the same two years the emphasis on fire became stronger, to judge by the attention given to the subject in the *Visitor*. Several observations on this development may be made. First, some statements, similar to those in 1896, simply relate the baptism of the Holy Ghost with fire, as in Matthew 3:11.²⁷ Given the emphasis on fire in the larger holiness movement, such statements refer to one definite experience of entire sanctification. Second, some testimonies explicitly relate the fire to one distinct experience. Sarah Dohner, who had recently moved to Kansas, wrote that "we found fire among the brothers and sisters, but praise God! the Holy Spirit is connected with the fire; and these two elements, taking hold of a person will thoroughly cleanse and purify from all dros [sic]." She added that she had herself received such an experience.²⁸ Third, some statements strongly imply two works but the authors do not amplify their meaning. Thus Katie E. Lenhert, who later became a member of a Fire-Baptized Band, wrote that "He has cleansed, sanctified and healed me and has baptized me with the Holy Ghost and fire."²⁹ Martha Sheets, a member from Moonlight, Kansas, near the Bethel church, stated that "Jesus not only saves us but also sanctifies and fills us with the Holy Ghost and baptizes us with fire."³⁰ Fourth, there are statements by members who suggest a distinction between entire sanctification and fire baptism, but who also note that the two could be part of one experience. A report of a Brethren meeting in Arizona (most of the Brethren in Christ settlers moved there from Kansas) stated that two souls were "wholly sanctified for God, one receiving the baptism of fire at the same time."³¹ One brother explained that in his case the baptism of the

Holy Ghost and the baptism of fire came to him at the same time, and he did not doubt that the fire could come later.³²

Finally, one experience recorded in the *Visitor* clearly reflects Irwin's work in both mood and contact. Maggie Frahm of Moonlight related experiences that were all part of Irwin's orientation--conflicts within herself and with other people and devils, visions, and times of depression and ecstasy. In her sanctification experience, Jesus gave the "death blow" to the old man, "took all his clothes and cast all the devils out." Then Jesus and she "sat down and eat [*sic*] our supper together." That event took place on November 8; it was followed by her being baptized of the Holy Ghost on December 12. Again she was very happy, and rejoiced and sang. Upon retiring for the night, she had a vision of her condition.

I saw a hill and rocks all around it and a big flat rock on top. A vessel full of water and running over was on top of this and the devil was on the outside of this vessel and he raised himself up and tried to get in, but this water was living water and seemed to be watching him, and as soon as he got up, it washed him down. He tried to get in about three or four times and the last time the water came in with such force and I felt it go all over me. Then it came to me--this is the condition of your heart as long as you obey, Hallelujah.

A week later she was baptized with fire.

While I was speaking [after a church service] the power of God came so heavy that it struck me to the floor and a wonderful burning was in my heart which went through my whole body. I could hardly move and my heart and body seemed all on fire. It seemed as though it were burning me up. . . . My heart got so big I thought it would burst, it was so full, and yet more was coming.

Her fire experience "worked the devil up" and thus she had a difficult time until Jesus caused the devil to flee. This was followed by an experience of being in a barn filled with angels. They fully protected her, and she was led to exclaim: "Oh, glory to Jesus! It was grand and I am just fool enough to believe it all and simple enough to believe it is true."³³

In evaluating these statements on fire, it must be kept in

mind that the understanding of fire varied greatly within the Brethren in Christ Church, as it did within the holiness movement and the larger society. "Fire," or "wild fire," or "firebrands" were often broad designations used to identify anyone who was seen as radical, fanatical, or highly emotional. To some Brethren, radical holiness included not only Irwin and his organization, but also the Hepzibah Faith Missionary Association. To further complicate evaluation, a group with headquarters in Shennadoah, Iowa, called themselves Firebrands and published a paper by that name.³⁴

One further group should be noted--the Fire-Brand Church, as they were locally known. This was largely composed of a few Brethren in Christ who left the Rosebank congregation in South Dickinson County and under the leadership of the Hepzibah group built and worshipped in a small church at Romona, Kansas. Their name came from an erroneous association of them with the work of B. H. Irwin.³⁵ This association, however, was not without warrant since the Hepzibah Faith Missionary Association used fire language.³⁶ The Tabor group, however, related fire baptism to the second work and did not see it as distinct beyond that experience, and they later condemned Irwin's teachings.³⁷

Of all the groups that related in one way or another to the Brethren in Christ, there is no doubt that the most extreme was Irwin's Fire-Baptized Holiness Association.

The first responses of the Brethren in Christ to Irwin, as we have seen, were essentially positive. But by the latter part of 1897, the Brethren developed a more negative assessment of Irwin. H. N. Engle, in a *Visitor* editorial in August, pointed out in a general way the dangers of identifying holiness with "emotional display," and "transitory feeling, and animal magnetism."³⁸ Almost certainly, Engle had Irwin on his mind, as well as possibly others. In November he directly attacked the Fire-Baptized movement. Engle found no basis

for a third work of grace; in the New Testament, fire referred to God's judgment and purgings, and was integral to being sanctified wholly. Sanctification, Engle insisted, must be based on the Word of God, not on the experiences of people.³⁹ Engle's editorial represented a turning point for the Brethren in relation to Irwin, for from this point, except for a few devotees, they began to reject the Fire-Baptized understanding of the Christian experience, and became critical of Irwin and his work.

In the view of the Brethren, a major weakness or heretical aspect of Fire-Baptism was its excessive emotionalism and fanaticism. They repeatedly made the point that holiness cannot be based on "raging enthusiasm," "billows of emotion," "superficial feelings," "powerful physical demonstrations," "fleshly gratification," "strong dilusions," and "good feelings."⁴⁰

According to the Brethren in Christ leaders, there were three weaknesses in excessive emotionalism. First, when the emotionalism has passed, believers grow confused and discouraged, begin to doubt their experience, and become beset by "dark temptations and fiery darts of unbelief."⁴¹ Second, emotional blessing may be a manifestation of selfishness--a self-centered desire for a high time. But there is no place for the self in holiness; "it is Jesus only."⁴² Third, emotionalism leads to fanaticism. To place confidence in subjective experience can easily lead to greater subjectivity. Care must be taken lest some selfish "'blessed experience' be the foremost tune of our harp."⁴³

This is not to say that the Brethren condemned all emotions in religion. Those who championed Wesleyan holiness were concerned about the dead formalism and dry ritualism they saw in the church and found in the new movement a larger place for freedom. Their basic concern was well expressed in an action of the Kansas Council in 1895 which instructed evangelists in revival meetings to avoid the

two extremes of "wild enthusiasm and dead formality."⁴⁴ Both Henry Engle and Kansas Bishop Samuel Zook in arguing against extreme emotionalism stated that they had and were experiencing the deep joy of sanctification, but insisted that such joy was the result of faith and obedience. Zook, by this time editor of the *Visitor*, in reporting a love feast, wrote that "there seemed to be a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit" and "remarkable demonstrations of God's power." At the same time, he hastened to add, "it was not wild excitement--not by any means--very little excitement all through the feast; but a deep, heart-searching power."⁴⁵ Thus there was a place in Brethren thinking for joy and the blessed consciousness of having the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, but such emotions must be perceived in the proper perspective.

What, then, were the elements of fanaticism? First, in addition to excessive emotionalism, there was a reliance on dreams and visions, such as those experienced by Maggie Frahm. In another instance, a member in recording her experience stated that at one point in her life the devil made her believe she had to have a vision to convince her parents of her spirituality. She waited for three years for the vision, but in vain.⁴⁶ Second, fanaticism involved people believing that God had revealed something new to them and not known to others, something for the few elect. And third, fanaticism included boasting, blowing one's own horn, self-exultation. The following lines by Henry Engle summarize the elements and dangers of fanaticism:

We have seen, in certain individuals, the culmination of that spirit which builds upon and is led by dreams, visions and manifestations. It leads souls to discard the Word of God, to rest their hope of salvation upon feelings and bodily demonstrations, rest their leadings upon. . . vague fancies and chance happenings and sets aside completely the simple yet vital doctrine of salvation by faith for works, experiences, burning sensations, hysteria, fits and wild-fire.⁴⁷

The Brethren saw themselves confronted with a major perversion of

holiness, and this at a time when some wanted nothing to do with Wesleyan holiness, while others wanted a moderate version.

In their opposition to this perceived perversion and to Irwinism in general, the church leaders emphasized the authority of the Scriptures. The basis of evaluation for the Christian life, they maintained, must be the Word of God, not individualized dreams or personalized revelations. They emphasized sound doctrine and eternal truth. "We need men today like Barnabas," Samuel Zook wrote, "men full of the Holy Ghost and faith (Acts. 11:24); men who are not ashamed nor afraid to speak the things which become sound doctrine."⁴⁸ A favorite verse in opposition to Irwinism was John 17:17: "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." All claims to truth must be tested by Scripture.

In attacking Irwin the Brethren also maintained that holiness must be accepted by faith--a faith based on biblical facts. Fanatics, they showed, begin with feeling and base their faith on feeling; thus feeling is by sight, not faith. The sequence must be reversed because "the Christian religion is based not on feeling, but upon certain well established facts and must be taken hold of by faith. . . . The divine order of salvation is fact, faith, feeling. . . ."⁴⁹

Given biblical authority and the importance of faith, what was the content of holiness? The center of holiness was Jesus Christ. A favorite designation of the holy life was that it was Christ-like, and references were made to the "Christ-spirit" and the "Spirit of Christ." In the experience of entire sanctification the old man within is crucified and replaced by the indwelling Christ, and this makes Christians partakers of Christ's holy nature. Henry Engle suggested that some questions for the sanctified person to keep in mind were as follows: "Do *I* abide in Christ? Am *I* walking in the light? Do *I* exercise perfect obedience to the will of God? Have *I* the mind of Christ?"⁵⁰

As this quotation suggests, obedience was emphasized as the Brethren sought to deal with Irwin's radical holiness. What was needed, they said, was not loud professors, but obedient liverers. The holy life is the obedient life.⁵¹ Holy people find the commandments of Christ to be a "regulator of engagements in religions, social and business capacities."⁵² Christian holiness centers on following in the steps of Jesus, and this obedience leads not to a life of drudgery but to peace and happiness in the Holy Spirit.⁵³

Obedience, the Brethren insisted, led to humility. To be sanctified wholly "means that the demon pride and the spirit of self-exaltation is cast out and we are clothed with the spirit of humility, of meekness and of gentleness."⁵⁴ Some people think that the Christian faith consists of "tents of ease," "downy pillows," and "Hallelujah times," and forget that Jesus went the way of rejection, persecution, suffering and death, which they too must be prepared to follow.⁵⁵ The Brethren concern for discipleship as opposed to the excessive emotionalism of Irwinism is well stated in the following quotation:

In the midst of our zeal, our fiery efforts at soul-saving, our enthusiasm for holiness and purity of heart and life, would we welcome the Christ of Nazareth into our assemblies? Would not his very august presence sometimes calm the raging enthusiasm and quell the billows of emotion which too frequently play havoc in the assemblies of the saints? Is he my example in meekness, in zeal, in quietude, in love? . . . A fixedness of purpose; a calmness of testimony; a soundness of mind--these are the characteristics of the Christ. . . . Will we have this man (Christ) to rule over us? Or shall it be some enthusiast whom we can see with our eyes, hear with our ears and our hands can handle?⁵⁶

Holiness also involved brotherly love. In some of its manifestations, the Brethren considered, radical holiness minimized the biblical concern regarding the nature of the visible brotherhood, including the element of love. "The central figure and predominant characteristics of the Christ life is love," wrote editor Engle.⁵⁷ And Samuel Zook, churchman par excellence, sought to further the

historic Brethren emphasis on the visible, covenanted and loving brotherhood by instructing ministers to lead with both love and firmness, and calling on all to love, care and share with one another.⁵⁸ In another place, Zook decried the inclination "to accept the idea that we have come into the dawning of a new light and our ancestors were too formal and lacked power and [so] we cry out against formality and get into the other extreme by putting away all form." Godliness, Zook insisted, has a form because it is real. There must be form--harmony--in God's household "because if not, the flock of God will suffer and that is a great trouble." Zook insisted that genuine holiness made for harmony and fostered fellowship: "Someone said not long ago that it is hard for a puffed-up self-righteous person to take his place, but the really sanctified person is humble and honest and if he makes a mistake will not blame someone else, but shows that he has enough of the grace of God in his heart that he can humble himself."⁵⁹

In summary, the Brethren response to radical holiness in general and to fire-baptism in particular was to affirm the authority of the Scriptures, the place of faith, the centrality of the Christ-life, the necessity of obedience, the value of humility, and the need for love. Probably of greatest significance in the Brethren response to Irwinism was the building of their defense on their historic understanding of the faith. All of the affirmations noted in the preceding sentence were a part of the original vision of the faith. Thus as the Brethren were accepting a moderate Wesleyan holiness, they were seasoning it with their historic emphases. The new perception of the holy life was conditioned by the Brethren worldview of the past.

The controversy with Irwin centered in three locations. The most far-reaching controversy was in Dickinson County. Irwin's assistant, G. M. Henson, in July, 1898, held meetings in the Belle Springs,

Bethel, and Abilene churches, and led gatherings in private homes. The most visible evidence of his activity was the organizing of a Fire-Baptized Band. Editor Engle observed that God has used Henson to uncover sinfulness and to encourage inquiry into the nature of the Christian faith. But the meetings had exposed the "fanatic phase" of the Fire-Baptized movement by turning the search-light on those who had rested their salvation on dreams and visions and manifestations. Engle considered that the organizing of a Fire-Baptized Band was a very inadequate way to meet the weaknesses of "ecclesiasticism," and in a subsequent editorial he was sharply critical of extreme holiness.⁶⁰

Several Brethren sources record the interaction between the Brethren and the Fire-Baptized Band. The *Visitor* reported that at the June, 1899 love feast held at the Belle Springs church, there were "some interruptions by the so-called 'Fire-Band' but to those loyal to the Gospel it was a real refreshing season."⁶¹ On another occasion, a member of the Band interrupted Samuel Zook three times as he was preaching in a revival meeting, declaring that Zook was not preaching the full gospel. Several of the Brethren ushered the dissenter from the building.⁶² The *Visitor* reported some of the wild-fire element being present at a love feast at the Rosebank meeting house in September, 1899, although this may have been the Hepzibah group from Romona.⁶³ George Detwiler (then office manager, later editor of the *Visitor*) refers in the *Visitor* to a Belle Spring "fire meeting."⁶⁴ The last mention in the *Visitor* of Irwin's active work is a short statement in the August 15, 1900 issue indicating that the evangelist had fallen from grace.

The climatic encounter between the Kansas Brethren and the Fire-Baptized movement occurred at a tent camp meeting conducted from August 14-24, 1899, on the farm of Mrs. Annie Brechbill of Moonlight. In addition to Kansas people, individuals from several states,

including Oklahoma, Iowa, Nebraska, North Carolina, South Carolina, and the province of Ontario, attended the meetings. Listed as those doing the preaching were a number of Fire-Baptized leaders--B. H. Irwin, G. M. Henson, Jesse Bathurst (Ness City, Kansas), Henry Kartman (Oklahoma), and Annie Brechbill.

The camp meeting was soon in high pitch. The leader of the local Fire-Band, Annie Brechbill, reported that full salvation was preached and no place was given to "sham, shallow, half-hearted work." Hungry souls were richly fed, but hypocrites, "cold formal church members, and sham holiness professors" heard the words of condemnation that Jesus and Paul pronounced against those given to cold formalism and man-made rules of their day. On Sunday, 2,000 people were on the grounds, and this made the accommodations inadequate. It was a day of victories. Several people were healed, many were sanctified, some were baptized with fire or experienced the dynamite, or both. One of the services was in German.⁶⁵ Several of the sermons preached were printed in Irwin's paper, *Live Coals of Fire*. Such messages give considerable insight into the content of the preaching.

During the camp meeting, an unscheduled event occurred on Tuesday evening, August 22, when a group of local farmers and their harvest help sought to deal with Irwin. Irwin, however, had left the camp on the previous day. The farmers, instead, "pounced" on his assistant Henson, and according to Annie Brechbill, "violently" threw him into the water tank used for watering horses (an effective way of putting out the fire of a Fire-Baptized preacher, the farmers apparently thought). Almost drowned, Henson was given air, only to be pushed under the water again a few minutes later. Some of the farmers returned the following night, but found that the tent had been taken down; some of the attendants were continuing the services in Annie Brechbill's home.⁶⁶

Such events make good newsprint, and the Kansas press made the most of the affair, embellishing it in the process. The local paper, the *Abilene Weekly Reflector*, reported that Irwin carried a large revolver and absconded with \$200.⁶⁷ *The Kansas City Star*, in a 1901 feature article on the fire among the Brethren, claimed that when the farmers struck, Irwin quickly secured a horse and dashed off.⁶⁸

The *Visitor*, not unexpectedly, carried its own report. A writer (either editor Samuel Zook or office manager Henry Engle) informed readers that "the preaching was to a great extent made up of hard sayings against other churches and especially against the Brethren." He characterized the farmers' action of cutting down the tent and dunking Henson several times as "disgraceful" and "unlawful," and strongly hoped that such action would not happen again.⁶⁹

Very much at the center of these events was Annie Brechbill. Much of her thinking may be discovered in a sermon she delivered following her ordination in the Fire-Baptized Band and subsequent to the camp meeting. She entitled her sermon "The Grumblers" (the title of a song popular with her group) because many people had been grumbling about the Fire-Baptized Band. Unfortunately, she complained, they did not do so directly to the members of the Band, but rather hid behind "the bushes." Taking her text from Acts 7, she identified herself with Stephen and maintained that the "worldly wise and hypocritical professors" in the audience were as the Jews of old--"stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart." Addressing herself to the grumblers, she declared:

I will not be a bit surprised if you gnash on me with your teeth before the Lord is through with me; and let me tell you, if it hurts you so bad that you walk out, you will locate yourselves by that very thing. . . . I do not care how hard you try to crush me, and try to upset the work of God, as long as we have the approving smile of Jesus I am going right through. . . . I know I have the wall of fire that protects me against everything that comes.

Brechbill next related some of the background to the present

situation. Many people, she suggested, would remember the fight they had at Moonlight fourteen years ago (1884) because she resisted light given to her husband, Christian: "When the Lord got hold of my husband and sanctified him, he came back here and tried to teach me the truth. I had my heart closed like some of you today, and I talked against him." But she could not stand up against him. He declared he was going to stop "worshipping the elders and churches and was going to worship God. . . . He began to show and speak out on the wonderful idolatry, hypocrisy and formality that was among us as a people." His words caused consternation, as the true message does today. It is idolatry, she declared, that is the basis of the Brethren opposition to the local Band, and which led the Brethren to cast out the "little despised band" in June, locking the church doors so that the Band could not worship in the meeting house. But the Lord, she claimed, wants to establish and further his holiness work precisely at the place where fourteen years ago it was fought against and knocked down.

Annie Brechbill next charged in her sermon that it was the pressure of the church that drove her husband to insanity (in 1886). Some Brethren, she related, concluded that her husband's state of mind was evidence that his ideas were wrong. After he was institutionalized, the church leaders, with considerable effort, obtained a confession from his wife, but the result was that she lived in darkness for two years. Only after she realized that she had compromised did she again find God's peace.

Not long ago, she reminded her listeners, some of the grumblers declared that she was "really mad" when she got up in the Bethel church and announced the camp meeting. She admitted that she was flushed in the face but insisted that her soul "was as sweet as heaven." She ended her sermon by calling for repentance and receiving the dynamite, testifying of her love for those present,

and praying that those hearing her would accept the mercy of God.⁷⁰

Parenthetically it may be noted that Christian Brechbill's experience is the earliest record of a Kansas Brethren testifying to entire sanctification. He obtained that experience away from his home community, and it turned him against the Brethren establishment. He apparently partook of the mentality of the "come-outers," holiness people who left the established denominations because they believed such groups apostate. More importantly, the sanctification experiences of Christian and Annie Brechbill may have been one factor behind the 1887 Brethren in Christ statement on sanctification. Credence to this idea is given by the fact that two of the five committee members who drew up the 1887 position papers were Kansas Brethren leaders (see *General Conference Minutes*, 1904, p. 47). Finally, it may be noted that the Kansas Brethren at the 1888 Kansas Joint-Council took the following action: "In consideration of the matter pertaining to Christian Brechbill and his wife, a committee appointed to investigate settled the matter to the best of their understanding and ability."⁷¹ Additional research is needed to determine the total impact of Brechbill's sanctification experience.

By this time, it is not surprising to learn, Irwin's favorable impression of the Brethren had undergone considerable change, and he now attacked them as heartily as he had earlier praised them. He stated his case against them in several places, including a sermon at the Moonlight camp meeting. His most direct statement against the Brethren leaders came in an editorial in *Live Coals* following the attack made on Henson during the Moonlight camp meeting. Weeks before the camp meeting began, he claimed, "hell was moved from beneath to meet our coming." Many church members who had covenanted not to attend were there. The meetings were a battle royal. The fight, Irwin reported, "was emphatically against sectarianism, church pride and idol worship and the victory was

decisive and complete. Mrs. Brechbill's sermons 'shook the very pillars of Hell.'" The exhortations were dynamite explosions which literally confounded and terrified the devil." But given the hypocrites at the meeting, "nothing short of this devil-arousing, earth-shaking dynamite will do this work." Irwin saw a multitude of devils--"the lust devil, and the lodge devil, and the sectarian devil, and the disorderly devil, and the proud devil"--all of whom conspired together against the leadership of the camp meeting.

In the same article, Irwin noted that he himself was in Pennsylvania when he first heard of Henson being thrown into the water trough. He reported that Henson prayed for his persecutors after being immersed in the water, and pled "with pure love in his heart" after being shoved under the water a second time. "And who," he asked, "is responsible for that mad mob's doing?" He had a ready answer.

The scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,--the heads of the River Brethren church who for months had wickedly fought the experience of God's deep saints, forbidding them to testify to what God had done for their souls and encouraged by precept and example, this murderous opposition to the work of the Holy Spirit. It is the same spirit which crucified Jesus, stoned Stephen to death and hunted Paul from city to city.

His final words for the church leaders in the editorial were strong ones: ". . . Let me warn you, the 'elders' and chief priests, and the scribes in and around Moonlight and Abilene, that God will vindicate His own and 'cut off' and that without remedy, those who, being oft reproved, harden their necks and their hearts against the truth."⁷²

One of Irwin's charges against the Brethren was that they kept the church in bondage to man-made rules and regulations. The prayer covering was an example. The basic problem with the covering was pride and idolatry--in the heart and on the head. Irwin reported that "several of the 'white caps' disappeared when the sisters were delivered from idolatry and spiritual pride; and the brethren carried

them [the caps] away, like returning missionaries carry away the idols of heathendom." He wrote in another place: "The idea of a woman coming to the Lord and crying to Him for an hour and more about a little white cap worth only a few cents." "You have your idols," he declared, "not only in your hearts, but on your heads and around your necks, and they will choke you to death some day if you do not get rid of them."⁷³

But, Irwin charged, the problem was how to get rid of the coverings. If some of the members would come to the altar and declare that they "were going to quit some of the forms," some of the Brethren "would shake their fists at you and say, 'We will put you out if you do.'" He told of a young girl who took her cap off because God had shown her that it was an idol in her heart. Her father, however, told the girl that if she respected his wishes she would put the cap on again. The issue was clearly whether the girl loved God more than her father.⁷⁴

Relatedly, Irwin attacked the Brethren practice of parting the hair in the middle. He charged that the members were afraid to do otherwise. "The idea," Irwin protested, "of tying your soul to a custom like that; the idea of resting your soul's salvation on a thing so slight." It was another evidence of Brethren bondage.⁷⁵

Irwin focused his attacks on other areas of crucial importance to the Brethren in Christ. His charge that the Brethren were more committed to the elders, the church, forms and rituals than to God struck at the Brethren historic commitment to the church. His accusation that the Brethren were compromisers and in a backslidden condition was uncomfortable to hear because they saw themselves in the spectrum of American Christianity precisely among those who had not compromised. And Irwin's call to a total and radical commitment appealed to the Brethren concern for obedience. Might not the baptism of fire and the power of dynamite be some additional element

of radical self-giving that they should follow as obedient disciples?

It is apparent that Irwin directed his message so as to root his suggested changes in historic Brethren views.

The Fire-Baptized Band remained active for at least several years. It was a small band. According to letters written to *Live Coals* by its members, the Band contained Harry and Anna Sollenberger, Ezra and Lea Sheets, a Brother and Sister Bert, Mary Lenhert, John Lehman, J. Z. Lehman, Mary Lehman, Barbara Ginder, Abram B. and Abe Brechbill, B. W. Koonts, and a Sister Lantz. It is apparent from this list that most, if not all of the members of the band were Brethren in Christ in background.

Annie Brechbill was the band's leader. She had been born in Franklin County, Pennsylvania in 1859, had there married Christian Brechbill, and was part of the Brethren movement to Kansas in the late 1870s. Her husband, mentally disturbed since 1886, died in 1894, leaving her with three children and a farm to operate. During Henson's visit to Kansas in 1898 she claimed to have received the fire baptism; this was followed by a dynamite experience, apparently obtained at the Moonlight camp meeting.

According to Annie Brechbill's letter to *Live Coals* a few months after the Moonlight camp meeting, the Band met twice in the week and twice again on Sunday. The lines between the Band and the Brethren were more sharply drawn than ever. The Brethren were trying to win back some of their members, but with limited success; actually, six new members had been added to the Band.⁷⁶ The Band organized a Sunday school. Harry and Anna Sollenberger felt the call of God to become missionaries to Africa, and Annie Brechbill received a similar call to open a school-orphanage in her home.⁷⁷

The Band's letters to *Live Coals* are descriptive of a number of the group's attitudes and emphases. The letters reveal a strong personal attachment by the writers to Irwin. The correspondence also

indicates the intensity of their personal spirituality. Annie Brechbill wrote in the following strong words:

When I see the deplorable condition I once was in, my heart full of self, pride, lust, envy, malice, strife, prejudice, superstition hatred, hypocrisy, and man made forms and other evils of the carnal mind, I must stop and wonder with amazement that such a poor sinner like me could be found, and really saved, sanctified and baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire, and filled with the real dynamite of heaven that takes me through fire, and filled with the real dynamite of heaven that takes me through every test I meet, glory to His name forever. . . . Now I am an empty vessel in His hands and find it so blessed to abide in Him and to have His words abide in me.⁷⁸

The intensity of the inner experience expressed itself vigorously in outward manifestations. One member of the Band wrote that those who went to the bottom of things "have an eye that loves holiness, fire and hell-shaking dynamite, the holy dance, holy shout, holy laugh. . . ."⁷⁹ After delivering a sermon, Harry Sollenberger reported his feelings in the following manner:

Brother Irwin, I never had such an experience as I had that evening. I have often felt the mighty hand of God resting on me and the magnetic power of God going through my being, but never did I witness it so strong. . . . I never felt sweeter and calmer in my soul. After the message, the jump, shout and dance came on me, and such jumping, shouting and dancing I never did before. . . . The saints were jumping, laughing, crying, dancing and shouting and singing. . . . We had good order all the time.⁸⁰

The letters show a related emphasis--a quest for more of God's grace and goodness, the theological basis for seeking additional (not just two) works of grace. "I am enjoying," wrote Harry Sollenberger, "the unmanageable and magnetic power of God, bless his name, and still going down for more and more, and I expect something new, something richer and deeper than I ever enjoyed before."⁸¹

Battles with the devil, not surprisingly, are also frequently mentioned. The letters support Irwin's teaching that the more perfect one's spiritual state, the stronger the devil attacked. "O blessed to know that the devil hates you," wrote Samuel Lehman.⁸² The sharpness of the battle with the devil, wrote Annie Brechbill, was manifested "one Sunday when God sent Noah Hershey family from south

Dickinson; they were ready to assist us in a hot battle against 'plots of the devil.'" After some "hand to hand fighting with the devil," through prayer and soul travail the victory was won. The result was a "sweeping, shouting, victory in Jesus' name."⁸³

Another emphasis of the Fire-Baptized Band was divine healing. Of those healings reported, perhaps Annie Brechbill's report of being healed from consumption is the most dramatic. For a year she had become increasingly weaker from a severe cough and eventually had to cease work. God revealed to her, she reported, that unless she received divine help she would "be in my grave before many months." She was directed by the Holy Ghost to write an article for *Live Coals* on faith in God. She began to write at once.

When nearly through, after writing a while, the Spirit called to my attention the fact that I had not coughed all that time, which was very unusual. To my utter surprise the voice continued, '*the Lord has healed you.*' All I could say was Amen. I believe it. Instantly my faith touched God and the work was done."⁸⁴

The letters also reflect continued conflict with the Brethren in Christ Church. One member declared that the Spirit of God had been driven out of the River Brethren Church, and as a result that body was the "habitation of Devils." He praised God that he was saved from wearing long hair and the need to part it in the middle to make him look humble (as, of course, the Brethren insisted on his doing).⁸⁵ Annie Brechbill recounted a meeting with some Brethren in Christ (the reason for the meeting is not given):

The wonderful deliverance and experience of dynamite came just in time to equip us for the hottest and most notable battle our regiment has ever had the pleasure of enjoying. After victory came to our band we had meetings every evening. On Friday evening we were first met by our enemies from the south, thus the battle becomes notable. War was declared between the north [the band at Moonlight] and the south [the opposing Brethren living in south Dickinson]. Glory, the collision came. Blood and fire from the south; and blood and fire and vapor of smoke from the north, hallelujah! . . . Saturday evening reinforcements came from the south, but God was more than a match for the devil. God enabled us on Saturday evening to boldly face the enemy and go through with Him in every detail, to the confounding of the enemy and the astonishment of all present, and the victory was so clear and decisive that the unsaved were forced to

How the defection of Irwin affected the Band is not known. It appears that the group did not exist for any length of time. Mrs. Brechbill's reconciliation with the Brethren and her death shortly afterward in 1901 must have seriously affected the Band.

The second location (Moonlight being the first) where controversy developed between Irwin and the Brethren in Christ was at Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. Irwin, as noted above, had held revival services there in November and December of 1897, one of the converts being Amos Musser. Irwin left the Moonlight Camp Meeting to travel to Chambersburg again in August, 1899, to be followed a few days later by Henson and Mary Lenhert.

Before his arrival, however, important developments had taken place. In November, 1898, Harry Sollenberger returned from Kansas with his wife Anna to his home area in Franklin County, Pennsylvania. There he met his grandfather, an uncle and many others whom he had not seen since his childhood. On the day following their arrival, the Sollenbergers attended a love feast at the Air Hill Brethren in Christ church. An overflow crowd was present. The Sollenbergers, along with Ezra and Lea Sheets, also of Kansas, used the situation to share with this large group their understanding of the faith. They chose a hillside bordering the church, and, with victory in their hearts and "the fire burning bright within," they began to sing and preach. "This," reported Sollenberger, "is where the fight began. The elders, scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites and formalists began to counsel, and the devil being their captain, came out and told us to stop." The Kansas group suggested in vain that the church leaders have prayer with them. The result, according to Sollenberger, was a "victory in Jesus 'name."⁸⁷

"All hell was quaking and trembling" following this episode, Sollenberger wrote. The Brethren in Christ leaders of the area

began to lay down "rules and regulations" on how to deal with the Fire-Baptized group, whose leaders (the Sollenbergers and the Sheets) were living with Amos Musser. The "apostate leaders" drew up a paper, which was read in their "temples." According to Sollenberger, the paper declared the following:

Anyone of those that seceded from the church, or have been cast out of the church, are not allowed to sing, pray, testify, or say amen in or on the surrounding ground of the River Brethren church, or we will call for the magistrates, and deal with them according to the common law. Any member of said church asking any of those to tarry with them, or give them the privilege to pray in their house, and if any greet them with a holy kiss, or attend any of their meetings, we will without consideration, expell him and disown him as a brother.

Noting that the man who read the document used tobacco and drank whiskey and had covered up all kinds of uncleanness with his self-righteous garb, Sollenberger asked the Lord to extend his arm of mercy and show these people that salvation is not a matter of form and ceremonies.⁸⁸

Apparently some months passed without any major eruptions. Sollenberger wrote, however, that the Brethren leaders had stirred up the "lewd fellows" to throw rocks at the Fire-Baptized group, and had sent a township constable to warn them not to testify any more in the name of Jesus (the visit of the constable was also reported in a local paper).⁸⁹ Other local papers in early June, 1899, carried the news that the Fire-Baptized Association "seceders from the River Brethren "were still in the area preaching their new doctrine."⁹⁰ It appears that the group maintained some kind of activity through the winter and into the summer of 1899.

If Sollenberger's reporting of the paper prepared by the Brethren leaders is accurate, the Brethren took a firm stand against the seceders. It is known, however, that they were not able to maintain the withdrawal of the holy kiss. One of the Brethren kept the practice with his son-in-law who was in the movement. He was not disciplined, with the result that the withdrawal of the holy

kiss was no longer a measure of separation from the Fire-Baptized group.⁹¹

But during the summer of 1899, the battle, according to Sollenberger, "waxed hotter and hotter till all Pennsylvania [Brethren in Christ Church] was in commotion and uproar." It was at this point that Irwin, Henson, and Mary Lenhert arrived "to press the battle to the gates." Two camp meetings were held in September, 1899, the first at Lehman's Grove (located near the Air Hill church), continuing from September 1 to September 11.⁹² Irwin, whose time was limited because he had to be in Olmitz, Iowa, on September 5, informed his readers that he had no tent, so he preached in the open air. "We preached and sang and shouted the everlasting gospel in the air, with nothing above us but the waving branches of the 'holy grove' and the deep blue vault of heaven. The weather was perfect and the God of fire and dynamite was present from the very first service." The result, Irwin added, was that some were saved, others sanctified holy, a few healed, and others got the fire. Contributing to the success of the meetings was Henson preaching in the power of the Spirit, although he was somewhat worn, given the "strife and strain of the Moonlight conflict."⁹³

The local press (whose accuracy may be questioned) kept the readers informed of the events. One reported that the aim of the "seceders" was the "extermination" of the Brethren church, but that the River Brethren were maintaining a "hostile front to the seceders," as evidenced in their instructions to excommunicate any member who greeted the seceders with a holy kiss. Excommunication was carried out, it was reported, in some cases, thus suggesting a hardening of positions during and following the September camp meetings. Another paper characterized the action taking place in Franklin County as a "religious war." The war became physical when "miscreants" threw some stones at Henson while he was speaking in an evening service.⁹⁴

A second camp meeting was held at New Franklin, located a few miles from the New Guilford Brethren in Christ church. It was scheduled as a ten-day meeting, with Henson and Ezra Sheets as the evangelists. The *Blue Ridge Zephyr* carried an item on this camp meeting, and also reported that Amos Musser had faith that the Lord would help him fly. He jumped from the second floor of his barn with the intent of flying across the yard, only to be picked up more dead than alive.⁹⁵ According to a reliable source, Musser was locally known as "Flying Amos."⁹⁶

There is only one reference in Brethren in Christ sources to the Fire-Baptized movement in Franklin County, and that is a reference to the paper drawn up by the church leaders reported by Sollenberger. In 1901 the North Franklin District asked the Brethren in Christ General Conference to approve a set of resolutions that the district had prepared to deal with the Fire-Baptizers. Conference agreed that the resolutions "were proper and in keeping with the doctrine of the church." Unfortunately, the records of the district during these years are no longer available.⁹⁷

Brown County, Kansas, was the location of a third conflict between the Fire-Baptized group and the Brethren in Christ, although the circumstances are not as clear as in the case of the conflicts at Moonlight and in Franklin County. The major link between the two groups was Frank Kern, a member of the local church, at least until 1899, and also an evangelist in the Fire-Baptized Association.⁹⁸

In June of 1898, as already shown, Henson held meetings in the local Brethren meeting house. N. G. Pulliam (a minister with the movement), reported that in March he (Pulliam) "preached hell and the serpent hissed and squirmed." A Reverend Stevenson then took up the cause and ably directed a few "dynamite and lyddite shells" into the enemy ranks. Then God sent Irwin. Irwin threw a "few lyddite shells with ponderous force upon the head of the already located enemy, and

when the sickly, green smoke from the battle line began to settle down, it produced nausea in the old man that he came out of his hiding place."⁹⁹ According to Irwin, the "hidden rock" that was blocking progress was a man who in his holiness professed "marital purity" (that is, no sexual relations between husband and wife). Calling that doctrine a "damnable delusion of the devil," Irwin reported that the same man had an adulterous lust affair of the heart with a hired girl. Irwin stayed for four days, "long enough to see this doctrine of devils blown to atoms."¹⁰⁰

Finally, it may be noted that we can learn something of the relationship between the Fire-Baptized Association and the Brethren in Christ from the list of leaders that Irwin published in each issue of *Live Coals*. Listed first is the "ruling elder" for each state; no Brethren in Christ was appointed to that post. The longer part of the list contains the "ordained evangelists." Of the 140-143 listed, 14 are of Brethren in Christ background. The accompanying graph carries the name and addresses of these 14, and indicates in which of the 21 issues of *Live Coals* published each name is listed.

Two conclusions may be drawn from these figures. First, only the people living at Moonlight, with the exception of Frank Kern, stayed with Irwin all the way. Second, the Hersheys and the Lenherts dropped out at about the same time--when the Fire-Baptized Association was in a deep crisis. This crisis was caused by Henson's insistence that it was possible to be entirely sanctified and to receive the fire in the same experience. He acknowledged that in his own case two experiences were involved, but he did not believe that two were required. Irwin, however, came to insist, as in the December 1, 1899 issue of *Live Coals*, that two experiences were necessary. When Henson persisted in his views, Irwin excommunicated him. It may be logically assumed that the Hersheys and the Lenherts left Irwin's ranks at the point where Irwin explicitly radicalized the movement by declaring the

Ordained Evangelists of Brethren in Christ Background Listed in *Live Coals*

		Oct. 6, 1899	to	June 15, 1900
Brechbill, Abram	Moonlight, KS.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21		
Brechbill, Fanny	" "	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21		
Brechbill, Annie	" "	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21		
Hershey, Isaac	Donegal, KS	1 2 3 4 5 6		
Hershey, Noah E.	" "	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9		
Hershey, Noah G.	" "	1 2 3 4 5 6		
*Lenhert, John	Okla. City O.T.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9		
*Lenhert, Katie	" " "	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9		
Lenhert, Mary	Abilene	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9		
Sheets, Ezra	Moonlight, "	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21		
Sheets, Lea	" "	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21		
+Sollenberger, Anna	" "	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21		
+Sollenberger, Harry	" "	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21		
Kern, Frank	Hamlin, "	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21		

*The address of John and Katie Lenhert was given as Oklahoma City until issue #7; after that the address was Abilene, Kansas.

+The address of Harry and Anna Sollenberger in the last few issues was Philadelphia, PA.

necessity for two experiences.

In conclusion, it may be observed that the interaction of the Brethren in Christ with Irwinism was a part of the larger Brethren controversy regarding sanctification. From 1887 to 1910 the nature of sanctification was much debated among them. Their 1910 statement did not explicitly condemn Irwinism or any of the major tenets of that position. It clearly stated two, not more, works of grace. It used the concepts of deliverance, destruction, and death as describing what happened to the sin nature; these were not the same as the more radical word "eradication" used by Irwin. And by its moderate content, it implicitly rejected the extreme views of the man from Nebraska.

One statement in the confession reflects the struggle with Irwin--that of Matthew 3:11. The confession quotes the words, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost," but omits the last three words--"and with fire." The omission almost certainly reflects the conflict with Irwin.

There can be little doubt that Irwin's views were a part of the controversy surrounding the developing of the Brethren in Christ doctrine on sanctification. In reaction to his extremism, the Brethren shaped their concept of sanctification in the light of their historic understanding of the faith. Samuel Zook, in a *Visitor* article in May, 1900, summarized the view of the Brethren:

Another important question that now agitates the minds of our people is the teaching of extreme Holiness or Sanctification doctrine. There is a Bible Holiness Sanctification and should be encouraged by our people in all its councils and conferences, but let us remember that true Holiness is not mere enthusiasm that savors strongly of fanaticism, but is a condition upon which the obedient believer enters by faith and obedience as led by the light of God's Holy Spirit and Word. True Bible holiness according to the teaching of God's word is safe and is not only safe, but an absolute necessity, and the hearts of God's people should be and we believe are, open to receive the same, but when Holiness professors begin to follow their own revelations direct from God and set aside the plain teachings of the Gospel on lines that the Church has always held sacred there is great need to stand our guard, because it will bring disaster and diversion among God's

NOTES

¹I am indebted to Avery Zook of Chambersburg, Pennsylvania for researching local Franklin County newspapers from 1897-1899.

²Harold B. Hoyt, "History of the Kansas State Holiness Association Campmeeting," *Yearbook of the Ninetieth Annual Camp Meeting of the Kansas State Holiness Association* (Wichita, Kansas: n.p., 1977), p. 3.

³Editorial in *Sent of God*, August 4, 1892; Editorial in *ibid.*, September 1, 1893; "State Holiness Meeting," *Abilene Weekly Reflector*, December 22, 1892; "State Holiness Works," *ibid.*, February 16, 1893.

⁴"A Remarkable Sect," *Abilene Weekly Reflector*, February 6, 1890. The word Pentecostal was inegral to the holiness movement until the first decade of the twentieth century when the tongues-speaking Pentecostal movement began. The holiness groups then dropped the use of the word in its opposition to the tongues phenomenon.

⁵"Kansas Camp Meeting," *The Christian Witness and Advocate of Bible Holiness*, June 1, 1893, p. 5. Hereafter referred to as *Christian Witness*. *Ibid.*, July 20, 1893, p. 20.

⁶"Facts and Comments," *Christian Witness*, September 28, 1893, p. 4.

⁷For Finley's article see, "Cornelius a Christian," *Evangelical Visitor*, November 1, 1892, p. 324. The *Evangelical Visitor* will subsequently be referred to as *Visitor*.

⁸Kansas Brethren Minutes, September 18, 1894 (in the Brethren in Christ Archives, Grantham, PA).

⁹Owen Alderfer, "The Mind of the Brethren in Christ (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Claremont Graduate School, 1963), p. 160.

¹⁰"Enroute for India," *Visitor*, February 1, 1896, pp. 37-38 and "Letter from Brother and Sister Zook," *Sent of God*, November 21, 1895.

¹¹"From Abilene, Kansas," *Christian Witness*, August 8, 1893, p. 7.

¹²"On Our Mission," *Visitor*, May 1, 1896, pp. 137-38.

¹³David W. Zook, "Mission Work in Japan," *Visitor*, June 1, 1896, pp. 169-70, and Eber Zook, "From the Slums of Philadelphia," *Visitor*, December 15, 1896, pp. 379-80.

¹⁴*Visitor*, June 1, 1896, pp. 169-70.

¹⁵"Christ and the Head of the Church," *Visitor*, June 15, 1896, p. 182.

¹⁶"The River Brethren," *Way of Faith*, November 25, 1895, p. 3.

¹⁷*Visitor*, December 1, 1896, p. 360.

¹⁸*Visitor*, June 1, 1897, pp. 168-69.

¹⁹*Visitor*, April 1, 1898, pp. 131-32.

²⁰The Chambersburg paper, *Franklin Repository*, carried notices of the preaching of Irwin in the following issues: November 20 and 23, December 10 and 11. Irwin stayed during the meetings with a retired United Brethren minister, John Fohl. Fohl contributed many articles to the *Visitor*, as well as to other holiness papers, such as *The Way of Faith* and *Sent of God*.

²¹*Visitor*, January 1, 1898, p. 11.

²²*Visitor*, April 1, 1898, p. 131.

²³*Visitor*, January 1, 1898, pp. 9-10.

²⁴John H. and C. A. Myers, "A Voice from the Field," *Visitor*, August 15, 1898, p. 317.

²⁵John H. and C. A. Myers, "Wayside Joltings," *Visitor*, December 15, 1898, pp. 478-79.

²⁶Noah and Mary Zook, "On Our Mission," *Visitor*, July 15, 1898, p. 277.

²⁷See, for example, J. I. and M. A. Stauffer, "Our Faith Mission," *Visitor*, April 1, 1898, pp. 136-37, and Barbara Millinger, "Experience," *Visitor*, January 15, 1898, pp. 28-29.

²⁸*Visitor*, March 1, 1898, pp. 86-87.

²⁹*Visitor*, May 1, 1897, p. 134.

³⁰*Visitor*, April 1, 1899, p. 129.

³¹C. C. Burkholder, "The Arizona Mission," *Visitor*, September 1, 1897, p. 287.

³²M. I. Jones, "The Source of Power," *Visitor*, May 1, 1898, pp. 166-67.

³³*Visitor*, June 15, 1897, pp. 182-83.

³⁴*Sent of God*, September 1, 1892 and June 15, 1893. *Sent of God* was published by the Hepzibah Faith Missionary Association.

³⁵Gladys Dodd, "The Religious Background of the Eisenhower Family" (unpublished B.D. thesis, Nazarene Theological Seminary, 1959), p. 379.

³⁶See, for example, *Sent of God*, May 3, 1894; February 7, 1895; and February 21, 1895.

³⁷"Fanaticism," *Sent of God*, June 15, 1899.

³⁸*Visitor*, August 1, 1897, p. 233.

³⁹*Visitor*, November 1, 1897, p. 366.

40. For these and other expressions, see John H. Myers, "God's Order in the Plan of Salvation," *Visitor*, July 1, 1898, p. 242; Henry H. Engle, "Try the Spirits," *Visitor*, June 15, 1898; Samuel Zook, "Feeding the Lambs," *Visitor*, December 1, 1899, p. 441; Henry Engle, "Re-view and Pre-view," *Visitor*, January 1, 1898, p. 5; I. Breckbill, "The Unpardonable Sin," *Visitor*, May 15, 1900, p. 184.

41 *Visitor*, August 1, 1897, p. 233.

42 J. G. Cassel, "The Life of Holiness," *Visitor*, August 15, 1897, pp. 254-55.

43 H. N. Engle, "The Light of the World," *Visitor*, September 1, 1898, p. 32.

44 Minutes of the Kansas Joint Council, March 22-23, 1895 (in the Brethren in Christ Archives).

45 *Visitor*, June 15, 1897, p. 185.

46 Alice Hamilton, "What God Did for Me," *Visitor*, May 1, 1898, p. 170.

47 "Bogus Salvation," *Visitor*, August 1, 1898, p. 294.

48 Samuel Zook, "Sound Doctrine," *Visitor*, October 15, 1899, p. 381. See also H. N. Engle, "Experience or Faith?" , February 15, 1899, p. 61.

49 J. G. Cassel, "The Life of Holiness," *Visitor*, August 15, 1897, pp. 254-55.

50 "Abide in Me," *Visitor*, November, 1898, p. 401.

51 D. W. Zook, "Daily Experience," *Visitor*, February 15, 1898, pp. 67-68.

52 Samuel Zook, "The Law of Christ," *Visitor*, April 1, 1900, p. 121.

53 Henry Engle, "Looking Unto Jesus," *Visitor*, November 15, 1897, p. 373, and "The Light of the World," *Visitor*, September 1, 1898, p. 321.

54 Samuel Zook, "Self-Abasement," *Visitor*, August 1, 1899, p. 281.

55 Henry Engle, "The Way of Salvation," *Visitor*, March 15, 1899, p. 101.

56 Henry Engle, "Looking Unto Jesus," *Visitor*, November 15, 1897, p. 373.

57 "The Light of the World," *Visitor*, September 1, 1898, p. 321.

58 "Behavior in God's House," *Visitor*, May 1, 1900, p. 161.

59 "Feeding the Lambs," *Visitor*, December 1, 1899, p. 441.

60 "Searching Meetings," *Visitor*, August 1, 1898, p. 294, and *Visitor*, September 1, 1899, p. 334. See also *Abilene Weekly Reflector*, July 14, 1898, p. 5.

- ⁶¹ *Visitor*, June 15, 1899, p. 234.
- ⁶² Personal interview with Bishop Monroe Book, Abilene, Kansas, June 17, 1968.
- ⁶³ *Visitor*, November 1, 1899, p. 415.
- ⁶⁴ *Visitor*, November 15, 1899, p. 435.
- ⁶⁵ B. H. Irwin, "Editorial-Correspondence," *Live Coals of Fire*, October 6, 1899, p. 1. Hereafter referred to as *Live Coals*. (*Live Coals* was edited by Irwin, and was the paper of the Fire-Baptized Holiness Association.) Annie N. Breckbill, "That Camp Meeting -- Mrs. Breckbill Writes of the Fire Brand Doings," *Abilene Weekly Reflector*, September 7, 1899, p. 9. "Camp Meeting A Plenty," *Abilene Weekly Reflector*, July 27, 1899, p. 11. "Moonlight," *Abilene Weekly Reflector*; August 17, 1899, p. 5.
- ⁶⁶ Breckbill, "That Camp Meeting," *Abilene Weekly Reflector*, September 7, 1899, p. 9.
- ⁶⁷ "Duched the Preacher," *Abilene Weekly Reflector*, August 24, 1899, p. 7.
- ⁶⁸ "A Curious Kansas Sect," *Kansas City Star*, January 19, 1901, pp. 2-3.
- ⁶⁹ *Visitor*, September 1, 1899, p. 334.
- ⁷⁰ Annie Breckbill, "Grumblers," *Live Coals*, October 20, 1899, pp. 2-3.
- ⁷¹ Minutes of the Council of the Brethren in Christ at the Zion Meeting House, February 19, 1889.
- ⁷² For Irwin's statements, see *Live Coals*, October 6, 1899, p. 1. For Zook's disclaimer of responsibility, see *Visitor*, September 15, 1899, p. 354. For the camp meeting, see also *Abilene Weekly Reflector*, August 24, 1899, p. 9, which carries the following: "The fire Brand Sect is composed largely of former River Brethren, but they are very demonstrative in their services and religious life. They greet each other with the cry, 'Fire! Fire!' and claim to be the scatterers of gospel fire for this generation. It will be remembered that Irwin's teaching caused scores of farmers to give up raising of hogs when here several years ago. He claims some kind of ability to cure diseases by laying on of hands."
- ⁷³ "Warning to Backsliders," *Live Coals*, May 4, 1900, p. 2; "The Temptation of Jesus," *Live Coals*, October 29, 1899, p. 2.
- ⁷⁴ "Warning to Backsliders," *Live Coals*, May 4, 1900, p. 2.
- ⁷⁵ *Ibid*, and *Live Coals*, October 6, 1899, p. 1.
- ⁷⁶ *Live Coals*, October 13, 1899, p. 1.
- ⁷⁷ See articles in *Live Coals* for March 9, April 1, and April 6, 1900.

⁷⁸See, for example, Annie Brechbill's letter in *Live Coals*, October 13, 1899, p. 1.

⁷⁹"A Single Eye," *Live Coals*, December 1, 1899.

⁸⁰*Live Coals*, December 15, 1899, p. 5.

⁸¹*Live Coals*, January 26, 1900, p. 5.

⁸²For this letter, see Samuel Z. Lehman to Harry Lehman, February 13, 1900. Typescript among the Asa W. Climenhaga Papers, Brethren in Christ Archives.

⁸³*Live Coals*, October 13, 1899, p. 1.

⁸⁴*Live Coals*, June 1, 1900, p. 3.

⁸⁵See the Samuel Lehman letter noted above.

⁸⁶*Live Coals*, January 26, 1900, p. 3. See also *Live Coals*, November 10, 1899, p. 8.

⁸⁷H. E. Sollenberger, "Peaceable Habitations," *Live Coals*, November 10, 1899, p. 7.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*

⁸⁹*Blue Ridge Zephyr*, September 12, 1899.

⁹⁰*Franklin Repository*, June 2, 1899; *The Shippensburg News*, June 19, 1899.

⁹¹Personal interview between Avery Zook and his father Harvey Zook, August 11, 1979.

⁹²*Franklin Repository*, August 30, 1899.

⁹³*Live Coals*, October 13, 1899, p. 1.

⁹⁴*Franklin Repository*, September 2 and 11, 1899; *The Shippensburg News*, September 8, 1899.

⁹⁵*Blue Ridge Zephyr*, September 16, 1899.

⁹⁶Avery Zook, interview with Harvey Zook.

⁹⁷*General Conference Minutes*, 1901, p. 10.

⁹⁸Noah and Mary Zook, "On our Mission," *Visitor*, November 1, 1898, p. 47. Also *Brethren Almanac and Directory*, 1897 and 1898; *Directory* for 1899 and 1903.

⁹⁹*Live Coals*, April 6, 1900, p. 5.

¹⁰⁰*Live Coals*, April 20, 1900, p. 1.

¹⁰¹"Conference Forecast," *Visitor*, May 1, 1900, p. 174.

FINDING OUR ROOTS: ANABAPTISM AND THE EARLY CHURCH

By David L. Hall*

The original intentions of the early Anabaptists came from their understanding of the Early Church. In brief, the Anabaptists maintained that the major reformers did not carry the Reformation to its logical conclusion--the formation of a truly biblical church.¹ Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, and others had corrected the major errors which they perceived as developing in the history of the Church; the "Radical Reformers" (Anabaptists), however, wanted to scrap everything that was a product of tradition and go back to the Early Church of the Scriptures.

It is this desire to go back to the Early Church that raises questions we in the Brethren in Christ Church need face since we are part of those grouped as "Anabaptists: Four Centuries Later."² These questions are: (1) the relationship of Scripture and tradition; (2) the organizational structure of the Church; and (3) the tension between pluralism and purity, or unity and diversity. This article will make no attempt to give exhaustive answers; rather, it is hoped that raising the questions will lead to continued discussion.

The Relationship of Scripture and Tradition

Historically, tradition was of little concern to the early

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Anabaptists. This was undoubtedly because of their reaction to the Church of their day, their lack of scholarly continuity, and their stated intention of being simply biblical. Their use of the Scriptures was straightforward and literal.³ Obviously, tradition has a large place in the life of Anabaptist people today. But the issue of getting back to the Early Church is an issue of the relationship between Scripture and tradition, and to that end there are foundational observations to be made.

To begin, it is important to keep in mind that the Scriptures were not produced in a vacuum. The New Testament documents were written in response to *ad hoc* situations in the early life of Christianity. The composite of the particular twenty-seven books which now make up our New Testament was an ongoing process during the first four and one-half centuries after Christ. The canon came to us through the history and development of the Church. This in itself relates the Scriptures to early tradition, rather than separating Scripture and tradition into mutually exclusive areas.

We affirm the Scriptures as the "rule of faith," but what is the rule of faith except what is accepted and taught by the Church? From the beginning the Church preached its gospel. This preaching began before the New Testament was written and long before it was canonized. The study of the doctrine of tradition in the first three centuries is the study of the precise process of the proclaimed word of the Church being written down to preserve the apostolic authority.⁴

And just as the Scriptures were written in a particular situation and were recognized as Scripture by the Church, so today there is no legitimate private interpretation of them that separates the written letter from its origin and manner of preservation. There is a sense in which the Church is the standard for the proper interpretation of Scripture. Clearly, those interpretations which lie outside the boundaries of historical continuity are to be rejected as false.

This is a call, then, for "right interpretation", for interpretation which demands a careful exegesis, which includes remembering one's own bias and limitations. Despite the early Anabaptists' methodology, there can be no simplistic approach to the Scriptures. A high view of the Scriptures, which, it is true, we have inherited from our past, demands a recognition and interaction with the complexities (linguistic, historical, cultural, and religious) with which God chose to give them. And we also need to recognize the place the developing traditions of the Church in the first three centuries had in setting the tone for the proper "rule of faith."

One might say this sounds much like the Roman doctrine of the Church in interpreting the Scripture. It is somewhat, but it is something the Protestant tradition needs to hear today. The Word of God had its origin in and belongs to the faith community. We have partaken too long in a society that exalts autonomy. A congregation free of any at-large authority or an individual merely following his private interpretation of Scripture is a foreign thought to that expressed by those in the Early Church. Consider these words from one of the Apostolic Fathers: "Similarly, all are to respect the deacons as Jesus Christ and the bishops as a copy of the Father and the presbyters as the council of God and the band of the apostles. For apart from these no group can be called a church."⁵

Ignatius also writes that anyone bringing division or following "a maker of schism" will not inherit the Kingdom of God.⁶ Obviously, the Fathers would be aghast at the division which has occurred in the Church (which is not to say they would not have felt the same way about the excesses and deviations which had come to the Church by the sixteenth century). But if anything is to be gleaned from the writings of these men who lived within a generation or two of the apostles, it is the necessity to have unity and a line of

authority. In this day, when there is a move toward congregational autonomy and increasing pluralism in the Brethren in Christ Church, we need to hear the rule of faith as it comes through our Church.

The Organizational Structure of the Church

While the Church was moving from an oral to a written rule of faith, it was also in organizational transition. The Church began operating almost totally on a pneumatic basis, i.e., as people were led by the Spirit. They lived simply from one day to another with their existential life in the Spirit being the central focus (Acts 2:42-47). Their unity was facilitated by spatial proximity and the group presence of the twelve Apostles (Acts 4:32, 33). When special problems came, the direction of the Spirit played the major part in the solution (Acts 6). In one of the earlier of Paul's epistles (Corinthians), direct prophecy from the Spirit through an individual was the medium of revelation to the Church (I Cor. 14). Little thought was given at first to long-range governing policies for the churches; the Lord's coming was at hand (I and II Thess.). But persecution came to the Church and scattered the Apostles (Acts 8:1f), and with that scattering, Gentiles became believers and new decisions had to be made (Acts 11). And this was not the most harmonious issue (Gal. 2:11f).

By the time I and II Timothy were written, a noticeable change had occurred in the Church. Offices had emerged with explicit guidelines for on-going church life. The Petrine letters show this even more clearly. The second coming was still the hope of the Church, but Christianity had entrenched itself for a longer war than first was expected.

There seems also to be a shift discernible in the worship patterns.⁷ Originally, the Church's meetings were marked by the spontaneity of the existential life in the Spirit. These were the

"house churches" of Acts, and the style of meeting depicted in I Corinthians 11-14. That in itself was a change from the very beginning where the traditions of Jewish worship were maintained. In order to retain some of the early hymns and creeds that flowed from the earlier days of spontaneity, liturgical worship developed. Examples of liturgical statements can be found in Paul where he seems to be quoting early formulae that had proven themselves significant in the life of the Church. These are Philippians 2:6-11, I Timothy 3:16b, and II Timothy 2:11-13. And this was only a part of the ongoing conversion of the oral rule of faith to the written, as mentioned above.

One last area where we see the change in organizational structure is through the institutionalization of the sacraments. Once again there is evidence of process.⁸ There is the lack of anything in Jesus' ministry which can be considered sacramental. He did no baptisms (for the bulk of his ministry). His table fellowship was the daily meal. His ministry had no ritual features. But with the coming of Pentecost, baptism was immediately used within the context of Jesus' followers. The initial emphasis was eschatological, a takeover of John's baptism. As Christianity moved out into the Hellenistic world, the focus was replaced by a backward look to Jesus' death.

The Lord's Supper was, at first, the Passover Meal of the Jewish community, with special significance for Jesus' disciples. The Lord's Supper itself was part of a long process in the Church. It was a proclamation of Jesus' death. For some Christians, especially Christians at Corinth, it developed into semi-magic, effecting salvation and union with the Lord. This was something Paul contested.

Towards the end of the first century, institutionalism and sacramentalism were well established trends, as witnessed earlier by the Pastorals (I and II Tim. and Titus) and in I Clement. The

fourth Gospel and the Johannine epistles, which were written at about the end of the first century, imply a resistance to this institutionalism. Thus we see life in the Early Church progressing in response to tensions that existed in most areas of faith and practice.

The Tension Between Pluralism and Purity

The original issue in this study is the early Anabaptists' desire to get back to the Early Church. This has been an often repeated quest, and one made most explicit by Watchman Nee.⁹ But in response to this quest, it is necessary to ask just what the Early Church was. Walter Bauer brought this to the fore in scholarly debate with his *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum* in 1934.¹⁰ The discussion has been continued and forwarded by James Dunn in *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament*. The subtitle, *An Inquiry Into the Character of Earliest Christianity*, expresses the thrust of the book.

In the desire to go back to the Early Church, one must first define its characteristics. But to do that is to discover more diversity than many care to admit. The Anabaptists based their practice on the idea that behind all the trappings of Church tradition there was an early period of Church life having a pristine purity of doctrine and practice. It was that doctrine and practice to which they wished to return; it is that same doctrine and practice to which we would commit ourselves today.

But the facts are against those who wish to embrace any such ideal beyond a very limited point.¹¹ There was much more diversity in the Early Church than unity. More than anything else, the early years of the Church were years of flux as she made her way as an established religion in the early centuries of the Christian era. This is not to say that there were (are) no boundaries, only that Early Church history, like biblical interpretation, is no simplistic

undertaking. And although the direction of the early Anabaptists has proven itself somewhat, the methodology they used was at best tendentious.

These first two sections have projected at least an idea of the diversity and ongoing modification in the doctrine and practice of the Church. Further elucidation is appropriate here, however. To that end, reference is made to *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* because of its importance. James Dunn, the author who is a professor at University of Nottingham, looks at various "types" of early Christianity. He finds diversity in the existence of Jewish Christianity, Hellenistic Christianity, Apocalyptic Christianity, and early Catholicism.

It must be remembered that Christianity had its origin in Judaism. Jesus himself was a Palestinian Jew, and he spoke out of the background of his own day and culture. Part of the diversity in the New Testament comes at this very point. Jesus came preaching the Kingdom of God; the Church preached Jesus.¹² Yet along with this diversity, there was a continuity. As Jesus was a Jew, the first stage of the Christian Church was Jewish. It was Jewish pilgrims who heard Peter's word on the day of Pentecost and believed. At this point, Christianity was viewed as just another sect of the day. The believers continued to meet in the temple and to follow Jewish Law.¹³ They saw themselves simply as a fulfilled Judaism, the beginning of eschatological Israel. Representatives of this part of the Christian spectrum are found in the New Testament through the books of Matthew and James. Both of these books stand in a tension with the concepts in the Pauline writings. Jewish Christianity was the basis for the later Ebionites, who were eventually declared heretical.

Hellenistic Christianity is that portion of the faith which spread beyond Palestine and Judaism. It was the fruit of the Gentile

mission and resulted in Christianity's contact with Greek philosophy speculation, mystery cults, and Gnosticism. With the introduction of Hellenistic Gentiles into the Church, new areas of tension arose. Some prejudice had already been expressed toward the Hellenistic Jews (Acts 6), but it was the Gentiles who brought the real strain (Acts 11). Further insight into the situation comes from Paul in Galatians, and other passages where references are made to circumcision. The place of the Law and the practices of Gentile believers was the first major obstacle in the development of the new faith.

But there were inherent tensions within Hellenistic Christianity. To what degree were the pagan philosophies and practices admissible? The Hellenists were ready to express the Christian message not through the Jewish/Old Testament backgrounds and early formulations, but through idioms and life-style most appropriate to its several situations and societies.¹⁴ This was quite a spectrum. On the one hand there were the persons of Paul and John. But going in fringe directions were the opponents indicated in I Corinthians, Colossians, the Pastorals and Jude. These were yet in the Church, but courting danger. Then there were those referred to in John 2:19, and finally, the Gnostics themselves. So like Jewish Christianity, Hellenistic Christianity had a fringe which became heretical.

Apocalypticism played an integral part in first century Christianity. Central to Jesus' message was the eschatological statement, "the Kingdom of God." Christianity was born in a world saturated with apocalyptic thought. The New Testament itself contains its share of apocalyptic literature. It was this dominating thought that overshadowed the Church in its earliest days. "The Lord returns" was the motif governing the Church's life and practices. But apocalyptic styles did not fit so easily into the growing institutionalism of the Church.¹⁵ The book of Revelation was a long time

in being accepted in the canon. The tensions inherent with the presence of apocalyptic and institutional directions in the Church account for the second century movement of Montanism, with its emphasis on ethical strictness and pneumatic enthusiasm, which were reactions to the growing institutionalism.

Finally, there was the expression of Christianity which Dunn calls "Early Catholicism."¹⁶ Most Protestants, and especially the Anabaptists, considered Catholicism a post-apostolic development, a falling away from the primeval purity and simplicity of the first century. The Catholics themselves maintain it was simply the natural unfolding of what had belonged to the essence of Christianity from the first. The only way to find a possible answer is to see if there are New Testament writings which project the historically emerging Catholic orthodoxy.

Early Catholicism can be distinguished by three main features: (1) the fading of the parousia hope, i.e., the second coming of Christ; (2) increasing institutionalization; and (3) crystallization of the faith into set forms.¹⁷ These characteristics developed slowly as the other forms of pneumatic, apocalyptic and spontaneous life gradually dissipated. These differing strains and emphases are evident in the New Testament material.¹⁸ Early Catholicism is to be found in the New Testament, the clearest examples being the Pastorals. "In them," Dunn says, "the parousia hope is a faded shadow of its earliest expression, in them institutionalization is already well advanced, in them Christian faith has already set fast in fixed forms."¹⁹ The other clearest example of early Catholicism within the New Testament is II Peter, particularly because of its treatment of the parousia and its appeal to the sacred tradition from the founding era of Christianity.

John's writings, however, are best understood as a reaction against early Catholicism. Luke - Acts is a sort of compromise between an early Catholic perspective and the enthusiasm of the first Christians. Early Catholicism itself was a compromise between Jewish and Hellenistic Christianity, absorbing the most enduring elements of both and rejecting the radical (heretical) extremes of Ebionism and Christian Gnosticism. With the emergence of early Catholicism came the finer lines of orthodoxy. And while this strengthened the doctrinal development and provided firm answers for theology, it also brought weakness to the life of the Church. Overstructured organization with its concrete offices and ritual brought not only crystallization, but petrification. The Church was on the way to losing the eschatological tension and the pneumatic focus which produced the spontaneity of Spirit-life.

It is at this point that we look again to the original question of the Anabaptists and to their policy of *restitutio*, i. e., returning to faith and practice of the Early Church. In their desire to restore the purity of the Early Church, it is to be concluded that they were chasing the elusive dream. "The Early Church," as some stable and pure expression of Christianity, never existed. And where does that leave the people of Anabaptist lineage today?

To answer this, it is necessary to come to some conclusion concerning the diversity in the New Testament material as explained above. Any unifying strains must be identified. Finally, we will look at expressions of the early tradition to see where there might be points of continuity with what we understand today as our Anabaptist tradition.

Coming to grips with diversity means more than a mere recognition of the fact; the implications of diversity must be sought. Commitment to the Scriptures demands that one respects not only their

content, but their manner of transmission as well. The New Testament documents had their origins in diverse situations and from diverse authors. Yet the Holy Spirit superintended the whole process in such a way that we have an infallible guide for faith and practice in its diversity. So what does that diversity say?

Through its diversity, the New Testament sets the perimeters for the Church's faith and practice. As James Dunn says, "It marks out the limits for acceptable diversity."²⁰ The church is a living organism whose life comes from the Spirit. Exacting formulae and minute doctrines are not the emphasis of the New Testament. Bondage to the letter can bring death even as it did in the Old Testament. Faith and practice must have room for process and expansion, not only from Judaism to Hellenism, but also from century to century. The endeavor to preserve life through institutionalization and precise credal formulae will only bring death if spontaneity and an allowance for development are excluded. We must keep before us the famous precept: in essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity. Diversity reveals how few the essentials are and how wide is the range of acceptable liberty.

However, to leave the discussion at this point would result in a complete unsettling; the gospel ship would be cut from all moorings; the body would have no head. If there is room for so much flux, what is the constant? If the diversity of the New Testament reveals the circumference of the circle, what is the center? There is a consistent unifying factor that runs throughout all the diverse types in the New Testament. Whether one looks to the Jewish, Hellenistic, Apocalyptic, or early Catholic Christianity of the Early Church, one confession is clear and absolute: Jesus is Lord. The unifying element was the continuity between the historical Jesus and the exalted Christ. However else the Early Church differed

in various times and places, it was constant in its claim that the man Jesus from Nazareth was also the Christ exalted by God and reigning as Lord. Christianity was, in essence, Jesus Christ. James Dunn explains as follows:

Christianity begins from and finally depends on the conviction that in Jesus we still have a paradigm for man's relation to God and man's relation to man, that in Jesus' life, death and life out of death we see the clearest and fullest embodiment of divine grace, of creative wisdom and power, that ever achieved historical actuality, that the Christian is accepted by God and enabled to love God and his neighbor by that same grace which we now recognize to have the character of that same Jesus.²¹

The central question, therefore, and the unifying possibility, is found in what one does with Jesus Christ.

As we move to look at the Anabaptist tradition and how it has continuity with the Early Church, this is a good place to begin. The Anabaptists took Jesus seriously. In many Christian circles Paul has actually been the hero. Jesus is there for what he did, but not listened to so much for what he had to say. But the opposite has been one of the major emphases in the Anabaptist teaching, i.e., the essence of Christianity as discipleship as taught by Jesus.²² This meant "the transformation of the entire way of life of the individual believer and society so that it should be fashioned after the teachings and example of Christ."²³ It was this sensitivity to the person of Christ, and therefore his teachings, which created additional elements in Anabaptist life and thought.

One of these was the concept of the Church as brotherhood. This had implications beginning at the point of inception and following through into Church life. Church membership began with and was based upon true conversion. It resulted in holy living and discipleship. This was in contrast to the Reformers' idea of a mass state church with membership being the population from birth to the grave. And it was this issue that brought Anabaptist opposition to infant baptism. How could infants give a commitment based upon

a knowledge of true Christianity?

This was also intertwined in the second place with the insistence on a separated Church conformed not to the world, but to Christ. This conformity was to Christ in his example of living, serving, suffering, and dying. Again there is the Christocentricity along with issues that type of conformity entails.

A third emphasis comes directly from Christ and a commitment to him and his teachings: the ethic of love and nonresistance. This applied to all human relationships and was understood to mean "complete abandonment of all warfare, strife, and violence, and of the taking of human life."²⁴

These, then, are the emphases of the Anabaptists--Christ himself, a mature commitment to Christ and his teachings, and church purity.

Keeping in mind the original question, how much continuity do these emphases with their particular manifestations have with the Early Church and its diversity? Obviously, the Christocentricity is there, but a question may be raised about the other particular doctrines/practices stressed by the Anabaptists.

It is the thesis of this paper that Anabaptist beliefs and practices have a definite continuity with what can be found in the life of the Early Church. But the diversity in the Church's early history is so great that while our traditions can be substantiated by some Early Church practices, there is no way that one tradition can claim exclusive right to the continuity of Early Church doctrine and/or practice.

There are those who have looked with disdain on much that has come down from Anabaptism. An example of this is Raymond Brown, a Roman Catholic scholar, who said of feetwashing that "a few small Christian sects have understood this imitation in a literal way."²⁵ Some have insinuated that the Brethren practice of trine baptism is some idiosyncratic aberration of the eighteenth century.²⁶ Still

others would charge that the Anabaptist teaching of nonresistance is a misunderstood and overly literalized interpretation of hyperbolic statements in the New Testament.

These charges can be met by a renewed reading of the Patristic writings. The writings of these early leaders who lived within a few generations of the Apostles have much to contribute to the Church at large, and the Brethren in Christ would find a certain amount of camaraderie reading Tertullian's *On Baptism*.²⁷ He speaks to believer's baptism, adult commitment, and even brings in implications of footwashing. Hippolytus has a classic statement in his *Apostolic Tradition* on the matter of military service for those coming into the church.²⁸ He also mentions a trine formula for baptism (so it is not altogether an eighteenth century aberration after all).²⁹

But while it is refreshing to read the Fathers and see some of our practices confirmed by earlier practice, one soon discovers it is not for proving oneself right that these writings should be read. Rather, we can discover a richness of heritage that goes beyond sectarian nomenclature. We can see the workings of God's Spirit through a diversity of Christian traditions that have been faithful to the unifying confession that Jesus the man is the Christ of God. And while we appreciate our own tradition with its doctrines and practices, we are able to lift our horizons and come closer to Jesus' prayer, "that they may be one. . . ."

NOTES

¹J. Howard Kauffman and Leland Harder, *Anabaptists Four Centuries Later* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1975), p. 19.

²*Ibid.*

³This opens the question of hermeneutics, which a following article will discuss. See Arthur M. Climenhaga, "Towards a Brethren in Christ Hermeneutic(s)," *Brethren in Christ History and Life* (June, 1978), pp. 18-25.

⁴See F. F. Bruce, *Tradition: Old and New* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), and R. P. C. Hanson, *Tradition in the Early Church* (London: SCM/Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963).

⁵Ignatius to the Trallians, 3:1, in Jack Sparks, ed., *The Apostolic Fathers* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1978), p. 93.

⁶Ignatius to the Philadelphians, 3:3 in *ibid.*, p. 105.

⁷Note Chapter VII, "Patterns of Worship," in James D. G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), pp. 124-149.

⁸Note Chapter XIII, "Sacraments," in *ibid.*, pp. 150-173.

⁹Watchman Nee, *The Normal Christian Church Life* (Washington D.C.: International Students Press, 1962).

¹⁰Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, 2nd German edition, G. Strecker, trans. Philadelphia Seminar on Christian Origins. R.A. Kroft and G. Krodel, eds. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971).

¹¹For a full discussion, see Dunn, *ibid.*

¹²*Ibid.*, pp. 13-32. Beyond this, of course, is the whole debate in scholarship concerning Jesus and Paul. Two books with an evangelical perspective here are F. F. Bruce, *Paul and Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1974), and H. N. Ridderbos, *Paul and Jesus* (Nutley, NJ: Prebyterian and Reformed, 1975).

¹³Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament*, pp. 235-266.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 267-308.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 309-340.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 341-366.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 344.

¹⁸A detailed examination of the biblical data is found in *ibid.*, pp. 344-362.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 363.

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 378.

²¹*Ibid.*, p. 376.

²²Guy F. Hershberger, ed., *The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision*.

²³*Ibid.*, pp. 42, 43.

²⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 51.

²⁵Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, The Anchor Bible #29A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970), p. 558.

²⁶Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale U. Press, 1972), p. 240.

²⁷E. Evans, ed., *Tertullian's Homily on Baptism* (London: SPCK, 1964).

²⁸B. S. Easton, ed., *The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus* (Hamden, CT: Shoestring Press, 1962), p. 42.

²⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 46, 47.

TRENDS IN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AMONG BRETHERN IN CHRIST MINISTERS:
1975-1980

*By Mark W. Charlton**

INTRODUCTION

The Brethren in Christ Church has traditionally opposed any participation in politics by its members. This position stemmed in large part from the theological conception of the church as a disciplined community of believers. The emphasis which the Brethren in Christ placed on the common life encompassed all areas of life including its social, economic, and political aspects. Particular emphasis was placed on the notion of separation from the world, especially from the political structures of society. This led to a very strong position of total non-participation in politics.

The Brethren in Christ position was reflected in a number of official resolutions passed by both the General Conference and district councils of the church during the latter part of the nineteenth century. These resolutions strictly forbade members from voting, joining unions or political organizations, holding public office, or even attending political gatherings.¹ That these injunctions were meant to be taken seriously was clearly shown in the case of Archie C. Carmichael. Disregarding the prohibitions against political activity, Carmichael, a minister in the church,

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successfully ran for Member of the Canadian Federal Parliament. In response to this infraction of its doctrine, Canada Joint Council set up a special committee to study the matter. In 1924, General conference was petitioned to give the Canadian Conference direction. The response was clear and unequivocal:

Any member of the Brethren in Christ Church, who accepts or continues in Parliamentary nominations or a seat in any legislative assembly directly under political influences which involves the principle of non-resistance as believed by the Brethren in Christ, thereby automatically disenfranchises himself from holding any official position in the gift of the Church (if holding such) and suspends himself from full fellowship and communication privileges until he shall retire from such a position and publicly confess the impropriety of this action.²

At its next meeting in 1924, Canada Joint Council ordered Carmichael "suspended from communion privileges."³

The Brethren in Christ view on political participation was based on several arguments. Perhaps most fundamentally, political non-involvement was seen as being intimately related to the doctrine of non-resistance. Since the government could take ultimate recourse to the sword, it was felt that the Christian could not commit himself to an institution that might call into question his obedience to God's call to a life of suffering, love, and peace.⁴

The doctrine of separation provided a further basis for rejecting political involvement. Politics were seen as an activity dominated by unbelievers who frequently engaged in questionable behaviour. Thus involvement with such individuals, it was argued, would cause the Christian to be "unequally yoked" with unbelievers.⁵ Furthermore, if a Christian were politically involved, he might be called upon to take a civil oath, which would contravene Christ's injunction to "swear not at all."

In addition to these theological arguments, there was a very pragmatic basis to the Brethren position on non-participation. Many Brethren believed that involvement in political affairs could jeopardize their conscientious objector status. This seemed to be

confirmed in their minds by the questions about voting practices that were raised by public officials when discussing military exemption of the Brethren.⁶

Since 1924 when Carmichael was disciplined, the Brethren in Christ attitude toward politics appears to have undergone some change. This is undoubtedly in part a result of the denomination's movement away from the emphasis on a community-based faith to an individualized salvation. With this change in theological perspective, the Brethren in Christ developed a growing acceptance of American society. As they become more closely identified with main-stream American Protestantism, they also become more willing to participate in the social, economic, and political aspects of society.⁷

It is now more than fifty years since Carmichael was censured for holding political office; thus it is pertinent to examine the attitude toward political participation within the Brethren in Christ Church today. In 1975, a study was undertaken in an effort to determine to what extent Brethren in Christ ministers, as a leadership group within the church, currently participated in politics.⁸ In 1981, a second survey was carried out using the same questions but involving a larger number of Brethren in Christ ministers. This article reports on the results of these two surveys. It will attempt to examine what trends can be identified in Brethren in Christ political participation. Further, this article will examine the differences in political involvement by nationality, age, and education. I am more interested in identifying certain trends than in explaining why such trends have developed. Although I shall tentatively suggest some possible explanations, I hope that this study will stimulate further research and discussion on the factors influencing changing Brethren in Christ attitudes toward political and social issues.

The Sample

The first sample of Brethren in Christ ministers was collected during the early spring of 1975. One hundred questionnaires were mailed to addresses of active ministers serving in pastoral assignments in Canada and the United States. Since the number of Canadian ministers is considerably smaller, questionnaires were sent to all of the available addresses. The addresses in the United States were chosen randomly with the number sent to each state in only "rough" proportion to the number of churches. Of the ninety questionnaires returned, twenty-four were Canadian citizens and sixty-six were American.

For the 1981 survey, it was decided to enlarge our sample. Using the directory of ministers as printed in the Minutes of the 1980 General Conference, questionnaires were sent to all individuals listed with United States and Canadian addresses. Thus the sampling included not only those ministers currently in pastoral positions, but also those who are now involved in other aspects of church work or who are retired. A total of 421 questionnaires were sent out. Of the 248 responses, 33 were Canadian citizens and 215 were American citizens. Although the response rate to the first survey was a surprisingly high 90%, the return rate of the second survey was an acceptable 51%.

The Instrument

The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part was composed of personal inventory questions such as age, citizenship, education, and present location. The second was composed of seven questions concerning the political activity of the respondent.

Six of the items on activity were used to develop a political activity scale for the purpose of analysis and comparison. The questions and the scoring procedure were modified versions of one used by Julian Woodward and Elmo Roper.⁹ This scale was designed to classify respondents for comparative purposes, according to the degree in which they engage in political activity. The exact scoring system is given in the appendix. Respondents scoring three points or less were classified as politically inactive. Those with four points or over were considered as active.

FINDINGS

The results of the 1975 survey showed that in the aggregate, Brethren in Christ ministers now participate in politics to a significant degree. Fully three-quarters (75.6%) of the ninety respondents had voted in national elections. More than half (51.5%) reported that they had written to their elected representatives about an issue which concerned them. Ten respondents, or 11.1%, had actively worked in support of a political campaign. However, when asked in a supplementary question if they would personally consider running as a political candidate, 3.3% replied yes while 13.3% said maybe.

The 1981 survey reveals that the trend toward greater political participation has continued. A total of 70.0% of the 215 respondents reported that they have voted in national elections. The number who reported having written to their representatives increased to 60.0%. Interestingly, only 2.7% of the respondents stated that they had worked in political campaigns. Attitudes toward personal willingness to actively run for political office remained virtually unchanged with 3.2% responding yes and 13.4% responding maybe.

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Tables 1 and 3 show the results when the political activism scale was established for the two studies. Table 1 shows that in 1975, fully 68.9% of the total were characterized as being active. However, when compared nationally, a significant difference in political participation emerged. Of the ministers in the United States, 80.3% were categorized as active, compared to only 37.5% of the Canadians.

It is interesting to note the comparison between the two groups in the separate items of the political participation scale. This is summarized in Table 3. The difference in voting behaviour is fairly significant and remains consistent on all three levels of voting. The area where the most significant difference occurs is on the number of respondents who wrote to their representatives. In 1975, it was found that 65.2% of the Americans had written letters, whereas only 12.5% (3) of the Canadians had. Only one Canadian respondent stated that he had actively aided a political campaign, whereas nine of the Americans indicated that they had done so.

The 1981 survey revealed that a number of interesting changes had occurred since 1975. As Table 3 shows, those ministers classified as active had increased slightly to 70.7%. The number of politically active American ministers decreased to 73.1%. But the most significant finding is that the number of Canadian ministers categorized as active was 57.6%. This is a dramatic increase over the 1975 result of 37.5%.

Table 4 shows that the Canadian ministers who participated in

TABLE 1
POLITICAL ACTIVISM BY NATIONALITY, 1975

Activism	Total Sample	Canadian	American
Inactive	31.1%	62.5%	19.7%
Active	68.1%	37.5%	80.3%
Total N=	100 % 90	100 % 24	100 % 66

TABLE 2
POLITICAL ACTIVITY BY NATIONALITY*, 1975

Activity	Total Sample	Canadian	American
VOTING:			
Nationally	75.6%	54.2%	83.3%
Prov./State	68.9%	45.8%	77.3%
Locally	63.9%	50.5%	68.2%
Wrote letters	51.5%	12.5%	65.2%
Aided a campaign	11.1%	4.2%	13.6%
N =	90	24	66

*This table gives the percentage of respondents replying yes to the activity questions.

both voting and letter writing increased in numbers. It is in letter writing where the greatest change took place, with over half (51.5%) reporting such activity. This compares with only 12.5% just six years ago. American participation dropped off slightly in each category, except for voting in local elections.

Tables 5 and 6 compare political participation with age. The 1975 survey revealed that for the total sample, the degree of political participation was fairly consistent across the age groups. However, when compared on a national basis, it was noted that in the Canadian sample, the most active group was in their forties while the younger group (under forty) was the most inactive. For the American sample, the amount of political participation was fairly consistent across the age groups, with the under forty group being as equally active as the over fifty group (81.8%). From this comparison, it appears that national differences are a more significant factor than age or political activism among the Brethren.

TABLE 3
POLITICAL ACTIVISM BY NATIONALITY, 1981

Activism	Total Sample	Canadian	American
Inactive	29.3%	42.4%	26.9%
Active	70.7%	57.6%	73.1%
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %
N =	215	33	182

TABLE 4
POLITICAL ACTIVITY BY NATIONALITY, 1981

Activity	Total Sample	Canadian	American
VOTING:			
Nationally	79.0%	60.6%	82.4%
Prov./State	72.5%	57.5%	75.2%
Locally	67.4%	51.5%	70.3%
Wrote Letters	60.0%	51.5%	61.5%
Aided Campaign	2.7%	3.0%	2.7%
Would Run			
Yes	3.2%	3.0%	3.3%
Maybe	13.4%	12.1%	13.7%
N =	215	33	182

TABLE 5
POLITICAL ACTIVISM BY AGE, 1975

TOTAL SAMPLE							
Activism	Below 40			40's		50 and over	
Inactive	31.0%			28.6%		34.4%	
Active	69.0%			71.4%		65.6%	
Total	100 %			100 %		100 %	
N =	29			28		32	
CANADIAN				AMERICAN			
Activism	Below 40	40's	50 and Over	Below 40	40's	50 and Over	
Inactive	71.4%	42.9%	70.0%	18.2%	23.8%	18.2%	
Active	28.6%	57.1%	30.0%	81.8%	76.2%	81.8%	
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	
N =	7	7	10	22	21	22	

TABLE 6
 POLITICAL ACTIVISM BY AGE, 1981
 TOTAL SAMPLE

Activism	Below 40	40's	50 and over
Inactive	35.0%	25.6%	27.8%
Active	65.0%	74.4%	72.2%
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %
N =	57	43	115

Activism	CANADIAN			AMERICAN		
	Below 40	40's	50 and Over	Below 40	40's	50 and over
Inactive	50.0%	0%	47.4%	31.9%	28.2%	23.9%
Active	50.0%	100%	52.6%	68.1%	71.8%	76.1%
Total	100 %	100%	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %
N =	10	4	19	47	39	96

The 1981 survey shows some interesting differences in regards to age from the 1975 sampling. For the total sample, the below 40 group was somewhat less active politically than those in their 40's and over 50.

Compared on a national basis, some further changes can be identified. In the American sample, the greatest decrease in political participation has occurred in those below 40. Political activism in this group fell from 81.8% to 68.1%, making those below 40 the least active group among American Brethren. For the Canadian sample, the total numbers are small enough that we need to qualify our findings. However, it is of interest to note that political participation increased significantly for *both* those below 40 and over 50. For the Canadian Brethren the trend toward greater political participation has occurred both in the younger and older age groups. Thus the changes that have been occurring cannot be explained by any differences in the generation gap.

In this context, it is interesting to examine the changes that have occurred in the oldest groups of Brethren--those over 50 (Cf. Tables 7 and 8). In the 1975 study, it was shown that only 16.7% of the Canadian Brethren over sixty were classified as politically active, whereas the American Brethren in this age group were very active.

In the 1981 study, 71.8% of the American ministers over sixty were active, just slightly lower than the participation level among the total American sample (73.1%). The Canadian group over sixty still remains below the participation level of the total Canadian sample. However, they have increased in political participation from 16.7% to 46.1%. This would seem to indicate that all age groups, even the oldest, are open to change in their attitudes and practice in regards to political participation.

Political activism of the Brethren was also compared with

TABLE 7
 POLITICAL ACTIVISM OF RESPONDENTS OVER
 SIXTY BY NATIONALITY, 1975

Activism	Total Sample	Canadian	American
Inactive	46.2%	83.3%	14.3%
Active	53.8%	16.7%	85.7%
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %
N =	13	6	7

TABLE 8
 POLITICAL ACTIVISM OF RESPONDENTS OVER
 SIXTY BY NATIONALITY, 1981

Activism	Total Sample	Canadian	American
Inactive	33.8%	53.8%	28.1%
Active	66.2%	46.1%	71.8%
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %
N =	77	13	64

TABLE 9
POLITICAL ACTIVISM BY EDUCATION AND NATIONALITY, 1975

TOTAL SAMPLE			
Activism	Low Education	University/College	Seminary
INACTIVE	54.5%	32.6%	8.0%
ACTIVE	45.5%	67.4%	92.0%
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %
N =	22	43	25
CANADIAN			
Activism	Low Education	University/College	Seminary
INACTIVE	75.0%	61.5%	33.3%
ACTIVE	25.0%	38.5%	66.7%
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %
N =	8	13	3
AMERICAN			
Activism	Low Education	University/College	Seminary
INACTIVE	42.9%	20.0%	4.5%
ACTIVE	57.1%	80.0%	95.5%
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %
N =	14	30	22

TABLE 10

POLITICAL ACTIVISM BY EDUCATION
AND NATIONALITY, 1981

TOTAL SAMPLE

Activism	Low Education	University/ College	Seminary
Inactive	34.9%	29.8%	24.2%
Active	65.1%	70.2%	75.8%
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %
N =	63	84	66

CANADIAN

Activism	Low Education	University/ College	Seminary
Inactive	35.7%	50%	40%
Active	63.4%	50%	60%
Total	100 %	100%	100%
N =	14	14	5

AMERICAN

Activism	Low Education	University/ College	Seminary
Inactive	34.7%	25.7%	23.0%
Active	65.3%	74.3%	77.0%
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %
N =	49	70	61

education (Cf. Tables 9 and 10). The 1975 survey showed that educational level had a significant influence. Those with primary, secondary, and Bible school education were grouped under the heading of "lower education." University or college educated and seminary trained respondents were treated separately. Table 9 shows that there is a steady increase in activism as the amount of education is greater. A considerably greater percentage of seminary trained respondents are active than other categories (92.0%). This trend appeared evident in both the Canadian and American samples.

Again, the 1981 survey shows some interesting variances. The trend towards greater political participation as the level of education increases is still evident. However, the gap between those with lower education and the seminary graduates has been significantly reduced. While activism shows a decrease for the seminary group, those with lower education have increased in political activism from 45.5% to 65.1%. A similar trend is noted for the American sample.

However, it is in the Canadian sample that the most interesting change has taken place. In the 1975 sample, those Canadian ministers with the lowest education were the least active politically with only 25.0% classified as active. In contrast, the 1981 survey shows that 64.3% of them are active, making the lower education category the most politically active group among the Canadians.

CONCLUSIONS

Considering the strong stance that the Brethren in Christ Church has historically taken against all forms of political participation, this study has shown that the shift towards political participation in the past fifty years has been a dramatic one. Voting, particularly in national elections, now appears to be common among most Brethren in Christ pastors. Carlton Wittlinger interpreted the results of

the 1975 survey as showing that most Brethren in Christ ministers "no longer perceive a conflict between commitment to non-resistance and the exercise of the franchise."¹⁰ Results from the 1981 survey support this conclusion.

A comparison of the data presented in this study revealed several significant features of political activism among the group studied. First, age does not appear to be a significant factor in the political activism of Brethren in Christ ministers. Those over fifty have shown an openness to change in their attitude towards political participation. Thus the growth of political participation cannot be attributed to a "generation gap" in which the younger ministers are moving away from the traditional position of the older generation.

Second, education was found to have an influence on political activism, although the extent of this influence may be diminishing. In their study of both Mennonite and Brethren in Christ denominations, J. Howard Kauffman and Leland Harder also found a direct relationship between greater political participation and higher levels of education.¹¹ Results from the 1975 survey would appear to support the notion that the educational process, as a strong agent of socialization, has played a role in modifying the Brethren in Christ attitude toward separation, which is in turn reflected in greater participation in politics.

The 1981 survey, however, indicates that this view may need some qualification. It shows that the gap in political activism between the various education levels has narrowed considerably. Those categorized as having lower education have moved significantly toward greater political participation. In fact, for Canadian ministers, this is now the most politically active group. These findings suggest that in an increasingly media-conscious society, education may be playing a lesser role as a socializing agent. Differences in educational levels may be less useful in explaining

variances in attitudes toward society than previously believed. This is clearly an area where further research could be fruitful.

Third, both surveys show that Brethren in Christ ministers in the United States are clearly more politically active than their Canadian counterparts. The Americans scored consistently higher on all of the activism questions. This would indicate a greater willingness on the part of the American pastors to take active steps to make their opinions known in the political sphere.¹²

The 1981 survey shows that there has been a significant movement toward greater political participation by the Canadian ministers. Thus while the American Brethren still remain somewhat more active, the differences in behaviour between the two groups are no longer as great.

It is not within the scope of this paper to try to determine why these changes have occurred. However, it might be noted that in the past, the leadership in the Canadian Conference supported a position of non-participation in politics. In recent years, advocates on the side of greater participation have gained a hearing. The writings of Ronald Sider have been promoted at the Canadian Conference Niagara Holiness Camp meetings, and have been discussed in some of the Sunday schools. The Canadian Conference's Commission on Peace and Social Concerns has taken stances on public issues not directly related to the peace issues, and encouraged others to voice their concerns.¹³ It would be useful to research the extent to which these and other factors have influenced the Canadian Brethren to greater participation within the past five years.

In general, these two surveys have shown that participation in the political process has now become a common practice among Brethren in Christ ministers. That this trend has become a general one is evidenced by the fact that differences in practice between nationality, age, and education have increasingly diminished in the

past five years. It is hoped that these findings will stimulate others to explore in greater depth the theological implications of this change in Brethren in Christ practice. It will be interesting to note what changes in the political activism of Brethren in Christ ministers will take place in the next fifty years.

NOTES

¹*Minutes of General Conference of the Brethren in Christ (River Brethren) from 1871-1904*, pp. 13, 30, 34.

²Quoted in E. Morris Sider, "History of the Brethren in Christ (Tunker) Church in Canada" (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1955), p. 209.

³*Ibid.*, p. 210.

⁴Carlton O. Wittlinger, *Quest for Piety and Obedience: The Story of the Brethren in Christ* (Nappanee, Indiana: Evangel Press, 1978), p. 107.

⁵This same argument was used to justify non-participation in other activities as well, such as labour unions. See Mark Charlton, "Biblical Non-Resistance and the Brethren in Christ Approach to Labour Relations." Paper presented at the Seminar on the Christian's Response to the Management-Labour Issue, Commission on Peace and Social Concerns, Canadian Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church. November 1979.

⁶Wittlinger, *Quest for Piety and Obedience*, p. 107.

⁷Martin Schrag, "The Brethren in Christ Attitude Toward the 'World'," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* (January, 1974), 112-13.

⁸Findings of this survey were briefly reported in Wittlinger *Quest for Piety and Obedience*, pp. 531-32.

⁹Julian L. Woodward and Elmo Roper, "Political Activity of American Citizens," *American Political Science Review* (December 1950), 872-85.

¹⁰Wittlinger, *Quest for Piety and Obedience*, p. 532.

¹¹J. Howard Kauffman and Leland Harder, *Anabaptists Four Centuries Later: A Profile of Five Mennonite and Brethren in Christ Denominations* (Kitchener, Ontario: Herald Press, 1975) pp. 160-61.

¹²It is interesting to note that Kauffman and Harder also found that Brethren in Christ in the United States were more likely to "take a political position" than their Canadian counterparts. This is opposite to the position of other Mennonite groups the authors studied, where a higher percentage of Canadians took a political position. *Ibid.*, p. 164.

¹³In their recommendation in 1978, the Commission recommended: "That every delegate to Conference commit himself or herself to writing a letter or otherwise communicating to a public official, or to a public forum, his or her concerns about a specific social issue as it touches on the gospel of the Kingdom of Christ." See *Minutes of the Canadian Conference, Brethren in Christ Church* (1978), p. 65.

APPENDIX

Scoring System for Political Activity Scale

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Score Points Credited</i>
Voted:	
Nationally	1
Prov./State	1
Locally	1
Wrote letters to MP's or Congressmen	2
Discusses politics:	
Very frequently	2
Occasionally	(1)
Aided a Campaign	2
Total possible score	<hr/> 9

"HARD BY A PUBLIC ROAD:" A STUDY OF BROTHERS IN CHRIST CHURCH
ARCHITECTURE

*By Ray M. Zercher**

When Matthias Brinser led in the building of a meetinghouse in the late nineteenth century, his breaking with precedent produced a denominational landmark--both literal and figurative. The literal structure has long since disappeared from the landscape, but the significance of its erection has lived in our consciousness throughout the intervening century.

Our first response was to repudiate, in an attempt to maintain the house-meeting tradition which had prevailed for the first hundred years of our church history. Accordingly, Brinser was excommunicated by the River Brethren in 1855.

But the mood of the first response was short-lived. Within the decade the parent church was building meetinghouses with official consent. And so the second response was introduced, one we have lived with until the present--and one of regret and attempts to make amends. Observing the nature of our church building across the brotherhood, one could hypothesize that it was our sad experience in issuing judgment upon the first meetinghouse that contributed to an uncritical attitude in building our churches during the second century of our denominational history.

As is suggested by the force of our action against Brinser, the

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tradition of meeting for worship in the homes (houses or barns) of various members was based on more than simple preference. The practice was rooted, consciously or otherwise, in two theological principles: a commitment to simplicity of life style and to the common bond of fellowship among believers. Negatively, it spoke of a desire to avoid the practices of "worldly" churches. It protested against the tradition which associated the presence of God with material things.

Even after the official acceptance of meetinghouses, a writer in the church paper warned against the errors of other churches:

To every close observer of the age in which we live the tendency is toward idolatry and forms. When we enter many of the pewed churches with their towering steeples, pipe organs, giddy, fashionable chairs, memorial windows, and the so-called minister reading an essay from a manuscript, to a proud and haughty congregation, it appears to the soul as chilling as an iceberg, and yet we are divinely taught that "God is a spirit, and they that will worship him aright must worship him in spirit and in truth". . . .¹

But there was little in that first Brinser construction to arouse suspicions of extravagance:

The house would hardly have been taken for a school house by a passing stranger, for it was far below the general appearance of that kind of building. Being in the corner of a field, hard by a public road, a stranger would have been apt to regard it as an implement shed. It stood where four roads met. Many noted personages were surprised on first seeing this meeting house, remembering the offence it occasioned for its extravagance. Scarcely possible to believe it was regarded as a sacrilegious innovation.²

Our denominational response to that modest structure is now ironic in light of our having constructed well over two hundred churches with a reported value, in 1980, of nearly \$42,000,000.³ But my purpose here is not to count churches nor to measure costs. I want rather to note the kinds of churches we have built and to suggest possible reasons for our choices in building them.⁴

It is remarkable that, in light of vocal opposition to the building of churches in the first century, little positive guidance

for building seems to have been offered after the practice was approved. But also remarkable is the continuity of identity which is architecturally expressed by the early meetinghouses. These structures were designed to continue emphasis on the corporate nature of the believers' fellowship. During this period of conscious opposition to the practices of "worldly" churches around them, the builders preserved the informal, family setting which had characterized the house-churches. Typically, the congregation gathered on three sides of a table, usually on the same level, from which the Word was ministered by one or more persons. Whether this arrangement was affected deliberately, intuitively, or in imitation of other dissenting bodies, is not known.⁵ But the shift from this arrangement in later years seems to have been accompanied by a shift from the theological stance which it symbolized.

The absence of guidelines on church-building was particularly crucial during the years of unprecedented building activity, the two decades following World War II. Although the pages of the church paper were replete with reports of ground-breakings and dedications, there was a virtual silence on the planning of those buildings and even less comment on the theological meanings of these structures.

Among the exceptions was the voice of Carlton O. Wittlinger, who, in reflecting upon this period in his book on denominational history (1978), observed that "a visible but almost unnoticed and little understood aspect of the transition of the 1950s and the 1960s was a revolution in the architecture of Brethren houses of worship."⁶ The "revolution" was a shift in the character of church buildings, one that seemed to occur in a vacuum of theological conversation on the subject. And, as we shall see, it occurred also during a period of deliberate relaxation of the distinctive posture

previously held vis-à-vis American protestantism.

Wittlinger had written both more critically and less formally in an *Evangelical Visitor* article in the late 1960s. Feeling that the Brethren were building with one eye across the street and with indifference to their denominational heritage, he observed:

The guidelines for the new architecture seem to have been formulated not out of any consciously-understood theology of Brethren in Christ worship but rather out of observations of the architectural practices of neighboring religious groups. . . . While others are groping their way toward certain of the insights of our forefathers, we seem to have concluded that those insights are terribly out of date and that our salvation lies in imitation of surrounding ecclesiasticism which has already been tried and found wanting!

Wittlinger was careful to avoid the error of romanticizing the past. And he disclaimed philosophical prejudice against change, which he recognized as inevitable. But he did question "whether change may not have been the master rather than the servant of our movement" and asserted that "it is crucial for the Brethren in Christ to begin to change less by chance and more by design."⁸ In a footnote to the same writing, Wittlinger expressed his own sense of limitation in making aesthetic-theological evaluations and deferred to the opinions of others who would later examine the issues.

Wittlinger's refusal to cite traditional practices as normative for contemporary purposes was probably welcomed by his readers. With the approach of the bicentennial anniversary of the denomination's origin, his colleagues looked upon the past with appreciation. But there was little interest in applying the architectural practices of the nineteenth century to the needs of the twentieth.

But, on the other hand, the twentieth-century Brethren in Christ have not been indifferent to models derived from the past. We have been quite ready to endorse as normative the general practices of the New Testament church. And examination of the architectural developments in the first three centuries of the Christian church,

and in the intervening years, might raise serious questions indeed about the propriety of what was done during the decades of "revolution" in church building. Had he looked into the origins of Christian architecture, and not only to the beginnings of Brethren in Christ church-building, Wittlinger might have spoken both earlier and more confidently of his misgivings.

The points at which we have taken lessons from the early church are numerous and familiar. An example is our teaching on church-state relationships. In support of the nonresistant/peace position, we have regularly lamented the consequences of the professed conversion of Constantine on church-state relationships. For example, in 1969, an advocate of the peace posture was uncompromising in pinpointing the historical significance of Rome's embrace of the Christian faith: "*Here was the tragic fall of Christianity. Here the church went into captivity to the state*" (italics his).⁹

But little has been said about the effect of this historical event upon the worship patterns, and, more specifically, the church buildings, of the Christian church. An examination of that impact may serve to show that we have stifled more than a denominational tradition in the clamor of hammer and crane during recent decades.

The Early Church

Acts 2:26 indicates that, while the disciples maintained daily use of the temple for worship, they also engaged in fellowship as they "broke bread from house to house." It is the latter practice which came to characterize the pattern of Christian worship in the second and third centuries.¹⁰ In keeping with the words of Christ as he instituted the Last Supper, their sharing of bread was a memorial of his redemptive act. But, more than that, it was also a celebration of the presence of the living Christ in the person

of the Holy Spirit--a worship experience. With Christ's promise of his presence wherever two or three were gathered in his name (Matt. 18:20), the disciples exulted in his triumph over death, his immanent presence, and his imminent return.

For the purposes of this informal and joyous celebration, any space which accommodated their numbers was adequate for their needs. The first churches were parts of homes, which offered space in the larger rooms or sometimes were entirely devoted to the needs of the assembled. They were of course inconspicuous buildings, not known for their special purposes, and unassuming in appearance.¹¹

But the point here is not simply that such space was suitable for their needs; it was *suitèd* to those needs. The house-church was theologically adapted to their worship, being conducive to their fellowship, being readily accessible, being found in the realm of everyday life, and, negatively, being devoid of such material and sacral objects which would vitiate their sense of the spiritual presence of Christ among them.

The essential thing, in these early days was to obey the Lord's command to gather together; not only to wait in patient vigil of prayer and biblical readings, for the accomplishment of His second coming, but first of all to celebrate His ever active presence in their midst (communion) and to transmit the power of his presence to the world (mission).¹²

For these purposes, the house-church served well. And the use of this readily available facility contributed to the remarkable multiplication of groups of Christian worshipers in many places as the movement grew and spread.

Denominational Parallels

The theological meaning of the house-church in these early centuries is unmistakable and bears a remarkable resemblance to the pattern adopted by our denominational fathers:

The house-church of the early Christians was a miracle of freedom, personalism and hospitality. The biblical symbol

of the temple. . . appeared totally transposed. It was applied to the risen Christ, and to the body of the faithful. *They themselves* were the temples of the Holy Spirit, and they, unlike the single temple in Jerusalem, were *de facto* scattered throughout the entire Roman empire.¹³

The Brethren in Christ counterpart of this description may be cited in the writings of Dr. Wittlinger:

For the Brethren the 'church' was the visible people of God assembled in Christ's name in loving face-to-face fellowship to gain the inspiration, spiritual enlightenment, and mutual support needed for the endeavor to perfect obedience in their personal and corporate living. . . . [and]. . . as members migrated to new localities, they carried this house-church concept with them.¹⁴

An additional parallel may be observed in the fact that in both cases the house-churches were eventually outgrown. For the early church, the problem was solved by their resorting to larger facilities, such as the *schola* and, later, the Roman basilica--the latter of special consequence in the history of church architecture. For the Brethren, the problem precipitated the crisis of the meetinghouse--first its rejection, but then, readily,¹⁵ its adoption as a standard place for worship.

The Basilica and Roman Authority

The cultural impact of the adoption of the basilica was heightened by its coincidence with the official recognition of the church by the Roman state. It was that recognition in fact which permitted the church to adopt a public meeting facility. The meaning of this move into prominence was indication of the fact that the Christian religion was now declared to be official. When ". . . Christianity became the imperial religion, its buildings no longer expressed merely the space needs of the local congregation. They had to express something of the imperial majesty because the Church had become a recognized organ of imperial society."¹⁶

The basilica was an oblong building, ending in a semicircular apse and used for public assemblies, especially as a court of justice,

by the Roman state. In this new context for worship, a hierarchy of leadership, unknown in previous centuries, soon developed. Most notable was the distinction effected between leader and laity. Under the sanction of the state, church leaders who had been considered virtual outlaws, were now admitted to high office in the state. And this status was reflected in a new polarity expressed by the meeting place of the Christian assembly.

Although leaders had previously designated roles in the house-churches, they were now set apart from their people. The bishop was now seated in the place corresponding to that of the emperor or his representative in secular assemblies: the center of the semi-circular **apse**, facing the assembly.¹⁷ This pattern was foreign to the house-church concept, both in its practical and theological implications.

The Growth of Sacralism

With the passing of time and as the liturgy was developed, those accessory objects once used to emphasize the elevated status of leaders in the church (e.g., the cross, incense, the book, portable lights) gradually became depersonalized and attached themselves in symbolic roles to various parts of the basilican church.¹⁸ The effect was to further enhance the sacral character of the physical setting for worship.

But such imputation of sacrality to tangible objects could not occur without compromising the former concept of the centrality of Christ meeting in spiritual communion with the assembled believers. Such sacrality had pertained in the religion of the Jewish temple, where objects and architecture alike shared symbolically in the communication of spiritual meaning. But their use in the Christian church represented an incomplete transposition from the Old Testament mode of worship and inadequate appreciation for the meaning of the presence of Christ in the Holy Spirit. A clearer understanding

would have recognized that "Christian sacrality has no real 'object.' It has only a 'subject': the risen Christ. . . ."19

This is not to suggest the denial of materiality within the context of Christian worship. The early Christians were human beings living with the limitations of humanity in a tangible world. And an important function of the house-church had been to remind them of that very fact by its own "human" character. But we see here the development of ecclesiastical traditions which, while they have come to be taken for granted, are in conflict with the New Testament concept of worship.

As this movement to the sacralizing of the material grew-- from the basilica to the Romanesque, to the Byzantine, to the Gothic, to the Renaissance, to the Baroque, and even to modern churches-- the concept of the church per se was altered radically. This shift took place in the two steps just indicated. The first was from the assembly of primitive Christians in corporate worship to the oppositional roles of leaders and their congregations. The second was a shift of focus from personal leadership to the material setting of worship, including not only sacral objects but eventually subsuming the entire structure as a symbol of the Christian faith.

Sacralism in the Brethren in Christ Church

Parallel progression in our denominational history is cited by Dr. Wittlinger in these words: "'Meeting house' has given way to the concept of 'church.' Thus, 'to go to church' now emphasized a place with special religious significance. 'To go to meeting,' on the other hand, emphasized people, brethren, in a fellowship encounter."²⁰ The Brethren in Christ, in other words, adopted the cultural notion that the church building is itself a symbol of Christian faith and, in some sense, a residence for the spirit of God.

The Brethren in Christ Church has not, it is true, gone to the extent that this tradition might have led them. We have not sought to maximize the sacrality of the church building by investing every part with sacral significance. And in that moderation there is certainly merit. But, in contrast to the patterns of the early church, we have largely adopted the popular concepts of American protestantism and its perpetuation of elements of Old Testament worship.

Just how this shift was made to a higher sense of sacrality of the worship edifice is not explicit in our public record. It must instead be inferred from the informal accounts of recent decades. It might be observed that since the public record is silent on the subject, the assumption gains credence, in support of Wittlinger's suggestions, that we have indeed made our choices more by inadvertence than by deliberate choice, more by uncritical acceptance than by careful scrutiny, and more by virtue of functional advantage than by concern for theological integrity.

The "basilican" counterpart in Brethren in Christ history was represented by the categorical redesigning of worship rooms to move the pulpit from the center-side position to the end position as our churches were remodeled in this century. There were some exceptions to the side positions in the original structures. But generally the side position had been used to emphasize the corporate character of the worship experience. In that arrangement, leadership and laity were placed in a more intimate relationship. This personal rapport was further enhanced by the absence of the raised platform in early structures.

While there were structural and acoustical problems in using the side placement for the pulpit, the social-theological significance is obvious, the congregation being gathered family-like on three sides of the Word. There have been attempts to recover the value of this arrangement by limiting the depth of the seating area in relation to

the width. But generally, we are committed to the end placement, the speaker relating to his audience as in a typical lecture hall.²¹

"Gone is the circle concept of gathered, sharing brethren arranged appropriately for the fellowship of 'social meeting.' "²²

The effect of moving the pulpit to the end of the worship room was to place it in stronger focal attention for the audience. The longitudinal line of attention led to the pulpit within the narrower limits of the walls. Some saw in this more prominent pulpit a fitting symbol of the protestant emphasis on the preaching of the Word. But this symbolism was realized only by placing an equal emphasis on the *preacher* of the Word. This emphasis on the worship leader was given further momentum by the shift to single pastoral assignments, in contrast to the multiple ministry of earlier days.

Related Denominational Factors

The literal elevation of leadership in the worship setting was also supported by a general trend toward individualism in the denomination. An early evidence of this trend was the change to single pastoral assignments during the 1940s. Further evidence can be traced from the mid-century, when the denomination was wrestling with crucial problems of general church policy.

The concerns focused on several factors: the slow growth in church membership, failure to hold the youth of the church, and ineffective witness in the mission of the church. Actually, these concerns were inextricably interrelated. The question of effectiveness in the local congregation had obvious bearing on attracting adherents to the church, both from within and from outside the constituency.

The arguments in favor of traditional distinctiveness had held so long as credence was given to the consoling concept of "quality" membership. But when it appeared that the price for maintaining that standard was the church's own young people, the appeal of

distinctiveness waned rapidly. The denominational membership in 1950 (c. 6,500) was seen in a different light when it was observed that "we evidently during the last twenty year [sic] period have lost to the church 1,000 youth who were born and reared in Brethren in Christ homes."²³

Along with the concern for church youth came a feeling of general ineffectiveness in reaching the unchurched. Accordingly, the call to evangelize was sounded with unprecedented urgency. One leader observed that evangelism is the primary task of the church and that "all other activities are subsidiary. . . . Regarding this, one can be utterly dogmatic."²⁴ An unparalleled surge of support for the Sunday school movement augmented this effort to "rise to new heights of winning souls and of bringing them into the church."²⁵

The greater emphasis on individuality contrasted with the denomination's previous commitment to the corporate fellowship. Individuality now emerged in the form of preference for subjective spirituality over ethical consistency.²⁶ Rather than seeing the body of believers as a source for guidance in determining practice for personal and corporate life, reliance on group counsel was now seen as an abrogation of individual prerogative. Thus, the tradition of corporate search and mutual counsel in interpreting the Word was discounted in favor of personal conviction.

In an effort to relax what were seen to be legalistic strictures which had hampered the church's growth and witness, generous claims were made in behalf of individualism. The church was described as "bogged down with meticulous details and hindered by an unwise contending for uniformity" at the sacrifice of "the most wonderful of all divine creations, a human personality."²⁷ This perception was given further expression in the greater autonomy given local congregations with the administrative changes of 1957.

It appears that the denomination was acting out the meaning of

the elevated and oppositional pulpit by a deliberate turning away from the traditional means for setting church policy. Finding itself unable to move by corporate counsel and consensus, with the Spirit-directed mind of the fellowship as the primary resource, it now championed the merits of the individual, who could be trusted to "follow the light." A spokesman for this view observed: "Christianity is a religion in which the individual is on his own. Each individual is his own priest and has direct access to God. . . . He is his own king, and as a consequence rules himself. . . . Christianity is the only religion that specializes in individuals and frees them from all encumbrance."²⁸

An underlying, but less frequently expressed concern of the denomination was for survival itself. Keenly aware of its comparative smallness,²⁹ the church adopted flexible policies in order to allay schismatic tendencies. And disagreement over traditional patterns was seen as the most potent divisive force to be resisted. In the 1951 General Conference sermon, the speaker cautioned against several threats to the life of the denomination, noting that "lukewarmness will never split a church. . . . Ritualism and professionalism might possibly split a church. . . . Traditionalism does split churches."³⁰

As has been frequently noted, the Brethren in Christ Church looked beyond its own borders for assistance in breaking the impasse in which it found itself at mid-century. When internal resources seemed inadequate, the denomination looked expectantly to the National Association of Evangelicals and the National Holiness Association. Affiliation with these inter-denominational organizations, in 1949 and 1950 respectively, provided not only the inspiration of the wider Christian fellowship;³¹ it also offered an entirely new set of models for the shaping of local church programs--and church buildings. And, given the greater latitude for local decision, congregations were quick

to do their shopping in the larger marketplace.

The effect was that the Brethren in Christ moved decidedly, if not decisively, toward mainstream American protestantism. With a sense of disillusionment with traditions, with an almost strident call for evangelism as the primary cause, and with newly-won autonomy for individuals and congregations, the denomination surged through the fifties and into the sixties with redirected energies and hopeful prospects.

New Structural Patterns

A concrete outgrowth of this period of change was the construction or remodeling of church buildings throughout the denomination, including overseas churches.³² The *Evangelical Visitor* carried building reports from nearly seventy-five churches from 1947 to 1960.³³ With hopeful acceptance of the belief that "church buildings have been known to change whole districts by their silent testimony and challenge to the highest and best in mankind,"³⁴ building committees went to work. And so the church houses were put in order.

But in making their plans the builders seem to have been influenced more by the models seen along the protestant mainstream than by their own heritage--architectural or theological. In an attempt to update facilities, congregations chose plans and patterns with what indeed seems to have been more than indifference to the past. The result was not only a loss of continuity with the past but the introduction of a wide variety of styles and motifs. As one writer observed:

Once the church became a soul-saving station . . . the meeting house became inadequate to meet the demand for an attractive and impressive plant that would draw people into the church to hear the Gospel. Consequently, the nineteen-fifties were a time of restless building and remodeling along progressively more ornate and complex plans.³⁵

Among the patterns introduced in the new structures was a

variation of the end-centered pulpit: the so-called divided chancel. The reasons for its adoption were no doubt varied. It may have been chosen to de-emphasize the pastor's prominence, or it might have been viewed as providing a more attractive chancel. Further, it might have been seen as representing the merging of the prophetic and the sacramental ministries of the church.³⁶ But by some it was seen as an unfortunate shift from the focus on the prophetic ministry from the Word, the preacher now being displaced in favor of a central emphasis on a symbolic, material and impersonal otherness identified as communion table, worship center, or altar.

A Sacral Focus

As with the pulpit, the communion table has been moved to various positions and represented in different forms in church history. In a pattern similar to that of the early Brethren in Christ, the early church, until the middle of the third century, served communion from a movable wooden table.³⁷ This table was placed so that the communicants could surround it on all sides, an arrangement suggesting the meeting of the family of believers, sharing in commemoration of Christ's suffering. Thereafter, with the greater distinction between leaders and laity, the communion table, because of its mystical symbolism, became the focus of sacrality and was identified as the altar. The altar was placed so as to limit access to it, against the liturgical east wall of the church. After the Reformation, in England, the communion table was restored to its original position among the worshippers in an attempt to restore the concept of corporate worship.

Although we call ourselves a non-liturgical church, the placement of the various objects used in our services carries significance. With the acceptance of the divided chancel, we have reduced the focus on the pulpit. This step would seem to be in

keeping with our traditional emphasis on the commonality of believers. But the divided chancel, while lowering the spotlight on the pulpit, raises it on the worship center. Although the word "altar" may not itself be used, the concept is clearly implied. And its allusions to non-Christian and pre-Christian sources are obvious.

In most of our churches "altar" still carries the traditional meaning, designating a low wooden rail, usually in front of the pulpit and used as a center for special prayers. In this use the term denotes a place for the offering of prayers of commitment or intercession. The loss of this meaning of the term is not anticipated, but the introduction of the divided chancel has created some ambiguity and may diminish its significance. This is particularly true because the prominence of the churches using this pattern wield a modeling influence greater than their numbers would suggest, representing only about 5% in numbers of churches but 14% in membership.

With the new concept of the altar or worship center, we of course move to a still higher level of sacrality. If the sanctuary was holy, the worship center is now holier. And, again, the Old Testament pattern is imitated.³⁸ The acceptance of these assumptions marked the distance we had moved from the early pattern of worship in the denomination. Again, the movement was away from sharing fellowship around the Word--where interpersonal response was the norm, where humanity was disclosed, and where the Spirit was encountered in fellow-beings--to directing reverential attention to a material, impersonal symbol of spiritual presence.

Other Building Components

The word "altar," in the revised sense, is only one of several terms which have moved into our vocabulary in recent decades. With few exceptions, the term "sanctuary" is used to identify the worship room. The non-ecclesiastical term "foyer" is still used in

preference to "narthex," nearly 3 to 1, indicating less agreement on what the approach to the worship room should be called. Or, stating it another way, this may indicate lesser concern for the naming of the areas peripheral to the worship center.

Our experience with the baptistry seems to have been influenced more by the theater than by theological requirements. Whereas the baptismal font in the traditional church stood at the entrance of the nave (sanctuary), where it symbolized the means by which one's approach to the altar was validated, the desire of the worshippers to witness the baptism has resulted in the baptistry's being moved to the front of the sanctuary in most protestant churches. One-half of our Brethren in Christ churches have built-in baptistries. And the large majority (80%) are placed forward in the church, either beneath the platform or behind the chancel.

Theological Meanings

The significance of these developments should hardly be read in absolute terms, partly because of the possible disparity between deed and intention. But looked at objectively, these facts would seem to suggest more than the great contrasts between our modern churches and those of our church fathers. The physical changes are obvious. The question of greater importance is, what do these changes mean theologically? And, one might ask, Would these changes have been made if proposed and discussed with understanding in our church councils?

Among the informal comments related to these issues, we have statements on both sides of the question, but none directly addressed to the significance of architectural patterns as such. For example, in 1947 a presentation of the New Testament meaning of worship was set forth at the dedication of the Roxbury Holiness Camp tabernacle (note the term). There the speaker declared:

In the life, work, death and resurrection of the Lord, Jesus Christ [sic], the realities suggested by these Old Testament symbols become ours. Through the provisions of grace in the Lord Jesus Christ, the individual believer now becomes the temple in which God dwells. Therefore, 'God dwelleth not in temples made with man's hands.' The most elaborate cathedral cannot contain God in the same measure that He dwells in human personality that has been cleansed by the blood of Christ.³⁹

Similarly, at the rededication of the Bethel Church near Abilene, Kansas, in the following year, the speaker observed:

God's presence and glory were seen in the tabernacle and temple, but that has been superceded by the second incarnation of Jesus Christ in the blood-washed church of the Holy Ghost dispensation. This personal indwelling of Christ endows the Church of today with a glory and power which marvelously transcends that of the Old Testament, for a greater than Solomon is here.⁴⁰

Building Patterns

But it appears that these concepts were not always understood-- certainly not in terms of brick and mortar. The building programs of the fifties and sixties indicate a general movement toward a greater emphasis on the sacrality of the church building. In some instances we see clear evidence of reversion to the temple, not only those of Jewish origin but from the pagan cultures of the ancient world. For example, the dedication of a new church in 1956 was reported with careful attention to the elements derived from classical temples: pediment, capitals, and columns. For the passersby, their historical meanings were not likely set aside by the fact that the columns were named Truth, Righteousness, Purity, and Love -- a fact which also suggests pre-Christian orientation.⁴¹

By aesthetic standards, perhaps even less fortunate than the choice of inept styles of architecture was the frequent combining of incongruous elements from different traditions--assuming, of course, the virtue of consistency, even in violation of principle.

Particularly in the remodeling of churches, there appeared motifs which seem to have been chosen simply to provide a new touch.

In the case of the arch, for example, the intention seems to have been to add an element of dignity by borrowing from antiquity, even though doing so introduced the only curved line in the building. Similar incongruities occurred, inside and out, in the combinations of materials, colors, textures, tones, and shapes--which appeared to represent the amalgamation of personal preferences rather than reliance upon informed opinion.

As might have been expected of a church conservative in monetary policies as well as in doctrine, the Brethren in Christ did not rush to seek professional advice in their building projects. Only about one-half of the churches report having engaged an architect's services in "the last building program."⁴² Being not far removed from their rural origins, and frequently including in their memberships those who possessed a variety of practical skills, congregations pooled their insights and manual skills in planning and building. A common feature of dedication ceremonies was the recognition of those who had provided such services. But the risks--both functional and aesthetic--which were run by following such procedures are obvious.

The Steeple

Another structural element which was borrowed during the "revolution" of recent decades is the steeple or spire. Being external, it is of course one of the most obvious devices, a fact no doubt prompting its use. It is perhaps the most striking visual evidence of our acceptance of popular, evangelical stereotypes. Considering the fact that very few of our churches featured this device prior to 1950, it is remarkable that more than one-half of the churches in the United States now have spires or are planning their installation.⁴³ In some cases these were acquired with church buildings purchased from other denominations. But most of these spires or steeples were specifically installed during new construction

or in remodeling programs.

The steeple derives from the medieval period, when, through its extended verticality, it expressed both spiritual and civic fervor. By long association with church buildings, it has become a generally accepted motif in our visual vocabulary, almost indeed to the point of reliance upon it to lend authenticity to our church buildings. But, although this traditional element might seem well-suited to represent the changeless mission of the church, considering its established tradition, serious question may be raised as to the cultural relevance of this device on modern churches.

In the medieval era the prominent steeple represented the authority of the church in an authentic sense. But the church then served as cultural kingpin, the generally accepted source of answers to the meaning of life. To place this symbol in the context of a secular community today would seem to misrepresent the role of symbolism itself, and of this symbol in particular.

In a society which has set aside churchly authority--the separation of church and state being explicitly observed--the use of the steeple or spire would seem to be an empty, anachronistic gesture with little more than sentimental value to those already churched.⁴⁴ The effect may be an isolating barrier rather than a positive appeal.

The Monumental Church

With regard to the general planning, we may well question the prevalent notion that the meaning of the church in society is well expressed through impressive, eye-catching structures. In America, this objective gained wide acceptance in the nineteenth century when, in an apparent attempt to counter the growing secularization of society, church buildings were made to appear more and more monumental.⁴⁵

In the latter part of the twentieth century, the local church

cannot hope to compete with other man-made spectacles on the landscape. We may find that to strive for impressive exteriority is to engage in an enterprise ill-suited to the mission of the Christian church. Without a careful examination of the assumption that "a church needs to look like a church,"⁴⁶ we may be led to a variety of inept planning decisions and excesses. But with recognition of the meanings of monumentality, we may rather conclude that the investment of our resources for this purpose is not a fitting expression of Christian stewardship.

Architectural Consequences

That the physical improvements in our church structures during the recent past have enhanced our programs is beyond question. We have redesigned old churches and have built new ones in extending our Christian witness. Indications of our doing so with some regard for theological meanings, though rare, are encouraging. We have generally subscribed to environmental patterns and stereotypes, with little evidence of spiritual imagination.

The diversity observable in our structures may be seen as a favorable expression of the individualism which has characterized our thinking since mid-century. But this individualism has been asserted more as the freedom to choose from extant designs than to plan with a creative awareness of doctrinal orientation. Perhaps, more basically, we reflect in our churches a weak consensus on theological commitment, which has made us vulnerable to architectural caprice.

We may hope that the next decades might see a more deliberate approach to our building of churches, with greater awareness of a heritage which has been largely left behind. This would not mean a reversion to former patterns in an artificial gesture to keep faith with a past that is past. It would mean, however, a greater appreciation for church history in general and for our own denominational

background in particular. These, guided by biblical principles, could contribute to more authentic Christian church-building.

To translate theological identity into spiritual purpose, the assistance of an informed architect, the use of modern technical means, and the choice of appropriate building materials and equipment should be combined. Seeing the church building as a functional component in our contemporary culture, we should devote our efforts to the shaping of space to fit the needs of human beings brought together in spiritual fellowship.

To express ageless tenets in modern language--either verbally or architecturally--is not an easy task. But the same Spirit who guides in the former will be faithful also in the latter. Both our verbal witness and the architectural expression of our faith should reflect contemporary relevance within a clearly conceived historical perspective. And, for the Brethren in Christ, that perspective includes a distinctive congregational concept: the fellowship of believers and comers engaged in corporate interaction, discovering within themselves the residence of the God who "does not live in temples made by human hands" (Acts 17:24b, Phillips).

NOTES

¹John Fohl, "The Body of Moses," *Evangelical Visitor*, January 1, 1893, p. 14.

²From reproduction of page from *The Pennsylvania German* magazine, January 1901, published in *Evangelical Visitor*, November 30, 1959, p. 7. See also page 1 of same issue for drawing of the Brinser meeting-house.

³*General Conference Minutes*, 1980, pp. 231-237.

⁴Statistics not otherwise credited are taken from a survey conducted by mail, covering all Brethren in Christ churches in North America, during the summer of 1981. These churches are reported 54.5% rural, 31.8% suburban, and 13.6% urban. They are constructed largely of traditional materials: 59.6% brick, 33.6% wood, 6.7% concrete block, 2.8% stone.

⁵For parallel developments among Quakers and Congregationalists, see "Interview with Robert Rambusch, Consultant in Liturgy, Art, and Architecture," *Your Church*, September-October, pp. 9-18.

⁶Carlton O. Wittlinger, *Quest for Piety and Obedience: The Story of the Brethren in Christ* (Nappanee, Ind.: Evangel Press, 1978), pp. 492-493.

⁷_____, "Thoughts on the Worship Setting," *Evangelical Visitor*, April 21, 1969, p. 14.

⁸*Ibid.*

⁹C. N. Hostetter, Jr., "The Christian and War," *Evangelical Visitor*, December 1, 1969, p. 3.

¹⁰Frederic DeBuyst, *Modern Architecture and Christian Celebration* (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1968), p. 22.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹²*Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 21. The Christian population of the Roman Empire numbered "some five or six millions by the year 300, with perhaps half of it in Asia Minor and the immediate neighborhood." Kenneth J. Conant, "The Expression of Religion in Architecture," in *The Arts and Religion*, ed. Albert Edward Bailey (New York: Macmillan Co., 1944), p. 73.

¹⁴Wittlinger, *Quest for Piety and Obedience*, p. 77.

¹⁵_____, "Thoughts on the Worship Setting," p. 5.

¹⁶Conant, p. 73.

¹⁷DeBuyst, p. 24.

¹⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 23.

²⁰Wittlinger, "Thoughts on the Worship Setting," p. 11.

²¹See Elbert M. Conover, *The Church Builder* (New York, N.Y., The International Bureau of Architecture, 1948), p. 53, for recommendation that sanctuary width should not exceed half the length, but where primary consideration is given to problems of aesthetics and construction. The average dimensions of Brethren in Christ sanctuaries reported in 1981: 54 feet long; 35 wide.

²²Wittlinger, "Thoughts on the Worship Setting," p. 11.

²³J. N. Hostetter, *General Conference Minutes*, 1950, p. 12.

²⁴H. G. Brubaker, "An Overview of Our Task," *Evangelical Visitor*, January 31, 1955, p. 3. See also J. N. Hostetter, "Evangelism--A Church Ministry," *Evangelical Visitor*, December 10, 1951, p. 14.

²⁵H. G. Brubaker, "An Overview of our Task," p. 3.

²⁶Frank Demmy, "The Spiritual Revolution in the Brethren in Christ Church as a Prelude to a Decade of Reorganization" (Brethren in Christ Church Archives, 1973), p. 10.

²⁷J. N. Hostetter, "A Decade," *Evangelical Visitor*, December 28, 1959, p. 2.

²⁸H. G. Brubaker, "The Central in Christianity," *Evangelical Visitor*, April 9, 1956, p. 4. See also J. F. Lady, "Ethics and Holiness," *Evangelical Visitor*, October 29, 1951, p. 7.

²⁹*General Conference Minutes*, 1950, p. 11.

³⁰C. N. Hostetter, Jr., *General Conference Minutes*, 1951, p. 11.

³¹W. J. Sherman, "For You at the NAE," *Evangelical Visitor*, May 19, 1958, p. 2; J. N. Hostetter, "NAE-NHA," *Evangelical Visitor*, May 5, 1958, p. 2; "Conference Bishops Report on National Convention of N. H. A.," *Evangelical Visitor*, June 2, 1958, p. 6.

³²This applies as well to the type of buildings erected. See, for example, *Evangelical Visitor*, June 3, 1968, p. 1; *Evangelical Visitor*, July 20, 1964, p. 1.

³³American churches were spending upward of \$800,000,000 per year on new buildings. John R. Scotford, *When You Build Your Church* (Great Neck, N.Y., 1958), p. 1.

³⁴William A. Harrell, *Planning A Better Church Building* (Nashville, Tenn., 1947), p. 8.

³⁵Frank Demmy, p. 33.

³⁶Thomas A. Stafford, *Within the Chancel* (New York, N.Y., 1955), p. 18.

³⁷*Ibid.*

³⁸Gradations of sacrality are of course not unique to the Jewish tradition.

³⁹C. N. Hostetter, Jr., "God's Pattern for a Holiness Tabernacle," *Evangelical Visitor*, August 25, 1947, p. 2. It is estimated that C. N. Hostetter, Jr. delivered at least thirty dedication sermons within fifteen years (interview with Hostetter biographer E. Morris Sider, July 7, 1981).

⁴⁰Earl Sider, "My House Shall be Called . . .," *Evangelical Visitor*, September 20, 1948, p. 2.

⁴¹*Evangelical Visitor*, June 18, 1956, p. 8.

⁴²A higher proportion (57%) reported reliance on church-related persons to serve as building contractors.

⁴³In Canada the proportion is reversed, only about one-third reporting their use and none anticipating installation.

⁴⁴DeBuyst, p. 28. A question of structural authenticity is raised by the fact that 43% of the steeples on U. S. churches are prefabricated.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁴⁶Cf. Robert H. Schuller, *Your Church Has Real Possibilities* (Glendale, Calif.: Regal Books, 1974), p. 117.

BOOK REVIEWS

MARTIN H. SCHRAG and JOHN K. STONER, *The Ministry of Reconciliation*.
Nappanee, Indiana: Evangel Press, 1973. Pp. 131. \$2.50.

*Reviewed by Mark M. Redfearn**

"Reconciliation" is a foreign word to many Christians. Some Evangelicals who find it relatively easy to talk about "salvation" or "faith" or "grace" find themselves tongue-tied when it comes to speaking about reconciliation, which, at its most elementary level, is simply "a right relation towards God" (p. 7). Martin Schrag and John Stoner have written *The Ministry of Reconciliation* to help Christians become aware of the life-changing implications of this ministry which God has committed to every believer.

Some persons, notably the late Carlton Wittlinger, have criticized the rather limited approach to the ministry of reconciliation which Schrag and Stoner have taken. After all, objected Wittlinger, doesn't reconciliation address more than just the issues of war and peace? But the authors note that ". . . a major contemporary issue is that of violence and war. . ." (p. 9), and state frankly that in their book "attention centers on the areas of conflict, war, reconciliation, and peace" (p. 21).

A glance at the chapter titles will pique the reader's curiosity enough to compel him or her to read further. Provocative titles

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include: "The Word and the Ministry" (an explanation of the biblical bases for reconciliation); "'But the Old Testament Says. . .'" (a chapter devoted to answering the perennial objections to peacemaking based on the Old Testament accounts of war); "Let's Be Realistic" (a sensitive exploration of what it means "for a Christian to be realistic in a world of sin"); and "Conscience and Compromise" (an examination of some of the ways in which Christians tend to blur the distinction between the absolute claims of Christ on the individual and the spurious counter-claims of the state).

Each chapter concludes with a list of "Questions for Discussion," designed for small groups or for stimulating individual reflection. While no "right" or "wrong" answers are suggested, the reader cannot help but become deeply involved in questions such as:

Is blaming war and all sin on the Fall a cop-out? Is it really a way of dodging responsibility? Or does such an explanation give real depth to the problem of evil? (p. 22)

Is it possible to be pious in personal behavior and yet be indifferent, if not negative, to social evil? (p. 51)

Why do so many Christians automatically go to war when the government calls them? Would they do the same thing if the government called them to a life of prostitution or gambling? (p. 88)

In modern warfare money is almost as necessary as men. Do you think that the New Testament statements regarding taxes call on Christians to support the nation regardless of the demands made for armament? (p. 115)

All of these questions call upon the reader to answer the fundamental question of life: the question of authority. Schrag and Stoner point out that there are only two possible answers to that question: man's answers based on his response to the ever-changing circumstances of life, or God's answers as they have been revealed in the Bible. "In this book," say the authors, "the accepted authority is the Bible. . . . God's Word must always be applied to man's particular context" (p. 21). It is the authors' hope that readers will wrestle with these questions in the light of biblical revelation.

Violence, alienation, and despair characterize our world. In order to "right" the "wrongness" which pervades our world, it is necessary to get to the root of the disorder. The authors note that the biblical account of the Fall records the breaking of four basic relationships: the relationship between God and humankind; the relationship within; the relationship between individuals; and the relationship between human beings and nature (pp. 16-17). The rupture of these relationships, caused by sin ("the desire to be independent of God," p. 16) has resulted in psychological tensions, wars, greed, and evil social structures. In order to heal these disruptions, Christians must become active ministers of reconciliation.

Reconciliation begins with God: "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" (2 Cor. 5:19, RSV), that is, making peace with His enemies. In Christ, human beings are restored to their original oneness with God and enabled to become peacemakers by the power of God.

Chapters four and five refute arguments against reconciliation which arise from an uncritical reading of the Old Testament accounts of "holy" wars. The authors are convinced that "Everything in the Old Testament, including war, is to be read through the 'prism' of Christ" (p. 33). They point out that God, not the Israelites, triumphed over the enemy. The Old Testament wars, while real and bloody enough, merely foreshadow the true war in which all Christians must engage, the war against the unseen hosts of evil (cf. Eph. 6:13).

No discussion of the Christian's warfare would be complete without a careful consideration of the weapons which are to be used in the conflict. Schrag and Stoner rely on Scripture to furnish a description of the arsenal of the reconciler. After listing the various implements of warfare found in Ephesians 6:13-17, and noting that these weapons are far more powerful than guns or bombs (cf. 2Cor. 10:4), the authors direct the reader's attention to the

most important, and most often neglected weapon of all:

. . .the weapon of suffering love or the cross. The cross means voluntarily denying self and ministering to the needs of other people. It means sacrificially giving of oneself to preach the word, clothe the naked, feed the hungry, minister to the prisoners, strive for justice and prophetically point out the sins of society. (p. 37)

Personal piety and withdrawal from evil social structures are not enough to constitute a genuine ministry of reconciliation. The authors call for a full commitment to biblical nonresistance as revealed in the suffering love of Jesus Christ. In short, Christians need to become peacemakers.

Peacemaking in the twentieth century calls for a keen awareness of current issues of war and peace. It means identification with and advocacy for the oppressed peoples of the earth. It means forthright proclamation of the ministry of reconciliation as an essential part of the gospel. It means addressing social evils not only in prayer, but also in prophetic confrontation. And, above all, it means ". . . to avoid confusing the mission of the church with the purpose of the state" (p. 97).

For the reader who is still unconvinced either of the efficacy of or the need for the ministry of reconciliation, a chapter-by-chapter bibliography has been provided in order to stimulate further reading and reflection. For those who are ready to begin but are not quite sure what practical steps to take, the final chapter includes a brief how-to section entitled, "Being Peacemakers," in which the authors offer some practical pointers to peacemaking.

The cross, the authors maintain in this final chapter, is central to the business of peacemaking. "*The reconciler begins his work by proclaiming the gospel of personal salvation*" (p. 120). The primary task of the reconciler is that of evangelism, of proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ to a sin-battered world whose cynical motto is, "No news is good news." Any attempt to engage in

peacemaking which bypasses or ignores the cross can end only in disaster.

The peacemaker needs to become aware of the deep inner needs of the people with whom he or she comes in contact daily. Schrag and Stoner suggest that "Christians need X-ray eyes to perceive the anxieties and conflicts of men" (p. 120). Humanly speaking, of course, such vision is impossible, "For what person knows a man's thoughts except the spirit of the man which is in him?" (I Cor. 2:11, RSV). Yet to believers, God has given the mind of Christ, which is the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 2:16), and by Him we are enabled to discern the pain, the fear and the suffering which haunt our brothers, our sisters, our neighbors. But the vision is given only to those who will act upon it. Therefore the reconciler seizes every opportunity to enter into ". . . the hurting places of the world . . ." (p. 120) and to bring the reconciling presence of Christ in word and deed.

Prayer is the sustaining power of the peacemaker. But, warn the authors, "Prayer is costly. It means confession of self-preoccupation and shallowness of concern: it means self-examination to discern if the source of conflict is in the heart of the one praying . . ." (p. 120). The attitude of prayer in the life of the peacemaker must be guarded at all costs, for "Prayer moves men and mountains, God making a way out of no way" (p. 121). Where there is prayer, there is power.

Another essential element of peacemaking is ". . . to fully enter into the feelings, aspirations and problems of both or several sides (or parties) of an issue" (p. 122). To "walk in the shoes" of one's communist neighbor or child-abuser friend, and then to apply the balm of the suffering love of Christ, is to take a giant step toward reconciliation.

The reconciler must assume personal responsibility for the injustices which he or she perceives and work to correct them. The

authors warn that "Individual Christians may have limited influence in settling the major conflicts of our time . . . but each Christian is responsible to do what can be done to secure justice rather than permitting injustices to prevail" (p. 123).

The authors, however, fail to cite examples of seemingly insignificant yet highly responsible acts of peacemaking which ultimately influence the entire world community. They might have suggested boycotting bananas, both as an act of contrition and a symbolic gesture of sympathetic suffering with the grossly underpaid harvesters in Central America. The authors seem to assume that since each Christian has been called to the ministry of reconciliation, each will find practical ways to implement this ministry as he or she listens to the cries of the lonely, the poor and the dispossessed of the world, and hears the voice of the Spirit through the pages of the Scriptures.

Occasionally the authors tend to become somewhat pontifical as they attempt to apply the principles of peacemaking to everyday life. At times they seem to advocate an all-or-nothing approach to peacemaking, but this will repel many sensitive Christians who do not share their views. For example, in their chapter on "Conscience and Compromise," the authors assert that the only truly Christian way to say no to conscription is to resist the draft. For Schrag and Stoner, conscientious objection is not an option because ". . . to cooperate with the agency of conscription is to contribute too much to the smooth function of the total military enterprise" (p. 112).

I find their contention unconvincing, however, because they fail to cite any personal record of non-cooperation with conscription. Did either Schrag or Stoner pay for their convictions with a prison sentence? Have either of them risked imprisonment by refusing to apply that portion of their federal income tax which is used for

military purposes? It would have been helpful, as well as convincing, to know. As it is, the answers (not only for me, but also for young people of draft age) are lost in a disturbing silence.

A more serious defect of the book, however, is its pervasive sexist language. The authors consistently refer to the reconciler or peacemaker by using the masculine personal and possessive pronouns. Perhaps this was merely an oversight. One would hope so. Yet if it is an oversight it is one with subtle and startling implications. Has not the ministry of reconciliation been committed to all believers, whether male or female? How will our sisters in Christ, particularly those who are conscious of their femaleness as never before in history, hear the call to this ministry if it is addressed to them in masculine terms? A revision of the book would be welcome in order to correct this defect.

Despite its shortcomings, *The Ministry of Reconciliation* remains a valuable resource for Christians who are questioning their tacit approval of war. Both Roman Catholics and mainline Protestants will benefit from a re-examination of their traditional views on war which this book invites. The peace churches (particularly with their large influx of newcomers from mainline denominations who have never heard of the ministry of reconciliation) will find the book helpful in examining their present attitudes toward war and peace in the light of their historical, biblical heritage. Individuals, Sunday school classes, and other small groups can use this book profitably. The voices of Martin Schrag and John Stoner need to be heard in the wilderness of contemporary Christian complacency and affluence.

MELVIN EASTERDAY DIETER, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century*. Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1980. Pp. 356. \$17.50.

Reviewed by Owen H. Alderfer*

In *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century* Melvin Dieter develops the thesis that in the synthesis of pietistic revivalism with Wesleyan Perfectionism just prior to and following the Civil War, the American tradition of revivalism was both modified and enhanced in a process that led to renewal in individuals and churches and the development of a new "strain" of institutions--the holiness and pentecostal churches. Working out this thesis takes Dr. Dieter into the development of Christian perfectionism among Methodists and other groups prior to the war and through the holiness revivals and the holiness camp meeting movement afterward. The renewal of holiness among the Methodists, its espousal by other groups, and the hiving off of radical holiness elements into institutions are the latter concerns of the study.

Melvin Easterday Dieter has his roots in the American Holiness Movement. As part of the Pilgrim Holiness fellowship, Dieter first studied theology at Eastern Pilgrim College, where he was later president. In the preface to his work the author notes that "his doctoral research is summed up largely in the volume which follows." Currently, Dr. Dieter is Professor of Church History and Historical Theology at Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky. There he is editor of the *Asbury Seminarian*, the journal of the seminary faculty. He has served as president of the Wesleyan Theological Society, has contributed to several books on holiness-pentecostal history and dialogue, and is currently co-authoring a history of the Wesleyan Church.

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The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century is the first volume in a new series in American evangelicalism titled "Studies in Evangelicalism," edited by Donald W. Dayton and Kenneth E. Rowe. The series seeks to explore the role of evangelicalism in the formation of American culture with particular concern to emphasize the diversity within the movement. This work brings together the streams noted in the statement of the thesis and shows their impact in the broad sweep of religion particularly in America during the nineteenth century.

In an introductory chapter Melvin Dieter provides the theological and cultural setting for the work he has set out to do. From there he takes a chronological framework on which to expand his study and to make and illustrate his case. The chronological work begins in 1835 with the renewal and spread of emphasis upon Wesleyan Perfectionism; he continues on through the balance of the century to the formation of the holiness denominations.

In his introduction, the author follows the generally accepted view relative to Christianity in America that revival/revivalism has been the dominant force in the shaping of American Protestantism since the first Great Awakening, about 1740 and forward. He sees the modification of revivalism by the rising interest in and synthesis with perfectionism in the period just before the Civil War as affecting not only Methodists, but also a number of other denominations. Dieter maintains that this synthesis gave subsequent American Protestantism a distinctive flavor as revival took on an appeal not only for conversion but also for holiness. The holiness advocates saw in the promise of the "second blessing" both the norm and hope for the church. This vision ultimately came to fruition in the emerging of holiness institutions as a part of the American religious scene.

From this introduction the author moves through several chronological divisions of nineteenth century history. The years 1835 to

1865 represent the developing synthesis during which the developing interest in perfectionism caught the attention particularly of Methodist leaders and generally of a wide spectrum of denominational representatives. The work of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Palmer, a Methodist lay couple, especially in connection with and merging from the Tuesday Meetings in New York City, is developed at some length. Especially is the activity and influence of Phoebe Palmer expanded upon as she works out aspects of the holiness doctrine for proclamation and individual lifestyle. The impact of this and other holiness expressions during this period spread throughout the land and across the Atlantic to raise the expectation of believing Christians relative to higher quality in Christian living and the perfecting of the church of Jesus Christ in these latter times.

The Civil War marked something of an hiatus in the advance of holiness, but with the coming of peace the holiness impact moved forward apace. The years 1867 to 1877 are designated as those of the holiness revival. With the launching of the first of the holiness campmeetings at Vineland, New Jersey, in July, 1867, a new day arrived for the proclamation and promotion of holiness. Campmeetings arose here and there throughout the land to proclaim the higher life emphasis and to call people to the fullness of the spirit-filled life. This network was finally organized into an association for the promotion of holiness in the land. At its best this movement reflected response to a call to holy living as expressed in personal righteousness, concern for Christian mission, and social concern. At its worst it became obsessively concerned with forms of experience and was divisive within denominational bodies.

The fourth chapter follows the spread of the holiness concern from America to England and on to the Continent in witness to the fact that this was not simply a local phenomenon. The work of Hannah Whitall Smith, among others, is particularly interesting as she

moves through Europe with great impact in the proclamation of the holiness message.

The final two chapters consider the tensions and struggles that the holiness message and movement came to face in the last two decades of the century. With the arrival of the last quarter of the century, a number of revolutions impacted upon American culture in ways that affected all of life--including holiness in message and living. Social, economic, industrial, intellectual, and spiritual revolutions changed the ways Americans thought and lived. The holiness advocates responded in at least two ways: (1) They made necessary adjustments in message and lifestyle to adapt to denominational directions and positions. (2) They hardened up and became more ardent and adamant in radical holiness as applied to both doctrine and lifestyle. The tensions which resulted produced adjustments in some quarters; in others it produced struggle, division, and the development of new denominations.

The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century is a doctoral dissertation. In form and style it could have been made more attractive and readable. There are about 200 pages of text in a book of 350 pages: a hundred are footnotes and fifty are bibliography. This is more to describe the sort of work Dieter has done than to offer negative criticism. The book is scholarly work written for scholarly consumption. I was impressed with the thoroughness of the notation and the extent of the bibliography; however, the book will win no prizes for popular reading.

As I know the story, Melvin Dieter has done a good piece of work in tracing out the holiness resurgence from 1835, its impact, and the resulting influences upon the church finally leading to institutional developments. In such a work it is unavoidable that one should overstress one aspect of Christian witness and work at the expense of others. The several denominations are noted as holiness impacted

upon them, but a broad spectrum of Protestantism is overlooked; the Baptist and Reformed side of American Christianity was very active in revivalism during this period, with the development of student Christian movements, with mission and witness movements, and with concerns for developing a Christian apologetic that could withstand a developing higher critical system that they found destructive. But, then, one book cannot do everything.

In concluding, Dieter's work simply stops. There are a number of loose ends that need to be drawn together in terms of ideas, concerns, and movements. What was the lasting impact of the holiness message and movement upon American Protestantism in 1900 after sixty-five years of "holiness revival"? What about the role of women in the holiness revival during these sixty-five years? What was the vision that gave them the opportunities they had so that their impact was proportionally greater in this period than at many other times? What of the validity of the "second blessing holiness" witness? Is this a universal truth for Christianity or is it a local and passing phenomenon--an emphasis that had its time and is gone?

A review of this book in *Brethren in Christ History and Life* would be expected to address questions of how this work may be helpful in addressing and illuminating our own Brethren in Christ heritage. Of course, as I read the work I had this in view. My conclusion is that very little explicit material of help to the Brethren appears in the work. On the other hand, there are clues here and there from which we can gain insight and make inferences relative to Brethren in Christ holiness in the nineteenth century.

Dieter shows holiness as quite pervasive in America throughout the last half of the century. From 1880 and forward the Brethren in Christ had their antennae out to pick up signals from the central streams of expression flowing within American Christianity. We can clearly trace the influence of Sunday school, revivals, church

publications, and the like. We have clues that the Brethren were also aware of the holiness message. General Conference Minutes at the end of the 1880's incorporate statements into the reports that clearly reflect Wesleyan holiness language and concepts--just short of the "second blessing" emphasis. We have only clues and hints as to whence we came by this; Dieter's work clarifies the context in which this sort of thing would occur.

As noted, here and there in Dieter's work are hints of the emphases of holiness that would appeal to the Brethren in Christ. Full surrender, entire consecration, all on the altar, the holy and separated life--these are American holiness terms that would have appeal for Brethren in Christ with a strong "quest for piety and obedience." But the author does not generally dwell at length on these things. While he hints at a distinction in the holiness ranks between the urban holiness people and the rural holiness groups, in my judgment he does not sharply enough delineate the differences here. The "rural holiness groups" were generally radical in the formation and proclamation of their doctrine, in the pattern and expression of the spiritual experience they expected, and in the lifestyle they required. The movements we know that mediated holiness to the Brethren in Christ most directly were all "rural holiness" types. Dieter's passing comments are helpful in describing these but a fuller understanding of Brethren in Christ holiness connections calls for further study with these distinctions in mind.

In *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century* Melvin Dieter gives us valuable insights into a significant page in the history of Christianity in America that is, at least, a part of our special heritage. Students wanting to understand the background and impact of American holiness upon Christianity in America generally as an influence upon our heritage will want to read this book.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Brethren in Christ Historical Society has passed its fifth birthday and I have completed my first year in the office of president. A report on what has been done over the year and comment as to what is anticipated in the future are in order in this, the final issue of *Brethren in Christ History and Life* for 1981.

The major accomplishments of the year were the publication of two issues of our journal and the Annual Meeting in June. E. Morris Sider, editor of *Brethren in Christ History and Life*, continues to bring together excellent materials in two editions each year. The publication is gaining respect and response among Brethren in Christ and beyond. Furthermore, the journal contributes to our sense of historic roots and present identity as Brethren in Christ. Our common thanks to Morris for his fine work!

On Thursday evening, June 25, 1981, the Brethren in Christ Historical Society met in Annual Meeting at Messiah College, Grantham. The meeting was held in conjunction with the Summer School for Ministry in process at Messiah College at that time. Theme for the meeting was "Story Telling in Communication of Faith and Transfer of Heritage." Dr. E. Morris Sider presented an address focusing on the theme. With this as background and rationale, five people brought to life moments of their own faith and heritage among the Brethren in the form of story. Story tellers included C. W. Boyer, Myron Dietz, Ruth Dourte, Henry Ginder, and Don Shafer. The 120 plus people present for the meeting found that indeed story telling is a delightful avenue for sharing faith and heritage.

An item of business from the meeting needs to be reported to you, the membership: The executive committee proposed an amendment to the constitution of the society as follows:

The Society shall maintain official relationship to the Brethren in Christ Church by way of the Archives of the Brethren in Christ in the following manner:

The Archives shall serve as the official depository for all Society records and for all exchange publications received by the Society.

The membership present adopted the recommendation amending the constitution. This provides for responsible maintenance of Society materials.

The executive committee of the Society has met quarterly--or nearly so--to give direction and thought to the activity of the organization. Among concerns projected for the future that might have particular interest among the membership is a colloquy on thought and life among the Brethren as a quest for consensus. Further word on this may be forthcoming.

In September of this year our secretary, Nancy Heisey, became Nancy Longacre. We extend our congratulations and best wishes to Paul and Nancy as they establish their home in Akron, Pennsylvania. Both of them continue service as executives with Mennonite Central Committee.

The next Annual Meeting of the Society will be held in conjunction with General Conference in Azusa, California, a breakfast meeting, Tuesday, July 6, 1982, in the Faculty-Staff Dining Room of Azusa Pacific University.

Owen H. Alderfer, President

NEWS AND NOTES

At the request of a member of the Brethren in Christ Historical Society, a cassette tape recording was made of the paper read and stories told at the Society's annual meeting in June. Members and others may purchase a tape by sending \$2.00 to the Archives, Messiah College, Grantham, PA 17027.

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Paul Hostetler, a member of the Brethren in Christ Historical Society, has had his book, *Preacher on Wheels*, serialized in the *Mennonite Weekly Review*. *Preacher on Wheels* is the story of the author's father, Eli Hostetler. The book is published by the Brethren Press.

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The following communication from Dwight Thomas is a call for hymnals and other information relating to the Brethren in Christ musical experience. Because of the significance of the subject, the communication is reproduced here in full.

As some of you know, I am presently working towards a Ph.D. in ethnomusicology at the University of Michigan. As part of my program, I have been doing research into our Brethren in Christ musical heritage. My immediate interest is in our German singing tradition, and more specifically in the tunes used with the old German texts. The search for old tunes and musical practices has been both exciting and frustrating, exciting when following fruitful leads or talking with people like Monroe Dourte, frustrating when confronted by the

inevitable dead ends--but in all, a satisfying search. Pieces of the puzzle are at last beginning to fall into place.

Some of my frustration has resulted from a lack of ready access to certain primary sources. By virtue of my being in the Midwest, it has been very difficult to get some of the hymnals and other information necessary for my research. If anyone can help, it would be greatly appreciated. My needs are twofold: (1) hymnals: Brethren in Christ and other related German and English hymnals; and (2) information relating to German singing among the Brethren in Christ. I am especially eager to obtain copies of the following hymnals:

Spiritual Hymns (German and English, any dates)
Geistliche Liedersammlung. Philadelphia: King und Baird, 1862.

and if there are any still at large among the Brethren in Christ:

Das Kleine Davidische Psalterspiel
Brethren's Select Hymnbook
Behney Hymnbook (used by the United Zion's Children)

If you have copies of these hymnals, but do not wish to part with them, I would still like to know what German hymnals are in Brethren in Christ hands, whose they were, and in what part of the country they would have been used.

I also need information relating to German singing among the Brethren in Christ: stories from oral tradition; written documents (diary citations, correspondence, etc.); and reminiscences of German songs and hymns sung in Brethren in Christ homes or churches. At this point, no bit of information is too mundane or insignificant. If you can help, please write.

In addition to my rather specific concerns with our German musical heritage, I continue to maintain research and documentation in other more general areas of Brethren in Christ musical expression, past and present. If you have, can spare, or know someone who has any of the following, please write:

1. Stories about Brethren in Christ music, musicians, and situations where music was played or sung.

2. Written documents such as hymnals used in Brethren in Christ churches (Brethren in Christ published and otherwise), diary citations, articles, letters.
3. Recordings made by Brethren in Christ people or Brethren in Christ music groups on record, tape, or wire (might there be 78s of old male quartets out there?).
4. Photographs of Brethren in Christ musicians or Brethren in Christ people making music.

Ours is a rich and fascinating musical heritage deserving to be well documented and described. It is my prayer that my research will contribute positively to that end, and that it might help create a heightened awareness of the importance of musical expression in a religious context.

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