

Brethren in Christ _____

HISTORY and LIFE

In this issue, by Wilma I. Musser—

Brethren in Christ Churches in Kansas



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A Historical Survey

Wilma I. Musser

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NOTES

From the Editor

This issue is substantially different from other issues of this journal in that it is given entirely to one subject--a history of the Brethren in Christ Church in Kansas. What started as an article for *Brethren in Christ History and Life* rather quickly developed into a larger work that deserved some special recognition, yet without the additional expense that producing it in a separate book form would entail.

As the following account will show, the story of the Brethren in Christ Church in Kansas has a unique place in that denomination's history, in part because many of the developments in the denomination since the late 1800's had their origins in that state. While this position has generally been conceded to Kansas, the story of the church in Kansas has until now largely been told only in pieces, mainly in several places in Carlton Wittlinger's *Quest for Piety and Obedience* and in Martin Schrag's two articles on Benjamin Hardin Irwin in two earlier issues of *Brethren in Christ History and Life* (June and December 1981). This issue gives for the first time a rounded treatment to the history of the denomination in Kansas.

For this reason, we owe much thanks to Wilma I. (Wenger) Musser. As denominational archivist, I can testify to the careful and persistent research that she did in writing this account, the kind of research that characterized her writing one of the first articles published by this journal ("Rhoda E. Lee," June 1979). In addition to her assiduous style of research, she brings to this account a knowledge of the Brethren in Christ Church in Kansas

that comes from having lived in that state for a number of years. Thus in more ways than one, we are fortunate in her authorship of this study.

Gratitude is also owing to Ray M. Zercher who served as guest editor for this issue. My absence in Asia and Africa on a sabbatical leave of absence meant that I could not satisfactorily edit a major production such as this history. As he has done on many occasions over the years for this journal and other publications, Ray Zercher unselfishly gave of his time and editorial skills so that another important piece could be added to the growing shelf of Brethren in Christ literature. No one does these things better or more graciously.

E.M.S.

PREFACE

William Allen White, well-known editor of the *Emporia (Kansas) Gazette*, once wrote, "When anything new happens in the country, it happens first in Kansas."

While that was no doubt a strong claim to make, it is true that in the life of the Brethren in Christ Church, many ideas, programs and even doctrines were introduced and initiated first by innovative Kansas Brethren. (A list of "firsts" is included in the Appendixes.)

Who were these people? Where did they come from? Why did they come to Kansas? What did they believe? What impact did they make on the history of the church? And what are they doing today?

These questions and more will be addressed in this historical account.

Two things have impelled me to undertake this writing: the need to preserve the history of the Kansas churches for future generations; and love and appreciation for the Abilene Church, which nourished me spiritually from infancy to college days.

It would be impossible to here acknowledge everyone who helped in making this book possible. I am indebted to Dr. E. Morris Sider, church archivist, for suggesting this project and for making material available; to Ray Zercher for his scholarly editing; to my husband, Arthur, who helped in research, and encouraged me in using the computer; to my brother Virgil Wenger and his wife, Carol, of Abilene, who checked many items and got local information; to Rev. Henry F. Landis, who lent photographs and church record books, and to many persons who were willing to be interviewed.

W. I. M.

Part I

Beginnings to 1910

Chapter 1

Origin and Beliefs

The year was 1753. A mother who had left the state church of Switzerland and joined the Anabaptists was being persecuted for this act by being isolated from her family. Under these conditions, her eighth child, Jacob Engel, was born.

At the same time a group of Swiss families, including her own, were planning to sail for America. Anna Engel's sympathetic mistress, although realizing she could be punished for her conspiracy, told Anna that some day when she would be out in the yard hanging up the linens, Anna should take the baby and slip out the backdoor. The plan worked, and eventually Anna was able to make the trip to America with her husband, Ulrich, and family on the ship *Phoenix*, arriving in Philadelphia October 1, 1754. Of fifty-one babies aboard ship, all had died on the ninety-one-day voyage except little "Yokeli," as he was called. The mothers gathered around Anna Engel and her son and declared that God surely intended something special for this little baby.¹

Such is the dramatic tradition of the early life of Jacob Engel, the person whose name is most consistently linked with the founding of the Brethren in Christ Church.

During Jacob Engel's early twenties, numerous spiritual revivals took place in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Among the preachers were Philip Otterbein and Martin Boehm. They preached regeneration and baptism, but the method of baptism was optional.²

Sometime in the mid-1780s, six men who had been meeting for prayer and praise and to exchange views, concluded that the only biblical mode of baptism was trine immersion administered to believing adults only. When a Dunkard minister refused to baptize them because they did not wish to join the Dunkard church, he suggested that they baptize each other. This they did near Stacktown, in the Conoy Creek, which flows into the Susquehanna River. Five of the men are said to have been Jacob Engle, Hans Engle, Jacob Stern, Samuel Heigs, and Christian Rupp. The two Engles and Rupp became the first ministers. Although the date for this event is placed at about 1786, there is actually no official record of the founding of the church.³

The small fellowship of believers was called "River Brethren," presumably because of their location near the river. The official name, Brethren in Christ, was used shortly before the Civil War, when the military draft made it necessary to register in Washington, D.C., as a nonresistant organization. The church was not incorporated until 1904. The names "River Brethren" and "Brethren in Christ" were used interchangeably and together for many years, and even today in Kansas the church is sometimes referred to as the River Brethren.⁴

The one thing, more than any other, that brought about their existence was their Anabaptist belief. (Anabaptism means rebaptism.) Whereas the state church of Switzerland (the Reformed) believed in infant baptism and considered rebaptism heretical, the Brethren felt baptism should follow a personal conversion, an experience of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ. Since an infant is incapable of that experience, they said, only adults should be baptized. Thus they combined in their theology important elements from Anabaptism and Pietism in a union which would characterize their later denominational identity.

The Brethren believed in the authority of the Scriptures and made the Word of God their guide as they sought to obey the teachings of Christ and the apostles. Decisions would be corporate rather than individual, and ministers would be elected

rather than chosen by lot. That they should be a holy people separated from the world would show in their manner of living and dress. They would be nonresistant, loving peace and repudiating violence and warfare.⁵

Chapter 2

Lure of the West-- and the Unalluring

During the first seventy-five years the Brethren in Christ increased substantially in numbers. They were well known for their large farms and their large families. It was the desire of every father to leave each son a farm. When good land became less accessible and more costly, some of the Lancaster County farmers moved to surrounding counties or farther west into Ohio, Illinois and Indiana. Others moved north into Canada.

Still others began to consider the possibility of moving to Kansas, where there was no scarcity of good land. Many Pennsylvanians took the excursions provided by the expanding railroads, who were eager for passengers as well as to sell land given to them by the government. Trains with as many as thirteen cars of excursionists were common and frequent. "Kansas fever" was becoming contagious, as people saw firsthand or heard glowing reports of this sparsely settled country.¹

A number of things contributed to the opening of the prairie and making this land desirable at this time. The railroad had reached Abilene by 1866, eliminating the long trips previously made by covered wagon. The Plains Indians had ceased to be a menace by 1876. By 1868 James Oliver had improved John Deere's iron plow, a most necessary tool in breaking up the virgin sod.² The invention of barbed wire in 1874 by J.F. Glidden, an Illinois farmer, has been said to have been more responsible for

settling the plains than even the railroad or the Homestead Law. Barbed wire fences made agriculture possible where previously cattle had sole access to the open range. It made possible also the isolation of cattle and introduction of blooded stock.³

Of great importance was the windmill, which soon became the universal sign of habitation on the Great Plains.⁴ Wells had to be drilled to great depths and the water brought to the surface by the windmill, which would deliver it night and day as long as the wind blew. Another enticement was the success of the hardy, red, winter wheat brought by the Mennonites from Russia in 1874. Theodore C. Henry, a farmer and the first mayor of Abilene, who had experimented with wheat even earlier, had 5,000 acres planted on both sides of the Kansas Pacific Railroad, from Abilene east six miles. Trainmen would call out to passengers, "We are coming to Henry's wheat fields" so they could view this impressive sight.⁵

In addition to the economic necessity of desiring good, cheap farmland, the Brethren in Christ desired that their people stay together in a religious body. While they wanted their children to stay on the farm, they also wanted them to stay in the faith of their forefathers. Their religious traditions and doctrines were so important that they felt a divine calling to perpetuate them. Thus any land they chose must be sufficiently large to accommodate a great number of families who were all bound by the common ties of religion, culture, language, occupation and marriage. They would take the church with them.

The church groups in Pennsylvania sent scouts to spy out the land. After they carefully examined a number of counties, they agreed that Dickinson County, with Abilene as its county seat, would be by far the best location. Abilene had been named for a town in the Bible (Luke 3:1). Now a prospering little town, it was recovering from its reputation as "the wickedest town in the west." During the years 1867-1872 cowboys had driven millions of cattle from Texas, up the Chisholm Trail to Abilene, where they loaded them on trains to be shipped East. When the cowboys got paid, they spent much of their money on whiskey and women.

There was much quarreling, even bloodshed. At different times, marshals had been hired to restore order. One marshal, Tom Smith, was murdered in Abilene. Another, Wild Bill Hickok, was killed in another town. When the railroads expanded west of Abilene, the town was glad to give up its dubious frontier-town reputation to Dodge City. Many years later a man from Abilene with Brethren in Christ background further helped enhance the town's reputation by becoming the thirty-fourth president of the United States. His name was Dwight Eisenhower.

In 1883, historical writer A. T. Andreas wrote his *History of Kansas*. Many who went before him and many who came after him were led to agree with his description of Dickinson County, quoted here in part:

A more beautiful prairie country would be difficult to find....No better soil can be found anywhere....Valleys of many of the Eastern rivers such as the Connecticut and the Mowhawk sink in significance compared to those of the Smoky Hill...The air is clean and dry and the atmosphere clear and invigorating and free from impurities....There is nothing known to agriculture that the soil is not capable of producing. The wide ranges, its numerous streams and creeks and pure living water and superabundance of rich, nutritious grasses make it desirable for stock raising purposes.⁶

This may sound more like a land agent's commercial than a factual account by a historian who wrote hundreds of descriptions of counties and states. It did, however, prove accurate to many who moved there. Also very important was the fact that, as far as eye could see, this rich, fertile farmland was available at very low prices. The Homestead Act of 1862 granted land to settlers, and railroads, too, were given large tracts of land, which they sold at from two to ten dollars an acre.

Only later would these hardy pioneers find that, along with the many good points of Kansas, they would have to battle droughts, floods, tornadoes, grasshoppers and duststorms--the

unalluring part, the battle with the elements. One writer aptly described the plains farmer as "a hostage of the elements."⁷

Although the prairie skies were often an innocent blue, with horizons unlimited and awesome sunsets, the fiercest enemies of these pioneers came from the skies. Clouds which produced too much rain caused floods; clouds that withheld rain caused droughts. The incessant blowing of the wind could be as mild as the gentle flowing through tall grass or as severe as a howling blizzard with winds of fifty miles an hour, or a tornado with a wind velocity of sixty-five miles an hour. Windstorms brought the duststorms that buried their land under inches of dust or, conversely, blew off their topsoil, carrying it hundreds of miles away. "Nowhere in the nation, according to climatologists, is there greater reason to be awed by the wind."⁸

A favorite story told by Kansans is about the visitor who asked, "Does the wind always blow like this?" "No," replied the farmer. "It will maybe blow this way for a week or ten days, and then it will change and blow that way for a while."

Grasshoppers, another plague of the farmer, sometimes stripped his corn fields, leaving his stand of corn looking like a million broomsticks. Hailstones as big as eggs or golf balls often utterly destroyed crops. Being dependent on the elements may have helped shape the character of the Kansas people. One has written,

Perhaps this sweetness of character becomes instilled in a group of people who are more dependent upon the elements than those in other parts of the country. This sweetness I believe is of a spiritual nature. This surrender to forces greater than oneself can but create a humbling knowledge that man is not all-powerful.⁹

However "sweet" the character turned out to be, somehow these hardships in preserving life and property did produce a strength of character, an unwavering faith, and a mind that sought

solutions to problems, as well as an independence typical of Kansans.

The Dickinson County people lived through several catastrophes in the period before 1910. The great Broadway fire of January 17, 1882, burned down the courthouse, destroying most records. The deeds were saved only because they were housed in another office building. The fire destroyed all the buildings on both sides of Broadway between Second and Third streets. In 1901 the city mill also burned.

One of the worst disasters in Abilene history occurred with the great flood of May 29, 1903. After days of rain, the Smoky Hill River and Mud Creek both went on a rampage, covering most of the town. Some people sought refuge in the Abilene Brethren in Christ Church. It is reported that one family stayed several weeks.¹⁰

The *Reflector*, which was not issued for five days, reported, "The water touched the ceiling of the press room, and paper stock, ink, etc. were floating promiscuously." Water was six to eight feet in the streets and the town became a lake. Untold damage was done to business firms. Forty thousand acres of crops were lost, leaving many farmers desolate. Loss to crops alone totaled over \$300,000.¹¹

In January 1895 the temperature dropped to sixteen degrees below zero. May of the same year produced a weather phenomenon--a temperature of ninety-three degrees on May 9 and a hard frost on May 12.¹²

The Great Seal of Kansas portrays a man in a field with a horse and plow under a starry sky. The motto declares *Ad Astra per Aspera* (To the Stars through Difficulties). With what more appropriate words could the life of the Kansas pioneer be described!

Chapter 3

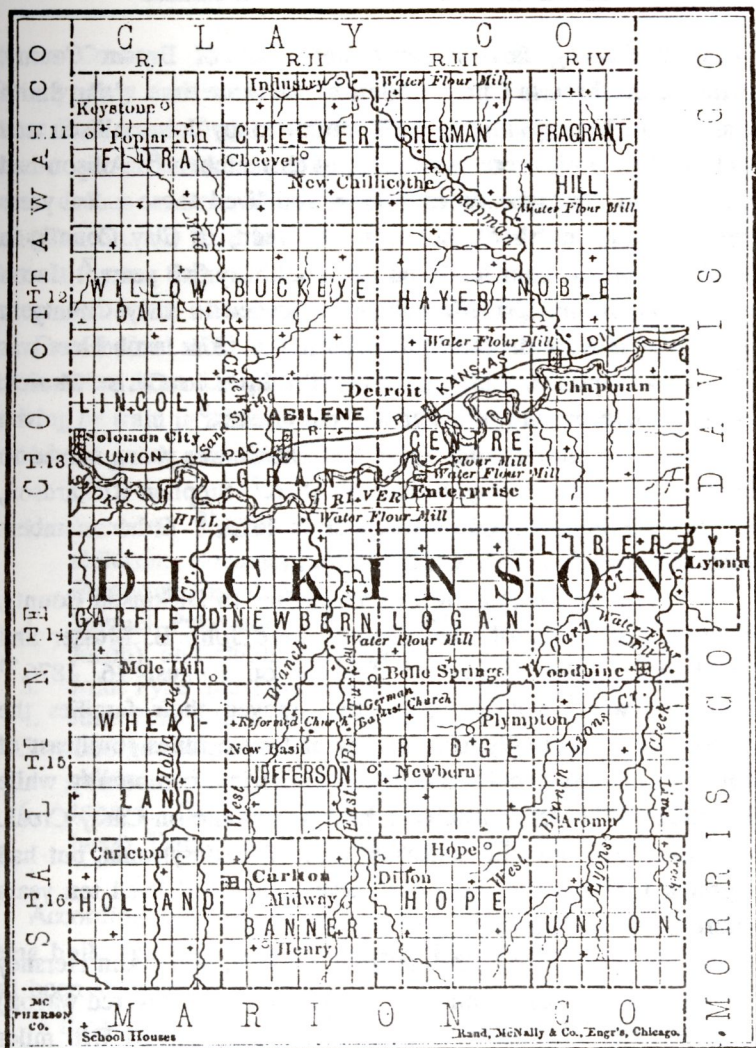
Early Settlers

It is difficult to determine just which Brethren in Christ members were the first to settle in Kansas. Although Dickinson County would early claim the largest number of church members, they did not migrate there first.

The earliest records available show them to be in Brown and Clay counties in 1873 and 1874. John Eyer, Sr., from Toronto, Canada, came with his wife, Catherine, and six children to Brown County, in the northeastern corner of Kansas, in 1873. Eyer had purchased 240 acres on Pony Creek, five miles north and west of the present town of Hamlin. Ordained a minister in Canada in 1859, he continued to minister in Brown County.¹

In 1874 Ben (B.M.) Byer came, also from the Markham District in Canada, with his wife, Nancy, and four children, having bought 160 acres nearby.² John Heise, according to courthouse records, bought a farm in Hamlin Township in 1872, but he and his family did not move there until later. John did not become a baptized member until 1915.³ Christopher Heise bought land in 1873, probably for relatives, for he never occupied it. He did, however, give land for the Pleasant Hill Brethren in Christ Church.⁴

The first of the Brethren to come from Pennsylvania to Brown County was Christian Haldeman. He arrived in 1876 with his wife, Harriet, and four children. He too was an ordained minister and served for many years with John Eyer.⁵



Map of Dickinson County from Andreas' book on Kansas history, 1883

Clay County, farther south and west of Brown County, attracted Brethren in Christ settlers at the same time. John Smith came from Pennsylvania in 1873, followed by John Allison and L.H. Mullen until there were ten church members.⁶ Allison had moved from Pennsylvania to Illinois and lived there a few years before settling north of the town of Green, in Clay County, in 1873. He was a minister for a total of thirty-five years.⁷ Jacob Heer came from Germany and homesteaded in Clay County in 1869, later moving on the Mullen farm. In 1876 Jacob Heer was converted, baptized, and joined the Brethren in Christ Church. He was a deacon and minister for many years.⁸

John W. Stauffer, after living in Illinois some years, moved to Sedgwick, Harvey County, Kansas, in 1876.⁹ Stephen Richardson, also from Illinois, moved to Sedgwick in 1878.¹⁰ Other members scattered throughout a few other counties.

The first members known to have come to Dickinson County, which is just south of Clay County, were John B. Musser and David Book, who arrived in Abilene on August 16, 1876.¹¹ Impressed with what they saw, they moved their families the following spring (1877) to farms about twelve miles southeast of Abilene. The Mussers lived in the Belle Springs community, while the Books lived just a little east, near Woodbine on Carey Creek. They had been born in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, but had migrated to Frederick, Maryland, where they had lived ten years before going to Kansas.¹²

In February of 1877, Adam Frey, his wife, Mary Ann Hershey Frey, and five children came by prairie schooner (covered wagon) from Iowa to Dickinson County, where they settled five miles northeast of Abilene. They had previously lived in Adams County, Pennsylvania, and in Illinois. Leaving Decatur, Iowa, with two wagons, they had to abandon one temporarily in Manhattan, Kansas, when a horse became lame because of very rough winter roads.¹³

The fall of 1877 brought two young brothers, Jacob and Daniel Bert, from Franklin County, Pennsylvania, to work in

Brown County. When soon afterward they visited Dickinson County, they decided it was the place for them. Their father, Peter Bert, came from Franklin County to inspect the land and was so pleased that he purchased a farm for each of his sons for seven dollars an acre, about thirteen miles northeast of Abilene, near Detroit. In 1878 he purchased 160 acres five miles north of Detroit for son Samuel. By 1879 the whole Bert family was there except son John, who remained on the Pennsylvania farm.¹⁴

Even before most of the Berts had arrived, the year 1878 saw six families from Dauphin and Perry counties in Pennsylvania arriving by train in Abilene on April 12. They came bringing their household goods and livestock. These families were listed:

1. Jacob F. Eisenhower and wife, Rebecca Matter, and children: Amanda, David, Abraham, and Ira; and father, Frederick Eisenhower.
2. Samuel Pyke and wife, Catherine Eisenhower (sister of Jacob), and children, Annie and Katie.
3. John Pyke and family (son of Samuel).
4. Jake Pyke and family (son of Samuel).
5. George Washington Jury and wife, Anna Gish, and children: Jake, John, Ben, Salome and Lizzie.
6. John L. Gish and wife, Catherine Moyer, and children: Jacob, Daniel, Sally, Anna, and Joseph Harvey.¹⁵

According to tradition, the Eisenhowers, while their house was being built, lived in their eight-horse-drawn wagon, all of which had been shipped by freight.

In the years to come, the Eisenhowers would become the best known of this group. Fifty-one-year-old Jacob Eisenhower, like his father, Frederick, before him, was a farmer and a preacher who could preach in both German and English. Two married daughters, Catherine Haldeman and Mary Ann Witter, would soon follow him to Kansas.¹⁶ Abraham (whose middle name was Lincoln) became a veterinarian, a traveling evangelist, and the founder of Jabbok Orphanage in Oklahoma.¹⁷ Ira became an

independent holiness preacher and founded a mission in Topeka, Kansas.¹⁸ David, who was fourteen when he came to Dickinson County, was later employed as a maintenance engineer for the Belle Springs Creamery and became the father of Dwight David Eisenhower. Amanda, seventeen at this time, later married C.O. Musser.

Years later, Amanda Eisenhower Musser wrote:

You want to hear about our journey to Kansas in 1878. Some things I remember very distinctly. There were only seven of the party who left Elizabethville, Pennsylvania. We went first to the town of Millersburg....At Harrisburg, five other families joined us--John Gish and family, Wash Jury and family, Samuel, Jacob, and John Pyke and their families....My deepest impressions on our arrival in Kansas were the continual blowing of the wind and that we could buy eggs for five cents a dozen.¹⁹

At about the same time these families were getting settled in new homes, more people were coming to spy out the land. A diary of April 9 to May 9, 1878, by Cyrus Lenhert, gives day-by-day details of the investigation made by him and Benjamin Gish.²⁰ There were other people in the group. In fact Lenhert says that about 350 passengers boarded the train at Harrisburg for Kansas, which suggests that this may have been an excursion train. How many of the passengers were Brethren in Christ is not known, although he mentions some by name. Only the travels of Lenhert and Gish are recorded.

Their tour took them as far west as Ellis and as far south as Kinsley, 120 miles west of Newton. They went up and down on the Missouri Pacific, the Kansas Pacific and the Santa Fe railroads, back and forth to Topeka and Kansas City several times, and made circles within circles as they investigated numerous towns. Lenhert records in detail the kind of soil, water supply, types of crops, price of wheat, corn, hay, price of land per acre, price of horses, mules, oil, coal, and so on. After describing some areas, he notes, "This place deserves consideration." He gives the price of lodging

and meals and tells of Brethren with whom he stayed or visited--Mussers, John Stauffers,²¹ J. Gish, Books and Berts. He names several others he met and apparently knew before this trip. While in Dickinson County they used ponies or teams to travel over the area to examine the land.

Cyrus Lenhert and Ben Gish arrived back in Harrisburg on May 8, 1878, and doubtless gave their reports and recommendations. They arrived only a short time before the General Conference convened in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, May 16-17, 1878. There a large group made known their intention to move to Dickinson County, Kansas.

Some had gone to see the land for themselves; others had heard glowing reports. Waiting too long could mean that other settlers would move in, buy and occupy the best land. Therefore, they decided they would go as a colony and as an organized church body. One of those making the move, Benjamin Gish, would be their minister.²²

Bringing the matter before the Council in 1878, they asked for an elected official to accompany them as bishop. The Council confirmed their choice of Jesse Engle of Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, and asked the church in his district to release him.²³ Jesse Engle²⁴ would be their bishop, Benjamin Gish their minister, and Benjamin B. Engle and A.M. Engle, their deacons. Jesse Engle and A.M. (Abram) Engle were grandsons of Jacob Engel, who one hundred years before had helped to found this brotherhood.

The same Council decided that missionary brethren be sent to Kansas. Joseph Hershey and Henry Leshner were appointed.²⁵ This action was no doubt taken in response to the 1877 Council, when it was decided that "ministering brethren be sent to visit the Mennonites in the far West and to visit the scattered members throughout the state of Kansas, and if necessary to elect ministers and deacons."²⁶ Samuel Zook wrote that Jesse Engle and Jacob Cassel visited in 1877, but they are not named in the Council minutes.



**Benjamin M. Gish before he went to
Kansas in 1879**



**The Cyrus Lenhert farm home, site of the first General Conference held
in Kansas, 1887, photographed 1912, showing, left to right, standing:
Rhoda, Mary, Mrs. George Lenhert, holding George Jr., George
(Cyrus's son), Esther, and Frances; seated: Paul, Harry, and Benjamin**

Having received permission to go as an organized church body, and having made personal decisions to relocate, some went to Kansas to buy farms before returning home to sell their Pennsylvania farms and to prepare for the big move. One such group left Harrisburg on October 1, 1878, and returned on October 23 of the same year. Cyrus Lenhert accompanied this group and again kept a complete diary. He names the twenty-eight persons who were in his railway car.²⁷

They went directly to Abilene, Kansas, where they were met by Henry Musser and John Pyke and his father, with teams to take them to John Pykes' and John Mussers'. They were able to accommodate only fourteen, so the rest stayed overnight in town. They "met the missionary brethren." These men are not named, but it has been conjectured that they may have been the men appointed by Council to visit the Kansas settlers. The Council of 1874 had said that ministers sent out to preach should be considered missionaries.²⁸ Samuel Zook also names Henry C. Leshner and Joseph Hershey as being present at John B. Mussers' for the first love feast held in Dickinson County.²⁹ This took place October 5, 1878, when fifty-five members communed and a number of Russian Brethren (Mennonites) did not commune.³⁰

An investigating party spent many days checking land and prices and consulting together. On October 22, Lenhert records that he bought a block of lots at Abilene and, on October 23, "looked around for a lot to build a warehouse. Secured one, entered an agreement and took the train East."

The next months were busy as they prepared to have sale of farmland and equipment. It is reported that farms sold for \$130 to \$176 an acre.³¹ There was much to do before the big day, March 25, 1879, when they would meet at the Pennsylvania Railroad station in Harrisburg to board the train for a new home and life in Kansas.

Some Brethren in Christ members from Franklin County, however, chose not to wait but to go one week earlier, on March 18. They left with a large group of mostly non-Brethren, going on

the Cumberland Valley Railroad via Hagerstown on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Of the passengers listed, these were thought to have been Brethren in Christ: the families of Isaac Shockey, Jacob Shank and John Shank, D.M. Martin, Jacob Shirk and Daniel Crider.³²

The largest group, called the "Kansas colony," was composed of persons from Lancaster, Dauphin, Lebanon, and Franklin counties, and some from Maryland, all going to Abilene, Dickinson County. Some of the group got on the mail train at Marietta, Lancaster County. Two special cars and a baggage car had been ordered for them. They had already sent eight carloads of farm implements, household goods, and furniture ahead on March 18. The *Daily New Era* of Lancaster, March 25, 1879, named sixteen families and thirteen single men who left that day to meet in Harrisburg.³³ The *Daily New Era* reported:

They are with one exception River Brethren and most have previously purchased ground near Abilene. Ten families have jointly purchased ground at said point on railroad and have erected a frame building 100 feet long which they will use as a temporary residence until they can erect habitations on the lands they purchased, after which they propose using the said building for storing and shipping grain. The emigration from this section of so many good people will be a loss to this community and a comparative gain to the section they remove to.

The next day the same paper reported the farewell for this group:

It is estimated that from 800 to 1,000 people had assembled (many of them out of curiosity) to see them off. About twenty minutes before the train came along, Rev. Benjamin Gish, one of the party who left, made his appearance on the platform of one of the cars and made some remarks appropriate to the occasion to the assembled multitude, and especially to his brethren in the faith whom they were leaving behind, which

was followed by a farewell hymn, in which nearly every one joined. It was very impressive. Many of their friends accompanied them as far as Harrisburg.³⁴

A similar farewell was held when the A.M. Engles of Shippensburg boarded the Cumberland Valley Railroad at that point to come to Harrisburg to meet the above group. "A large crowd was hushed into perfect order by the singing of a hymn which was followed by an appropriate prayer by the Rev. Samuel Zook."³⁵

Half a column in the newspaper was devoted to a flowery tribute to the Engle family. Previously an article appeared telling of the good sale of Engle's eight registered cows, plus common cattle, amounting to \$2,453. The correspondent adds his personal comments: "May the Lord's blessing and our best wishes follow friend Engle who was one of the most progressive and enterprising men of the Valley having done his full share of the work to introduce improved seeds, implements and good stock"³⁶

Two weeks earlier, his farm sale had been advertised, as were the sales of Isaac Shockey and Jacob Shank. Advertisements such as these were frequent in those days and usually commenced, "Intending to remove to Kansas...."³⁷

In addition to those who took the mail train from Marietta to Harrisburg, another group left Marietta on the same day, on a special train of the Pennsylvania Railroad bound for Dickinson County, Kansas, after joining the first group in Harrisburg. These were eighty-three in number and were mostly from Lancaster County. Their names were printed in the *Marietta Times*.³⁸

Whether the two sections of train left Harrisburg at the same time is unclear, although it has been assumed they did. At any rate one group arrived in Abilene Thursday evening, March 27, while the other group arrived the following morning.

Jesse Lady explained the reason for the difference in arrival time. He said that, arriving in Kansas City, the group for the first time changed trains. Here they boarded the Union Pacific (Kansas

Pacific) for Abilene. The first section arrived at 4:00 p.m., Thursday. However, the second did not arrive until Friday morning because they had been delayed by a fire on the track east of Lawrence, Kansas. In Abilene, the migrants were guided by the light of several lanterns to the Emigrant House.³⁹

A correspondent for the group wasted no time in writing back to the *Daily New Era* the very next day. On March 29 he wrote:

We reached Abilene City on March 28 at 5 o'clock a.m. We had a few hundred yards to walk until we reached the reception house....where we were received by John Musser and family who had breakfast ready for us. After all had something to eat, preparations were made to haul our furniture and goods into the reception house which hauling was finished last evening. It is now stored in that building amounting to eight carloads....Our colony consisted of about 300 in all including children. Our train had nine coaches and two baggage cars.⁴⁰

The three hundred persons included sixty families.⁴¹ The oldest person was forty-five years old and the youngest was twenty-one days.⁴²

The "reception house" mentioned in the *New Era* report was the frame building one hundred feet long mentioned earlier in this chapter. It was more commonly known as the Emigrant House, but sometimes was called the Colony House. It had been built by John B. Musser and David Book⁴³ on land acquired by Cyrus Lenhert and Ben Gish on their trip in October 1878. The migrants stayed here while they built their homes.

The building was actually 32 by 80 feet. It had three rooms on the first floor. The upstairs was divided into two parts, with steps in the middle of the building. The west half of the upstairs was used by the women for sleeping and the east half by the men. Here Sunday morning services were also held until other places were available. The downstairs was used for kitchen, dining room and storage, where furniture was stored from floor to ceiling. Meals were often served to 175 at a time.⁴⁴

The *Abilene Chronicle*, a weekly newspaper, on April 4, 1879, noted their arrival:

Probably the largest colony that ever located in our county arrived during the past week. For a long time arrangements were being made for the newcomers and their arrival has created quite a stir. They belong to a denomination known as River Brethren....During the past year a number of the best farms of the southern part of the county have been purchased for them, many of them in the vicinity of Belle Springs....No other large company have brought so much with them. They are worthy men of means who pay cash for what they get, and are able to get what they need. They are able to pay cash for their farms and make needed improvements. They are honest, steady, hardworking people and they can not fail to coin money in our glorious, young state.⁴⁵

One historian wrote that this colony was "one of the most complete and perfectly organized that ever entered a new country." He noted that, after spending much time seeking a location, they finally decided upon Dickinson County, some settling north and some south of the Smoky Hill River, which flows south of Abilene. "They brought with them fifteen car loads of freight, and in noting their departure from Pennsylvania, the *Marietta Times* said that they took with them not less than \$500,000 in money."⁴⁶

Another source explains that Dickinson County was chosen by leaders who sought divine guidance. An article from the *Abilene Gazette* points out:

They saw many fine places to locate along the Kansas Pacific between Kansas City and Salina and in several counties south east [sic] of Kansas City, which for temporal advantages were thought to be very favorable. But as the colony had the establishing of the church and the spiritual welfare of its members more seriously in view than pecuniary and temporal interests and advantages, its chief concern was to that end. Prayer and supplication to the Lord was made for wisdom and

Divine direction. Finally in October, last, Dickinson County was decided upon by those who were sent to make the selection.⁴⁷

Some of the new settlers wrote letters to their home newspapers extolling the virtues of Kansas.⁴⁸ They also wrote personal letters to relatives and friends. They reported that railroads were offering excursion rates, that land was cheap and crops were good.

Not everyone, however, was delighted with the new frontier. Rev. H.V. Givler returned from a trip to Kansas in early 1879 and gave a lecture in the Methodist Episcopal Church on Duke Street in Lancaster. His report was not as glowing as most. He emphasized that a man needed at least \$2,000 to stock a farm.⁴⁹ It was also reported that two young men went to Abilene for a day or two and, without even going out to see the country, decided to go back.⁵⁰

On the whole, however, people were pleased with what they found and, after the March 1879 migration, came in rapid succession. More came during the same spring.⁵¹ Bishop Samuel Zook came in 1880⁵² and was followed by his brother, evangelist Noah Zook, in 1881.⁵³ Cyrus Lenhert, who had made two trips in 1878 to examine the land for himself and others, did not actually move until 1882.⁵⁴ In addition to people already named, the Freys, Eshelmans, Pages, Kauffmans, Brechbills, Martins, Hoovers, Wengers, Sollenbergers and many others, whose names are not intentionally omitted, arrived in the early eighties. The names and legends of all who should be mentioned are many.

For the benefit of a generation who may never have seen a "plain" person, it may be appropriate to describe the appearance of these early settlers. Upon conversion they had renounced the world and accepted the Brethren lifestyle, making church members easily recognizable. Men parted their hair in the middle and cut it straight across the back. They wore beards and were not allowed to wear moustaches unless they did not shave at all.

Sunday garb included long-tailed coats with erect collars, high black shoes, cape overcoats and broad-rimmed hats.

One writer, describing the dress of the colonists, wrote, "Their hats were probably more a trademark of the Brethren than anything else. They were universally wide-brimmed, flat-crowned and black."⁵⁵

The women were conspicuous in their dark, solid-colored dresses with aprons and skirts gathered at the waist. The bodice was covered with a cape of like material. Dresses extended below the ankles, and stockings and shoes were black. They rolled their long hair in a bun on top of their heads and covered it with a white cap called a prayer covering, which was tied by strings under the chin. For outside wear, a black bonnet similar to a sunbonnet was worn. Women were not permitted to wear jewelry.

Clothing for children were not exact duplicates of their elders but were simple in design and homemade. Mothers even made their boys' trousers until denim overalls were used. Perhaps some suppressed pride could be seen in the colorful hair ribbons and sashes which mothers used in dressing their little girls. But even with all that, the children, too, were easily recognized as belonging to the plain people.

One author writing about "these curious people" stated, "They have not invented a new style of dress. They simply refuse to adopt new styles. They dress as they did when they came from Germany and there has been no change for generations."⁵⁶

A newspaper article featuring the Brethren at the time of the General Conference at Belle Springs in 1902, after discussing their dress, says,

There are in Dickinson County alone perhaps 3,000 members of this sect. They have been here for twenty-two years. they have the best farms and the sleekest horses. They ride in queer four posted carriages with curtains for the storms....They were pioneers in the mixed agriculture that has made central Kansas successful. They did not worry when crops failed in the

90's. They simply plowed a little deeper and harrowed oftener. They raised crops when their speculative neighbors did not. They raised stock and fruit and fertilized the soil as their neighbors did not. Consequently when the good crops came they had the largest in the whole community and their bank accounts were, as they now are, the envy of the community. They succeeded because they planned right.⁵⁷

Chapter 4

Early Churches

When the colonists first came to Kansas they worshipped in homes, some of which were built large for this express purpose. Sliding or folding doors between rooms opened to make a large sanctuary. Benches and even wagon seats helped to provide seating. The first service was held in the home of Jacob Eisenhower in 1878.¹ The first love feast was at the home of John B. Musser in the fall of 1878.² The first public service was held March 30, 1883, in the Emigrant House. They later worshipped in the United Brethren church on the Southside and then in the old Christian church on Buckeye and Fifth streets.³

As the Brethren moved to Kansas, some settled on the south side of the Smoky Hill River, south of Abilene, while others settled north of Abilene. All combined to make one district--Dickinson. Ministers were Jacob Eisenhower and Ben Gish, with Jesse Engle as bishop. Peter Bert also served a short time before his death in 1880. In 1881 all the county churches voted for two additional ministers. The choices fell on Jacob N. Engle, aged 23, from south of the river, and John M. Sheets, aged 33, from north of the Smoky Hill.

Later the church was divided into two districts--North and South Dickinson, the river being the dividing line.⁴ When Bishop Samuel Zook arrived in 1880, he was made overseer of North Dickinson. He died in 1904. M.G. Engle was elected in 1906 to take his place. When Bishop Jesse Engle went to Africa in 1898, his son Jacob N.Engle, already a minister, was made bishop of

South Dickinson. He served both districts until Bishop M.G. Engle was ordained.

After worshipping in homes and in schoolhouses for several years, the Brethren in Christ turned their attention to building churches. The churches, like the people themselves, were plain, exhibiting no ornaments nor frills. For many years they were referred to as "meetinghouses" rather than by the more sophisticated term, "church." To avoid any appearance of pride, no outdoor sign indicated the name or denomination of the church. The meetinghouses all looked very much alike because they followed the same building guidelines.

The buildings were white frame structures consisting of one main room, and in most cases a small annex or "anteroom." Here mothers could tend to their small children and babies. It was also used as a Sunday school classroom and sometimes served as a place where applicants for membership could await the decision of the group. On the front side of the building were two doors, one for the men and one for the women. Benches were first used rather than pews. Men sat on one side and women on the other. In some (perhaps all) churches, a shoulder-high partition connecting the benches down the center separated the men and women. Benches at the back were reserved for the non-members and visitors. Perpendicular to the main benches were several rows of short benches on each side of the front. These were called "amen corners." Here the deacons and church officials sat and frequently sanctioned the truth or encouraged the speaker with audible amens. These benches were also sometimes used by others to relieve overcrowded conditions during special meetings.

There was no platform and no pulpit so all could be on the same level. Centering the front was a long table with a bench behind it upon which the ministers sat. Sometimes there were six or more because of the multiple-ministry practice of the time or on the occasions of sharing ministers from other congregations. A pitcher of water, drawn from the cistern or well, and a glass sat on the table. Classrooms were usually made by drawing curtains

hung on wires. Only two churches, one in the North and one in the South, were built originally with basements which would be used to accommodate love feast occasions. Others would, in years to come, excavate for that purpose.

Of course this was before the days of modern conveniences such as plumbing or electricity, so just like other rural churches, they had to be lighted by lamps and heated by coal-burning, pot-bellied stoves. Planners provided outside toilets called outhouses or privies. And they needed to provide shelter for the horses. Many of the things which at the time may have been done out of necessity, as well as for simplicity, were retained by the Brethren long after mainline churches had made changes.⁵ Many of the members were rural people living on farms outside the town.

The first church building was built in Abilene, perhaps because it would be a central meeting place. This church was built on the corner of Twelfth and Buckeye (address, 1201 North Buckeye). The plot of ground was bought for \$300 by Isaac Shockey and Cyrus Landis, trustees, on July 19, 1884.⁶

The church was a frame building 36 by 50, with an annex 16 square feet and cost \$2400. Money was raised by voluntary subscriptions, which were promptly paid.⁷ Even after other churches were built in the country, there were still fifty members living in town in 1892, which made it feasible to have regular Sunday services both morning and evening.⁸

On May 28, 1893, the Abilene church was struck by lightning and burned beyond repair. The estimated loss was \$1,200, of which amount about \$900 in insurance was received from the Brethren's Fire Aid. The sides, ends, and floor joists and the anteroom were saved through the prompt response of the Abilene Fire Company.⁹

To rebuild the church, these parts were moved onto a new foundation at the new location on the northeast corner of Seventh and Buckeye. These lots had been purchased on June 20, 1893, for \$1,000 by trustees Isaac Shockey, John K. Forney and C.O. Musser.¹⁰ While the new church was being built, at a cost of



Members of the Eisenhower family who went to Kansas in 1878, seen here about 1939; from left: Ira, Abe, Amanda (Musser) and David (Photo courtesy *Patriot-News*, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania)



Noah and Mary Zook, full-time traveling evangelists for thirteen years, beginning in 1896

\$1,600, the members worshipped in the Baptist church.¹¹ Salvage was valued at \$600 so the lot and church were now worth \$3,200. The contractor was J.L. Kruger. (Records containing the names of those who pledged and the amounts pledged for the new church are in the Abilene church office.) Elder George Detweiler preached the dedicatory sermon on November 12, 1893. His text was Isaiah 60:1, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."¹²

Except for the dimensions and cost, no further description of the first meetinghouse has been found. It doubtlessly was plain and conservative and set the pattern for the rural churches which would be built over the next decade. The new Abilene church built in 1893, however, was much more elegant and subject to criticism, as will be noted later in this chapter.

The second meetinghouse for the Brethren in Dickinson County was the Bethel church, twelve miles northeast of Abilene, and built in 1887. The location could also be described as five miles north of the now nonexistent village of Detroit. After the death of Peter Bert on January 10, 1880, his daughter, Anna H. Bert, gave an acre of land for a cemetery, and later another acre for the church.¹³

In 1887 at the District Council a committee of seven were appointed to "lay plans and make calculations as to the probable cost of erecting a meetinghouse at the Bert Cemetery." These men were Samuel Page, W.H. Sollenberger, Samuel Zook, Samuel Bert, John Sheets, A.M. Engle, and R. Brechbill.¹⁴ The church, built on a hill and named Bethel, was dedicated November 20, 1887. Costing less than \$3,000, it was 40 by 60 feet.¹⁵ This church was the only one in North Dickinson District to have a basement for the purpose of preparing and serving meals for love feasts. The Bethel congregation had the honor to host the annual General Conference in 1894. It was here also that the first money was given for foreign mission work.

Later when a post office was needed, the community became known as Moonlight, so named for a politician, Thomas

Moonlight, who was instrumental in locating the post office there. It existed only a few short years--1894-1905--but the name stuck.¹⁶

While the church at Bethel was being considered, Bishop Samuel Zook, feeling the need for another church, contributed \$750 for the Zion church, which was also built in 1887. It was located seven miles north of Abilene at the intersection of highways 15 and 18. This was on the property of Noah Zook, who was paid \$50 for the ground occupied by the church and cemetery.¹⁷

Elder Jesse Engle preached the dedicatory sermon on October 18, 1887, and a series of revival meetings followed. Engle's text was, "The place where thou standest is holy ground." The cost of the building was \$1,800, much of the labor being donated. The main carpenters were Noah H. Sollenberger and C.C. Burkholder. The building was 36 by 50 with an annex 12 by 14 to the west, with access to the coal and cob room. This church had no pulpit until some years later, when one was built by Harry Sollenberger, the son of one of the early carpenters.¹⁸ The seat divider was removed about 1910, making it possible for families to sit together. The church was built on a foundation of cut rock about a foot thick¹⁹ and seated approximately 250.²⁰ In the early days services were held alternately on Sundays at Zion and Bethel.

The three churches just described--Abilene, Bethel and Zion--composed the North Dickinson District. The South Dickinson District, where families had lived since 1877, was made up of Rosebank, Belle Springs, and Newbern.

In 1883, several River Brethren families located south of Hope, not far from Ramona, and preaching services were held alternately at various schoolhouses--mainly Michigan, Nolls, and Rosebank--every four weeks, with Sunday school at the same place. When the group got too large to be accommodated in the schoolhouses, Abe Mellinger started a church building program in 1890. Funds were solicited by Anna Mellinger, Annie Brechbill, and Annie Epler. That fall the corn crop was a failure, so people had plenty of time to donate their help. The church, named



The original building of the Zion Church, 1887-1948



The Bethel Church building as it appeared 1887-1947

Rosebank for a schoolhouse and a bank of roses, was built in the fall of 1890 and dedicated by Noah Zook in January 1891. His text was, "My house shall be called of all nations a house of prayer."²¹

The Belle Springs church, was named for the community post office by that name and was located one-half mile north of Donegal, two and a half miles southwest of Navarre and about fourteen miles southeast of Abilene. Just as the Bethel church needed a cemetery before a building, so did Belle Springs. This was necessary in the fall of 1879, when John B. Musser became the first of the church pioneers to die. He had lived to see the big colony arrive earlier that spring. He was only forty-five years of age. His seventh child, a daughter, Anna, had been born August 21, 1879, and eighteen days later Musser died of typhoid fever.²² His death occasioned buying a burial plot of two acres near Belle Springs, which was purchased from C.S. Hoffman in 1879 for \$75.²³

Services of worship were held in homes and in schoolhouses, namely, Purdy, Prairie Center, No. 99, Union Valley and Maple Grove. The church building itself was not begun until the fall of 1890 and completed in the spring of 1891.²⁴ Thus, after the people had met in other places for twelve years, it was dedicated June 28, 1891, with 700 people present. The sermon was preached by Elder Henry Davidson, followed by Jacob Eisenhower, who spoke in German on "The House not Made with Hands." A Sunday school was organized that very afternoon.²⁵

Much of the church was built by Levi Hoffman, a church member who built many houses and barns in the area.²⁶ Noah H. Sollenberger, a carpenter who had helped with the other churches, helped also in its construction.²⁷ It was 40 by 60 by 20 feet and included three rooms on the main floor, basement and partitioned loft.²⁸ Just as Bethel in the North had a basement to be used especially for love feast occasions, so did Belle Springs in the South.

In the winter of 1891 and 1892, revival meetings were held in the church with Bishop Samuel Zook and Elder J.H. Eshelman in charge. Bishop Zook said, "It was perhaps the most glorious revival I ever witnessed." Over one hundred "made a start" within four weeks.²⁹ (Another report of the same meeting says it continued six weeks with 153 souls being saved, and still another says 130.)³⁰ On April 3, 1892, Elders Fike and Zook spoke on church membership and baptism. There was a severe thunderstorm but no damage, so all proceeded to the brook at Eli Hoffman's home, where twenty-nine were baptized.³¹ Zook writes that eighty were baptized in the whole county.³²

The Newbern church was the last rural church of the Brethren in Christ to be built in Dickinson County. On November 12, 1892, a meeting was held at the Knox schoolhouse about nine miles southwest of Abilene. There it was decided to build a meetinghouse on the J.M. Engle farm to cost about \$1,800. The meetinghouse was badly needed because the dwellings were getting too small to accommodate the crowds, as was shown at Noah Engle's house, which, though large, was filled to capacity.³³

In 1893 an organization was effected by Benjamin Gish, Noah Engle, John M. Engle, Cyrus Lenhert, and Henry Landis.³⁴ The church was dedicated on October 22 of that year. Before this time they had worshipped with the Belle Springs members, first in homes, then in their new building. Services had also been held in the Knox and Harmony Hall schoolhouses. An evangelistic effort at the Knox schoolhouse had resulted in about thirty conversions, baptism following in the Turkey Creek, administered by Bishop Jesse Engle and Bishop Samuel Zook.³⁵

The land for the Newbern church was donated by John M. Engle and his wife, Martha, the deed being dated March 7, 1890. Newbern's cemetery preceded the church building by about ten years. One of the first persons to be buried there was Isaac Huntzberger, who was born in Dauphin County, Pennsylvania, in 1804, and died in Dickinson County on January 4, 1884. On the

day of the dedication, a funeral for Philip Kauffman was held in the afternoon.³⁶

George Minnich, a skilled carpenter, was in charge of construction, aided by other skilled carpenters and cabinet makers. Cyrus Lenhert and John Shirk made the doors and paneling.³⁷ In the diary of George Lenhert, dated May 10, 1883, he states that his father, Cyrus, had been to town for lumber for the Newbern church, and later that he himself had gone to town for lumber for benches.³⁸

The church was arranged in the manner typical of the Brethren meetinghouses, although they did have rooms along the west side for Sunday school rooms. Baptisms took place in the John G. Engle pond, where several loads of sand would be hauled for the occasion.³⁹

Fifteen years after the first Brethren in Christ came to Dickinson County, there were three elders, twenty ministers, nine deacons, and a membership between five and six hundred. Only seven of the ministers and three of the deacons had been ordained in the county. The others had held their offices before moving to Dickinson. Each year two District Council meetings were held in each district, and one Joint Council was held for the entire state.⁴⁰

Besides the six churches in Dickinson County, several other counties claimed Brethren in Christ churches. Some church members settled in Clay County in 1873, as stated in the previous chapter. They worshipped for some years in schoolhouses of Hays Township, with Elias Smith and John Allison as their pastors. But Allison moved to Dickinson County in 1883.

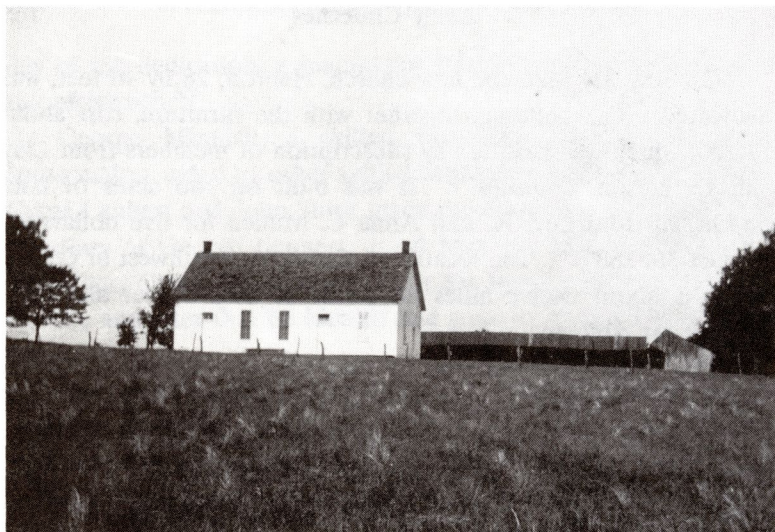
In 1885 the L.H. Mullins family asked the Dickinson County brethren to come and have a love feast in their yard. A tent 30 by 40 feet was pitched in their yard. A week of meetings preceded the love feast. The meetings were so effective that they continued for four weeks. Fourteen were added to the church, making twenty-two members.⁴¹ The members decided it was imperative to build a church as they had been meeting only in schoolhouses.

On July 31, 1886 the new church, Hebron, 28 by 40 feet, was dedicated. The building, together with the furniture, cost about \$1,100, which was paid for by subscription of members from Clay and Dickinson Counties.⁴² It was built on two acres of land purchased from Levi H. and Anna C. Mullen for five dollars on August 30, 1887.⁴³ The location is five miles northwest of Green, which is about twelve miles northeast of Clay Center and forty miles from Abilene.

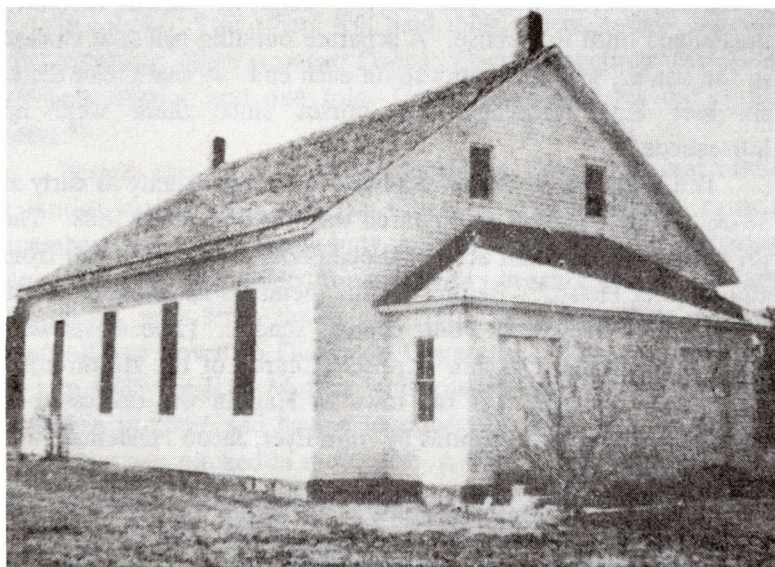
The church was entered by one double door on the front. There was no other outside door in the building. Benches were placed in the center, with a section of short benches on each side able to accommodate three people on each bench. An "amen corner" was at each side at the front. The one-room building had curtains to be drawn for creation of classrooms. Two pot-bellied, coal-burning stoves provided heat in winter. Because there was no water, drinking water had to be brought from the farmhouse nearby for the preacher. The building was lighted by gaslights. Electricity never was put in the building, which remained unchanged until its demise. A separate building had coal storage in the center, with an outhouse on each end. A windbreak fence, six feet high, protected the horses since there were no horsesheds.⁴⁴

The Brethren in Christ had lived in Brown County as early as 1873, but the Pleasant Hill church was not built until 1888. The lot of one and one-half acres had been bought for one dollar from Christopher Heise.⁴⁵ Before this the members had worshipped in homes or in the Stony Point country school. Love feasts were observed with the German Baptists (Church of the Brethren).⁴⁶ The church located near the town of Hamlin was dedicated in December 1888, with sermons by John Eyer, Jacob Haldeman, and John Henry Byer II.⁴⁷

At what date the first Brethren in Christ arrived in Harvey County is not known. The church named Fairview was built near Sedgwick in Harvey County in 1894 or 1895.⁴⁸ At the Kansas Joint Council in 1896, a motion was passed that \$200 be given



Pleasant Hill Church, Brown County, as it appeared 1888-1959



The Newbern Church served from 1892 to 1922 and was sold in 1937 to another denomination.

from the Church Extension Fund to remove the indebtedness of the Brethren's meetinghouse in Harvey County.⁴⁹ But Harvey County had been represented at the Kansas Joint Council under "outlying missions" at least as early as 1891. Delegates before 1894 included Stephen Richardson, Samuel Shirk, and J.B. Eshelman.

In the winter of 1893, twenty people were saved in a two-week meeting at Fairview. On Sunday, December 3, four people were baptized. "The temperature was seven degrees above zero, and there were two inches of ice on the water. Yet they stood it heroically although some were rather frail." Weekly prayer meetings and preaching every two weeks were arranged to be held in a schoolhouse.⁵⁰

Elder Jacob Stauffer, who is remembered for laying the first five dollars for missions on the table at the 1894 conference and subsequently being appointed treasurer of the fund, is noted to have been from Newton, Harvey County, Kansas.⁵¹ Furthermore, when the hat was passed, Jacob H. Eshelman was the first to place a five-dollar bill in it.⁵² He lived five miles northeast of Sedgwick in Harvey County and was a pastor there.

Some additional counties claimed groups of Brethren in Christ members who met together for worship in homes or schoolhouses for a number of years but never built churches. One such group lived in Rooks County 125 miles northwest of Abilene. How many members were there or when they first arrived is unknown. But in 1884, District Council at Abilene "decided to supply preaching for two appointments in their midst, 12 and 24 weeks respectfully [sic] after their love feast which was held September 1884."⁵³

Four years later, in a Council session at the home of Ephraim Engle, consideration was given a letter concerning a minister in Rooks County. An election there resulted in the choice of Jacob J. Fike of Plainville. But Fike did not live to serve his people. The day of his ordination as minister was instead the day of his funeral. At thirty-six years of age, he died March 30, 1889.⁵⁴

How long the Rooks County group stayed together is not known, but Henry Landis was scheduled to preach there in 1896.

Another group of the Brethren lived near Galva in McPherson County. Although the date of the first settlement there is not known, we know that the Isaac Brubaker and David Breneman families, along with others, arrived in March 1885. Among those already there was Christian Brubaker.⁵⁵ In 1896 Samuel Wingert was assigned to Galva as pastor. The Brethren's *Almanac* of 1898 indicates a membership of twenty-two. But it must be remembered that only baptized people (usually adults) were considered members. So there were no doubt many more worshipping at Galva.

There were now nine Brethren in Christ church buildings in Kansas. As stated, the buildings were plain and simple. Any plans suggested by the progressive members were usually kept in check by the more conservative ones. For example, when the church at Rosebank was built in 1890 (dedicated in January 1891), it was built with a platform for the pulpit. This displeased some people and much discussion followed. At the district council of September 1892, it was decided that "the Rosebank Building District should decide by ballot whether the platform in their church should be cut down one step or left as it is."⁵⁶

The next spring the action of September was reconsidered and it was decided that the Rosebank Building Committee should vote on, "Shall the platform in the Rosebank church be taken out or no?"⁵⁷ The final action on the matter was given in the fall of 1894, when council decided that "the platform in the Rosebank Meeting house should be lowered one step, the work to be done before the next communion services are held." The building committee was instructed to see to the work. A collection amounting to \$10.50 was taken for defraying the expenses.⁵⁸

Today we might think of this as "much ado about nothing." To the deeply conscientious, however, this was *something*. At issue was their commitment to the true priesthood of all believers. Since they were all equal before God, they eschewed ideas of

clergy-laity distinctions. The platform, therefore, seemed to contradict their belief in community, their all being on the same level.

The new Abilene church, built in 1893, was subject to much more criticism. The town people had always been considered more progressive and bold in making advancements or departures from the old ways. These innovations did not go unnoticed, however, for on September 25, before the building was to be dedicated in November, the brethren of North and South Dickinson met in special council in Smith's Hall⁵⁹ to consider the following question, referred from the North Dickinson County District Council: "Is the new church building of Abilene satisfactory to the brotherhood?"⁶⁰ The meeting, called "for the purpose to counsel the trustees," showed that there was considerable dissatisfaction with various parts of the building: the paneled ends of the seats; the raised pulpit; the ceiling design, with a diamond shape in the center; the west gallery; and especially the gable and the arched windows.⁶¹

After much discussion and various suggestions, the special council voted to make no changes for the present but to defer the matter to Joint Council and to "bear with each other trusting that God will accept the forbearance and grant us peace and good will towards each other."⁶²

The following description of the windows and gallery is given by one who attended the church for many years. The main entrance was on the west side of the church, which faced Buckeye. The windows on that side and in the gallery (balcony) and above the doorways were of a pointed-arch design. The windows on the other sides of the church were not arched, but merely straight across the top. The balcony was used for classroom space and for overflow; there were doors which were lifted for such use.⁶³

The Abilene church was also different in that it had a center aisle. Pews were placed on each side of the aisle, and there were no side benches. "Amen corner" benches were installed at the side

fronts, however. (There is no recorded criticism concerning the center aisle.)

The Joint Council held at Belle Springs on March 23 and 24, 1894, decided to change the door and window frames on the front from Gothic to square heads and to cover the diamond design of the ceiling with a straight ceiling.⁶⁴ But time went on and the changes were not made. This did not please some people, and at the District Council held at Rosebank, February 20, 1896, it was decided to take up the Abilene Meeting House Question at Joint Council for final settlement.⁶⁵

The issue was finally laid to rest after three years, when at the Joint Council of 1896, "The decision of the Kansas Joint Council of 1894 relating to the Abilene Church building was repealed." Complaints were evidently overruled, and in the future other progressive additions and improvements would be made.

By 1893, six Brethren in Christ churches had been built in Dickinson County, and one each in Harvey, Clay and Brown Counties. These nine churches had their independent organizations and services, but they often met together for revival meetings, love feasts, and other occasions.

It would seem appropriate to close this chapter by referring to an article, "Impressions of the Kansas Church in 1894," by Elder George Detweiler of Sherkston, Ontario, Canada. He spoke of being impressed in three areas: (1) Activity in the church--public services, Sunday school, prayer meetings (even two a week in Abilene) and evening services, great interest in mission work and outstanding Sunday school work; (2) The large number of young people--not merely members but active in services with clear testimonies; and (3) The attitude of the church toward the twin evils of strong drink and tobacco.⁶⁶

Chapter 5

Organization and Decisions

General Conference, the highest ruling body of the denomination, convened in a different location each year and was attended by delegates from every church. The Kansas Brethren maintained their ties with the East through yearly visits and the yearly Conference.

The *Philadelphia Press*, on April 26, 1903, ran a feature story about the Kansas River Brethren returning to visit their old homes and to attend the annual Conference to be held at the Cross Roads Meetinghouse near Florin, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. It reported that a party of forty with a special Pullman car had left that week.

The account included the story of one of the early visits East: A River Brethren man came into the Abilene railway office and asked the fare for a round trip to Harrisburg. The agent replied, "It will cost \$45.00," not expecting the man to buy a ticket.

"Very well. I will take sixty tickets." And, drawing from his pocket a roll of bills, he counted out \$2,700. The next day the party went back East for a visit with friends. The opportunity to transport groups of this size was uncommon in that day and one that the railroads contended for on such occasions.

While the General Conference was the highest authority of the denomination, grass roots influences came from the local, district, and state councils. Each church had its own annual council or business meeting. Districts were made up of several churches as a rule, although in some cases a single church

composed a district. District Council meetings were held annually, and soon Joint Council meetings were held. In 1890 Joint Council was changed to State Council, embracing all the churches and missions of the Brethren within the state of Kansas.¹ This system was used until the reorganization of the church in 1957.

Within the denomination, the administrative structure consisted of three levels: bishops (sometimes called elders or overseers), ministers, and deacons. A bishop was elected from the ministers of a given district. He had to be self-supporting and was expected to serve for life. He presided at council meetings and elections, baptized, and performed wedding ceremonies, attended the annual Conferences, and often preached.

Ministers, sometimes also called elders, and later pastors, were also self-supporting and elected by the district or congregation. They did most of the preaching, performed weddings and had funerals, and were on call whenever aid or counsel were needed. In the early days, several ministers alternated at different churches, and often several were present at the same time. Later it was deemed advisable to assign a minister to a particular church.

Deacons received less honor but were very essential. Each church elected two deacons. They with their wives arranged for the love feasts, took care of the needy, visited the sick. Together, the two deacons made a yearly visit to each home to inquire about the spiritual welfare of the family and to see if they had any criticisms or suggestions. It was also their duty to discipline the erring and to reconcile those who were at odds with the church or with others.

One of the big decisions of the denomination took place at the 1887 General Conference, hosted by the Kansas church on the farm of Cyrus Lenhart, south of Abilene. Here reconsideration was given to the publication of a church paper, an issue which had been debated frequently in the past but was defeated by the eastern Brethren. Now permission was given for a four-year trial publication period. Henry Davidson was named as the first editor. In 1891 he sold his farm in Michigan and moved to Abilene,

where the *Evangelical Visitor* was published until the end of 1902, when it was moved to Pennsylvania.²

The church from the beginning was much concerned about preserving their traditions and not accepting the ways or customs of those about them. "Worldliness" was a thing to be feared and pride a sin to be shunned. Decisions in their council meetings covered everything that concerned anyone. Some of the decisions as we look at them today may appear very trivial and sometimes even amusing.

Many of the decisions dealt with the question of plain clothing. The General Conference of 1872 took the position that clothing "should not be in fashion with the world," and there was much pressure for conformity in many Conferences to come. Brethren were urged to retain plain apparel, and men were not allowed to be ordained to the ministry if they did not conform.³

The women were expected to put on the prayer veiling (according to I Corinthians 11) when admitted to church membership.⁴ Many items in the Kansas council minutes concern individuals who were unwilling to wear a covering. Deacons were asked to visit such and to inform them that anyone "laying off the prayer covering" could not be owned as a member.⁵

Styles of the world were not to be copied in any area of life. In 1885 a question arose concerning windowpanes. "It was decided that the brethren think it is more consistent to have eight panes in a window than less and would advise the Brethren to strive for consistency."⁶

Consistency was the principle applied to many questions. At Brown County the question was asked, "Is it consistent to have trimmings on pillow cases, hoods and other wearing apparel?" Answer: "It is not."⁷

Perhaps the most unusual question, pertaining to clothing came in 1886: "Is it right for sisters to wear corsets?" The answer (which may have been hard to prove) was, "Decided that we believe the wearing of corsets to be inconsistent with the doctrine of Christ, that it is injurious to health, and sisters are admonished

to quit their use." Even in this day of free expression, it would be hard to imagine a gentleman even mentioning an undergarment in a public religious meeting.

The matter of having pictures taken was discussed early in the life of the church. The very first General Conference, in 1871, decided that it was not consistent for Brethren to have their likenesses taken.⁸ Almost yearly at the Kansas councils the question came up. In 1885 members who had violated the wishes of the church by having photographs taken were reminded of the decision of General Conference.⁹ Not only were photographs of people forbidden, but members were not allowed to have pictures of their homes or buildings taken.¹⁰

In addition to photography, the place of music in the church was a question often discussed. The Brethren did not approve of musical instruments. They could find no use of them mentioned in the New Testament, though singing was frequently reported. Singing was placed on the level of prayer. Congregational singing was encouraged and usually sounded surprisingly good as they sang *a cappella*. Until 1906 the Brethren hymnbooks did not even have notes. Even then, some who wanted notes argued whether the notes should be round or shaped.¹¹

At the District Council at Brown County in 1890, the question was asked, "Is it right to sing according to note?" A favorable reply was given: "It is perfectly right."

One in writing of the Newbern Church wrote of the beautiful voices of Frances Lenhert Lady, Elizabeth Lenhert Shetter, and Esther Lenhert Heise. He had been told that one of the deacons, J.G. Engle, insisted on good singing, and qualified men were brought in to conduct courses in sight-reading.¹²

In 1907 the annual meeting of the Abilene congregation considered the question, "Wouldn't the worshipful use of our church hymns be greatly promoted if some member of the congregation led the singing. It was considered at length and decided that the ministry should select a leader to stand up front

Minutes of District Council
of Oct, 10, 1882 - Golden Rule

At I There were some complaints of
feud stating that the rich
brethren have not the sympathy
and mercy for the poor members
which they should have
Complaint sustained

At II Complaint that pride is com-
ing into the church. - Admitted,
and brethren and sisters are
admonished to withstand and
be circumspect

At III Decided That the common
use of tobacco still causes
offense in the church. The
finders are hereby admonished

At IV The case of John James
was considered
Decided That James shall
pay self of the money received
from the Brethren's Fund
money shall be due on the
first day of September 1883

A page from the secretary's record of the 1882 District Council minutes, dealing with the issues of attitude of the rich members toward the poor members, the intrusion of pride into the church, the use of tobacco, and caring for financial needs of an individual

and lead the congregational singing. Allen Kauffman and Naomi Engle were appointed."¹³

The 1880 General Conference decided it was inconsistent to use musical instruments. In 1899 Conference was asked for the privilege of using instruments during worship, but the simple answer was "No."¹⁴

Another subject of concern was the use of tobacco. It may be surprising to find that in the case of a certain brother in 1887, it was decided he could serve as a minister in making special calls, "provided he leaves off the use of tobacco."¹⁵ The next spring at the Northside council, the question was asked if a brother could be ordained to office in the church who habitually used tobacco. Apparently unresolved, the question was "Referred to Joint Council."¹⁶ The same spring at Southside council, the question was posed, "Will the church put forth its united efforts in putting away the habitual use of tobacco?" Answer: "It will."¹⁷ This brief and apparently emphatic reply is less dogmatic in view of the Council statement of December 1877: "It is not consistent for brethren or sisters to use tobacco in any form, especially the ministers, and they are warned through council to quit the use of it *as much as possible*" (emphasis added).

As implied in the action just cited, the use of tobacco was not limited to men. When one woman handed in her resignation, the council proclaimed, "Inasmuch as the church holds the said in esteem and accounts her to be worthy of respect, resolved that her withdrawal be accepted and the church expresses sorrow on her [the church's] part that the evil of tobacco in its use as a habit should be the cause of her losing a worthy member and resolved we as a brotherhood will renew our endeavor by God's help to rid ourselves and the church of this evil."¹⁸

In the annual business meeting of the Belle Springs congregation in 1908, J.G. Engle was asked to formulate and place a notice in the vestibule prohibiting smoking and spitting.¹⁹

Holding public office, being involved in politics, and voting were all forbidden. But in 1894, General Conference said that "it

is allowable to hold public office under the restrictions of the church."²⁰

The 1887 General Conference had condemned attendance at political elections generally, but members could vote if issues were not political. The exception referred primarily to school board elections. But the prohibition issue required additional consideration. In 1889 General Conference decided that since "the prohibition question is a moral and not a political one," the question of voting should be left to the conscientious consideration of each brother.²¹

Members were not allowed to patronize state and county fairs. One member was asked to make "a confession stating he did wrong in seeking political office and also for serving as a clerk on the Fair Grounds."²²

Insurance was also forbidden and those who had it were visited and asked to drop it and to trust the Lord.²³ The Brethren in Christ Fire Relief agency was acceptable, however, and such insurance was taken on the meetinghouses, as was verified when the first Abilene church burned.

The church decreed in 1885 that no one should venture into business without the consent and advice of a committee. This was reaffirmed in 1892. The Brethren felt that good financial accountability was necessary for a good witness to other members and to the community. Therefore, when anyone failed in this respect, he was disciplined. Thus when Elder Jesse Engle's financial ventures ended in bankruptcy, the church relieved him of his ministry and asked him to make a confession before the church.²⁴

A committee made up of several persons from each district was appointed to solicit donations to erase his debt.²⁵ At the council of 1894 it was reported that Jesse Engle had fully acknowledged and asked pardon for mistakes in business matters, and that full pardon was granted and steps were being taken to restore him to his former position in the church.²⁶ He was restored the next month. In his diary, Cyrus Lenhert says, "I went

to meet the committee on Jesse Engle case." And a day later: "Jesse Engle was reinstated into office."²⁷

The treasurer of the Jesse Engle Fund reported at the 1895 council that \$4,583.60 of the almost \$5,000 needed had been collected,²⁸ but it was not until 1898 that the treasurer reported all obligations paid in full.²⁹ Thus, while members were held accountable and were subject to discipline, other members sought to help them out of the difficulty.

Another case involved a preacher in Brown County. Rev. John Eyer bought a carload of fruit trees from Iowa and planted an eighty-acre orchard.³⁰ The bank withdrew financial support, and the farm was sold in 1897 at sheriff's sale. The council in March of that year voted to silence him until financial affairs were settled. That October the council had a special session to send greetings to John Eyer, expressing sorrow at not seeing him in their midst and to say they felt they had been hasty in their decision regarding the ministry. They asked forgiveness and hoped the past would be forgotten and adjustment made pertaining to his ministry. After the sale of the farm, however, he left the state.³¹

Individuals in need were often helped in a monetary way. In 1883 "Bro. Huntzberger" was given a sum of \$150 for care of his invalid son. The "members of the North" were to be responsible for \$60 of the amount.³² And after the death of Jacob J. Fike in Rooks County, his wife and five children were given assistance.³³ Many other cases are recorded.

After Isaac Shockey, an Abilene Brethren in Christ business man, visited the unfinished four-room house of Noah Zook, in which ten people were living, he was so distressed that he appealed to the whole church through the *Evangelical Visitor*.³⁴ As a result, a six-room house costing \$600 was built for the grateful Zooks.³⁵

Two months after the colonists arrived in Kansas, the General Conference decided they should be permitted to purchase a tract of land for benefit of the poor, widows and orphans.³⁶ In 1889 a committee was appointed to look into a proposal by Ben Gish

to donate land in Morris County, and a Board of Trustees was appointed.³⁷

Sometime in the early 1880s, Jesse Engle was responsible for buying a tract of land for building an orphanage, but because of crop failures the payments could not be made and those plans were abandoned.³⁸ But a non-denominational orphanage was started in Hillsboro, Kansas, which the Kansas churches strongly supported. Tobias Martin of Pennsylvania had founded that work. Enos Engle, son of Jesse Engle, and his wife, Adella, after their marriage in 1898, took charge of this orphanage for five and one-half years. In 1910 they moved to Thomas, Oklahoma, where they had charge of the Jabbok Orphanage for several years.³⁹

Fannie Gish willed a bequest of \$500 on July 18, 1889, to help finance an orphan's home, until such time the money to be held in trust, the interest to be used for benefit of the poor in the district. The fund was still intact when the districts reorganized as the Midwest Conference in 1957. At that time the Fanny Gish Fund was placed in the hands of the regional treasurer for investment, with interest to be used in behalf of the needy in the conference area.⁴⁰

Members were accountable to the whole church and if they failed in any area, they were visited by a committee and admonished according to Matthew 18. In 1887 Abe Eisenhower was asked to make a confession.⁴¹ Because he felt this was not necessary, it was decided he could no longer be held as a brother.⁴² After several years, in 1892, Eisenhower wrote a letter for the *Evangelical Visitor* saying, "I at one time belonged to the church and being inconsistent I was dealt with according to Matthew 18. I thank God for it. So I stood nearly five years. I had not quit praying....If the Lord lets me live I wish to be an earnest Christian worker in the church until death."⁴³

In 1889, David Shirk, an active member of the Y.M.C.A., was asked to be one in faith and practice with the Brethren or to quietly withdraw.⁴⁴ He lived many years in Topeka, Kansas, but his obituary states, "He was a faithful member of the church all

his life, attending the state Sunday school conventions and the State Councils."⁴⁵

Chapter 6

Love Feasts

Love feasts may well have been the most anticipated occasions of the church year. These two-day meetings were a time not only for spiritual refreshment but a great time of social fellowship. They were held in the spring and the fall.

Beginning with the 10:00 a.m. Saturday service, preaching centered on the sufferings of Christ. After the noon meal, there were more exhortations, with plenty of time for testimony and praise from the members. Members were admonished to examine themselves individually to be sure they could partake "worthily" of the Lord's Supper in the evening. Many times confessions were made, publicly and privately. Sermons were preached on the prayer veiling, from I Corinthians 11:1-16; on forgiveness, from Matthew 18; on communing worthily, from I Corinthians 11:28,29; and on Christian living, from Ephesians 4.

After the afternoon services, those who lived nearby went home to do farm chores. In most cases, however, part of the family had been left at home for this purpose. Or, if at all possible, a neighbor had been employed to do these tasks so the whole family could enjoy these times together.

After the evening meal, the evening meeting began with singing, prayer, Scriptures and more exhortation. The Lord's Supper, or communion, was then observed. Communion was always held in the evening because that was when Christ observed it. The women on one side of the church and the men on the other, they partook simultaneously of the communion elements.

The communion bread (unleavened) had been baked by the deacons' wives. Anyone who has tasted such bread will forever have pleasant memories. In preparing it, sweet cream, unsalted butter, and flour were kneaded well and flattened onto baking sheets, cut into strips, pricked with a fork and baked to a light, golden brown.

At the time of communion, a strip was given by a deacon's wife to the first person in the pew. She turned to the next person and said, "Beloved sister, this bread which we break, is it not the communion of the broken body of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ?" She then broke off a small piece and handed it, along with the original piece, to the person addressed. The neighbor nodded approval or answered, "Yes," then repeated the procedure to the next person.

The same procedure was followed on the men's side. All remained standing until each had a piece of bread. Then all were seated and solemnly ate the bread, which practically melted in the mouth. One mother is said to have asked her children to break each small piece into five pieces so that with each bite one of the five wounds of the suffering Christ could be remembered.

Next came the "wine," which was unfermented grape juice. A common glass or cup was passed from person to person. Before the sip was taken, the question was asked, "Beloved sister/brother, this cup which we drink, is it not the communion of the blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ?" After indicating assent, the next person would turn and repeat the question. Individual communion cups were not used until 1946.

Included in the love feast was the holy kiss, when sister greeted sister and brother greeted brother with this salutation (Romans 16:16; I Cor. 16:20; II Cor. 13:12; II Thess. 5:26). Sometimes the people stood, and the kiss was passed down the row (women with women and men with men), sometimes accompanied with an embrace and a simple "God bless you." At other times the kiss was observed after foot-washing.

Washing the saints' feet was taken literally. After a sermon from John 13, women washed the feet of women and men washed the men's feet. Sometimes the women retired to the "ante room" for this part of the service. In the early days two persons washed each other's feet. In 1892 the Brown County Council brought to the General Conference the request for the single mode. This meant that a person did the washing and drying for the person seated next to her/him, and that person in turn did it for the next one.

After rising from washing and drying the feet, the foot washer would remove the apron and tie it on the person whose feet had just been washed. The two would then exchange the holy kiss, and the foot-washing would continue down the row. Deacons and their wives stood at the ends of the rows with dry towels. The request for the single mode was at first rejected but finally adopted in 1911.¹

For members of the Kansas churches, the love feasts perhaps evoke more good memories than any other one event in church life.² A former member of the Belle Springs congregation, when hearing that the old church would be for sale, wrote to the editor of the Abilene paper, recalling pleasant memories:

Without a doubt, the highlights of these memories are the love feasts, those two wonderful days each year of work, fellowship, spiritual communion, and mingling with the good people of other church districts.

I will always remember the damp, clean smell of the large basement when it began to take on life as the women folk of the church opened the windows, washed the year-old dust and grime from the long board tables that in a few days would be covered with fresh, white cloths and filled with friendly folk from far and near; and the enticing odor of food being prepared in huge containers to serve those hundreds of people.

I remember there were mountains of thick china dishes to be washed and wiped, and thousands, so it seemed, of knives and forks to be scoured with red brick dust. I remember how

my father worked with the other men of the church in planning and perfecting the organization of the two-day meeting which included securing the services of a hostler to take care of the horses. The women would plan the menus for the Saturday and Sunday meals and decide what food would be donated from the well-filled cellars of their homes, and what had to be bought. I'll always remember the large wicker baskets of hand-sliced bread that were constantly carried back and forth among the tables.³

When the Newbern church was to be sold, another told of love feast memories there. The attic had to be cleaned until spotless because people would be sleeping there. Women always brought their prize canned food, preserves and pickles. Typical love feast food included longhorn cheese, dried prunes, peaches and apples, cooked together because there was no refrigeration. There was always cake. It was not iced in the early days because Noah Engle felt it was unnecessary for a church meal for plain people.⁴

The Zion church had no basement, so a kitchen was improvised in the "ante room." The women assigned what food and amounts would be needed. There was no electricity, so food was heated on a two-burner coal-oil stove, which also heated the water for coffee and the water to wash the dishes. Tables were made out of trestles and boards and placed in the front of the sanctuary.⁵ Pots of food were placed on the tables, and people passed by to receive their trays of food, then proceeded to the pews to enjoy the meal and fellowship with friends. After the days of the coal-oil stove, a gas stove was rented from a member in Abilene who sold them.

A person from another generation wrote:

One traditional love feast food was the big, round bakers' buns generously spread with butter....What aromas passed through the closed door as we sat listening to the preachers....After the meal we could count on Brother Anderson Minter, with his

box of toothpicks, going from pew to pew accomodating [sic] those who needed such. The meal being finished and the improvised table cleared and removed, the room which a bit ago buzzed with activity and warm fellowship of a church dining hall, now became the church sanctuary again, and we resumed our afternoon service.⁶

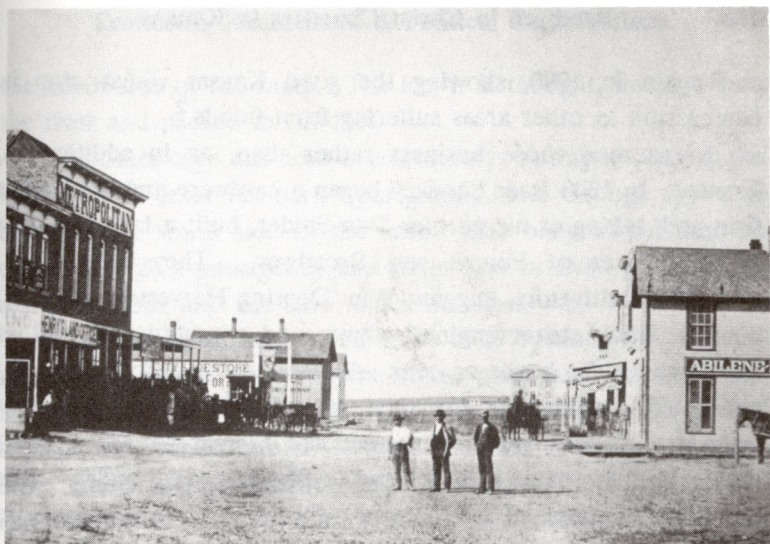
Chapter 7

Economic, Educational and Political Contributions

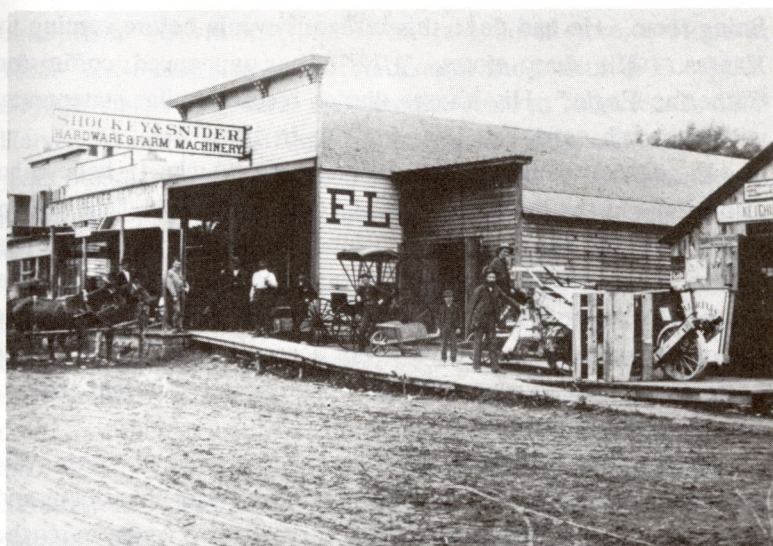
Agriculture was the material life of the River Brethren. Next to the Bible, they knew it better than anything else. As farmers, they made their greatest economic contribution to Kansas. Though the elements of nature were not always kind, somehow the colonists seemed to manage.

In addition to the general reputation of these farmers, several earned special recognition in various fields. As unsalaried ministers, many maintained farms. William Page, who came with the Seventy-Niners at the age of sixteen, grew up to become an ordained minister of the group. Page raised purebred shorthorn cattle. He exhibited them at fairs and shows at the Central Kansas Livestock Fair, the Kansas State Fairs, Kansas City Royal, Denver Cattle Show, Chicago International, and was awarded many prizes. He organized the Harmony Hustlers 4-H Club and was president of the Farm Bureau Association. He was selected in 1930 to receive the first Master Farmer Award ever given in Dickinson County.¹

The excellent farming record of the River Brethren was further noted when Avery T. Hoover, also from the Bethel Church, received the Master Farmer Award in the 1930s. His grandson Jared Hoover kept up the family reputation by receiving this award. His farm and that of his father, Alvin Hoover, were photographed for a televised commentary on Kansas farms in 1982



Abilene street scene, about 1875, looking north on Broadway from Second Street



Shockey and Snider Hardware and Farm Machinery buildings, Fourth Street and Broadway, Abilene, established 1882, changed to Shockey and Landes in 1889

and again in 1990, showing the good Kansas wheat crop in comparison to other areas suffering from floods.²

Some men chose business rather than, or in addition to, farming. In 1883 Isaac Shockey began a hardware and implement firm and, taking as his partner Dan Snider, built a large building at the corner of Fourth and Broadway. They sold stoves, windmills, cultivators, buggies, Wm. Deering Harvestors, mowers, binders, Frick steam engines, plows, and windmills, as well as hardware for the house or barn. A news article said that "by fair and square dealing the firm has worked a large and profitable trade."³ In 1889 Snider's interest was bought by J.C. (Jacob) Landes and the name was changed to Shockey and Landes.⁴ The building still stands in use today as a furniture and hardware store and bears the same name.

One unusual but very necessary service was provided for the Brethren by Cyrus Lenhert. He furnished caskets, or coffins, sometimes making them and sometimes ordering rough boxes and lining them. He had done this in Pennsylvania before coming to Kansas. His diary notes, "1/12/1871, commenced coffin for Catherine Engle." His Kansas diaries record similar statements, with two such entries in 1890 and five in 1894.⁵

In addition to oral tradition, there is evidence to believe he also prepared the bodies for burial. One writer said, "He was an undertaker for the church in Pennsylvania and continued his service while living in Kansas. In earlier years when there was a death in the church body, he was called upon to make a coffin for the occasion and to take care of the deceased until burial. Later he ceased to manufacture, but dealt in coffins of different sizes to suit the size of the body."⁶

Marks of his undertaking service have survived the years. His granddaughter, Mary Lenhert Eshelman, who was born there and lived on the Lenhert farm many years, recalls two caves under the barn. One was under the earth ramp leading to the main floor. It was used for ice storage and was entered through an opening on

the north side of the ramp. The ice, it is thought, was cut from the river and packed in sawdust.

The other cave was used as a mortuary. A wagon carrying the corpse could enter the barn from ground level through the large door on the south side of the barn. The body would then be taken through a passageway and down four or five steps through a smaller door into the cave under the barn.⁷

Mrs. Eshelman revisited the place in 1979, along with a great-nephew of Cyrus's. The renters let the great-nephew come back to take a picture. He describes the cave as being constructed of stone, having smooth walls with an arched ceiling about seven feet high. Inside is a homemade plank table about fifteen inches wide and five feet long upon which stand about a dozen narrow-necked jars, varying in capacity from one half to one gallon. On two hooks hanging from the ceiling was a rod from which could be hung clothing or shrouds.⁸

Other church members engaged in various business enterprises. David Eisenhower had a general store at Hope in 1885. E.G. Hoffman had a blacksmith shop until 1913. H.W. Dayhoff started a general merchandise store at Navarre. In 1900 Harvey Wingerd bought half interest in the store and after a few years bought the other half. He sold everything from needles to groceries and buggy tops to harnesses. He operated the store for sixty-three years.⁹

In the Bethel community at Moonlight, John Sheets, one of the Seventy-Niners, who had been elected as a minister, decided that a little country store would be a great convenience. In the early nineties, a building was moved to their farm about one-half mile from their home. Groceries, dry goods and farm implements were sold. One item Sheets never sold was tobacco. But a certain man, deciding to build up a tobacco trade, moved a building close to Sheets's store. Then he added the sale of "firewater." In apparent answer to prayers by the Christians for its removal, the man in charge soon found himself in debt and quit

the business. The building, later remodeled, became the home of Mr. and Mrs. Sheets when they retired.¹⁰

Abilene later saw additional businesses developed. The Abilene Milling Co., later called the East Mill, was founded by E.S. and Elmer Engle.¹¹ Raymond Eshelman owned and operated a plumbing business on Spruce Street, between Third and Fourth streets in Abilene, from 1915 to 1957. He provided plumbing services as well as the sale of appliances and fixtures.¹²

The Farmers Mutual Telephone Co. was organized as the first of its kind in Kansas. Elmer Hoffman was the first president, Levi Hoffman was secretary-treasurer, and Eli Hoffman was line man. "They were not able to buy wood telephone posts, so they used some of the flues taken from old boilers and put a 4 by 4 wood piece on top of them to fasten the brackets on to them." The first line was built two miles from Donegal and southeast to Hope.¹³

The best-known business operation begun by the Brethren was the Belle Springs Creamery. By 1886 the Seventy-Niners were doing well in Kansas despite the weather and its varying effects on crops. Wheat, oats, barley, and hay were grown. Corn, however, could not be depended on as it failed three out of every five seasons. What could be depended on was milk from the many cows owned by these farmers. But what to do with the surplus was a problem, until they remembered the sweet-cream butter they had enjoyed in Pennsylvania.

One August day in 1886, four men met in the farmyard of Eli Hoffman to make plans. In addition to Eli was his brother, Christian Hoffman, his brother-in-law, J.K. Forney, and another colonist, Noah Hershey. Forney was sent back to Pennsylvania to inquire how best to build a creamery. He returned with some equipment, and the first creamery was built in the Belle Springs area on a branch of Turkey Creek. A young man, J.E. Nissley, was hired to operate the plant. In November 1886 the firm of J.E. Nissley and Company (soon to be renamed Belle Springs Creamery) was started.



J. E. Nissley and Company, proprietors of Belle Springs Creameries, 1886-1892 (Photo, courtesy Dickinson County Historical Society, Abilene)

Then M.L. Hoffman, Eli's son, went to Wisconsin to learn the Babcock method of testing butterfat. After he returned, he tested at all the receiving stations. M.L. Hoffman was a preacher for the Abilene congregation, and his reputation for honesty helped the company. The stock was owned by the four founders, and the returns were generous.

In 1892 the business was built new and enlarged in Abilene at the end of Cottage Street in Prospect Park, often called Little Egypt. In 1895 they bought the old Drovers Cottage, the leading hotel during the cattle days. Here, in 1903, they completed the large, modern building that was used until 1970. An ice plant, cold storage facilities, the manufacture of butter, ice cream and cheese, and later a poultry and egg processing plant provided work for many in Abilene until its closing in 1972. Of forty-three people who worked there in the early days, from 1887 to 1893, all but a possible one or two were Brethren in Christ members.¹⁴ David Eisenhower and all of his sons, including the future president, worked there at one time or another.¹⁵ Until 1938, the steam whistle was blown from there every day at 7:00 a.m., 12:00 and 1:00 at midday, and 6:00 in the evening. The creamery was truly an institution that helped Abilene grow.

Aside from business ventures, many church members entered the field of education. William Page, already named as an outstanding farmer and cattleman, also served as president of Kansas State School Officers Association and as president of the Dickinson County School Officers, 1929-1938. He served for twenty-five years on the local school board of Harmony District 22, and thirteen years as treasurer of the Dickinson County High School at Chapman. His six children were all school teachers. One served as principal of the Garfield School and the Junior High School in Abilene. Another was principal at Hope grade school and Ramona high school before becoming head of the Agriculture Department at Eastern New Mexico University, Portales, New Mexico.¹⁶



Belle Springs Creamery location, 1903-1970, as it was in 1930 with poultry processing plant on left



In 1964, pastor David H. Wenger congratulates former pastor George Whisler and wife, Effie, on their 60th wedding anniversary, in Abilene

David Shirk was a high school teacher and principal of Dickinson County Community High School at Chapman. He was active in the Young Men's Christian Association and started, for boys, the first Hi-Y Club in the world. Later he was active in homes for orphaned children in Topeka.¹⁷

John H. Engle was also a school teacher. And J.S. Engle, though after 1904 no longer a member of the church, was baptized by Samuel Zook. He was on the high school board at Abilene and signed the graduation diploma of Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1910.

In northeastern Brown County, John Haldeman, son of Jacob E. Haldeman taught school in 1888 and some years afterward had a business in Reserve, Kansas.¹⁸ In 1894 Ben Eyer was principal of Hiawatha Normal.¹⁹ In 1900 he resigned at Topeka High School to teach at Manhattan College.²⁰ In 1902 he took a year of electrical engineering in Chicago, then returned to Manhattan to teach at Kansas State College.²¹

Many of the young girls graduated from the Normal Training Course at Abilene High School in the early 1900s and taught in the rural schools of the county.

Abe Eisenhower, a preacher, graduated from Chicago School of Veterinary Medicine in 1891 and was the leading veterinarian of the Abilene community for seven years.²²

Dr. Abram Gish, as a young man, got a medical degree from the Eclectic Medical School in Ohio. His first entry in his "baby book" was a delivery in 1869. After moving to Kansas in 1882, he started practice in Abilene. For office calls he charged twenty-five cents and for house calls, which he made in a horse-drawn buggy, fifty cents. Obstetric cases were five dollars, but he was often paid in farm produce. On October 9, 1924, at the age of eighty years, he recorded the 1,097th delivery in his "baby book." He had practiced for fifty-five years.²³

Though the Brethren in Christ frowned on politics and preached against involvement, two members did become mayors of Abilene. J.E. Nissley was mayor from 1893 to 1895, and Eli

Hoffman (who had the distinction of being the first baby born in the colony) served 1929 to 1933.²⁴ It was considered all right to serve on school boards or township offices, but even then some of these positions were looked on with suspicion.

Chapter 8

Mission Expansion

Even before the colonists came to Kansas, there were Brethren in Christ members who made journeys throughout the United States and Canada to spread the gospel and to encourage the saints. They did this without remuneration and at great personal sacrifice, often leaving families at home for months at a time as they traveled, first by horseback and later by train.

In 1871 the General Conference established a mission fund, such money to be collected by the deacons of each district.¹ In 1874 they provided for ten or twelve minister-missionaries to be appointed annually to be subject to call by the Board of Missions. But when the plan was found to be impractical and unsupported, it was abandoned in 1886.²

The Kansas Brethren began their own regional mission plan in 1888 whereby a committee of three--Henry Engle, Heise W. Brennemman and Cyrus Lenhert--would solicit the local membership for funds to send out minister-missionaries.³ This was meant to supplement the mission work of General Conference and not to supersede nor supplant it. In fact when the General Conference of 1888 adopted a Traveling Missionary program and named Noah Zook of Kansas and T. Avery Long of Pennsylvania as the traveling evangelists, the Kansas churches enthusiastically encouraged the venture.

Zook who lived on a farm near Talmage, just west of the Zion church, left his wife and eight children and was gone for six months in this work. Much time was spent in Michigan, where a

new church developed. Later, in 1896, Noah and Mary Zook sold their farm and devoted full time as travelling evangelists.

General Conference was so impressed with the effectiveness of the mission activity in Kansas that it urged every state to organize into a Home Mission District as Kansas had done.⁴

The first major departure from the traditional method of evangelism by traveling ministers was introduced by the Abilene Brethren in the form of using a Gospel Tent. But it should be noted that tents had been used previously when extra meeting space was needed. The first reference found concerning them is in the South Dickinson Annual council minutes, 1886, "That the brethren purchase another tent for meeting purposes. The money to pay for it (\$74.50) was raised at once by voluntary contributions."⁵

It is possible that these were the tents used at the General Conference at Cyrus Lenhart's home in 1887. In 1888 a committee was named to supervise the use of the brethren's tents and "to make charges according to their best judgment."⁶ In 1888 there was a report of a meeting in a tent in Hostetter's grove for South Dickinson and North Marion.

Then, in the District Council of 1891 the question came up: "Would it be to the glory of God and the salvation of souls to have a tent to do missionary work?"⁷ The question was referred to Joint Council. There, in 1892, Jacob Eisenhower suggested buying a tent for "the preaching of the gospel in the state and elsewhere." It was decided that the church of Kansas should acquire a tent with capacity for about 500 persons, used for missionary work only. A committee of three--Samuel Zook, Jacob Eisenhower, and H.N. Engle--took charge.⁸ The decision drew community interest and was reported in the Abilene newspaper.⁹

J.G. Cassel described the tent to be 45 by 50 feet in size, with folding benches to seat 250, and room for additional seats to bring the seating capacity to 450. There were also two smaller tents. The larger of the two, 12 by 18 feet, was divided into three compartments. One was used for cooking and eating and the

other two for sleeping. The smaller tent, 12 by 9, was used for traveling guests.¹⁰ The whole outfit cost \$239.50.¹¹

The tent was first used in Abilene, June 3-25, 1893, with services daily at 3:00 and 8:00 p.m.¹² It was then taken to Clay Center for three weeks.¹³ It was in various parts of the state from June 5 to October 26, 1893, after which it was returned to Abilene and stored for the season.¹⁴ The tent workers were Noah Zook and wife, Mary, Katie Hershey, Susan Hoffman, and J.K. Forney. Cassel describes the pattern of tent evangelism thus:

In the meetings, Bro. Zook takes the lead, handling the "sword of the Spirit" fearlessly, while the sisters do their part faithfully in singing, testifying and calling sinners to accept salvation....Their labors are not by any means confined to the meetings in the tent. Much house to house visiting is done, which gives them opportunity to talk and pray with the people and to distribute religious literature among them. Whole towns are canvassed in this way, and who can tell the amount of good that may be accomplished.¹⁵

The next year, 1894, George Detweiler from Sherston, Ontario, spent about five months in Kansas as helper with the Gospel Tent, from June 1 to October 11.¹⁶ Along with the joy of seeing souls saved came the discomfort of the weather. Reporting on the two weeks of meeting at Enterprise, a few miles southeast of the Abilene, Detweiler wrote:

We passed through a time of drought, heat and hot winds as has not been my lot to experience before, and has not been so severe here for twenty years. During the last week of July the mercury registered from 100 degrees to 108 and for three or four days the "hot winds" continued to blow, scorching the corn as well as other vegetation and even the apples on the trees. The disappointment is great and much hardship will result.¹⁷

Preceding the summer schedule the tent was used at the 1894 General Conference at the Bethel Church and at the love feast at the Belle Springs Church the following week. Friends from the East who attended could get a better knowledge of the work and expressed themselves as approving this type of evangelism.¹⁸ Tent evangelism became an annual event in all Kansas districts for many years.

Another unique, but not original, method of evangelization was the use of the Gospel Wagon, which may have been an idea borrowed from the World's Gospel Union. The Young Men's Christian Association, the forerunner of the World's Gospel Union, had used a wagon as early as 1890 as mentioned in the yearbook of the Y.M.C.A. The *Kansas Pilgrim*, a paper published by the missionary forces within the Y.M.C.A., reported use of a Gospel Wagon or the Gospel Wagon Band in nearly every issue. At the demise of the Y.M.C.A. in Abilene and the birth of the World's Gospel Union, the wagon continued to be used and is mentioned frequently in their paper, the *Gospel Message*.

Three times in this paper, an Abilene Brethren in Christ member, A.L. Eisenhower, is reported assisting in the work of the Gospel Wagon, once for a period of several months.¹⁹ Eisenhower was asked to supervise the building of a wagon to be used by the Brethren in Christ. Unknown to them, this vehicle might well have been the forerunner of today's camper. Instead of being motorized, however, it operated by live horse power supplied by two horses.²⁰

The wagon was 7 by 14 by 6 1/2 feet. It contained chairs, tables, a gasoline stove and cots for four. It could be divided into apartments by sliding curtains. The total cost was only eighty dollars, which was paid by individuals. When assembled, the wagon was taken from Abilene to Belle Springs, where it was dedicated June 27, 1897. The workers were J.H. Eshelman, Rev. A.L. Eisenhower and wife, Annie, and Barbara Hershey.²¹

When members moved to another state, it was expected that they do so with the approval and blessing of the church. At the

District Council of 1890 it was observed that "the church does have restrictions and advice for members who contemplate colonizing in communities in which there are no brethren."²² Thus when one brother wished to move to California it was recorded, "Inasmuch as Bro. Noah Hershey has intentions of investigating and locating in California, he herewith petitions the church to allow him the privilege of doing as above stated." The action was that "he be allowed to move to California with his family and as many who wish to accompany him."²³ The General Conference of 1902 placed the California mission under supervision of the Kansas church.²⁴ (When the California church was organized as a district in 1905, C.C. Burkholder was chosen bishop and Joseph B. Lehman, minister.²⁵)

The March 15, 1890, council decided that Bishop Samuel Zook be requested to accompany Jacob Eshelman in a mission tour of Adair County, Missouri. Then, in 1892, the General Conference authorized a mission in Arizona to be under the Kansas churches, with expenses to be paid from the General Conference Mission Fund.²⁶ The next year they met at B.M. Byer's home to organize, twenty-two members being received by letter or otherwise. Stephen Richardson and J.H. Byer were the ministers.²⁷ In 1896 they asked for a tent, wagon, team and camping equipment to further the gospel there.²⁸ In 1896 C.C. Burkholder was installed by the Zion Church with the purpose of his going to Arizona to take charge.²⁹

In 1898 there were twenty-seven members in the Glendale district, Arizona, twenty-six in the Lowry City district, Missouri, and twenty-two in the Galva district near McPherson, Kansas.³⁰

In 1892 David Book toured Oklahoma,³¹ and in 1895 General Conference referred the matter of a resident pastor to the Kansas churches. In 1897 Bishop Samuel Zook presided over the election of David Eyster as Oklahoma pastor. He was ordained bishop there in 1907.

Probably the first work to be proposed across the border was proposed for Mexico. S.H. Zook was interested in being a



**Sarah Bert, co-founder of Chicago Mission;
served 1894-1941**



**The Bert sisters, from left: Anna, Sarah and Lizzie
(Brubaker), early workers at Chicago Mission**

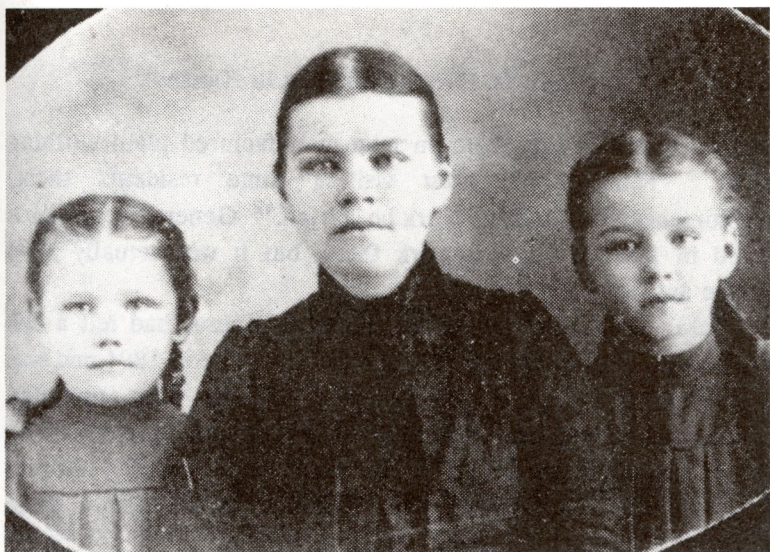
missionary there in 1898.³³ By early 1900 he was at Hidalgo, Texas, on the border, studying the language.³⁴

The World's Fair in St. Louis in 1904 offered an unusual challenge to mission-minded folk, such as Benjamin Gish and his wife, who at this time were approaching their fiftieth wedding anniversary.³⁵ When he could get no one to help him, he ordered a tent sixty feet in diameter and called on his old friends Avery and Mary Long to help. The weather was rainy, the tent difficult to erect, and soon it was torn to shreds by a storm. Attendance was small, and when they could find no other place at the Fair, they visited city missions and a large saloon, where they preached the gospel and handed out tracts.³⁶

In 1898 William Kern of Brown County asked for and received permission to go to Texas as a missionary.³⁷ A further attempt to launch a colony in Texas took place in 1908 when Peter and John Fike bought 12,000 acres in the vicinity of Victoria, thirty miles from the Gulf of Mexico. The group, who left right after the 1909 General Conference held at Abilene, soon numbered twenty-one. Peter Fike died in 1914. The T.A. Longs, who were the sponsors and overseers of the work, left in 1919. Most of the colonists had moved, so the little church was turned over to the neighbors who had helped to build it.³⁸

Hezekiah Musser, son of John B. Musser, with his family moved to Washington state in 1889.³⁹ They and the families of two other brothers, Benjamin and Jacob, lived in Whatcom, one hundred miles north of Seattle, in 1892.⁴⁰ They later moved to Filer, Idaho, where Henry and John E. Musser joined them in 1908.⁴¹ Their two sisters and others went also. Because a church was never established, they worshipped with the Mennonites. Some moved to California about 1924, although others remained there for the rest of their lives.

Mission work in the early days began with a group of church members migrating to a new area to form a nucleus of believers. The time came when this procedure led to developing a work in a city. Several Brethren in Christ members were living in Chicago,



Katie Bollinger and daughters Alma (left) and Avas in 1903, when they went to Mt. Carmel Home in Illinois, where Katie served as matron for 35 years



A study in pioneer character: Amanda (Eisenhower) Musser, 1861-1951, and husband, Christian (C.O.) Musser, 1863-1950

and a Church of the Brethren man manufactured plain clothing there. Noah Zook, after visiting some residents there, recommended that mission work be started.⁴² General Conference voted in 1890 to begin a work there, but it was actually 1894 before anything was done.

Sarah Bert from the Bethel church in Kansas had felt a call to Chicago. Following her call, she arrived there in 1894 and was a co-founder of the mission. In 1905 she was appointed superintendent and capably held that position until 1941, when she was past eighty years of age.⁴³ Her sister Anna Bert and another sister, Lizzie, and husband Ben Brubaker, all of Bethel, were workers at the mission many years.

A young woman from the Abilene congregation, Beulah Musser, daughter of C.O. and Amanda Musser, went to Chicago Mission as a worker when she was nineteen and served there fourteen years before sailing for Africa in 1920.⁴⁴

Another mission work was the Mount Carmel Home in Morrison, Illinois, where Katie Bollinger from the Bethel Church served as the matron and superintendent for thirty-five years, beginning in 1903.⁴⁵ She had left her Pennsylvania home to go to Kansas with her parents, John and Martha (Niesley) Sheets, in 1879, when she was six years old. In 1897 her husband, John Bollinger, died, leaving her with two daughters, Avas, three years old, and Alma, two weeks old. After his death she expressed a great desire to help orphaned children.⁴⁶

Chapter 9

Foreign Missions

Although the denomination had had an interest in spreading the gospel in the homeland since 1871, it was not until 1894 that the idea of foreign missions was voiced publicly. In that year at the annual Conference held at the Bethel church, a member of the Abilene congregation, Rhoda E. Lee, made a dramatic appearance.¹ She read a paper, written by herself, presenting a passionate plea for foreign missions. In an emotional appeal, she implored, "Oh, may I dare to hope that a missionary fund may be started and a systematic method of foreign work organized."²

No immediate action was taken. But later in the day, Jacob Stauffer, also of Kansas, placed a five-dollar bill on the conference table saying, "That is to start a fund to carry the gospel to the heathen." In an impulsive, spontaneous gesture, Rhoda Lee jumped up, grabbed a hat and passed it through the audience for an offering. "Conference sat almost spellbound. No one had any remarks to make."³ The offering amounted to about forty-three dollars. Never before or since has a woman done such a dramatic and unprecedented thing at Conference!

Something had to be done with the money, so the first contributor, Jacob Stauffer, was appointed treasurer.⁴ During the following year Rhoda Lee had three articles published in the *Evangelical Visitor*, urging people to give not only money but themselves.⁵ At the next Conference, in Canada, she presented another paper, urging action. She declared: "If the church will not support foreign missions, there will be those among its



Rhoda E. Lee photo taken in Iowa before she went to Kansas in 1877 at 21



Hettie Fernbaugh, at right, with her sister, in only known photo of her as an adult



Indicative of their interest in photography, these Kansas lasses posed for a picture at the Harmony Hall School, September 8, 1918. They are (seated, from left) Ethel Haynes (Wenger), Pearl Myers (Engle), Frances Lenhart (Lady), Helen Myers; (kneeling, from left) Emma Lenhart (Byers), Carrie Faidley, and Fanny _____.

members who will take it upon themselves to go abroad without the help of the church." To support her point she referred to a younger friend and fellow church member: "Already has one of our band set the noble example and soon, in darkest Africa will be telling the story of redemption. God bless Hettie Fernbaugh"⁶

While both Lee and Fernbaugh were members of the Abilene Brethren in Christ Church, both had been influenced toward missions by the World's Gospel Union, which had its headquarters in Abilene.⁷ Rhoda Lee's husband, J.H. Lee, was a worker in their tent meetings at various locations. The whole family lived in Scranton, Kansas, a few years, where they held Bible studies and worked among the miners.⁸ Mrs. Lee died after an extended illness in 1899, just five years after her first appearance at Conference. She was forty-two years old and left five children.⁹

Hettie Fernbaugh was also influenced by the World's Gospel Union (whose name was changed in 1902 to Gospel Missionary Union).¹⁰ Especially influential were the evangelistic meetings of the Union held by a converted Jew, Albert J. Nathan. He had given up being the minister of a Methodist Episcopal church in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, to become state secretary for the Oklahoma World's Gospel Union and to hold evangelistic services under them.¹¹ When the Union pled for missionaries to Morocco and no one else responded, Nathan volunteered himself and family.

Hettie Fernbaugh, who had felt a call to missions earlier but felt herself unqualified, now volunteered to go as a "helper" to care for the Nathans' five children, aged five months to five years. They left December 19, 1894, just days before her twenty-fourth birthday.¹²

The Brethren in Christ Church, which had not yet accepted the idea of foreign missions, opposed her going. Afterward, in writing to her sister, she told how John Allison had shaken her hand and, frowning, exclaimed, "'Tut-tut. Just be sure it is of the Lord.' He also shook his head as if he knew it was not."¹³

Bishop Samuel Zook was one who favored her going, so she was allowed to go as a "helper." But in addition to her home duties, Fernbaugh took lessons in both Spanish and Arabic and did visitation work among the women.¹⁴ She remained loyal to the Brethren in Christ Church, even to the point of wearing the covering.

Fernbaugh continued to correspond with some of the members. In one letter to her sister, July 7, 1897, she told of hearing from her friend Emma Martin. "She said if I got scared out here to come back to the United States; but praise God I have some place else to flee better than there. I can flee to the Lord. He is my shield and buckler." (Her correspondent was the same Emma Martin who married Harvey Frey and later went as a missionary to Africa.)

Though Conference moved slowly in the matter of foreign missions, each step was hailed with anticipation. In a letter to Samuel Zook, editor of the *Evangelical Visitor*, Fernbaugh wrote, "I praise the Lord for the step the brethren are taking in mission work. Let us always remember to pray for the Foreign Mission Board. Foreign Mission Board! How glorious that does sound."¹⁵

Later, in May 1899, Amanda Witter Zook, writing from India to Hettie Fernbaugh in Africa, said, "Since you left there has been a great awakening of the missionary subject and God has already placed a number of us on the field. I now believe the missionary subject is becoming one of the greatest throughout the church. Praise God."¹⁶

After five years in Morocco, Fernbaugh came back to the United States. After a few more years she died, weakened by ailments from Africa and having followed her convictions on not having a doctor.¹⁷

In January 1897, the new treasurer, Bishop Samuel Zook, published an appeal in the *Evangelical Visitor*: "The Lord has provided money--somebody was willing to give it, but who will give himself? I believe the Lord has spoken; we are ready and waiting to receive applicants, but somebody must be willing to obey God

or the work will be delayed while souls are perishing. Who shall it be?"¹⁸

This appeal was read by a young Brethren in Christ member in her seventh year of teaching at McPherson College, McPherson, Kansas. Until then she had been happy and satisfied in serving God in the classroom. After reading the appeal a second time, she reported: "He showed me Christ lifted up for a lost world. He filled me with an unutterable love for every soul who had not heard of Him and with a passionate longing to go to the worst parts of the earth and spend the rest of my life telling the story of the cross."¹⁹

That young woman was H. Frances Davidson. She at that time had probably received more formal education than any other person in the Brethren in Christ denomination. She was the daughter of Henry Davidson, who had lived in Abilene while editing the *Evangelical Visitor*. He was at that time a member of the Foreign Mission Board. When Frances told him of her call, he exclaimed, "How can I say yes, and how dare I say no."²⁰

Two other young women applied and were accepted. One was Alice Heise, daughter of John and Sarah Heise of Brown County. She had trained as a teacher at McPherson College.²¹ The other missionary candidate was Barbara Hershey, daughter of Noah and Barbara Engle Hershey from Belle Springs, Dickinson County.²² She had helped in earlier tent meetings and with the Gospel Wagon.²³

When no man applied, Bishop Jesse Engle and his wife Elizabeth volunteered. Engle was fifty-nine years old and the secretary of the Foreign Mission Committee. He had felt a call in his youth, but until now no opportunity had been given. In the meantime Engle had had many reverses and trying times.

In a later letter to friends, Engle wrote from Africa: "I need not tell you of the deep waters through which we passed since then [last time of their meeting] and how the Lord delivered us from them all. When I look back, the past seems like a preparatory ordeal for a work which under the circumstances could



The Jesse Engle family (1900/1901), seated, from left: Adella Heise Engle and her husband, Enos Engle, Mrs. Jesse Engle (nee Elizabeth Niesley), Jacob N. Engle, Henry N. Engle with his wife, Susan (Gish) Engle; standing, first row: Sarah (Climenhaga) Engle and her husband, John Engle, Mary (Engle) Heise and her husband, Anthony Heise; back row: Ezra, Aaron, and Jess Engle

only be accomplished, though the ordeal be ever so fiery. But dear Brother today we are in Central South Africa, a place with which I had to do for near a score of years; but after passing through the floods did not anticipate seeing or laboring in this land, until suddenly the Lord laid His hand heavily and momentarily [sic] on me and in my own heart made the matter [sic] final. What now remained was to make the necessary arrangements [sic] which linked themselves to family and church."²⁴

After a farewell service at the Messiah Home in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, the group left for New York City and sailed November 24, 1897, reaching Capetown December 26.²⁵

At Capetown Barbara Hershey left the party to go with friends, the Worcesters, to work in Johannesburg. She later married Victor Swanson and spent a lifetime in Africa.²⁶

The rest went thirty miles from Bulawayo into the Matopa Hills to establish the first mission station. Jesse Engle died of malaria, April 3, 1900, a little over two years after arriving there. His wife, who had not professed a call but had gone out of loyalty to her husband, returned to America.²⁷

Alice Heise, in May 1900, married Isaac O. Lehman, who had arrived in April 1899. In 1901 they left the Brethren in Christ work in Rhodesia and went to Johannesburg, where they labored until 1948.²⁸ She died in Africa in 1952.²⁹

This left only Frances Davidson of the original party. She spent twenty-five productive years in Brethren in Christ missions in Africa. After teaching at Messiah Bible College for seven additional years, she returned to Abilene, where she spent the last several years of her life with her sister Ida, Mrs. Martin L. Hoffman. She died in 1935.³⁰ (The author, a girl at the time, remembers vividly Frances Davidson sitting in a rocking chair over the furnace register at the end of the aisle each Sunday.)

The book *There is No Difference* by Anna Engle, John Climenhaga and Leoda Buckwalter contains biographical sketches of the Brethren in Christ missionaries from 1897 to 1950. Of the first thirty-six missionaries listed, eighteen were sent by the Kansas



H. Frances Davidson, at left, with Ada Engle (Taylor) in Africa (1906/1907) and, at right, as she appeared later in life, having served in missions, 1897-1922

churches in the years 1897 to 1920.³¹ J. Wilmer Heisey, then the executive secretary of the Board for World Missions, referred to this list when speaking in Abilene at a meeting honoring the Kansas churches in 1978. He said that of the eighty-five listed more than thirty had a Kansas history.

In the final decade of the nineteenth century, while the Foreign Mission Board and members of the Brethren in Christ Church were slow in responding to her appeal, the predictions of Rhoda E. Lee were coming true. Members were going overseas independently or under other mission groups.

The World's Gospel Union has already been noted for the part it played in the lives of Mrs. Lee and Hettie Fernbaugh. It was also their influence that caused John K. Forney to make a trip to India in December of 1898. Although he returned in the spring of 1899, the Union was also directly or indirectly responsible for others going into foreign mission work.

The World's Gospel Union at various times had Dr. C.I. Scofield of Dallas, Texas, as a speaker at their Summer Bible School Conferences. He was the founder of the Central American Mission. His impassioned pleas caused E.A. Bishop of Abilene, the first president of the World's Gospel Union, to resign his job and take his family to Honduras under the Central American Mission. Others followed.

Sarah Cassel and her brother Jacob had attended the Missionary Institute of the World's Gospel mission in Kansas City. Sarah married William Torrance, who was active in the Union. They left for Honduras in December 1898. He died there August 6, 1899.³²

Sarah's brother Jacob, who had been active in Sunday school work and tent meetings of the Brethren, married Mary Hoffman, daughter of Eli and Fannie Hoffman. They too went to Honduras but under the Christian and Missionary Alliance. A sister of Mary, Martha Hoffman, followed them in 1900.³³

Two more of the Hoffman sisters went to India to work under the Christian and Missionary Alliance. Fannie went in 1898 and Elmina in 1899.³⁴ How much contact they had with the World's Gospel Union is not known, but in the early days the Union secured the workers and the Alliance directed them overseas.

Travelling evangelists Noah and Mary Zook also gave four children to missions. One of these went under the Brethren in Christ Board. The others went independently or with the Hepzibah Faith Missionary Association of Tabor, Iowa, where most of the Zook children had attended Bible School.³⁵

David and his wife, Katie Morris from Iowa, were the first to leave. They left for Japan on January 4, 1896, and from there went to Calcutta, December 1897, where they started an orphanage. Two of their children died in infancy there. They served there many years.

David's brother Eber married Amanda Witter (a sister of Ray Witter), and they arrived in Calcutta in December 1898. He died of small pox just two years later, in December 1900.

The third child of the Zooks to enter mission work was Sarah, who married Clifford Cress. They were in the second group approved to go to Africa under the Brethren in Christ, leaving America in March 1899. Sarah died of fever on February 8, 1900, being the first Brethren in Christ missionary to die in a foreign country.³⁶

Rhoda, having met and married Josiah Martin from Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, while attending Hepzibah Missionary Training school, went to India in 1903. Josiah died of small pox December 30, 1907, and Rhoda died of the same in January 1908.³⁷ They left twins one year old.

In addition to losing two daughters, a son, a son-in-law and two infant grandchildren on the mission field, the Noah Zooks lost a daughter in the homeland. Seventeen-year-old Martha died in Illinois, in July 1900, while her parents were in Pennsylvania in evangelistic work. She too had been preparing for mission work.³⁸ Probably no other Brethren in Christ couple has sacrificed so much for the cause of missions as Noah and Mary Zook.

Before leaving the effect of the Hepzibah Missionary Association on the Brethren in Christ, let it be noted that Jacob M. Zook, son of Bishop Samuel Zook, and his wife Mary (Eyster) of Abilene had charge of the orphanage work in Tabor for some time.³⁹ Another Dickinson County member, Emma Herr, daughter of John R. Herr, taught at the Tabor school from 1902 to 1930.⁴⁰

Another Abilene member, Jeremiah I. Long, spent a couple of years in Japan with Leonard Worcester, one of the founders of the Hepzibah Missionary Association.

The editors of the *Evangelical Visitor* announced the Summer Bible School Conferences of the World's Gospel Mission and reprinted articles from the Hepzibah Missionary Association's paper, *Sent of God*. They regularly printed letters from all of these missionaries and their addresses. So regardless of the organization under which these Christians served, the challenge of foreign missions was ever before the reader.

Bishop Jacob N. Engle and Rev. John Sheets, both of Kansas, were appointed by the Foreign Mission board to spend the year 1909-1910 surveying the needs of missions in India and Africa.⁴¹

Chapter 10

The Holiness Movement

From the 1880s through the early 1900s a wave of revival services and holiness meetings swept over Kansas, causing many people to reexamine their spiritual lives.

Prior to this time the Brethren believed in conversion and a separated life. With regard to sanctification, they believed that it began at the time of conversion and was an ongoing process. Then, in 1887, the General Conference adopted a stand which moved the church toward the Wesleyan position of sanctification as a second work of grace.¹

By 1894 it had become an issue at the Kansas District Council and the following statement was made: "Since the doctrine of Holiness is at par with all other vital gospel doctrines, it should be both preached, believed, and enjoyed; but brethren should be careful not to be carried away by one special doctrinal question, however weighty."²

In 1903 Kansas asked General Conference if ministers who taught the doctrine of the second work as "total eradication" should be tolerated.³ Although Conference responded by saying the 1887 decision was adequate, there was much discussion and disagreement as people tried to work through and accept this doctrine.

Several organizations outside the denomination had come in with extreme Wesleyan holiness views which resulted in discord and dissension. One group which believed in sanctification subsequent to conversion was the Hepzibah Faith Missionary

Association of Tabor, Iowa. They had found great favor with evangelist Noah Zook, who had met the founders, Leonard Worcester and George Weaver.

Zook sent at least four of his children to attend the missionary school at Tabor. His son David W. Zook was the first to introduce holiness as a second work of grace in Kansas when he held a ten-day meeting at his home church, Zion.⁴ Further interest was promoted through the paper *Sent of God* which the H.F.M.A. sent free to several thousand people. Some of these articles were also printed in the *Evangelical Visitor*.

These people were emotional and expressed themselves by jumping or shouting in a way not known before. They spoke of "fire," but it was associated with sanctification and not in addition to it. They were so influential in the Rosebank area in South Dickinson that a group left the church in 1904 and, after holding meetings in the schoolhouse, built a small church at Ramona. Weaver, just back from Africa, held meetings at Rosebank, and he was the "wolf that scattered the flock."⁵ They spoke of themselves as the "comeouters" and called their church "the Firebrand Church." Their leader was Ira Eisenhower, who had been ordained by George Weaver in 1897.⁶

Jacob W. Book, the pastor at Rosebank, enjoyed going to their meetings but was reluctant to leave the Brethren. One Sunday afternoon in 1904 as he was going to attend the meeting of the Tabor group, which he had been attending each evening, he decided to let his horse make the decision for him. When he came to the crossroads, he dropped the reins. The horse turned toward the Rosebank Church. That settled the issue for him. Although eight families left, he stayed to pastor the rest of the flock who remained.⁷

The most extreme group, and the one that caused the most trouble, was known by several names--Fire Baptized Holiness Association, Firebrand, and World Missionary Association. The leader of the group, Benjamin Hardin Irwin, was a handsome, persuasive, former lawyer from Nebraska. As a Wesleyan

preacher, he had organized the Holiness Association of Iowa in 1895. He interpreted Matthew 3:11, "baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire," as meaning two separate and subsequent baptisms. In addition to the baptism of the Holy Ghost and the baptism of fire, Irwin introduced other baptisms: "dynamite" and "heavenly lyddite." There could be no end to the experiences. One even claimed "selenite" and "oxydite".⁸

Irwin preached in all the Brethren in Christ Churches of Dickinson County and in Brown County. When he held meetings at Zion and Bethel in November 1896, he stayed at least part of the time in the home of one of the Bethel preachers, D.H. Brechbill. He reported over fifty at the altar for entire sanctification at Zion and over thirty at Bethel, a number of whom had received the "fire."⁹

At first Henry N. Engle, the editor of the *Evangelical Visitor*, which was being published at Abilene at that time, seemed to approve, or at least to tolerate Irwin. But as Irwin became more radical, Engle became more wary. Irwin had at first endorsed the simplicity and character of the Brethren, but later turned against them, denouncing organized church bodies, accusing them of pride and ridiculing the parting of the hair in the middle by the men and the wearing of the prayer covering by the women. He displeased the farmers by preaching against the raising of swine. The people embracing Irwin's doctrines were given to great emotionalism to the point of shouting, dancing, jumping, and they put great stock in dreams and visions.¹⁰

Sympathizers with Irwin organized a local Fire Band, led by Mrs. Annie Brechbill, widow of Christian Brechbill. The Brechbills were members of the Bethel Church and had lived in the community of Moonlight. Christian Brechbill was the first known Brethren in Christ member to profess entire sanctification. This happened in 1884 at a non-Brethren meeting and turned him against the Brethren in Christ establishment. At the time, both his wife and the church opposed him. When he became mentally ill and was institutionalized, his wife blamed the church. After

several requests for a confession from them, the matter was finally dropped in 1889, when it was reported that "the committee appointed to investigate the matter, settled it to the best of their understanding and ability."¹¹ His last years were spent in an asylum; he died at thirty-seven.¹²

Annie herself was then taken up with the holiness movement and became a leader of Irwin's group. She planned a camp meeting to be held on her farm August 14-24, 1899. People from Oklahoma, Iowa, Nebraska, and South Carolina came. Benjamin Irwin and his assistant, G.N. Henson, as well as Annie Brechbill preached.¹³ It was reported that 2,000 people were there.

One Tuesday night, August 22, some local farmers thought they would take care of Irwin. He, however, had left the camp the day before. So they grabbed Henson, his assistant, and threw him into the horse watering trough. The tent was taken down--or more specifically cut down--but the meeting continued in the Brechbill home.¹⁴

Abilene newspapers printed sensational reports of the meetings, making good use of this story. It was even used in an article in the *Philadelphia Press* a few years later.¹⁵

Live Coals, the periodical of the Fire Baptized Holiness Association, in each issue listed its "ordained evangelists." Listed were fourteen of Brethren in Christ background from Dickinson County and one from Brown County.¹⁶ The holiness movement found fertile soil in Brown County during the years 1895-1903. Only one Brethren in Christ person from Brown County (Frank Kern) was listed as ordained, but there were others identified with the Association.

News items from the *Brown County World* report many holiness meetings during those years, not only in the River Brethren church but in the Wesleyan, Christian and Baptist churches and in the tabernacle (tent) in groves. Some of these were called holiness meetings and others Firebrand holiness.

As newspapers sometimes do, it seems they engaged in sensationalism. For example, in January 1898, they reported

Daniel Steckley from Dickinson County holding a holiness meeting at the Pleasant Hill River Brethren Church:

The preacher emphasized his remarks by vigorous gestures, leaping in the air and shaking fists at the audience. He denounces various denominations by name and tells members of secret societies they will go to hell if they don't repent. Women with high hats are pointed out and vigorously denounced as sinners in need of repentance. Some of the unregenerate say they are having a "hot time" in the old church.¹⁷

They also reported that the holiness people of Brown County printed verses on bridges such as, "Prepare to meet thy God" and add that, "underneath someone has directed the weary traveller, 'see Yost, the friendly undertaker.'"¹⁸ In 1899: "Frank Kern is building another fine building on which to print more Bible verses for the public to stare at--hallelujah!"¹⁹ In 1900: "Kern and hallelujah Bill gave a street meeting in Hamlin Saturday night in the midst of a festival series and a band concert. The band played louder and was longer winded."²⁰

A newspaper account describes in detail a disturbance that took place after a sermon by N.T. Franklin. The correspondent calls Kern "that white fire baptized holyite who thinks he can't sin anymore."²¹ Eventually Kern no longer considered himself a member of the Brethren in Christ. By 1903 he was having protracted meetings in Herman Engle's vacant house.²²

The brethren held holiness camp meetings in the Jerre Kern Grove two miles north of Hamlin. Ira Eisenhower from Dickinson County attended the meeting and George Hess acted as marshall.²³ During the years 1897 to 1900, the Hamlin and Morrill newspapers carried twenty-nine announcements of meetings or references to the holiness people.²⁴

As late as 1908 the editor of the *Morrill News*, Abe Eichelberger, made a plea for "the genuine or nothing else." He

was attacked by an unknown correspondent of the *Brown County World*, and for several issues the debate continued in the two papers.²⁵

The outcome of the holiness issue in Brown County resulted in Kern's starting a mission in Hiawatha, several families leaving the church with good feelings but wishing to attend a holiness church in Morrill, and a third group believing in holiness but remaining with the Brethren in Christ Church.²⁶

The difference of opinion as to how holiness should be taught and believed caused dissension and division in the church, even among the ministers and leaders. One Firebrand minister from Brown County said during the controversy that young people came to Pleasant Hill in great numbers to watch the old brethren fight. When asked why they fought, he said they were trying to get rid of a dead church.²⁷

An exchange of letters between Mary Engle (Mrs. A.J.) Heise of Hamlin, Brown County, Kansas, and her father, Bishop Jesse Engle, at that time in Africa, reveal something of the conflict. Mary tells of attending an evening meeting which lasted until half past twelve and which was held by a fire-baptized brother. She tells of her husband, her and their baby going to Missouri to attend meetings. She closes by saying they would like to go to Iowa to hear Bro. Irwin.²⁸

Mary's husband, Anthony J., who had gone to Oklahoma City with others to hear Henson and Irwin, reported: "[fire-baptized sanctification] is almost worth a farm, and if I would get the full experience a farm would not pay for it." He then expresses the desire for both of them to be able to go to Iowa to hear Irwin.²⁹

Mary's father, Jesse Engle, wrote a "special" letter saying he had heard of the commotion caused by the meetings of that man (Henson) from Oklahoma. He cautioned that "the foundation of the Bible is broad enough to stand upon and we need no additional interposition as separate fire baptized bands making a doctrine of their own."³⁰

Mary wrote back thanking him for the special letter. She related how she almost joined the group. She had had a dream which had something to do with a code or constitution of some kind. (The group had just now received the constitution of the Fire Holiness Association.) The meaning of the dream was unclear to her, but all day she felt she belonged to the holiness band and kept testifying to this fact. But a few days later when the group organized, she was severely tested. The Lord told her that if she belonged to the holiness band, it was not needful to join some association that decided things for her. She wrote, "I believe I would have joined the band would it not have been for God's providence." She also wrote, "We learned yesterday there expects to be another Fire Baptized preacher here next week, so I guess we will get another testing time."³¹

In 1900 she summed up the condition of most of the Brethren churches: "There seems [sic] to be several atmospheres prevailing in our midst at the present. One is of cold indifference and the other a little on the fanatical side. Will you pray that we may be kept from either and found on the highway of holiness?"³²

In addition to personal warnings such as Jesse Engle's, several things made the Kansans take a second look at the Firebrand interpretation of holiness. One major influence came through the warnings of the editor of the *Evangelical Visitor*, Henry N. Engle. He said he could find no biblical basis for Firebrand teaching and that "it is the most fatal error of the delusive times which are upon us."³³

Another influence came from the holiness evangelist Noah Zook, who believed in holiness but did not accept the radical position. Noah's brother, Bishop Samuel Zook, with his level-headedness, helped to bring the church through a very disquieting period.³⁴

The greatest deterrent to the movement, however, was what happened to Irwin himself. In the spring of 1900 he was seen on the streets of Omaha, Nebraska, drunk and smoking a cigar. Confronted, he confessed that he had been living a double life.³⁵

The Iowa Holiness Association rejected Irwinism and developed new leadership.³⁶

Annie Brechbill, the leader of the Dickinson County group who had spoken against the Brethren, made peace with the church. She died soon after at the age of forty-one. By request, the Brethren officiated at her funeral, which was held at the Bethel church and "was largely attended and very solemn."³⁷

Along with the radical and fanatical elements of the holiness movement was an extreme view of divine healing. While the anointing of the sick with oil and belief in supernatural healing were taught by the church, there were those who discounted doctors altogether. Thus, during those years two young mothers in Brown County died, leaving large families. Mrs. Jerre (Lizzie) Kern, on April 21, 1899, left eight children, the youngest only four days old.³⁸ The Hamlin correspondent to the *Brown County Weekly World*, May 1899, wrote both a tribute and an indictment against those who called no nurse or doctor, "as it is 8 children are bereft of a mother's love and protection. It is all right," she said, "to trust in God, but He has given us brains and common sense and expects us to use them at such a time."

Mrs. A.J. (Mary) Heise, whose letters have just been cited, died of typhoid fever in 1901 at the age thirty-three, leaving five children. She was not under a doctor's care and took no medicine.³⁹ Her funeral service was conducted by Elder L.B. Worcester of Tabor, Iowa, and Elder George Detweiler.⁴⁰

Letters attesting to divine healing were printed in the church paper from time to time. One such was from Noah and Mary Zook, who were in Pennsylvania in March 1901, where Noah was preaching in a series of meetings in York County. When they were informed of the illness of their son-in-law, in Philadelphia, they went there directly, found him "very sick indeed," and anointed him with oil. "He received immediate relief," Zook reported. The son-in-law, Josiah Martin, declined to use drugs a doctor prescribed "feeling he would rather trust the Lord to raise

him up." Though he was a convalescent for several weeks, he was restored to health without drugs.⁴¹

Disillusioned, the Firebrand groups eventually broke up. What the Kansas churches had experienced made church members in other states wary about sanctification; therefore, the doctrine of Wesleyan perfection was slowly accepted. But being open to various interpretations of holiness and attempting to maintain biblical standards, the Kansas churches were able to lead the way. Doubtless because of these experiences, the denomination needed again to redefine its position on sanctification in 1910, affirming the doctrine of a work of grace subsequent to justification but dropping the term "second definite work" in favor of "grace of cleansing completed." The more radical word, "eradication," which Irwin had used was replaced with other words suggesting cleansing and deliverance.⁴²

Perhaps one benefit derived from the holiness movement was its influence in getting Christians to see the need for foreign missions. Because holiness groups encouraged and sent Brethren in Christ members overseas, the church awakened to the fact that if it did not send them, others would.

Perhaps an even greater claim for the value of the holiness position as accepted by the denomination was made in the General Conference sermon in 1938. At that time Bishop E.J. Swalm credited the movement with helping avoid division which might otherwise have split the ranks of the Brethren in Christ Church. He saw it as having had a unifying effect in spite of earlier polarization on the doctrine.⁴³

Chapter 11

Impact of a Cult

At the same time that the radical holiness element was dividing the Brethren, another new doctrine was subtly creeping in. It originated in 1884 with Charles Taz Russell, whose followers were called Russellites, Millennial Dawnists, or International Bible Students. In 1931 they became known as Jehovah's Witnesses.¹

While comparatively few Brethren joined this group, it is not difficult to see how some of the Kansas Brethren who felt bound by tradition and frustrated by the polarization caused by the wild-fire holiness radicals, could be attracted by them. In the early days the "Bible Students" shared many common beliefs with the Brethren: Holiness as defined by two separate works of justification and sanctification,² conscientious objection to participation in war, observance of water baptism and communion. They were opposed to organized church bodies, and had no officers or leaders, just Bible teachers, as all studied together. Along with the Bible, they studied the teachings of Russell, particularly his *Plan of the Ages*, using the Great Pyramid of Egypt as a source of prophecy. Their most objectionable tenets were their belief in the mortality of the soul and annihilation.

In 1891 the Kansas Council submitted to General Conference a recommendation that "brethren who partake of the doctrine of the mortality of the soul and kindred doctrines, cannot be ordained to office in the church." This came up again in 1901 and in 1902.³

Years later, from time to time articles were printed in the *Evangelical Visitor* warning the readers against this doctrine. One such was by A.L. Eisenhower, in which he wrote of the doctrine of soul annihilation as "fool hearted nonsense," and, further, that, "It is the devil's asbestos blanket to cover up the realities of hell fire judgment."⁴

One of the best known Brethren in Christ members to accept their teaching was Henry N. Engle, son of missionary Jesse Engle. As editor of the *Evangelical Visitor*, 1896-1899, he had given his services free of charge except for several donations. He was a proponent of holiness but opposed "Firebaptism."⁵

When his views changed and he embraced the doctrine of Russell, it became necessary for him to resign his editorship. He was asked, however, to continue as business manager for a few months, which he did.

Another family involved with Russellism was that of David Jacob Eisenhower and wife, Ida, parents of the future president. From a strict Brethren in Christ background and with a father and two brothers as ministers, there is no evidence that David ever joined the church. Nor had his wife, whom he had met at Lane University in LeCompton, Kansas. Yet Sunday school record books show that both David and Ida taught classes in the Brethren in Christ Sunday school in Abilene during the years 1894-1897.⁶ In 1892 David Eisenhower was asked to "permanently teach the young ladies class."⁷

Mrs. Eisenhower's interest in the Russellites began in 1895, when her fifth son, Paul, died at age ten months. Several neighbor women, who were ardent students of the Millennial Dawn writings, published by the Watch Tower Society, came in to comfort her. Mrs. Eisenhower was intrigued by their beliefs. She opened her living room on Sunday afternoons for Bible study.⁸

Milton Eisenhower, one of the sons, wrote:

We all went to the River Brethren Sunday School, and grandfather who was a minister of the Brethren who lived with

us, never seemed to lose his ministerial aspect. His black beard and black tie were the trademarks of his calling.

Mother was raised a Lutheran but at the time I can remember best she had become interested in the Bible Students of the Watch Tower Society. It was she who organized the meetings that use [sic] to fill our living room on Sundays, and it was she....who saw to it that religion would be just as much a part of our lives as eating and sleeping.⁹

In writing to a fellow witness in 1943, Mrs. Eisenhower wrote, "I have been in the truth since ninety-six and still in, and am glad I found the truth. It has been a comfort....Naomi Engle stays with me and she is a witness too so my hopes are still good."¹⁰

In 1944 she wrote to a young convert,

As a witness of and for the Great Jehovah of Hosts (I have been such the last 49 years) I am pleased to write to you and to urge you to faithfulness....My prayer is that they all [her sons] may anchor their hope in the New World, the central feature of which is the kingdom for which all good people have been praying the past two thousand years.¹¹

The Eisenhowers attended numerous national conventions of the Witnesses. When David Eisenhower died in 1942, his service was conducted by two Witnesses, Fred Southworth and Dr. James Thayer, an Abilene dentist. However, there is no record that he ever joined, and it is recorded that he lost interest in the movement about 1919.¹² At that time the meetings moved from the Eisenhower home to the Kingdom Hall.¹³ Sadie Witter Steckley, a niece and a trained nurse, who was in the home at the time of her uncle's death, said Naomi Engle made the arrangements.¹⁴

Naomi Engle, daughter of Henry Engle, had been baptized by Elder Detweiler, had joined the Brethren in Christ when a young

girl,¹⁵ but had followed her father in joining the Witnesses. She became the travelling companion and home companion of Mrs. Eisenhower in her later years. Mrs. Eisenhower died in 1946 at age 84. After her death, son Milton gave to Mrs. Lotta Thayer the fifty-year accumulation of the semi-monthly copies of the *Watch Tower* sent by subscription to the Eisenhower home.¹⁶

Chapter 12

Sunday Schools

While there were some Union Sunday schools held in schoolhouses, the first to be organized in a Kansas Brethren in Christ church building was at Abilene. On March 21, 1886, a meeting was called by Bishop Samuel Zook to consider the possibility of a "sabbath school." The decision was to have one, but it needed to be conducted according to the rules given at General Conference of 1885, which forbade picnics and celebrations and required that only the Word of God be taught.¹

The school was organized the next Sunday, with John H. Engle as superintendent. It was decided to call the school the River Brethren Bible School.² From then until the end of the year, there was an average of sixty-one scholars in six classes. The year 1887 recorded a high of 137 pupils, 117 being there on Christmas day when "after the usual giving of a present to the children there was a closing prayer."³ Just what the "usual present" was is not mentioned. But it is known that an orange and a box of candy was the customary gift for nearly half a century. Otherwise, the gift may have been the usual picture or Scripture card.

All of the Kansas churches organized "Sabbath schools" shortly after building construction. Belle Springs organized the very afternoon of dedication in 1891, but they had been meeting weekly on Sunday afternoons at the Philomathian Schoolhouse as early as 1885, with Henry N. Engle as the first superintendent.⁴

The members of Rosebank community operated a Union Sunday School in the Michigan, Noll, and Rosebank schools, which later organized in 1887 at a tent love feast at Sam Haldeman's farm. When the church was built in 1891, they had Sunday school there.⁵

In 1892 the Joint Council decided to have "an annual Sunday School conference of all Sunday School boards, officers, and others interested in the cause, to be held annually on the day preceding and at the place of the annual Joint Council of Kansas." They also provided for a General Sunday School Board of three members to be chosen annually at the council to inspect and recommend Sunday school literature, to visit all of the Sunday schools of the state annually, to report to the Joint Council, and to plan for the annual Sunday school conference.⁶

Thus the first Sunday school conference in the denomination (or convention as it was later called) took place at Bethel the following year.⁷ In 1894 George Detweiler wrote, "I think in no other state, is the church so alive to the importance of Sunday School work as in Kansas."⁸ In 1909, at the General Conference held in Abilene, the first Sunday School Board for the whole denomination was appointed.⁹

Abilene early established an outreach in the town. They were known for their Home Class--for the aged or adults who could not attend--which was organized January 1, 1900. A report for 1909 listed the names of eighty Home Department members, with five women responsible for visiting them.¹⁰ The other area of outreach was the Cradle Roll Department, by which mothers and babies who were unchurched were visited on a regular basis. In 1910 there were twenty-five babies on the cradle roll, seventy-nine in the Home Department and 197 in the main school, making a total of 301.¹¹

Still another outreach occurred a little later, during the years 1912 to 1917, when Abilene members held a weekly Sunday school in the Sand Springs area west of Abilene. It had an enrollment of 68 to 80, with a usual attendance of 45 to 75.

Brethern in Christ Sunday School -1904

			JANUARY.				FEBRUARY.				MARCH.				APRIL.				MAY.				JUNE.				
REG. No.	CLASS No.	TAUGHT BY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
		<i>Continued</i>																									
		<i>First</i> Nancy Wagaman	1	1	1	1	1	0	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
		Irwin Metz	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
		Jno. Dayhoff	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		Laban Staloff	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
		Ellen Langheist									1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		Dwight Eisenhower										1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
		Neora Samers																									
		Visitors																									
Amount contributed for each Sabbath during the year.			1.20	2.22	1.11	2.21	2.20	2.23	1.16	2.22	2.21	2.24	2.29	2.29	1.16	1.38	1.24	1.12	1.09	1.13	1.26	1.10	1.16	1.16	1.19	1.17	1.17
			DOLLAR CENTS																								

Dwight D. Eisenhower's Sunday school attendance record at Abilene Church, 1904

John H. Engle, son of Jesse Engle, first superintendent and a school teacher, became known as "Sunday School John." In 1906 he was asked to address the General Conference on the state of the Sunday school movement. He defined the Sunday school as the "Bible-studying and Bible-teaching service of the church."¹² He was ahead of his time with his attendance at interdenominational Sunday school conferences, promotion of graded lessons, and teacher training. His first teacher-training class graduated from the Hurlburt course in 1912. It was the first known training class in the denomination.¹³

John H. Engle was general secretary of the Kansas Sunday School Association for twenty-five years and had his office in Abilene, from which he travelled extensively, promoting Sunday school work for various denominations. Years later when he moved to Michigan, he was executive secretary of the Michigan Sunday School Council of Religious Education.¹⁴ He was also a delegate to conventions in Jerusalem, Zurich, and Yokahoma.

The Abilene Sunday school pupil who grew up to be the most famous was, of course, Dwight D. Eisenhower, thirty-fourth president of the United States. Two yearly record books show him to have been a member of the Intermediate Department in 1904 and 1905. An attendance record book shows he was more faithful than most of the class.¹⁵

In the history of the Kansas church, by 1910 nine churches had been established, the holiness movement had been both a bane and a blessing, Sunday schools were flourishing, foreign missions was beginning to play an important part, and the church was expanding to other states.

Members of the Kansas church were also making progress economically. Alfalfa was discovered in 1891. Kansans were taming the grasses and learning not to depend on only one crop; thus if one failed another might succeed.

Most of the Brethren still lived on farms and were adhering to church doctrine in regard to dress and other cultural practices. However, the Kansas church had influenced the entire

denomination by introducing changes which would continue to mark church life in the decades to follow.

INTERMEDIATE DEPARTMENT.—Class Number Five.

Nancy Wagaman, Teacher.
 Rhoda Hoffman,
 Elsie Woolverton,
 Anna E. Engle,
 Mary Dayhoff,
 Carry Ledy,
 *Florence Engle,
 Cora Engle,
 Florence Amess,
 Hedwig Schmutz,
 Bertha Ross,
 Lillie Ross,
 Katie Gish,
 Neora Sauers,
 Dwight Eisenhower,
 John Dayhoff,
 Irvin Metz,
 Laban Stauffer 18
 Ella Lenhert,
 Delilah Stauffer 20

In 1905 Dwight D. Eisenhower was listed as an Intermediate Department member at the Abilene Sunday School.

Part II

1910-1950

Chapter 13

Decades of Change

The years from 1910 to 1950 were ones of great challenge and change. Cars were replacing the horse and buggy. The mechanical age and electricity were bringing in new conveniences. Telephones and radios were popular and needful, and television was making its appearance. People were leaving the farm for a semi-urban life. Two World Wars and the Great Depression had brought about lasting changes which left their imprint on the church and its people.

In a world of change, Brethren in Christ churches during these years also made changes, in policy, programs, and procedures. While there was also much resistance to change within the denomination, this section will describe various kinds of changes made among Kansas churches.

Finances

Even before the churches were built, members were assessed one dollar on every one thousand dollars of property evaluation.¹ Rosebank kept this pattern until 1928, when they adopted the budget system. In 1893 North Dickinson decided to place mite boxes in the houses of worship for free contributions.² In 1915 the Abilene congregation established a financial policy called "Every Member Canvass." Members would use a divided weekly offering envelope, one part for local expenses and the other for

missions and other causes.³ In 1958 Bethel moved from a free-will offering system to the budget system.

Ministers and bishops had served without pay as most were self-supporting farmers. But the Abilene folk pioneered in a supported ministry. A special meeting was called in 1910 to discuss pastoral support, but it was not until 1915 that Homer Engle, a student pastor for the summer, received partial support. In 1920 Ben Books received full support as a full-time pastor.⁴

The Kansas churches also led in providing parsonages for their pastors. What may well have been the first was provided for the Hebron Church in Clay County. On May 6, 1903, the Dickinson County churches purchased a residence for the Hebron congregation from P.B. Atwood and wife of Rockford, Illinois. The property was deeded to the church with J.M. Sheets and S.H. Bert, both of Detroit, Kansas, and J.O. Wenger of Abilene, designated as trustees.⁵

Clothing

Changes in attire before 1910 had been few, but soon after that date the doctrine of nonconformity in respect to clothing began to be debated as people began to move from the seclusion of the farm and to participate in businesses, professions and urban life. As the children grew up, many were not joining the church of their parents. The church fathers' first reaction was to make stricter rules on prescribed garb. The "dress question" was frequently brought up at General Conference. In 1929 the necktie for men was forbidden,⁶ but in 1930 it was not mentioned. In 1937 church uniforms were stipulated which included suits with erect collars for men and dresses of plain material with capes for women. Concessions were made to members employed where church uniforms were not permitted. Gold, silver and precious stones as ornaments were forbidden.⁷ It was not until 1958, slightly beyond this period, that the General Conference reluctantly gave permission for the wearing of wedding rings.⁸

Photographs

In 1921 the General Conference in California decided that although "modern photography is not...directly treated in the Word of God...photographs have special value in bringing to us...views of the mission field....However, the members...are sincerely advised and admonished to conscientiousness and consistency in the use of photographs."⁹ Slides and moving pictures became an issue at the 1941 conference. Here the General Conference Executive Board recommended that pictures taken by missionaries not be shown in Brethren in Christ churches or those of any denomination.¹⁰

Music

During June, October and November of 1932, the Abilene church board considered whether it would recommend a musical instrument. No instrument was permitted until 1937, when permission was given to use a pump organ in the basement for the weekly Bible School held each Saturday during the school year. In 1942 a piano was donated, and in 1943 the church board, with the consent of the congregation, authorized its use for weddings, funerals and other services as thought advisable. In 1954, when Paul Snyder was pastor, an organ was purchased.

Nonresistance

When United States entered the First World War in May 1917, the Kansas churches had already decided at their April council that "Since the nonresistance principles are clearly stated in the [denominational] constitution, the interpretation and application be a matter for individual conscience."¹¹

When United States entered the Second World War in December 1941, an alternate service work program, Civilian Public

Service, was available for conscientious objectors. Civilian Public Service men served without pay in places such as conservation camps, mental hospitals, health projects, and "guinea pig" experiments in medical research. While some Kansas men chose this option when drafted, others did not and accepted noncombatant service, or entered military service.

The Abilene Church had an honor roll which listed seven men and two registered nurses who served in the First World War and twenty-four men who served in the Second World War.¹²

In order to enforce the doctrine of nonresistance, the denomination took a firm but radical stand at the General Conference of 1942 by declaring that anyone who accepted military service would automatically be out of fellowship with the Brethren in Christ and thus forfeit his membership. He could be reinstated only by acknowledging his error.

The Kansas State Council in 1943 observed that often the draft-age men had not been fully informed about provisions for conscientious objectors and should receive competent counsel and assistance by the bishops.¹³ One young man was severely tested for his stand as a conscientious objector. Rosanlee Holt, a church member whose family was living in Morris County, registered there in 1948 at the age of eighteen. The draft board there had declared they would never give anyone a C.O. (4-E) classification. Although first classified as 4-E, he was changed to 1-A and was told in 1952 to report for induction. After refusing to take the oath, he was permitted to leave, knowing full well he would be arrested and jailed. His father-in-law, John Longenecker, and Samuel R. Minter, both of Zion, put up \$40,000 bail for his release.

In a trial in federal court at Wichita, the judge ordered Holt be given a 4-E classification. But the draft board ruled he would have to leave the United States to perform his alternate service. Therefore, he and his wife, the former Twila Longenecker from Zion, served two years under the Mennonite Central Committee,

working at the clothing center in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, and managing the 160-acre Boys' Farm.¹⁴

Education

When the denomination established Messiah Bible School and Missionary Training Home in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, in 1909, members of the Midwest churches were unhappy with the location. J.R. Zook of Des Moines, Iowa, was foremost in the opposition, although Jacob Engle of Kansas was a member of the Incorporating Board.¹⁵ From 1915 through 1926, petitions were brought to General Conference asking for a school in the Midwest, Kansas being the favored location.

Even after Beulah College and Bible Training School was opened in 1922 in California, the Midwest churches continued to work for a school of their own. General Conference sought to resolve the issue by creating a Student Travelling Fund to subsidize mileage for Midwest students.¹⁶

A special council was held in Abilene, Kansas, on November 3, 1921, with representatives from Oklahoma, Illinois, Indiana, and Iowa, as well as Kansas. Their purpose was to discuss prospects for a school in the Midwest. The next General Conference granted permission for them to raise \$25,000 in cash and pledges, plus \$50,000 in endowment pledges.¹⁷ By 1923, \$83,000 had been pledged, and in 1924 the Kansas Joint Council considered launching the school. Although the motion to do so passed, the vote of 25 to 21 signaled a serious division and the project was abandoned.¹⁸ Money was returned to donors, and in 1927 General Conference tabled plans for a Midwest school.¹⁹

In the years that followed, Kansas contributed to the support of the church schools, financially, by sending their young people as students, and, to a remarkable extent, by supplying faculty personnel. (Many of the teacher's names are listed in Appendix IV.)

Bible Conference

The annual Bible Conference began in 1914, when a full week of day and evening meetings was planned with both local and out-of-state speakers for December 12-20 at Abilene. The annual meetings, devoted to Bible studies in the daytime, with audience participation and evangelistic meetings in the evenings, continued until the midcentury. The dates were changed, however, from December to Thanksgiving Day and weekend.

Holiness Again

In October of 1927 Henry W. Landis of Iowa held meetings in all the Dickinson County churches but Zion. Then, feeling he had been away from home long enough, he returned to Iowa. He recommended that one night a week be given to prayer only. Harry Crider from Bethel was asked to hold the meetings at Zion. After the Zion meetings, the first Tuesday night prayer meeting was announced to meet in the home of Abe Brandt. These meetings continued for a number of years. The regular prayer meeting met at the Bethel church on Thursday nights.

It was not long until there was contention. The "Tuesday nighters" felt they had a holiness not experienced by the others nor by the bishop and some of the ministers. The others felt the Tuesday nighters were causing the trouble.²⁰

In 1933 a young Wesleyan Methodist minister, Rev. William Hotchkiss from Concordia, and Rev. Varney Martin from Clay Center came to Abilene to hold a series of evangelistic meetings. They began in February 1934 in a downtown store building at 103 N.W. Third Street and continued nightly for six weeks. At the end of that time, Hotchkiss was asked to stay to shepherd the Abilene flock. A number of Brethren in Christ families attended, with families from Zion, Bethel, and Abilene joining the church when it organized as a Wesleyan Methodist church on April 1, 1934, with thirty charter members. In 1968 the church merged

with the Pilgrim Holiness Church, changing its name to Wesleyan Church.²¹

Sunday Schools

About 1930 Abilene presented the Robert Raikes Diploma plan to encourage perfect attendance. A diploma was given at the end of the first year, and seals thereafter. If a Sunday was missed the pupil had to start all over and earn another diploma before going on to earn seals. Perfect attendance meant perfect attendance. No allowance was made for sickness or for visiting another Sunday school when on vacation. In later years these rules were changed to say that two or three "visiting Sundays" during the year would be allowed. But no absences because of sickness could be counted, although illness did not confine itself to week days. (The author has at least three diplomas with one or more seals because childhood illnesses necessitated absences and a completely new start.²² An Abilene member, David S. Wenger, father of the author, established what is believed to be a denominational record, recording thirty-eight years of perfect attendance, 1931-1969).²³

In 1949 the Kansas Sunday schools took part in the *Forward Enlargement Campaign* sponsored by the denomination. Some were still engaged in this program as late as 1971.

Youth

Separate meeting were held by and for the youth in Abilene on Sunday evenings, beginning in 1913. They were called Christian Endeavor. Belle Springs considered such meetings in 1916.²⁴ Brown County as early as 1894 had discussed whether the young people could hold their meetings in the church.²⁵

The first recorded Youth Conference was held by the Kansas churches in 1927 for a three-day period near Manhattan. Eighty-

five young people were present.²⁶ Later a camp for teens was held at Camp Washunga and other camp sites.

Young people had long been challenged with the idea of giving their lives in serving humanity. In addition to those who trained as teachers, many of the young women had become nurses. By 1950 and into that decade several young men had become or were training to become doctors:

Jesse Heise and Alvin Heise (deceased, March 1991), both from the Pleasant Hill Church, Brown County.

Dale Eshelman (deceased, April 1985) and Orville Eshelman, both from the Rosebank Church, Dickinson County.

Leroy Steinbrecher attended both the Hebron Church in Clay County and the Rosebank Church in Dickinson County as a youth.

Edward Long from the Abilene Church, Dickinson County.

David E. Byer from the Pleasant Hill Church in Brown County.

The "Dirty Thirties"

The thirties were sometimes referred to as the "dirty thirties," not only because of the numerous dust storms but because so many bad things seemed to happen.

Tornados were frequent. One of the worst struck in the early spring of 1930. On the Lloyd Knisely farm, which was being rented by Irvin Hoover, all the farm buildings and the house were leveled. Hoover and his five small daughters survived, having fled to a cyclone shelter underground. Hoover's first wife had died a few years earlier in a cook-stove fire. He was planning to be married on May 22, 1930, to Carrie Deemy of Iowa. The wedding clothes which had been prepared for Hoover and his children were destroyed. But the wedding took place, and the new bride and family lived for some time in a newly built chicken house.²⁷

The dust storms came from Oklahoma just before harvest and the wheat and red dust drifted into hedges like snowbanks. It sifted into houses, causing the housewives dismay as it got under rugs and into everything. One such storm arrived in 1933 just as school was about to begin for the day. The sky became so dark that the street lights came on and the children were hurriedly sent home.²⁸

In 1936, just when the corn was about two feet high, grasshoppers came from the north, descended and left only stubs.

After the dry years of the thirties, there was too much rain in 1942, and it was too wet to plant wheat. One farmer said he did not get his silo filled until Christmas time. There were also numerous floods locally.²⁹

The thirties also brought the Great Depression, which had begun in 1929. Times were bad. Some people lost their homes and their farms. Some sold out and moved away. Brethren in Christ families were affected as much as anyone else. And to add to all the grief, an event that shook the church and the community as well was the suicide of an elderly, wealthy, and influential deacon in the same decade.

Chapter 14

Demise of Three Churches

The period 1910 to 1950 saw the closing of three of the Kansas churches. The first to discontinue services was the Fairview Church near Sedgwick, in Harvey County.

Little has been found concerning this church. J.M. Eshelman was the Sunday school superintendent, and Jacob Eshelman was the minister. John Hoover, who lived near Peabody, also ministered many years.¹ Services were conducted both morning and evening on Sundays. Love feasts were regularly celebrated, with members from other counties attending. Some of the family names of attendees were Good, Lutz, and Shirk; and Joseph, Jacob, Isaac, and Amos Eshelman.²

Jacob Eshelman was well known throughout the denomination as "Prophet Eshelman." He prepared charts and gave lectures on prophecy, especially concerning the "last days."

In 1913 the Sunday school had an average attendance of thirty.³ In 1914, the last year a Sunday school record was kept, twenty-three were reported attending, but no officers, teachers, or total enrollment were given.⁴

In 1917, the building, land and chairs were sold for a total of \$275. Twenty-five dollars of the amount was returned to the former owner of the land. The rest was given to the treasurer of the General Executive Board.⁵

The second church to disband was the Newbern Church, about nine miles south of Abilene in Dickinson County. It was said that this church had the largest Sunday school attendance of any in the

county from 1910 to 1916 and that fifty to seventy-five teenagers and youth attended Sunday evening services.⁶

As many as seven ministers were on the bench at one time, with the "amen benches" full and the church filled to overflowing. Carriages and buggies could be seen going to and from the church in all directions on Sunday mornings and evenings. But a few years later attendance began to fall. Although George Lenhert did keep the services going for awhile, the last regular services were held in 1922. The decline in attendance was attributed to some people moving, the need for a pastor, and the popularity of the automobile, which took people from rural to town churches.

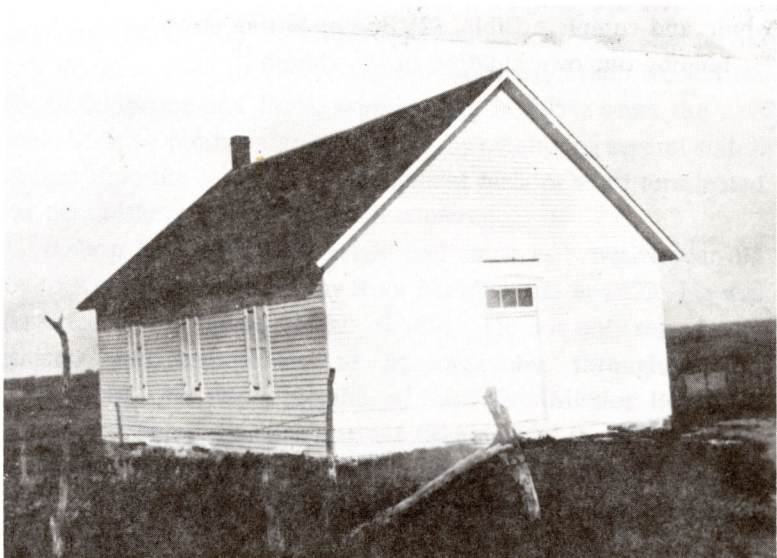
The Newbern church was vacant for about eighteen years.⁷ In 1937, a special council voted to sell the church to the Plymouth Brethren for \$500. Rosebank and Belle Springs each received half the amount to use for remodeling or repair on their buildings.⁸ The commissioners of Dickinson County declared the cemetery a district cemetery, supported by county levy, so the quitclaim deed was presented to the custodian.⁹

We do not know how long the Plymouth Brethren used the church or how long it remained empty. B.F. Jury affiliated with the Plymouth Brethren and was worshipping with them at least as late as 1938.¹⁰ Finally, it was sold at public auction on April 10, 1965, to Felix Bollinger and son Ronald Bollinger, who had the building torn down. Proceeds were given for the care of the cemetery. Thus one of the last pioneer churches of the county had become only a memory.¹¹

The third church to be a victim of the times was the Clay County church named Hebron. Reports of revival meetings, love feasts, and harvest meetings at Hebron were printed in the *Evangelical Visitor* with some regularity over the years. The largest Sunday school attendance was forty in 1921. Jacob Heer taught a Sunday school class in German until about 1930.¹² The congregation was never large; in 1935 there were only twenty members. Records show thirty-four enrolled in Sunday school, with average attendance of twenty-four.¹³



In Clay County, Jacob Heer and wife, Elizabeth, were photographed eating ice cream on their fiftieth wedding anniversary (1921), unknown to Heer, who was opposed to having his picture taken.



The Hebron Church in Clay County, 1886-1941

At their annual meeting, March 15, 1941, with Bishop M.G. Engle present, a decision was made that services discontinue.¹⁴ The building was sold for \$262.10. The money was given to the Beneficiary Board because that board had given liberal aid to one of their members. Seven members asked to have their membership transferred to the North Dickinson District.¹⁵

During the later years of the church, four Heer brothers--Philip, Chris, John and Jake--sang as a quartet, providing music for worship services and elsewhere in the community.¹⁶ Elias Smith, the early pastor who lived into his nineties, always drove a horse and buggy. He never owned a car, so in later years the members would go to his home in Clay Center and drive him to the church.¹⁷

The Kansas church was aware of declining attendance and membership. To address the issue, Elder C.A. Frey preached the State Council sermon in 1946, "What can the Kansas church do to hold its identity as a body despite the fact the body is getting smaller?" He suggested three things: (1) By standing for the whole and complete Bible; (2) By not letting down the bars; (3) By holding our own children in the church.¹⁸

Chapter 15

Church Leaders

Leadership of the churches was under capable direction of good bishops who could hardly be held responsible for what happened to the above congregations.

In 1906, two years after the death of Samuel Zook, M.G. Engle, was elected bishop for North Dickinson, and served until 1944. Monroe Book was chosen in 1946.

Jacob Engle had been elected bishop for South Dickinson in 1898 after his father Jesse Engle went to Africa. He served that area until 1932. Ray I. Witter was then elected. He also served both districts 1944 to 1946. Since bishops were then elected for life, both Witter and Book were serving in 1957, when the new administrative polity enlarged districts by combining several states. At that time the terms of all incumbent bishops were terminated and new bishops named for each conference.

Bishop M.G. (Millard) Engle had come as a twelve-year-old boy to Kansas with the colony from Pennsylvania in 1879. He was converted in the "great revival" of 1891. He not only served as a minister and bishop but as an evangelist throughout the brotherhood. He was a member of the Home Mission Board for thirty years, being the chairman for twenty-six of those years. His was one of the best known personalities in the church. He was faithful to the church, loyal to biblical principles, and a preacher of holiness.

Anyone who ever met Bishop M.G. Engle was impressed by his stature, his thick beard and bushy eyebrows, and his brief

sentences, uttered straightforwardly in a sometimes abrupt and brusque manner. Beneath all this, however, was a kind heart.¹

Bishop Engle's second wife, Anna Kraybill from Oklahoma, had been ordained there and sometimes took his place in the pulpit.²

R.I. (Ray) Witter was a pastor at Rosebank for thirty-one years and served twenty-six years as bishop of South Dickinson. He was also overseer for Iowa, South Dakota District, and Brown County. He held revival meetings in nearly all the churches of the brotherhood and was a noted camp meeting preacher. He helped organize the Midwest Regional Camp Meeting in 1949. He was twice moderator of Conference and served for thirty years on the Foreign Mission Board.³

Bishop Witter and his wife, Ruth Book, were deeply committed to the church as were their children. He was often gone for as long as six weeks at a time in evangelistic meetings, which were usually in the winter. The big question every year was, "Will he be home for Christmas?" He was not present when any of his three children took their first steps. But every other year he took the family to General Conference to provide them with a vacation and a chance to travel, which he felt an essential part of education.

When he pastored at Rosebank he was often asked to give the Memorial Day address at the Ramona Cemetery. This may seem a bit ironical for a minister who opposed war and helped young men get a C.O. classification.

He was always faithful to his convictions. He never voted--not even when his first cousin Dwight D. Eisenhower was elected president. He wore a plain coat most of his life and did not approve of the practice of some ministers preaching without a coat in the summertime. He felt the dignity of the office.⁴

M.M. (Monroe) Book was a graduate of McPherson College and taught high school at Ramona before moving to North Dickinson. He pastored at both Zion and Bethel and was bishop

of North Dickinson for ten years. He was also overseer of the churches in Oklahoma.⁵

Bishop Book was a man of few words but his words when spoken were of worth. He set a good example for his family and community. He attended services regularly, lived frugally, and could enjoy a good laugh. When snow prohibited driving the car to church, he would take his family in a wagon drawn by a team of horses.⁶

In contrast with their counterparts of earlier years, church leaders were increasingly, not only supported financially, but educated for leadership, more and more of them being seminary trained. The development of prepared leaders was a change concomitant with the general trend among church membership toward professional service occupations which took them from the rural areas which had largely nourished the life of the church from its beginnings.

Part III

1950-1990

Chapter 16

Meeting Changing Needs

The Kansas churches moved into the second half of this century well-rehearsed for the additional changes they would need to make to serve their generation, changes that can be seen in various categories.

Camp Meetings

Tent meetings were eventually replaced by camp meetings, which were first held in the unoccupied Belle Springs church. For several years, beginning in 1959 a camp meeting was held at the United Brethren camp on N.E. Fourteenth Street. In 1962 Kansas church members started going to King Solomon Camp, east of Abilene. In 1969 they celebrated the twentieth anniversary of Kansas Brethren in Christ camp meetings. In 1974 it was decided to combine regional conference with camp meeting, the first of which was in the Abilene church, July 21-24, 1975.

Youth

Youth camp was held at Camp Washunga and other places before going to King Solomon Camp during the years 1959 to 1979. The next year they went to Colorado, then to various other places for a few more years.

In 1984 fourteen youth and two sponsors from the Midwest Conference went to a National Youth Conference at French Lick,

Indiana. In the summer of 1988, some youth spent two and a half weeks in evangelism in Mexico. Nine teens helped at Timber Bay Children's Home in Saskatchewan in 1989.

Some youth have taken part in the denominational Bible quizzing program.

Areas of Adult Service

After the General Conference of 1961 made the decision to have Men's Fellowship, the Abilene Church was the first from the Midwest Conference to organize, with an average attendance of twenty-five.¹ The Men's Fellowship financed such projects as supplying the Zambia Broadcasting Corporation with equipment to send the gospel message. They also gave an air conditioner, sterilizer and generator for the Madhipura hospital operating room in India.²

Women and men participated in the Peace, Relief and Service projects. Many helped with the meat canning, when thousands of cans of beef, lard and broth were processed and donated for relief during the sixties.

Jared Hoover worked with PAX in Greece under the Mennonite Central Committee, 1959-1961.

Numerous men joined the teams of the Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS). In 1965, Everett Byer and Samuel Minter helped in building homes and a community building after the earthquake disaster in Anchorage, Alaska.

Kansas Brethren helped clean up after tornados in Kansas, Alabama, Mississippi, and Texas and helped with housing for poor blacks in St. Louis and Wichita. They also helped in flood cleanups in Kansas and South Dakota.

In 1981 the Kansas Mennonite Disaster Service gave special recognition to Carl Decker, who had helped pioneer the work and served for twenty-five years on the Board of Directors.

The men helped in many other Brethren in Christ Church needs, such as remodeling the Palm Valley parsonage at Pharr,

Texas, and concreting the parking lot for the Oklahoma City Church, both in 1989.

A number of Kansas men belonged to the Gideons, an organization which places Bibles in hotels and motels.³

Weather and Crops

The year 1977 was a bad one for wheat, Dickinson County's number-one cash crop. That year the county ranked 104th out of the 105 counties in Kansas! Then in 1979 a hailstorm destroyed the crop.

After two and a half years of drought, the 1989 crop was the worst ever. One Brethren in Christ farmer reported planting 500 acres and harvesting only 500 bushels, an average of one bushel per acre. Another reported harvesting not enough to get even his seed back. The average for the county was 4.5 bushels per acre for all acres planted. Of 170,000 acres only 71,000 were harvestable, for an average of 10.7 bushels. Provisions of the 1985 Farm Bill made it possible for farmers to survive, along with the fact that cattle and hog prices were good.⁴

Bishop Glenn Ginder, in the 1989 Midwest Conference report, stated that giving had declined 9.8%, which "reflects some of the economic struggle so keenly felt by the midwest farmer." However, "Even with reduced offerings the giving to our Cooperative Ministries has increased by an outstanding 30.8%"

On the brighter side, 1990 brought a record crop. One Brethren in Christ farmer got forty-eight bushels per acre, another fifty.⁵ Two other farmers got forty bushels.

To compensate for bad years in crop production, Kansas has turned to agribusiness, which includes dairy production, meat packing, alfalfa dehydrating and turkey processing. There is very little industrial work.

Tourism has become one of the main sources of income. Abilene is well known because of the Eisenhower home, museum, library and chapel (where the former president and his wife lie

buried). In addition is a reconstructed "Old Abilene" town and the Greyhound Hall of Fame, a dog museum.

Chapter 17

Three More Churches Disband

Since 1950 three more Kansas churches have been closed. The first of these was the Belle Springs Church in South Dickinson. This church had an outstanding beginning in the early 1990s, with revivals and church accessions. The church was known for its large crowds at love feast time. That service, on June 11, 12, 1892, drew a crowd estimated at from twelve to fifteen hundred attending the Sunday morning service, 325 having participated in the communion service the previous evening.¹

The Belle Springs church contained three rooms, a full basement, used primarily for love feast meals, and a full attic designed as sleeping quarters for guests who had come distances for church services.²

In 1902 they entertained General Conference and did so again in 1924. After Rosebank and Newbern in 1891 and 1892, respectively, were organized, services were held on alternate weeks in each church to give members an opportunity to visit and worship together and to maintain unity. Later, services were held each Sunday in each church. Regular services were held at Belle Springs until 1946.

After 1946 the Belle Springs building was used for conventions, youth groups, and camp meetings until 1955. On September 14, 1957, the church building was auctioned for \$1,020, its contents for \$457.30. The building was bought by Robert Moyer of Chapman, who tore it down to use the lumber to construct a house.³



Benjamin M. Gish and wife late in life, perhaps a few months before their deaths in 1907 (with unidentified third person)

A few years later, when Bishop Charlie Byers was the evangelist at a King Solomon Camp Meeting, he noticed an unusual interlocking beam in the ceiling of the auditorium. Upon inquiry, he was told that it came from the Belle Springs church.

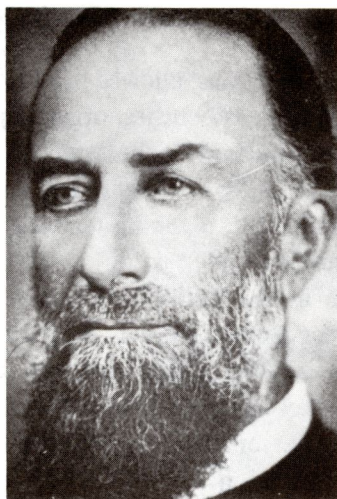
The money from the sale of the church was given to the Foreign Mission Board to be used "for a memorial in southern Africa in respect of the first missionaries: Bishop Jesse Engle and wife, who left from said place to begin mission work in Africa, accompanied by Sisters Frances Davidson, Alice Heise and Barbara Hershey. Furthermore the Foreign Mission Board to be responsible for sponsoring said project."⁴ The cemetery at the Belle Springs Church was placed under the jurisdiction of Logan Township.

The next church to join the deceased was the Bethel Church in North Dickinson. As with some other churches, Bethel began the century with some polarization caused by the holiness movement, and some people were leaving. Others moved from the area. The church held its own pretty well, however. The General Conferences of 1917 and 1936 were held at Bethel. Many non-Brethren in Christ are buried in that cemetery. John Sheets, a well-liked Brethren in Christ minister, was often called to officiate at funerals of community members.⁵

As noted earlier, there was some criticism of one of the pastors, Elder William Page, who raised prize-winning purebred shorthorn cattle and exhibited them at different livestock fairs.⁶

In December of 1942 the church barn, which had provided shelter and feed storage for horses, was sold for \$128.50, and the money was put in a separate account for future church improvements.⁷ Some remodeling was done in 1947, when the entrance was changed from the east side to the south side. They also put in a balcony and classrooms.⁸

On October 31, 1968, in a special meeting, the Bethel Church voted to merge with the Abilene congregation. Several families, however, chose to join the Zion congregation. The last service was held on the following Sunday.⁹



**Bishop Jacob N. Engle, South
Dickinson, 1898-1931**



**Messiah Bible School students from Kansas, in 1919, visit the
Pennsylvania Capitol while waiting for the train to Grantham (from
left): Anna Wingerd (Heise), Simon Bohen, Mary Book (Long), Ethel
Haynes (Wenger), Edna Harmon, and Elizabeth Zook.**

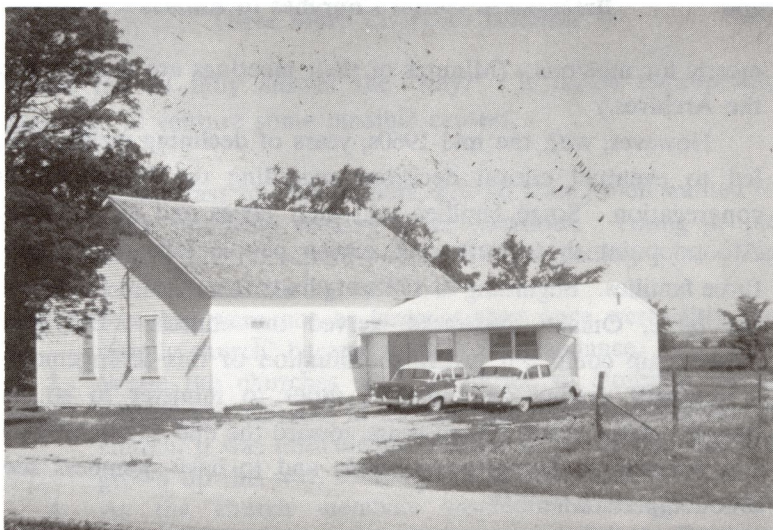
The Abilene Church was allowed to take whatever articles could be used there, such as benches, organ, and love feast dishes. The rest were sold at auction at the same time as the church in July 1970 for \$1,738.17.¹⁰ The church was bought by R.E. Thomas, who dismantled it, planning to build an airplane hangar with the church trestles.

A fund known as the Phillippi Memorial Fund, created on the cessation of the Bethel Church program, was held by the Midwest Conference Board of Directors to establish some memorial at the Bethel church site regardless of the disposition of the building. The parsonage was returned to the donor, Mrs. Annie (Mrs. Avery T.) Hoover.¹¹ Trustees for the cemetery are still appointed by the Board of Directors of the Midwest Regional Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church.

The church building was torn down, leaving the foundation, steps, and south entrance door. A small one-room building was erected, using a portion of the foundation wall and the space under the steps. It was intended to house the pulpit and other articles. At the present time, because the roof of the little room leaks, the pulpit has been moved to a barn to keep it dry. No memorial plaque has yet been mounted at the time of this writing.

Pleasant Hill in Brown County was the last church to close its doors. While the end of the 1800s found people moving and divided on the holiness issue, the new century was begun with optimism. In 1902 Bishop Zook held a successful revival, and seven persons were baptized in the creek south of Hamlin and joined the church. In 1905 fourteen families were present for a church service.¹²

About 1947, when Pleasant Hill appeared to be a growing congregation, they purchased new oak pews. A new roof was added, ceiling tile and light fixtures were installed, and the inside walls replastered. In 1959 a 30-by-30-foot addition made the church into a L-shaped building. This provided four classrooms and a vestibule. There were now eight families attending.¹³ A faithful group of eight or ten women met every month for sewing,



The Pleasant Hill Church, Brown County, as it appeared 1959-1980



Pleasant Hill pastor (1918-1960) Jacob Charles with his wife, Ella, and daughter, Dorothy

mostly for missions. (Minutes of their meetings are preserved in the Archives.)

However, with the mid-1960s, years of declining membership led to eventual critical decisions regarding the future of the congregation. Some families sold their farms and moved away. At one point there were only eleven people left, representing three families. Beginning in 1965, students from Grace College of the bible, Omaha, Nebraska, served the church. But good stewardship could not justify continuation of this arrangement--a student's driving one hundred miles to minister to so few people. After nearly fifteen years, toward the end of the 1970s, it was decided to discontinue services and to have members seek fellowship elsewhere.¹⁴

Members were given their choice of the folding chairs, books and songbooks. The Wichita Brethren in Christ Church got the piano, and the Harper, Kansas, Missionary Church bought the pews.¹⁵ The building was sold June 1, 1980, to a Sabetha builder, who dismantled it piece by piece. A quitclaim deed was recorded on the three-fourths acre of land to the owner of the adjoining land, Austin Heise. The three-fourths-acre cemetery tract was transferred to Hamlin Township Cemetery Association.¹⁶ Money received from sale of the church was \$2,000, pews \$900, and chairs \$50. Substantial sums of money from the treasury were dispersed to Brethren in Christ Missions, Board of Benevolence, Board of Extension, Life Line Mission, Navajo Mission and to Mary Olive Lady.¹⁷

About nine members who still live in Brown County attend various churches but get together to share news of Conferences and other events, and, as always, contribute generously to the work and missions of the Brethren in Christ. On October 6, 1991, a gray granite memorial, 92 inches by 36 inches, and four inches thick, will be dedicated, inscribed with information on the history of the Pleasant Hill Church.¹⁸

It would be impossible to attribute any one reason for the demise of any individual church. Even a combination of reasons

would fail to fully answer the "why?" It seems appropriate, however, to venture some possible causes:

1. In contrast to their fathers, not all young men wanted to farm, but were seeking other vocations. Young people were going to school and to college, getting jobs, being married and moving away.
2. Families were not as large as they once were; thus the "family church" became smaller in attendance.
3. While the churches were composed of closeknit family groups who adhered to the traditions and doctrines of the church, it was difficult for "outsiders," those who had not grown up this way, to accept these standards.
4. As the church members worked and mingled with Christians of other denominations, some left the Brethren to join them. Some no longer wished to follow the church's prescribed pattern of dress and thus left by choice or were asked to leave.
5. Cars and improved roads shortened distances, and some people left the rural churches for town places of worship.
6. All of the Brethren in Christ churches, even those still existing, felt the loss of people moving throughout the years. Oklahoma, Missouri, Arizona, Idaho and California claimed quite a number. During the depression years people moved to California to get jobs. Others moved there so their children could attend the church school in Upland.
7. Weather conditions caused a few farmers to go bankrupt or to become discouraged and move away.

The buildings of six Kansas churches no longer exist, but the spiritual work that was done in them will remain forever. The Word of God was faithfully taught, people were brought into the kingdom, and many went to foreign lands to tell the Good News. Many are still living today who were greatly influenced by members of these churches and retain many precious memories.

Chapter 18

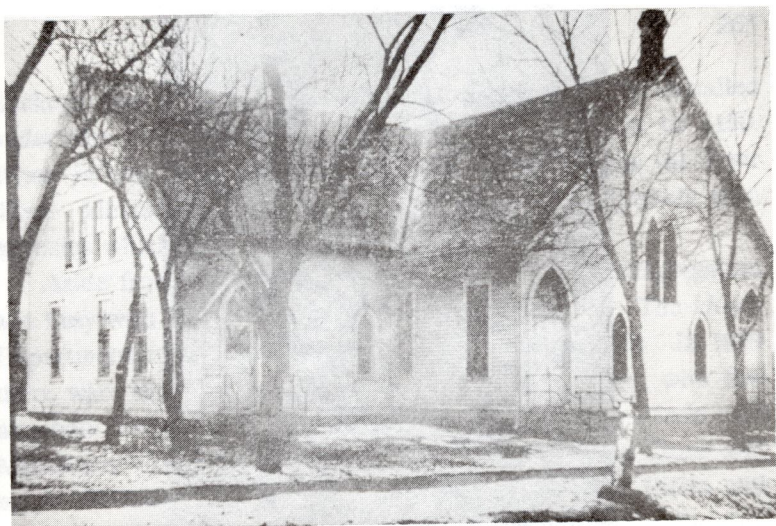
Surviving Churches

Three of the original nine churches in Kansas have survived. They will be discussed here in the order in which they were built.

Abilene

The church of 1893, constructed after the first one was destroyed by fire from lightning, embodied a number of advanced ideas, some of which were criticized, but nevertheless allowed to remain unchanged. The first furnace was installed in 1905. Other improvements continued to be made with an appeal to town people. When it was known that the General Conference of the denomination would be held in the Abilene church in 1909, the trustees urged the building of an addition which was already needed and planned by the growing congregation. Thus in the winter of 1908 and spring of 1909 the building was extended twenty feet north and thirty-two feet west.¹ This provided two large rooms plus a balcony. Restrooms with sanitary plumbing were installed. All this cost \$2,300.²

Most remarkable of all, stained-glass windows paid for by personal donors were installed in the already controversial arched windows as well as the others.³ Although they depicted no biblical scenes, they were very attractive and provided a functional purpose as well. They made unnecessary the use of drapes to keep out bright light. They also provided the privacy needed because the church was located on the corner of two busy streets,



The Abilene Church, with north addition built in 1908



The Abilene Church, Seventh and Buckeye, 1893-1970 (Photo by Jeffcoat Studio, Abilene)



**Bishop Ray I. Witter with his wife, Ruth
(Book), South Dickinson, 1931-1957**



**Former pastors of the Abilene Church, front: Effie and George Whisler,
Faithe Musser; back: Esther and Paul Snyder, David W. Musser
(pastor when photo was taken)**

Buckeye and Seventh. In 1913 the first baptistry was installed under the platform in the main sanctuary, at a cost of \$150. When in use the pulpit was removed and a door in the floor lifted. Heated water made the experience more enjoyable than baptisms which took place in cold streams.

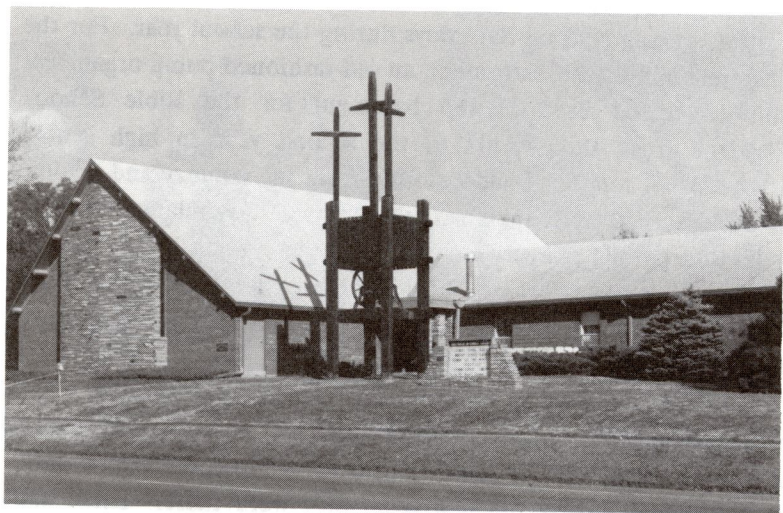
Aside from making building improvements, the congregation was busy with spiritual activities, and serving others. The Home Department of the Sunday school was started in 1900. In 1909 there were eighty members in the Home Department, with five members responsible for visitation.⁴ The Sewing Circle and Missionary Circle both began in 1911. The Sewing Circle still meets monthly, and the Women's Missionary Prayer Circle still meets as a Missions Prayer Fellowship for everyone on the first Sunday night of the month. The highest church membership was 125 in 1910.⁵

In 1933 the basement, which up to this time had been only a furnace room, was excavated. Now extra classrooms and a large meeting room were available as well as a small kitchen. In 1937 a weekly Bible School was started by Pastor Joel Carlson and wife Faithe. It was held on Saturdays during the school year. For the first time, a musical instrument, an old-fashioned pump organ, was allowed to be used in the basement for the Bible School. Children from three years to the second year in high school attended. A number of these came from the country and studied at Bible School while their parents shopped. Attendance averaged 120 children and twelve teachers. One year, when it was hard to get teachers, Mrs. Carlson claimed the promise from Isaiah 30:20, "Thine eyes shall see thy teachers" (KJV). And sure enough, teachers were supplied.⁶

Another means of outreach in the community was Child Evangelism, with classes once a week in homes after school. Emma Wenger, wife of pastor David H. Wenger, conducted these in her home during the five years they were there. Ethel and David S. Wenger (not related to the pastor) opened their home for classes for twenty-five continuous years. Ilona Hensel, wife of



Bishop Samuel Zook, North Dickinson, 1880-1904



The Abilene Church at present location, since 1970, Eleventh and Buckeye

pastor Glenn Hensel, taught during some of these years, and other Christian women in the community helped. There were often twenty or more children packed into the room.⁷ Mrs. Hensel also taught classes in the home of Virgil and Carol Wenger. Iva Bebermeyer, who lived in Talmage and later moved to Abilene, was active in Child Evangelism at both places.

During Pastor Hensel's term of service, an aged couple, John and Bertha Kugler, heard him give a funeral sermon. Dissatisfied with their own mainline church, they began to attend the Abilene Brethren in Christ Church. At ages eighty-five and eighty-two they were baptized by immersion in April 1970. The invalid wife was lowered into the baptism on her chair. They remained faithful until death.⁸

Pastor Hensel tells of being surprised that at that late date the members and community people still referred to the Brethren in Christ as "River Brethren." Perhaps in no other place had that name stuck so long as the historical alternative for "Brethren in Christ."⁹

In 1969 the congregation petitioned the Midwest Conference for permission to sell the property at 701 North Buckeye and to reinvest the proceeds in a lot and building at 11th and Buckeye streets.¹⁰ The old church was sold to Rev. Vernon Burgraff of the Miracle Tabernacle for about \$10,000. It was later sold to realtor R.W. Cook, who made it into a five-apartment complex.¹¹

Construction was begun promptly at the new location. The new church, an attractive red-brick, one-story building with basement, contained 11,000 square feet of floor space and cost \$100,000. It was dedicated April 5, 1970, with Bishop Alvin Burkholder preaching the sermon.

The Awana Club, started during Henry Landis's pastorate, was effective for more than ten years. This program, somewhat similar to scouting but with a Christian emphasis, was for children from kindergarten to grade eight and included recreation, devotions, and Scripture memorization. They met every Wednesday evening, with an attendance of seventy-five to eighty.



The Rosebank Church as it appeared 1914 to 1966



The Belle Springs Church, sold in 1957 (see Chapter 17)

By this time the church had purchased a forty-passenger bus and a sixteen-passenger van, both of which were driven seven miles to Enterprise each week to gather children for the club in Abilene. The bus was also used to take them to the Awana Olympics with out-of-town churches once a year and to take youth to youth camp as far away as Colorado. It was used for a while to bring children to Sunday school.

Community Night has been observed for some years on the third Sunday of the month, when community folks are invited to a special program such as the showing of a film, to hear a missionary or a musical. Refreshments and a social hour follow.

When the month has a fifth Sunday, Abilene, Zion and Rosebank enjoy a program planned by the host church. A weekly program, HIS (He is Savior), is well received by fifty youth. The 1991 Summer Vacation Bible School had an average of seventy children.

"Family of the Month" has been a big success as a time when an older family and a younger family are honored each month. During the month special attention is given to these two families, and at the end of the month a church dinner is given for all to enjoy in their honor.

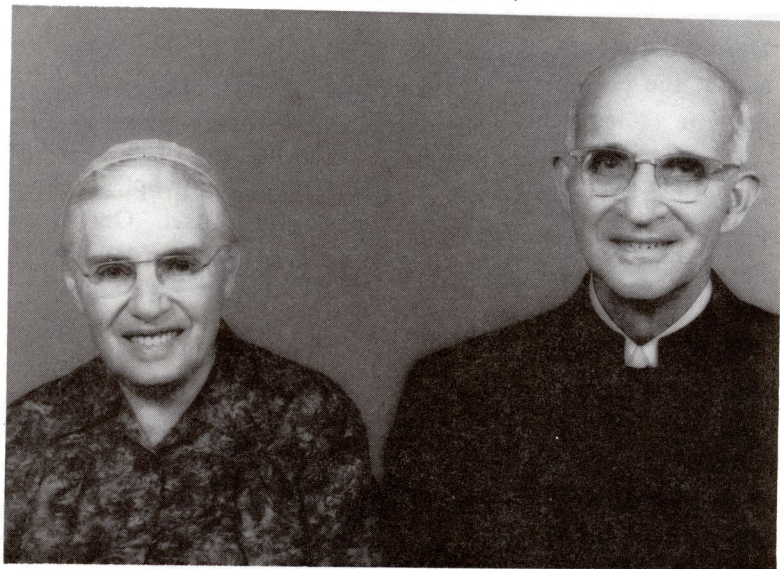
The Abilene congregation has always had some young families, but it has essentially been a church for older people. This is primarily due to retired farmers moving into town. One former pastor said he remembers his years there as a time of "sending the saints to glory."¹²

One hindrance to membership has been the multiplicity of churches in the area. Abilene, according to the latest census, 1990, has a population of 6,600. There are twenty-three Protestant churches and one Catholic. This would mean that on any given Sunday, the entire population could be housed in local churches should they all decide to go on the same day.

The Abilene Church was a denominational leader in providing pastoral support. Partial support was provided as early as 1915,¹³ and full support was provided beginning in 1920.¹⁴ The church



Jesse C. Hoover observed his 101st birthday June 11, 1991, as the oldest member of the Kansas churches. (Photo, 1990)



Former Zion Church pastor C. A. Frey and wife, Ella (Bert) Frey, on their fiftieth wedding anniversary in 1967

purchased their first parsonage in 1951 at 204 N.E. Seventh Street, just a block from the church.¹⁵

Looking to the future, the church council recently voted to purchase land east of the alley for parking space if it can be bought for their price. Church membership at Abilene, in 1990, was 101.¹⁶

Zion

For some time the Zion and Bethel churches had services on alternate Sundays, with Sunday school in the afternoon. Later, each had a complete service schedule, but they shared love feasts, at Bethel in the spring and Zion in the fall.

Zion has always been a missionary church, from the days when Noah Zook was sent out as a travelling missionary. Ollie Lady and Emma Minter felt a missionary call to visit regularly in the homes of the community.¹⁷ The Sewing Circle was started in 1915, first meeting in homes and later in the basement of the church. It was called the Dorcas Aid and did sewing and quilting for the denominational Sewing Auxiliary, making hospital gowns for African missions and other projects.

After a number of years with an enrollment of 140 and with thirty or forty children between three and fourteen years of age, it was evident that they needed more room. Thus on March 3, 1948, they began tearing down the old building. Because the highway had been widened, they decided to locate the new building a little west and north of the old site. Much of the work was done by the members. On the day the new foundation was put in, thirty men helped and were served dinner at the Earl Engle home. Much of the lumber from the old church found a place in the new, brick-veneered building.

The cornerstone was laid by Bishop Monroe Book on September 21, 1948. The first service was a love feast, February 6, 1949, with dedication in the afternoon. The sermon was preached by Bishop E.J. Swalm of Canada, and the dedicatory



The Zion Church, built in 1949, as it now appears



The Rosebank Church as photographed in 1991



Bishop Millard G. Engle with his wife, Anna (Kraybill), North Dickinson, 1906-1944



Bishop Monroe M. Book with his wife, Lizzie (Crider), North Dickinson, 1946-1957

prayer was offered by C.N. Hostetter, Jr., of Pennsylvania.¹⁸ Mike Engle was the contractor. While the new church was being built, services were held in the Glenwood schoolhouse two miles west.

When the raised pulpit was taken apart, a bright, flashy necktie was found, evidently put there by someone who had given it up at the altar in the days when ties were frowned upon.¹⁹

In 1957 partitions were put in the basement for classrooms. In 1959 there were fifty children under twelve enrolled in Sunday school.²⁰

The first effort at a supported ministry was in 1955, when Henry Miller was given partial support. Under the Millers a weekly club program was started--Pioneer Club for girls, and Boys' Brigade for the boys. While the Millers were there, a budget system was started, the new parsonage was built, and an east addition to the church was built.²¹

Pastor Kevin Ryan, after growing up in a mixed ethnic environment and exposed to the drug culture in New Jersey, attended Messiah College, married, and came to this small rural congregation with a perspective different from that of those he came to serve. He ministered in the jail and often made his calls on a motorcycle.²²

The present pastor, Ron Bowell, is a "homegrown boy" from the community. He did not have a church background, but after he was converted and started attending Zion with his wife and children, he grew spiritually and became an avid student of the Bible. Because he sensed a call to ministry, he was supported by pastor Kevin Ryan, who strongly recommended him when he resigned. Ron brings to the ministry an understanding of how "outsiders" view the church, which enables him to serve the community in various ways.²³

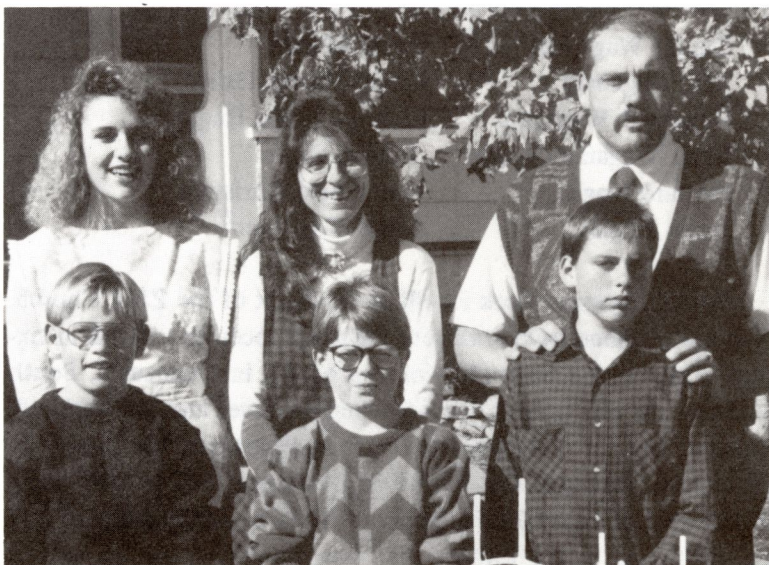
In 1989 a second story was added to the east side for classrooms. Wednesday night Bible studies and activities are planned for children, youth and adults. Both the Pioneer Girls Club and Boys' Brigade have been very successful. A children's



Zion Church pastor Ron Howell, his wife, Kerry, and family (1990)



Abilene Church pastor Henry F. Landis and his wife, Faithe (Book), (1990)



Rosebank Church pastor Robert Lister, his wife, Mary, and family (1990)

program, ABC, and a young people's program, XYZ (exceptional youth of Zion) have held good interest and attendance.

Of the original members of the Zion congregation when it was organized in 1887, one, Samuel Zook, has a seventh-generation descendant attending now. Three other families have had six continuous generations, and one of the three is represented through two lines. Furthermore, the last three generations of three of these lines are in attendance each Sunday. The generational sequences are shown by the following:

Samuel Zook	Mary Ann Frey ²⁴	Mary Ann Frey
Aaron Zook	Ollie Frey Lady	Ollie Frey Lady
Bruce Zook	Minnie Lady Engle	Cornelius Lady
Clyde Zook	Mahlon Engle	Myron Lady
Verl Zook	Howard Engle	Brian Lady
Christie Zook Ammann	Jacob Engle	Joshua Lady
Jason Ammann		

Daniel Wagaman	David Martin
J.H. Wagaman	Fanny Martin Grove
Raymond Wagaman	Frances Grove Engle
Irene Wagaman Engle	Delbert Engle
Howard Engle	Joan Engle Christner
Jacob Engle	Aaron Christner ²⁵

Foreign mission work is still at the heart of the Zion Church. Zion and Abilene have both sent members recently to work in six-week stints in the denominational program in Venezuela, South America. At this writing, Rebecca Engle Garver and her husband, Howard, are in language study in preparation for work in Venezuela. Regional Conference reports from 1985 to 1990 show an increase of thirty-four members. With a membership of 117 and continued family loyalty, the Zion Church seems to have a good future.

Rosebank

The Rosebank Church suffered at the beginning of the century from the disruptive influence of the Firebrand movement, but a faithful core of members kept the church moving forward. Many physical changes have been made over the years. The partition dividing the church was removed in 1905. A cement porch and vestibule were added in 1914, and a basement dug in 1940. In 1966 a new front entrance and inside restrooms were added, and in 1979 new pews, carpet and pulpit were installed. In 1981 there was major remodeling when a baptistry was installed.²⁶ The new addition included classrooms, library, pastor's study and nursery. The cross with lights behind it was made by Millard Hostetter and is mounted on the side wall near the front door.²⁷ A new organization, the ABC Club, meets Wednesday evenings and has up to forty-five children attending.²⁸ There are sixty-eight church members.

Chapter 19

Administrative Changes

"The midpoint in the twentieth century found the Brethren in Christ Church striving for a new identity in the future but tied to that of the past."¹ The rigid dress standard of the thirties and forties was being challenged, as well as other legalistic practices that kept the church isolated.

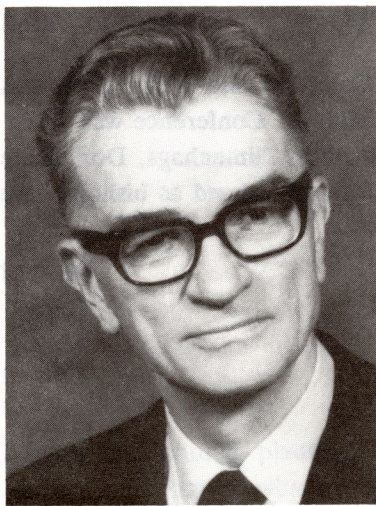
In 1950 at the National Association of Evangelicals Convention in Indianapolis a group of Brethren in Christ got together for discussion and prayer concerning the lack of church growth and the hesitancy to share the gospel in their communities. In the same year, John N. Hostetter, in the General Conference sermon, warned of the need for a change of perspectives and practices if the church was to serve the future. A new committee called Church Review and Study was formed to examine the church's beliefs and practices. It served for ten years, organizing a format for the new constitution and bylaws for the 1960 *Manual of Doctrine and Government*.

The denomination, through its affiliation with the National Association of Evangelicals and the National Holiness Association, was able to enlarge its perspective for witness and outreach.

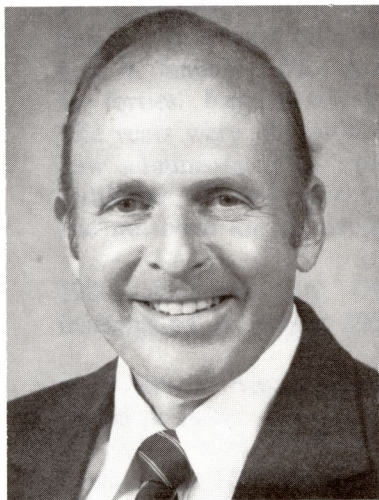
In 1957 the denomination in Canada and the United States was divided into "conferences" to take the place of the former districts. Each conference was assigned a bishop who served a five-year term. The annual regional conference meeting took the place of State Council. The Midwest Conference was originally composed of Kansas, Oklahoma and Iowa. It now includes Texas,



Bishop Alvin Burkholder, 1957-1967



Bishop Arthur M. Climenhaga, 1967-1972



Bishop Donald R. Shafer, 1972-1984



Bishop Glenn A. Ginder, 1984-present

Colorado and New Mexico as well. The first bishop of the Midwest Conference was Alvin Burkholder, who was followed by Arthur Climenhaga, Don Shafer and Glenn Ginder. Many who formerly served as bishops have chosen to serve as pastors.

Chapter 20

Extension

Through a program of extension and church planting, a number of Brethren in Christ churches were started which were strongly supported by the Kansas churches in the Midwest Conference:

1961--Mountain View Chapel in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

1973--Palm Valley, Pharr, Texas.

1977--Wichita, Kansas. The members never owned a building but met in several different locations. The first service was held in January 1978. Attendance in the early 1980s was in the forties. Regular services were discontinued January 1989.¹ The years were not without their rewards. Sheron Brunner, now administrator of Life Line Mission in San Francisco, California, women's work has said she would not be there if it had not been for the Brethren in Christ in Wichita.²

1980--Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. This work had been investigated as early as 1964.

1981--New Harvest, a second work in Colorado Springs. It was closed in 1984.

1986--Cedar Hill, Texas, in the Dallas area.

1988--Community South, a second work in Oklahoma City.

A proposed planting in south Denver, Colorado, received impetus from an August 1990 telephone campaign.

Chapter 21

Past and Future

When the Brethren in Christ came to Kansas, the church was responsible for the physical and spiritual welfare of its members. The members were accountable to each other and to the church.

In trying to make the Bible relevant to the modern age without compromising its principles, many changes have taken place. The Kansas pioneers, individualistic and innovative, and perhaps more open to people and ideas around them than their eastern counterparts, initiated many of these changes. Impetus for the holiness movement, foreign missions and supported ministry all began in Kansas. The Sunday school movement was stronger here than anywhere else in the church. Here, as elsewhere in the denomination, individual conscience was allowed to make decisions formerly prescribed by the church. This is exemplified by issues such as insurance, musical instruments, picture taking, and pattern of dress. Brethren in Christ members are no longer recognizable by their distinctive attire. Nor are their church buildings distinctive in design.

In some cases change came slowly and gradually. In other cases it came with such rapidity it was hard for some to accept. In all decades, and perhaps now more than ever, members have reached out to share the faith and show compassion to the needy.

Many of the churches of the past have faded away. Periods of stress and difficulty continue to arise now and then. But the surviving churches are alive and well.

Bishop Glenn A. Ginder of the Midwest Conference offers his appraisal:

I am inclined to believe there are good days ahead for the Kansas churches. Leadership in each congregation at the present time is concerned with addressing the matter of outreach....I suspect we will see in the next ten years a new church or two beginning in Kansas....The Kansas churches continue to be vibrant communities of faith.¹

My personal hope is that the Kansas church will always stand on the Word of God and be led by the Holy Spirit. May there be Brethren in Christ churches in Kansas when Jesus comes!

Appendix I

Bishops

South Dickinson:

Jesse Engle, 1879-1897

Jacob N. Engle, 1898-1931

Ray I. Witter, 1931-1957

North Dickinson:

Samuel Zook, 1880-1904

Millard G. Engle, 1906-1944

Monroe M. Book, 1946-1957

Jacob Engle was overseer for both districts 1904-1906, and R.I. Witter for both, 1944-1946.

Bishops of the Midwest Conference:

Alvin Burkholder, 1957-1967

Arthur M. Climenhaga, 1967-1972

Donald R. Shafer, 1972-1984

Glenn A. Ginder, 1984-1990, reappointed for six-year term.

Appendix II

Pastors

An attempt has been made to list the pastors of each church. It is hoped that no name has been omitted. Churches are listed in alphabetical order. In the early days, there were often several ministers at one church, and they sometimes took turns preaching at various churches; so they will be listed where they were ordained or preached most frequently.

ABILENE, Dickinson County (North)

Jacob Eisenhower, came in 1878; John Allison, 1887-1890; Jacob Eshelman, 1890-1894; Henry Davidson, 1891-1893; Joseph Bassler, 1894-1900; Levi Wenger, 1900; George Detweiler, 1901; Jacob Stauffer, 1904; C.O. Musser, 1906 (resigned); M.L. Hoffman, 1904-1915; Homer Engle, summer, 1915; J.G. Cassel, 1917-1918; Ben Books, Paul Baum, and Jesse Eyster, all 1919; Ben Books, 1920; George Whisler, 1921-1935; Joel E. Carlson, 1935-1940; George Whisler, 1940-1952; Paul Snyder, 1952-1954; David W. Musser, 1954-1960; David H. Wenger, 1960-1964; Glenn Hensel, 1964-1970; W. Edward Rickman, 1970-1975; Henry F. Landis, 1975-1983; Roger Charman, 1983-1985; Scott Miles, 1985-1988; Henry F. Landis, 1988-present (1991).

BELLE SPRINGS, Dickinson County (South)

Jesse Engle and Benjamin M. Gish, came in 1879; J.N. Engle (the first elected pastor, 1881, and bishop, 1898); David Book, 1885; A.J. Snively (second pastor to be elected, ordained February 23, 1897); D.L. Graybill, October 1899; David W. Brehm, 1906; Homer Engle, 1906-1947; Levi Markley, 1912; Samuel B. Wingerd, Joseph Bowers and Henry Rhodes, all ministers who moved into the district.

BETHEL, Dickinson County (North)

Peter Bert, came in 1879; John Sheets, 1881; Samuel Bert, 1886; Samuel Brandt; David Brechbill, 1889; William Page, 1894; Harry Crider, 1915-1941; Harold Sheets, 1927; Kenneth Hoover, 1941-1942; Bert Winger, 1942-1944; David Musser, 1945-1952; Hershey Gramm, 1952-1957; M.M. Book, 1957-1960; Charles Rickel, 1960-1964; Robert Bushnell, 1964-1968; M.M. Book, 1968.

FAIRVIEW, Harvey County

Jacob Eshelman was the main minister. John Hoover from Peabody, Kansas, preached when he visited there. Speakers were often sent from Dickinson County.

HEBRON, Clay County

Elias Smith; John Allison; S.H. Zook, who moved there from Dickinson County; T. William Smith from Chicago; Jacob Heer, William Steinbrecher, and Donald Heer. Dickinson County sent a minister once a month.

NEWBERN, Dickinson County (South)

Benjamin Gish, came with the colony in 1879, served until his death in 1907; Noah Engle, elected 1889; John R. Herr, elected 1896; Henry Landis moved into the district in 1885 from Perry County, Pennsylvania, moved to Oklahoma in 1917, and returned to Millersburg, Pennsylvania, in 1919; David Brehm came from Belle Springs, then moved to Hummelstown, Pennsylvania; B.F. Jury, third minister elected at Newbern. Jury was chosen in 1905 but later affiliated with the Plymouth Brethren. Clarence Girton was last pastor there. Pastors from Belle Springs also took turns with those at Newbern.

PLEASANT HILL, Brown County

John Eyer, 1873-1897; Christian Haldeman, 1876-1905; John Henry Byer, II, 1888-1891; N.T. Franklin, 1899-1903; Samuel Stoner, 1903-1912; A.J. Heise, 1896, 1912-1915; Jacob Charles, 1915-1945; Archie Byer, elected 1915, but not ordained, did not serve, died 1917; Isaac Lehman, 1917-1918; Hershey Gramm, 1946-1950; Ray Heisey, student pastor, 1952; David McBeth, 1953-1955; Paul Charles, 1956-1960; Ben Books, 1960-1965. Grace Bible students from Omaha, Nebraska, served for the next fifteen years.

ROSEBANK, Dickinson County (South)

Abe Eisenhower, Jacob Cassel, Jacob Book, Dan Steckley, Andrew Snively, Peter Fike, Henry Rhodes, Ben Sollenberger, Adam Book, Herman Bohen, Monroe Book; Ray I. Witter, 1915-1946; Cecil Plank, 1933-1963; Charles Rickel, 1963-1964; Charles Norman, 1964-1977; Joel Carlson, interim, 1977; Ronald Freeman, 1978-1981; Howard Bishop, interim, August 1981-January 1982; Jesse Dourte, 1982-1990; Robert Lister, 1990 to present (1991).

WICHITA, Sedgwick County

Charles E. Norman, January 1978-September 1984; Robert Bushnell, 1984-1989.

ZION, Dickinson County (North)

Samuel Zook, bishop, 1880-1904; Noah Zook, 1881-1912; C.C. Burkholder, 1895-1896; Elias Martin; D.B. Martin, 1895; Samuel H. Zook, 1896; Harvey Frey, 1900; Bishop M.G. Engle, 1906-1944; Harry Wagaman, 1913; Chris A. Frey, 1916-1956; Monroe Book, 1921-1957; Jesse Lady, 1927; Vern Zook; Marion Book; Henry Miller, 1956-1968; John Hawbaker, 1968-1974; Paul Z. Hess, 1974-1979; Kevin Ryan, 1979-1984; Ron Bowell, 1984-present (1991).

Appendix III

Kansas Missionaries

These persons served as missionaries to foreign countries for the years indicated under the Brethren in Christ Church, and are all Kansas related. They were either born there, lived there or were sent out from there. In some cases, only one of these applies; in others all three apply. They are listed alphabetically.

1. Bathurst, Dale, 1979-1980, Africa
2. Bathurst, Juanita, 1979-1980, Africa
3. Bert, Ruth J., 1968-1971, 1985, Africa
4. Book, Thata (Frey), 1950-1977, Africa; 1985 to present, Venezuela
5. Bowers, Miriam, 1977-1980, Japan
6. Brechbill, Beulah (Musser), 1920-1928, Africa
7. Brechbill, Sadie (Book), 1911-1941, Africa
8. Brubaker, Grace (Book), 1924-1951, Africa
9. Buckwalter, Allen, 1939-1981, India
10. Buckwalter, Katie (Burkholder) Smith, 1913-1928, India
11. Byer, Dr. David E., 1968-1970; 1974-1976, Africa
12. Cress, George, 1899-1900, Africa
13. Cress, Sara (Zook), 1899-1900, Africa
14. Davidson, H. Frances, 1897-1923, Africa
15. Dohner, Evelyn (Noel), 1971-1982, Africa
16. Duncan, Esther (Buckwalter), 1936-1942, India
17. Engle, Jesse M., 1897-1900, Africa
18. Engle, Elizabeth (Niesley), 1897-1900, Africa

19. Eshelman, Martha (Kauffman), 1924-1950, Africa
20. Eshelman, Mary (Lenhert), 1919-1948, Africa
21. Evey, Cora B. (Alvis), 1911-1919, Africa
22. Eyster, Anna M., 1931-1957, Africa
23. Eyster, Jesse R., 1902-1913, Africa
24. Eyster, Melinda (Brubaker), 1902-1913, Africa
25. Frey, Emma (Martin), 1905-1940, Africa
26. Frey, Harvey J., 1905-1936, Africa
27. Ginder, Anna L. (Byer), 1962-1975, Africa
28. Hall, Mabel (Engle), 1932-1952, Africa
29. Hart, Edna (Wingerd), 1960-1962, Japan
30. Heise, Dr. Jesse L., 1968-1969, Africa
31. Hershey, Dorothy (Lexow), 1937-1963, Africa
32. Hess, Lois (Hoover), 1972-1976, Africa
33. Hoover, Kenneth B., 1990-1991; also made mission study trips in the 1970s to Africa, Japan, and Indonesia
34. Howland, Mary C. (Engle), 1952-1966, Africa
35. Lady, Jesse F., 1954-1955, Israel; 1955-1960, Africa
36. Lady, Harvey C., 1918-1920, Africa
37. Lady, Naomi (Kern), 1918-1949, Africa
38. Lady, Martha, 1954-1974, Africa
39. Lady, Mary Olive, 1969 to present (1991), Africa
40. Lehman, Alice (Heise), 1897-1901, Africa (other mission work until 1948)
41. Lenhert, Dr. Paul G., 1971-1972, Africa
42. Lenhert, Rhoda G., 1946-1961, Africa
43. Longenecker, Fannie, 1946-1984; 1988-1989, 1991, Africa
44. Manning, Ellen (Hoover), 1966-1977, Africa
45. Minter, Ruth (Eyster), 1969-1971, Africa
46. Minter, Samuel F., 1969-1971, Africa
47. Musser, Helen (Brechtbill), 1968-1969; 1970-1973, Africa
48. Musser, Lois (Brechtbill), 1951-1968, Africa
49. Shelly, Beth (Engle), 1981-1982, Africa
50. Sider, Gladys (Bohen), 1946-1961; 1975-1977, Africa
51. Sider, Pauline (Frey), 1953-1959, Africa

52. Steckley, Elizabeth (Engle), 1907-1941, Africa
53. Steinbrecher, Dr. Leroy, 1970-1972, Africa
54. Swanson, Barbara (Hershey), 1897, Africa (other mission work until mid-1940s)
55. Taylor, Ada (Engle), 1905-1932, Africa
56. Werkman, Maria (Cressman), 1906-1907, Africa
57. Winger, Abbie (Bert), 1905-1947, Africa
58. Winger, Andrew, 1913-1920, Africa
59. Zook, Miriam G. (Frey), 1963-1977, Africa

(This information was compiled by Fannie Longenecker and the Brethren in Christ World Missions office.)

Appendix IV

Kansas Educators

While numerous Brethren in Christ members became public school teachers, others devoted their lives, or large segments of them, to teaching in the private schools and colleges operated by the denomination. This list does not include all Kansans who taught in the church schools but those who taught many years. They were all born in Kansas and grew to adulthood there, with the exception of Paul E. Engle, who moved to California at age 16.

1. Melvin Bowers--Registrar and teacher, 1947-1952; 1957-1965, Upland.
2. Miriam Bowers--Librarian, 1938-1944 and 1951-1965, Upland; 1970-1977, Messiah
3. Gordon Engle--Mathematics, History, 1948-1958, last three years also as principal of Academy, Upland.
4. Paul E. Engle--Business manager, vice president, teacher, 1920-1929, Upland; 1929-1932, Messiah; 1936-1965, Upland.
5. Mary Lenhert Eshelman--Home Economics, 1949-1972, Messiah.
6. Helen Gish--Preceptress and Home Economics, 1920-1965, Upland.
7. Dr. Wendell Harmon--History, 1951-1956; Dean, 1953-1956, Upland.
8. Dr. Kenneth B. Hoover--Science, Biology, 1937-1942, Jabbok; 1942-1977, Messiah.

9. Dr. Jesse F. Lady--Bible, 1936-1944, Messiah; 1944-1949, president of Upland; and 1959-1962, Upland.
10. Dorothy Witter Schrag--Music, Piano, Organ, 1940-1950, Upland; 1953-1956 and 1959-1983, Messiah.
11. Eunice Lady Wingert--1926-1928, Jabbok; Home Economics, 1932-1933, 1938 1941, Messiah.

(H. Frances Davidson, while not a native Kansan, lived in Abilene while her father, Henry Davidson, edited the *Evangelical Visitor* there, 1891-1896. She taught at Messiah College, 1925-1931, after her retirement from missionary service in Africa.)

Appendix V

Denominational "Firsts" in Kansas

1886--first person to express a call from the Lord to preach rather than awaiting call of church (David Book).

1886--first regional mission fund and committee.

1887--denominational paper first approved at General Conference, at Cyrus Lenhart's farm.

1892--first purchased evangelistic tent for protracted meetings.

1893--first Sunday school convention held.

1894--first public appeal for foreign mission offering and personnel.

1894--first Brethren in Christ member to go overseas in mission work (Hettie Fernbaugh).

1896--first to teach holiness as second work of grace.

1897--first five missionaries, all from Kansas, sent by Foreign Mission Board to Africa. Of the first thirty-six missionaries sent by the Brethren in Christ Foreign Mission Board, eighteen were from Kansas churches.

1903--first church parsonage (Hebron Church, Clay County).

1912--first Teacher Training course taught.

1913--first baptistry (in Abilene church).

1915--divided envelopes for weekly offerings.

1915--first partially supported minister (Homer Engle for summer months).

1920--first full-time, supported minister (Ben Books).

1932--among first to vote for instrumental music in church
(1937--small organ used for Bible school; 1943--piano for use when
advisable; 1954--electronic organ installed.)

NOTES

1. Origin and Beliefs

¹A. W. Climenhaga, *History of the Brethren in Christ Church* (Nappanee: E. V. Publishing House, 1942), pp. 343-345; 347-354. See also Morris Engle, *The Engle History and Family Records* (Mt. Joy, Pennsylvania: Bulletin Press, n.d.), p. 31.

²C. O. Wittlinger, *Quest for Piety and Obedience: The Story of the Brethren in Christ* (Nappanee: Evangel Press, 1978), pp. 10, 24.

³Climenhaga, pp. 326, 337-339, 343-345. For more on dating of origin see Wittlinger, pp. 15-17.

⁴Climenhaga, p. 45; Wittlinger, p. 27. In 1788 John Winger and Jacob Sider carried the faith to Canada, where for many years they went by the name "Tunkers." Since the German word *tunken* means to dip, this name could have referred to their mode of baptism, the practice of immersion. The name was well established when, in 1793, the Militia Act granted the Tunkers, Mennonites and Quakers exemption from military duty. Not before 1936 did the Canadian church accept the name "Brethren in Christ," even then retaining the word "Tunkers" parenthetically (E. Morris Sider, *The Brethren in Christ in Canada* [Nappanee: Evangel Press, 1988], pp. 52, 53).

⁵Wittlinger, pp. 35-54.

2. Lure of the West--and the Unalluring

¹"Kansas Fever," Lancaster (Pennsylvania) *Daily New Era*, March 18, 1879. When Kansas acquired statehood in 1861, the population of Dickinson County was 378 over 851 square miles, or 2.25 persons per square mile (A. T. Andreas, *History of Kansas* [Chicago: Donnelly and Sons, 1883], pp. 683-685).

²John R. Hertzler, "The 1879 Brethren in Christ Migration from Southeastern Pennsylvania to Dickinson County, Kansas," *Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage*, January 1980, p. 12.

³Walter Prescott Webb, *The Great Plains* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1931), p. 12.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 336.

⁵T. C. Henry, "The Story of a Wheat King," *Abilene High School Booster*, May 12, 1938, p. 13; Climenhaga, p. 174.

⁶Andreas, *History*, p. 684.

⁷Evan Jones, *The Plains States* (New York: Time-Life, 1968), p. 12.

⁸*Ibid.*

⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁰Wendell Harmon, "Brethren in Christ Church," *Early Abilene Edition*, *Abilene High School Booster*, May 18, 1938, p. 8.

¹¹*Abilene Reflector*, June 2, 1903.

¹²Noble L. Prentiss, *History of Kansas* (Topeka: 1904), p. 241.

3. Early Settlers

¹Everett Byer, "Pleasant Hill Brethren in Christ Church (Also known in earlier times as River Brethren), Brown County, Hamlin, Kansas: A History (1888-1977)," 1984, p. 4. Eyer's obituary records his coming to Kansas about 1875.

²Ibid., p. 4.

³Everett Byer, letter to author, April 3, 1990.

⁴Byer, "Pleasant Hill," pp. 3,6; also deed in Brethren in Christ Church Archives.

⁵Ibid., p. 4.

⁶Noah Zook, "Mission Work in Clay County," *Evangelical Visitor*, October 1, 1887, p. 26.

⁷John Allison obituary, *Evangelical Visitor*, December 1, 1896, p. 368.

⁸Jacob Heer obituary, *ibid.*, April 26, 1926, p. 9.

⁹John W. Stauffer obituary, *ibid.*, March 5, 1923, p. 9.

¹⁰Stephen Richardson obituary, *ibid.*, January 15, 1895, p. 32.

¹¹Zook, p. 237.

¹²Mattie Musser Graybill (daughter of John B. Musser) obituary, *Evangelical Visitor*, April 22, 1967, p. 12; David Book obituary, *ibid.*, March 15, 1898, p. 120; J. H. Engle, "Pennsylvania Germans in Kansas," *Abilene Daily Reflector*, August 28, 1919.

¹³Lawrence Frey, Lucille Cavender, C. A. Frey, Elbert Frey, Samuel Minter, David Musser, Frances Lady, *A History and Geneology of Adam and Mary Frey, 1811-1953*, n.d., p. 7.

¹⁴Samuel Zook, "Local Church History," *Evangelical Visitor*, August 1, 1892, p. 257; Daniel Bert obituary, *ibid.*, January 16, 1939, p. 8; Jacob Bert obituary, *ibid.*, December 5, 1921, p. 8.

¹⁵Clarence L. Gish, "The River Brethren Migrate from Pennsylvania to Dickinson County, Kansas," typed manuscript in Dickinson County Historical Society, Abilene, Kansas, p. 2; C. L. Gish, "Migration of River Brethren from Pennsylvania to Kansas"; Ira Montgomery Gish, *Footprints in the Sands of Time* (Loma Linda, California: Privately printed, 1970), p. 39; Hertzler, "The 1879 Brethren in Christ Migration," p. 14; Harold S. Gish, "One Man's Family," *Footprints*, p. 237.

¹⁶Sam Haldeman and wife are listed with the colonists, *Marietta Times*, March 29, 1879; Hertzler, p. 18; the Witters went in 1880 according to the obituary of John Witter, *Evangelical Visitor*, February 25, 1918, p. 20.

¹⁷A. L. Eisenhower obituary, *ibid.*, January 15, 1945, p. 9.

¹⁸Ira Eisenhower obituary, *ibid.*, June 7, 1943, p. 10.

¹⁹Francis Trevelyan Miller, *Eisenhower, Man and Soldier* (1944), cited by E. A. Herr in *Footprints*, p.97.

²⁰Cyrus Lenhart, handwritten notebook-diary, 1878, Archives.

²¹John K. Stauffer was in Dickinson County in 1878 (Zook, "History"; Engle, "Pennsylvania Germans").

²²When the group left in 1879, Gish was almost forty-six years old and had fathered eight children. His oldest son was already in Kansas teaching school. His youngest, also named Benjamin, was six months old in March of 1879 and another

son, David, would be born in Kansas (Harold Stanley Gish, "One Man's Family--Benjamin Musser Gish," *Footprints*, p. 233).

²³Council minutes of May 16, 17, 1878, Article XVI. During these years, "Council" was used to designate the denominational meeting, which was later referred to as "General Conference."

²⁴Jesse Engle was forty-one years old and had been ordained a bishop at age thirty-eight. He had six sons and one daughter. A seventh son, Ezra, would be born in Kansas, January 4, 1880. When he went to Africa, Jesse Engle was fifty-nine (Anna Engle, John Climenhaga, Leoda Buckwalter, "Jesse Engle," and "Elizabeth Engle," *There is No Difference* [Nappanee: E.V. Publishing House, 1950], pp. 361,362; Jesse Engle obituary, *Evangelical Visitor*, June 15, 1900, p. 240; Ezra Engle obituary, *ibid.*, March 5, 1923, p. 9).

²⁵Council Minutes 1878, Article XV.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 1877, Article VI.

²⁷The Cyrus Lenhert diary lists the following: C. Lenhert, C. Hoffman, Eli Hoffman, Ben Engle, Henry S. Engle, Henry Bossler, John Bossler, John Forney, Abram Forney, John M. Engle, John S. Graybill, Samuel Page, Noah Hershey, Isaac Page, Isaac Hershey, Ben Portner, Jesse Engle, John Mellinger, Ben Musser, Samuel Brandt, Joseph Niesley, S. Niesley, Jacob Haldeman and wife, Brown and wife, C. Gish, Eli Musser, and Henry Longenecker.

²⁸Council Minutes, 1874, Article VIII.

²⁹Zook, p. 237.

³⁰Lenhert diary; unsigned manuscript, (probably John G. Engle, secretary), Belle Springs District Record Book, Archives.

³¹George R. Beyer, "Pennsylvania Germans Move to Kansas," *Pennsylvania History Quarterly Journal*, January 1965, p. 41.

³²*Public Opinion*, Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, March 18, 1879.

³³Those listed: Samuel S. Garber, Christian S. and Eli Hoffman, Rev. Benjamin Gish, Noah G. Hershey, Jeremiah and Benjamin Engle, Tobias and John Sheets, Simon Cameron, esq., John K. Forney, and John R. Noll, of Donegal Township; Jesse and Abram M. Engle of Cumberland Valley, formerly of Donegal; Benjamin B. Brubaker and Noah Engle, from Rapho Township--all heads of families and prominent farmers, and also the following single men not belonging to the above families: John L. Engle, C. S. Graybill, J. L. Garber, C. Miller, Samuel Rehm, Christian Hisey, A. E. Miller, and David Hisey of Donegal Township; Henry Eby and Samuel Nissley, Mt. Joy; Enoch and Samuel Hoffman, Rapho, and Clayton E. Musser of Marietta.

³⁴*Ibid.*, March 26, 1879.

³⁵"Departure for Kansas," *Public Opinion*, Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, April 1, 1879.

³⁶"Blood will Tell," *ibid.*, March 18, 1879.

³⁷*Ibid.*, March 4, 1879.

³⁸"Westward Ho," *Marietta Times*, March 29, 1879, reprinted in *Pilgrimage of the Brethren in Christ* (Nappanee: Evangel Press, 1978), p. 16. "The following were in the party: Henry Graybill and family of East Donegal township [sic]; John Graybill and family of East Donegal; Benjamin F. Engle and family of Conoy township; John Engle and family of Conoy township; L. Eagle and wife of Conoy township; George Smith of East Donegal township; Samuel Haldeman and wife of

East Donegal township; J. H. Peifer of Manor township; Elmer Grove of Marietta; Henry Kauffman and family of Marietta, Henry Swanger of Mount Joy; D.H. Breneman and Kate E. Breneman of Kansas; A. M. Sheetz and wife of Rapho township; Joseph Stricker, John A. Engle, and Charles Morton, of Maytown; Jacob Wagoner of Mount Joy; Amos Eshelman of Mount Joy; Christian Musser of East Donegal Township."

³⁹Jesse Lady, "The Trip of the Colony of the Brethren in Christ Church from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, to Abilene, Kansas in March 25-28, 1879" (unpublished ms.), pp. 7,8.

⁴⁰"The Kansas Emigrants," *Daily New Era*, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, April 4, 1879.

⁴¹"Stalwart Faith of River Brethren in President's Religious Background," *Kansas City Times*, March 11, 1955; et al.

⁴²Lady, "The Trip," p. 4. Another source gives the age of the oldest, Abram Engle, as forty-seven (obituary, *Evangelical Visitor*, April 7, 1913, p. 18). The youngest was Anna Sheets (Sollenberger), daughter of John and Martha Sheets (obituary, *ibid.*, December 10, 1951, p. 9).

⁴³J. H. Engle, "Pennsylvania Germans in Dickinson County," *Abilene Weekly Reflector*, August 28, 1919; Frances Lady, "Zion Church," unpublished manuscript, Dickinson County Historical Society, Abilene, Kansas, 1949, and Archives; Andreas, *History*, p.686.

⁴⁴[John G. Engle], Belle Springs District Record Book.

⁴⁵Reprinted in Harold S. Gish's "One Man's Family," p. 237. This article noted that the first group arrived in the evening from Maryland and the rest the next morning from Lancaster, Cumberland, Franklin, Lebanon and Dauphin Counties, Pennsylvania. Andreas also notes the ones from Maryland (p. 686). The Maryland passengers pose a conundrum since the two passenger lists gave no addresses from Maryland. But some, such as the Noah Engle family, were living near Frederick, Maryland, at the time but had gone to Marietta to go with the group, and their former Lancaster county address had been listed ("Bound for Kansas," *Daily New Era*, March 1, 1879). Much research on the part of this author failed to produce names of other Maryland colonists.

⁴⁶Andreas, *History*, p. 686.

⁴⁷"The River Brethren," *Abilene Gazette*, reprinted in *Public Opinion*, Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, April 26, 1879.

⁴⁸"The Kansas Emigrants," *Daily New Era*, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, April 4, 1879; S. S. Garber, "Letter from Kansas," *ibid.*, April 25, 1879; A. M. Engle, *Public Opinion*, Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, May 10, 1879; Isaac Shockey, *ibid.*, May 3, 1879; B.F. Shively, "From Kansas," *ibid.*, May 10, 1879.

⁴⁹Beyer, "Pennsylvania Germans," p. 39, from *Daily New Era*, March 7, 1879.

⁵⁰Isaac Shockey, "From Kansas," *Public Opinion*, May 3, 1879.

⁵¹"Local News," *ibid.*, Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, April 15, 1879, reported the names of those who left for Kansas the previous Tuesday. Included were Noah Sollenberger, Michael Bert, I.B. Martin and J.B. Engle.

⁵²Zook, p. 237.

⁵³Noah Zook obituary, *Evangelical Visitor*, February 10, 1912, p. 16.

⁵⁴George Lenhert obituary, *ibid.*, October 14, 1935, says 1883; Clarence L. Gish, "River Brethren Migrate," p. 3, gives date as 1882. Dickinson County Court

House records show that on January 13, 1882, Cyrus Lenhart purchased 160 acres for \$3,200 and on January 19, 1882, 161 acres for \$1500.

⁵⁵Gish, "One Man's Family," p. 238.

⁵⁶J.I. Hamaker, *Matthias Gish of White Oak: The History of an American Family* (Privately printed, 1940), p. 276.

⁵⁷"River Brethren," newspaper clipping, May 25, 1902, found in Bible of Henry Steinbrecher's grandmother. Much of this article, "Quakerlike River Brethren Going East to Conference," was reprinted in the *Philadelphia Press*, April 26, 1903.

4. Early Churches

¹[John G. Engle], Belle Springs District Record book.

²Zook, p. 237.

³River Brethren File, Abilene Public Library; Souvenir Report of Abilene Sunday School, 1908.

⁴Zook, p. 237; Climenhaga, p. 176.

⁵Description of the churches from Samuel F. Minter, Samuel A. Lady, "Zion Brethren in Christ Centennial," 1987; [John G. Engle], Belle Springs Record Book.

⁶Filed October 18, 1884, Deed Book 3, p. 452.

⁷Zook, p. 237.

⁸Ibid.

⁹*Evangelical Visitor*, June 1, 1893, p. 185.

¹⁰Filed August 19, 1893, Book 34, p. 1260.

¹¹Harmon, "Brethren in Christ," p. 8.

¹²Raymond Eshelman, "History of Abilene Church," typed manuscript 1961, Archives.

¹³Anna Bert obituary, *Evangelical Visitor*, December 22, 1930, p. 4.

¹⁴District Council minutes, February 10, 1887, Article III.

¹⁵Climenhaga, p. 182; Samuel Zook, "Abilene, Kansas, December 17, 1887," *Evangelical Visitor*, January 1, 1888, p. 73.

¹⁶"A Lovely Name for a Lovely Town," *Salina Journal*, July 9, 1967.

¹⁷North Dickinson Council minutes, February 14, 1888, Article II.

¹⁸Frances Lady, "The Zion Church."

¹⁹Minter, "Zion Centennial," p. 15.

²⁰Samuel Lady, "Zion Centennial," p. 17.

²¹"Service of Dedication and Homecoming," Rosebank Brethren in Christ Church, November 1, 1981; Edith Eshelman, "Rosebank," n.d., Dickinson County Historical Society church book.

²²Anna Engle Shirk obituary, *Evangelical Visitor*, February 14, 1921, p. 9; Anna Musser Kendrick obituary, *ibid.*, July 17, 1967, p. 14.

²³"History of Belle Springs," Belle Springs District Book. The deed was not executed until 1883.

²⁴*Ibid.*; *Topeka State Journal*, September 12, 1957.

²⁵Gladys Dodd, "Religious Background of Eisenhower Family," typed manuscript, 1959, p. 159; "Belle Springs," *Evangelical Visitor*, July 1891, p. 234.

²⁶"Church Groups Found Towns of Donegal, Dayton, Belle Springs," *Abilene Reflector Chronicle*, October 29, 1954.

²⁷Noah H. Sollenberger obituary, *Evangelical Visitor*, April 24, 1944, p. 138.

- ²⁸"Belle Springs," *ibid.*, August 1, 1891, p. 234.
- ²⁹Zook, p. 237.
- ³⁰[John G. Engle], Belle Springs District Book; John H. Engle, "Belle Springs," *Evangelical Visitor*, February 1, 1892, p. 15.
- ³¹*Ibid.*, April 15, 1892, p. 120.
- ³²Zook, p. 237.
- ³³"New House of Worship," *Evangelical Visitor*, December 1892, p. 360.
- ³⁴[John G. Engle], "Newbern Church District," Belle Springs District Book.
- ³⁵*Ibid.*
- ³⁶Mrs. Jesse Cox, "The Old Newbern Brethren in Christ Church," October 28, 1965, Dickinson County Historical Society church book.
- ³⁷*Ibid.*
- ³⁸Diary from original notebook, Archives.
- ³⁹Cox, "Newbern Church."
- ⁴⁰Zook, p. 237.
- ⁴¹Noah Zook, "Mission Work in Clay County," p. 26.
- ⁴²*Ibid.*
- ⁴³"The Brethren in Christ--Hebron," *Kansas Kin*, May 1988, p. 36.
- ⁴⁴Henry and Elizabeth Herr Steinbrecher interview, April 18, 1990.
- ⁴⁵Copy of deed, Archives.
- ⁴⁶Byer, "Pleasant Hill," p. 4.
- ⁴⁷*Ibid.*
- ⁴⁸Unsigned manuscript with Sunday School Records, Archives.
- ⁴⁹Kansas Joint Council minutes, Belle Springs, March 5, 6, 1896.
- ⁵⁰Noah Zook, "Sedgwick," *Evangelical Visitor*, December 15, 1893, p. 379.
- ⁵¹*General Conference Minutes*, 1894, p. 4.
- ⁵²J. K. Forney, "A Reminiscence," *Evangelical Visitor*, August 28, 29, 1937, pp. 30, 31.
- ⁵³District Council minutes, Abilene, September 30, 1884, Article VI
- ⁵⁴Jacob Fike obituary, *Evangelical Visitor*, May 1, 1889, p. 16.
- ⁵⁵Esther Dourte Snyder, "Their Legacy in Our Hearts," *Brethren in Christ History and Life*, December 1990, p. 338.
- ⁵⁶Minutes, South Dickinson District Council, September 15, 1892, Article VII.
- ⁵⁷Minutes, District Council, February 16, 1893, Article VII.
- ⁵⁸*Ibid.*, September 20, 1894, Article V.
- ⁵⁹C. O. Musser records that the meeting was upstairs in the Neuz store building, which was probably the same place (handwritten notes on history of Abilene Church, 1945, Archives).
- ⁶⁰Handwritten minutes in secretary's book, "Special," Abilene, Kansas, September 25, 1893, Archives.
- ⁶¹Council minutes, September 25, 1893; Musser, "History."
- ⁶²Minutes, September 25, 1893.
- ⁶³Memories of the author, who remembers vividly the three years in the primary department there, as well as Sunday night Junior League held there. When funerals were held in the church, a quartette often sang from the balcony.
- ⁶⁴Minutes, Article VIII.
- ⁶⁵*Ibid.*, Article IV.

⁶⁶*Evangelical Visitor*, March 15, 1894, p. 87; reprinted, *ibid.*, November 27, 1961, p. 12.

5. Organization and Decisions

¹Joint Council minutes, Abilene, Kansas, March 15, 1890, Article IV.

²*General Conference Minutes*, 1887, Article VII; *Evangelical Visitor*, August 28, 29, 1937, pp. 7-9.; Ray M. Zercher, "For One Hundred Years: A Tie That Binds," *Brethren in Christ History and Life*, December 1987, pp. 121-123, 166. An Abilene newspaper reported attendance of 4,000 people at the 1887 Conference "over a thousand of whom took Sunday dinner on the grounds at the expense of the brethren. A number of hired hostlers were constantly at the service of this vast concourse of people, feeding all the horses brought" (*Evangelical Visitor*, August 1, 1887, p. 9).

³*General Conference Minutes*, 1888, Article XV.

⁴Kansas Council minutes, 1872, Article III; *ibid.*, 1873, Article III.

⁵Concerning Anna Mary Hutchinson, February 24, 1887, Article III; also Emma Dayhoff, September 15, 1910: "decided with much regret and sympathy we can not own her as a member"; see also March 2, 1911, et al.

⁶South Dickinson District Council, at home of Eli Hoffman, October 10, 1885, Article I.

⁷District Council minutes, Brown County, February 16, 1889.

⁸*General Conference Minutes*, 1871, Article IV.

⁹Abilene Council minutes, October 6, 1885, Article V.

¹⁰Rosebank Council minutes, February 21, 1889, Article V; Abilene Council minutes, September 30, 1884, Article V.

¹¹Wittlinger, p. 219; "Hymn Books and Singing," *Evangelical Visitor*, April 15, 1901, p. 159.

¹²Mrs. Jesse Cox, "The Old Newbern Brethren in Christ Church," October 28, 1965, Dickinson County Historical Society church book.

¹³Abilene Church records, compiled by Raymond Eshelman, Archives. In 1965, on receiving an honorary doctorate from Messiah College, former President Dwight D. Eisenhower recalled his Sunday school days at the Abilene River Brethren Church. He remembered that Kauffman as song leader had difficulty getting people to learn new tunes and therefore bought a pitch pipe, which occasioned much criticism because some considered it a musical instrument. He said he wondered if the church might have an organ by that time (speech manuscript, May 29, 1965, Archives).

¹⁴*General Conference Minutes*, 1880; *ibid.*, 1899, p. 94.

¹⁵District Council minutes, September 24, 1887, Article VII, concerning William Ausherman.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, February 14, 1888.

¹⁷Council at home of Samuel Wingert, Southside, Hope, February 9, 1888. The answer of Joint Council was, "Referred to General Council" (Joint Council minutes, March 17, 1888). But the General Council (Conference) did not deal with the question in May 1888.

¹⁸Kansas Joint Council minutes, Abilene, March 15, 1890, concerning Amanda Dohner.

¹⁹Belle Springs minutes, January 2, 1908.

²⁰*General Conference Minutes*, Bethel Church, Detroit, Kansas, May 16-18, 1894, Article II. The item had come from the Belle Springs Joint Council, March 23,24, in the same year, Article IX.

²¹*Ibid.*, May 15-17, 1889, Article X.

²²South Dickinson Council minutes, Number 54 Schoolhouse, September 24, 1887, Article XII, concerning Charles Hutchinson.

²³North Dickinson Council minutes, Zion, February 19, 1895. In 1905 a petition from the Kansas churches asked General Conference to modify the position of insurance, but the statement was reaffirmed with an addition of ten biblical references to encourage trust in God (*General Conference Minutes*, May 17-19, 1905, Article XVII). The position remained intact until 1952, when Conference decided that insurance be left to individual decision (*General Conference Minutes*, June 4-9, 1952, Article IV).

²⁴South Dickinson Council minutes, February 3, 1891; Engle, at al, *There is No Difference*, pp. 13,14.

²⁵Joint Council minutes, Belle Springs, March 18,19, 1892, Article IV.

²⁶*Ibid.*, Belle Springs, March 23,24, 1894, Article IV.

²⁷Cyrus Lenhart diary, April 13,14, 1894.

²⁸Joint Council minutes, Abilene, March 22,23, 1895.

²⁹*Ibid.*, Belle Springs, March 10,11, 1898.

³⁰*Brown County World*, 1896, reported by Everett Byer in "Pleasant Hill Brethren in Christ Church," p. 8.

³¹*Ibid.*

³²District Council minutes, Abilene, October 2, 1883, Article I.

³³Joint Council minutes, Abilene, March 15, 1890, Article V.

³⁴"An Appeal," *Evangelical Visitor*, February 1, 1889, p. 76.

³⁵*Ibid.*, September 1, 1889, p. 184.

³⁶*General Conference Minutes*, May 21,22, 1879, Article IX.

³⁷South Dickinson Council minutes, September 19, 1889; Abilene Council minutes, September 25, 1889.

³⁸[Henry Davidson], "Orphan's Home," *Evangelical Visitor*, September 15, 1890, pp. 280, 281; D. Heise, "A Proposition," *ibid.*, January 1, 1891, p. 11; Jesse Engle, "Correction," *ibid.*, February 1, 1891, p. 41.

³⁹Enos N. Engle obituary, *ibid.*, January 27, 1940, p. 43.

⁴⁰*Midwest Regional Conference Minutes*, Abilene, Kansas, March 14, 1958, Article XXV.

⁴¹South Dickinson Council minutes, home of Henry Rhodes, February 5, 1887.

⁴²Council minutes, Schoolhouse District 54, September 24, 1887.

⁴³*Evangelical Visitor*, April 1, 1892, p. 107.

⁴⁴North Dickinson Council minutes, Bethel, September 17, 1889.

⁴⁵David F. Shirk obituary, *Evangelical Visitor*, December 23, 1935, p. 408.

6. Love Feasts

¹*General Conference Minutes*, 1911, p. 54. The previously observed double mode called for two persons to wash and dry each other's feet, thus limiting the

symbolic expression of servanthood to a personal level in contrast to the community.

²The preceding description is drawn largely from memories of the author.

³Mrs. A. W. Lippert, Kansas City, Missouri, *Abilene Reflector-Chronicle*, September 13, 1957. Mrs. Lippert was formerly Estella Engle, daughter of J. G. Engle.

⁴Mrs. Jesse Cox, "Old Newbern Brethren in Christ Church," typed manuscript, Dickinson County Historical Library, Abilene, Kansas.

⁵Esther Minter Noel, "Zion Brethren in Christ Centennial," 1987, p. 53.

⁶Thata Frey Book, *ibid.*, p. 12.

7. Economic, Educational and Political Contributions

¹"William Page Contribution to Dickinson County," unsigned, documented manuscript, Archives; "An Ancestral Portrayal of William Page and Elizabeth Wingerd," unsigned manuscript, July 1970, Archives.

²Cecilia Harris, "Hoover Family Being Filmed for TV Documentary," *Abilene Reflector-Chronicle*, October 2, 1982.

³"Shockey and Snider," *Evening Reflector*, June 9, 1887, reprinted as Souvenir Edition, *Abilene Reflector-Chronicle*, 1987, p. 6.

⁴Related at a centennial program given during a Board of Administration meeting, Abilene, 1978.

⁵Cyrus Lenhert diaries, Archives.

⁶[John G. Engle], *Belle Springs District Book*.

⁷Mary Eshelman interview, June 15, 1990, Messiah Village.

⁸Letter from Clarence L. Gish, Manhattan, Kansas, to E. Morris Sider, August 24, 1979, Archives.

⁹Harvey Wingerd obituary, *Evangelical Visitor*, July 20, 1964, p. 14.

¹⁰Katy (Katie) Bollinger, "History of Moonlight," undated, Archives. Bollinger was a daughter of John Sheets.

¹¹"Brethren in Christ Church," *Abilene Booster*, 1938, p. 8.

¹²Raymond Eshelman obituary, *Evangelical Visitor*, January 28, 1946, p. 11.

¹³Fred Riekeman, "Church Groups Found Towns of Donegal, Dayton, Belle Springs," *Abilene Reflector-Chronicle*, October 29, 1954.

¹⁴For a complete history of the plant, including names of employees, read *Chronicle of the Belle Springs Creamery of Dickinson County, Kansas* by Paul D. Hoffman (Abilene Printing Company, June 1975); the author was for many years president of the creamery, a grandson of Eli Hoffman and son of Martin L. Hoffman.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 8,9.

¹⁶"William Page Contribution to Dickinson County."

¹⁷David Shirk obituary, *Evangelical Visitor*, December 23, 1935, p. 408.

¹⁸Byer, p. 6.

¹⁹*Brown County World*, June 15, 1894.

²⁰*Ibid.*, June 1900.

²¹*Ibid.*, June 1902.

²²Abe Eisenhower obituary, *Evangelical Visitor*, January 15, 1945, p. 45.

²³Clarence L. Gish, "Early Kansas Pioneer--Dr. Abram S. Gish," *Footprints in the Sands of Time*, p. 103.

²⁴"Abilene Mayors," *Abilene Booster*, 1938, p. 7.

8. Mission Expansion

¹*General Conference Minutes*, 1887, p. 8.

²*Ibid.*, 1886, Article XX.

³Joint Council minutes, Abilene, March 17, 1888, Article I.

⁴*General Conference Minutes*, 1893, p. 3.

⁵Joint Council minutes, September 6, 1886, Article I.

⁶South Dickinson Council minutes, September 20, 1888, Article VIII.

⁷Abilene, September 15, 1891.

⁸Belle Springs minutes, March 18, 19, 1892.

⁹*Reflector*, March 25, 1892.

¹⁰J. G. Cassel, "Gospel Tent Work," *Evangelical Visitor*, September 15, 1893, p. 279.

¹¹Henry Davidson, *ibid.*, November 1, 1892, p. 328.

¹²*Ibid.*, June 15, 1893, p. 185.

¹³*Ibid.*, July 1, 1893, p. 200.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, November 15, 1893, pp. 344, 345.

¹⁵Cassel, "Gospel Tent," p.279.

¹⁶*Evangelical Visitor*, November 15, 1894, pp. 341, 342.

¹⁷"An Open Letter," *Ibid.*, August 15, 1894, p. 250.

¹⁸Cassel, "Gospel Tent," p. 279; *Evangelical Visitor*, June 15, 1894, p. 187.

¹⁹"Kansas Notes," *Gospel Message*, July 15, 1895, p. 12; *ibid.*, August 15, 1895, p. 12; *ibid.*, February 15, 1896, p.7.

²⁰The Gospel Wagon had its contemporary counterpart in the prairie wagon used by shepherders.

²¹"Gospel Wagon," *Evangelical Visitor*, July 15, 1897, p. 226.

²²Abilene, March 15, 1890, Article XII.

²³*Ibid.*, May 10, 1890.

²⁴*General Conference Minutes*, 1902, p. 15.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 1905, p.9.

²⁶*Ibid.*, May 18-20, 1892, Article III.

²⁷Samuel Zook, "A Western Mission Tour," *Evangelical Visitor*, March 1, 1893, p. 175.

²⁸J. G. Cassel, "The Arizona Mission," *ibid.*, March 15, 1896, pp. 89,90.

²⁹North Dickinson Council minutes, February 16, 1896.

³⁰*Brethren's Almanac and Directory*, 1898.

³¹"A Visit to Oklahoma Territory," *Evangelical Visitor*, August 1, 1893, p. 235.

³²*Ibid.*, July 15, 1897, p. 227.

³³*Ibid.*, July 1, 1898, p. 254.

³⁴*Ibid.*, February 1, 1900, p. 54.

³⁵Sider, p. 61.

³⁶*Evangelical Visitor*, July 1, 1904, p. 2; *ibid.*, September 1, 1904, p. 14; *ibid.*, September 15, 1904, p. 13; *ibid.*, December 1, 1904, p. 3.

³⁷Byer, p. 8.

³⁸Sider, pp. 69-74; *Evangelical Visitor*, February 1, 1908, p. 16.

³⁹Ibid., July 16, 1934, p. 8.

⁴⁰Samuel Zook, "A Western Mission Tour," *ibid.*, January 15, 1893, p. 29.

⁴¹Ibid., October 1, 1908, p. 16; *ibid.*, November 8, 1943, p. 360.

⁴²Ibid., November 1, 1888, p. 254.

⁴³Sider, "Sarah Hoover Bert," pp. 17-45.

⁴⁴Engle, et al, *No Difference*, p. 370.

⁴⁵Katie Bollinger obituary, *Evangelical Visitor*, January 16, 1967, pp. 22,23.

⁴⁶Avas Carlson interview, December 8, 1990, Messiah Village.

9. Foreign Missions

¹Wilma Musser, "Rhoda E. Lee," *Brethren in Christ History and Life*, June 1974, pp. 6-9.

²Rhoda E. Lee, "An appeal for Foreign Missions," *Evangelical Visitor*, June 1894, pp. 162,163; *ibid.*, October 2, 1916, p. 8.

³J. K. Forney, "A Reminiscence," *ibid.*, August 28,29, 1937, pp. 30,31.

⁴*General Conference Minutes*, 1894, p. 4.

⁵August 15, 1894, p. 241; September 15, 1894, p. 275; April 15, 1895, pp. 115,116.

⁶Ibid., July 1, 1895, pp. 193,194; *General Conference Minutes*, 1895, p. 2.

⁷Martin Schrag, "Societies Influencing the Brethren in Christ Toward Missionary Work," *Notes and Queries in Brethren in Christ History*, January 1967, pp. 1-4.

⁸*Evangelical Visitor*, December 15, 1895, p. 376; *ibid.*, September 15, 1897, p. 307; *Gospel Message*, July 15, 1896, p. 15; and many others through October 1897, p. 14.

⁹Obituaries, *ibid.*, October, November 1899, p. 7; *Evangelical Visitor*, December 1, 1899, p. 460; *Abilene Daily Reflector*, November 1899.

¹⁰Wilma Musser, "Hettie Fernbaugh, Missionary Pioneer," *Notes and Queries in Brethren in Christ History*, July 1965, pp. 16-22.

¹¹"Golden Anniversary History of the First Methodist Episcopal Church," Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 1939; "The Morocco Mission," *Gospel Message*, December 15, 1894, pp. 2,3, includes picture of the Nathan family.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Hettie Fernbaugh letter to Josie Haynes, Abilene, August 4, 1895. All of Fernbaugh's letters to her sister are in Archives. The author is a great-niece of Hettie Fernbaugh's, being a granddaughter of Josie Haynes.

¹⁴The author has her hand-written notebook with Arabic lessons.

¹⁵August 1, 1895, p. 228.

¹⁶May 21, 1899, Archives.

¹⁷Hettie Fernbaugh obituary, *Evangelical Visitor*, July 1, 1904, p. 16 (which erroneously gives her birth year as 1879 instead of 1870).

¹⁸January 15, 1897, p. 25.

¹⁹Engle, et al., *No Difference*, p. 16.

²⁰Sider, "Frances Davidson," pp. 159-212.

²¹Diary of Elizabeth Herr reports being at John Heise's and helping Alice Heise prepare to attend McPherson College, October 1890 (Archives); see also

Brown County World, April 1891, February 1892, Archives, for report on her being a McPherson student.

²²Lois Hershey Guengerich interview, May 31, 1990.

²³*Evangelical Visitor*, July 15, 1897, p. 226.

²⁴Letter to Tillman and Lizzie Erb from Matopa Mission, Bulawayo, South Africa, February 1899, Archives.

²⁵Engle, et al., *No Difference*, p. 18.

²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 363.

²⁷*Ibid.*, p. 62.

²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 362.

²⁹*Evangelical Visitor*, December 22, 1952, p. 9.

³⁰Frances Davidson obituary, *ibid.*, December 23, 1935, p. 409.

³¹Engle, et al., *No Difference*, pp. 361-386.

³²J. G. Cassel, "Honduras," *Evangelical Visitor*, September, 15, 1899, p. 357.

³³*Ibid.*, December 15, 1898, p. 474; June 1, 1899, p. 215; August 1, 1900, p. 294.

³⁴*Ibid.*, October 15, 1898, p. 394; November 15, 1899, p. 434.

³⁵Schrag, *Notes and Queries*, January 1963; "Societies Influencing Brethren in Christ Toward Missionary Work," *ibid.*, January 1967.

³⁶Engle et al., *No Difference*, p. 363.

³⁷*Evangelical Visitor*, February 1, 1908, p. 16.

³⁸Emma Martha Zook obituary, *ibid.*, August 1, 1900, p. 300; Noah Zook, "On Our Mission," *ibid.*, August 15, 1900, p. 316; Hannah Mary Zook obituary, *ibid.*, August 16, 1926, p. 8.

³⁹Noah Zook, "On Our Mission," *ibid.*, July 15, 1898, pp. 277,278; *ibid.*, November, 15, 1898, p. 434.

⁴⁰Emma Herr obituary, *ibid.*, February 25, 1973, p. 15.

⁴¹The diaries of Jacob Engle, including the account of his trip back to Pennsylvania to propose to his future wife, as well as the account of his visit to foreign missions, are in possession of a grandson, Eldon Engle of Abilene, Kansas.

10. The Holiness Movement

¹*General Conference Minutes*, 1887, Article III, full text, pp. 55-64.

²North Dickinson Council minutes, September 18, 1894, Article VI.

³*General Conference Minutes*, 1903, Article XXI, pp. 13,14.

⁴"Enroute to India," *Evangelical Visitor*, February 1, 1896, pp. 37,38.

⁵Dodd, p. 201.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 232. Eisenhower left comments on his spiritual experiences to be used with his obituary. For these, with comments, see William Allen White, "Current Opinion, Old Time Religion," *Topeka Daily Capital*, April 2, 1943.

⁷Letter from Grace Book Brubaker, daughter, to Carlton Wittlinger, May 29, 1973, Archives.

⁸Martin Schrag, "Spiritual Pilgrimage of the Reverend Benjamin Hardin Irwin," *Brethren in Christ History and Life*, June 1981, pp. 20, 21.

⁹Schrag, "Benjamin Hardin Irwin and the Brethren in Christ," *Brethren in Christ History and Life*, December 1981, pp. 92,93. For excellent coverage read both articles by Schrag.

- ¹⁰Ibid., pp. 109,110.
- ¹¹Kansas Joint Council minutes, Zion, February 19, 1889, Article X.
- ¹²*Evangelical Visitor*, January 15, 1894, p. 32.
- ¹³Schrag, "Irwin and the Brethren in Christ," pp. 104-109.
- ¹⁴Ibid.; H. Engle, *Evangelical Visitor*, September 1, 1899, pp. 334-345.
- ¹⁵"Quakerlike River Brethren Coming East for Conference," April 26, 1903.
- ¹⁶Schrag, "Benjamin Hardin Irwin," p. 119.
- ¹⁷Everett Byer, "The Holiness Movement 1895-1903 as Reported in *Brown County World*, January 1898," Archives.
- ¹⁸*Brown County World*, May 1898.
- ¹⁹Ibid., May 1899.
- ²⁰Ibid., May 1900.
- ²¹"Neighbor News," *ibid.*, January 9, 1900.
- ²²*Brown County World*, January 1903.
- ²³Ibid., August 1899.
- ²⁴Byer, "The Holiness Movement."
- ²⁵Byer to author, November 1900.
- ²⁶Ibid.
- ²⁷Byer, "Pleasant Hill Brethren in Christ," p. 9, as reported by N.T. Franklin in 1933.
- ²⁸Letter, August 17, 1898, Archives.
- ²⁹A. J. Heise letter to wife, Mary, May 14, 1898, in possession of Irene Wagaman Engle, granddaughter of the Heises.
- ³⁰Jesse Engle, undated, but before December, 1898, Archives.
- ³¹Mary Engle Heise letter, December 29, 1898, Archives.
- ³²Ibid., February 11, 1900.
- ³³*Evangelical Visitor*, November 1, 1897, p. 366; *ibid.*, January 1, 1898, p. 5; "Try the Spirits," *ibid.*, June 15, 1898, p. 221; "Firey Experiences," *ibid.*, July 15, 1898, p. 275; "Religious Fanaticism," *ibid.*, May 1, 1899, pp. 175,176.
- ³⁴Samuel Zook, "Conference Forecast," *ibid.*, May 1, 1900, p. 174.
- ³⁵S. G. Engle, "A Warning Word," *ibid.*, August 15, 1900, p. 306.
- ³⁶Schrag, "Spiritual Pilgrimage," p. 23.
- ³⁷Obituary, *Evangelical Visitor*, February 1, 1901, p. 60.
- ³⁸Mary Heise letter to parents, May 1, 1899, says they had no doctor.
- ³⁹Illness reported, *The World*, Hamlin, Kansas, July 23, 1901; death reported, *ibid.*, July 26, 1901 (Everett Byer, "Pleasant Hill Brethren in Christ," p. 10).
- ⁴⁰*Evangelical Visitor*, August 15, 1901, p. 320.
- ⁴¹Noah Zook, "On Our Mission," *ibid.*, May 1, 1901, p. 177.
- ⁴²Schrag, "Irwin and the Brethren in Christ," p. 120. See also Wittlinger, pp. 321-341.
- ⁴³E. J. Swalm, "Save Thy People," *Evangelical Visitor*, August 1, 1938, p. 244.

11. Impact of a Cult

- ¹Dodd, p. 221.
- ²*Watch Tower*, January 1899, p. 2412; *ibid.*, December 1900, p. 2733; *ibid.*, December 1903, p. 3280.
- ³*General Conference Minutes*, 1891, 1901,1902.

- ⁴A. L. Eisenhower, "Life and Death," *Evangelical Visitor*, July 9, 1928, p. 5.
- ⁵"Firey Experiences," *ibid.*, July 15, 1898, p. 275; Zercher, "A Tie That Binds," p. 127.
- ⁶Abilene Sunday school record book, Archives.
- ⁷Raymond Eshelman, "History of Abilene Church," given on seventy-fifth anniversary of the Sunday school, 1961, Archives.
- ⁸Marley Cole, "Jehovah's Witnesses, The New World Society" (Vantage Press, New York, 1955), p. 190.
- ⁹Milton Eisenhower, "Abilene Remembered," *Eisenhower, American Hero*, ed. Ken Davis (American Heritage Publishing Co., N.Y., 1969), p. 33. (Used by permission, American Heritage Publishing Co.)
- ¹⁰Copy of her hand-written letter to Mrs. B. I. Lawson, in Cole Appendix.
- ¹¹Letter to Richard Boeckel, in Cole Appendix.
- ¹²Dodd, p. 224.
- ¹³*Ibid.*, p. 244.
- ¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 245.
- ¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 239.
- ¹⁶Cole, p. 192.

12. Sunday Schools

- ¹*General Conference Minutes*, 1885.
- ²J. A. Line, secretary, Sunday School minutes, March 28, 1886.
- ³*Ibid.*, December 25, 1887.
- ⁴[J. G. Engle], Belle Springs District Book, p. 5.
- ⁵Service of dedication, Rosebank Church, November 1, 1981.
- ⁶Joint Council, Belle Springs, March 18, 19, 1892, Article III.
- ⁷Wittlinger, p. 212.
- ⁸*Evangelical Visitor*, March 15, 1894, p. 87; *ibid.*, March 1, 1894, pp. 74, 75.
- ⁹Climenhaga, *History*, p. 236.
- ¹⁰Souvenir report of Brethren Sunday School, Abilene, 1909.
- ¹¹Souvenir, end-of-year record, 1910.
- ¹²Wittlinger, p. 212.
- ¹³"Brethren in Christ Sunday Schools in the Twentieth Century," *Forward* centennial issue, 1963, p. 15.
- ¹⁴John H. Engle obituary, *Evangelical Visitor*, October 12, 1925, pp. 8, 9.
- ¹⁵Record books, originals, Eisenhower Foundation, Abilene, Kansas; photocopies, Archives.

13. Decades of Change

- ¹Abilene Council minutes, October 2, 1883, Article II.
- ²North Dickinson Council minutes, Abilene, February 21, 1893, Article II.
- ³Raymond Eshelman, "Decisions of the Congregation, Abilene, Kansas," Archives.
- ⁴*Ibid.*
- ⁵State Council minutes, Bethel Church, May 17-22, 1917, p. 81. In 1916 the council acted to liquidate the balance of \$700 remaining on a loan for this

purchase (ibid., April 5, 6, 1916). George Lenhart of Abilene was named trustee when S. H. Bert resigned in 1917.

⁶General Conference Minutes, 1929, p. 46.

⁷Constitution and bylaws, 1973, pp. 20-24.

⁸General Conference Minutes, June 11-16, 1958, p. 32.

⁹Ibid., June 9-14, 1921, p. 9.

¹⁰Ibid., 1940, p. 46; also pp. 36, 37.

¹¹State Council minutes, April 4, 5, 1917, Article XVII.

¹²Reported by Raymond Eshelman, 1961 anniversary.

¹³State Council minutes, April 8, 1943, p. 10.

¹⁴Telephone conversation with author, October 27, 1990, and letter to author from Rosanlee Holt, November 20, 1990.

¹⁵E. Morris Sider, *Messiah College: A History* (Nappanee: Evangel Press, 1984), pp. 26-34.

¹⁶General Conference Minutes, May 17-22, 1917, Bethel Church, Kansas, p. 64; ibid., 1924, pp. 57, 59.

¹⁷Ibid., June 8-15, 1922, p. 9.

¹⁸Kansas State Council minutes, April 2, 3, 1924, Article XIX; Wittlinger, pp. 301, 302.

¹⁹General Conference Minutes, June 3, 1927, p. 11.

²⁰David Engle, "That Despised Prayer Circle," to the author, June 26, 1990, Abilene, Kansas; (Engle attended the meetings and felt the lack of holiness, particularly in the ministry.); interviews, 1990, with two Kansans who as youths, listened outside these meetings and heard derogatory remarks about church officials (Kansas Churches File, Archives).

²¹Doris Ledy Kubin letter to author, July 5, 1990. Mrs. Kubin attended the Tuesday night prayer meetings when a child. She remembers them as times of seeking for the Holy Spirit's moving in their hearts and throughout the community. She and her parents became members of the new church.

²²The author also recalls one girl who was so intent on having perfect attendance that she came to Sunday school with measles and sat in the furnace room. Her parents pled her case with the superintendent, requesting that she be given credit as present. (The girl was Evelyn Landis, daughter of Jake Landis.)

²³Mrs. Arthur Musser, "My Father," *Forward*, Centennial Issue, 1963, p. 17.

²⁴Belle Springs Council minutes, January 4, 1916.

²⁵Pleasant Hill Council minutes, February 20, 1894.

²⁶State Council minutes, April 6, 1927, p. 16.

²⁷Carol Hoover Wenger, telephone conversation with author, July 14, 1991.

²⁸Personal memories of author.

²⁹Ibid.; Alvin Hoover interview.

14. Demise of Three Churches

¹John Hoover obituary, *Evangelical Visitor*, July 14, 1930, p. 4.

²Sunday School Record Book, Archives.

³State Council and Sunday School Conference minutes, 1913, p. 11.

⁴Ibid., 1914, p. 9.

⁵Ibid., April 4, 5, 1917.

⁶Grover Easter, "Newbern Church," unpublished manuscript, Dickinson County Historical Society church book, Abilene, Kansas.

⁷*General Conference Minutes*, June 3, 1937.

⁸Special Newbern Council minutes, February 27, 1937; *General Conference Minutes*, June 3-7, 1937; South Dickinson District Council minutes, March 2, 1938.

⁹*Ibid.*, February 16, 1939, Article XVI.

¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹*Abilene-Reflector*, September 18, 1965.

¹²Sunday School Record Book, Archives.

¹³Record of annual meetings, Hebron Church, Archives.

¹⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁵State Council minutes, Belle Springs, April 2, 1942; *General Conference Minutes*, June 10-15, 1942, pp. 91,92.

¹⁶"Church Records," *Kansas Kin*, May 1988, p. 36.

¹⁷Henry and Elizabeth Herr Steinbrecher interview, April 18, 1990, in their Mountville, Pennsylvania, home.

¹⁸State Council minutes, February 14, 1946.

15. Church Leaders

¹M. G. Engle obituary, *Evangelical Visitor*, August 22, 1960, p. 16; Ray M. Zercher, "Keeper of the Charge: M. G. Engle," *Brethren in Christ History and Life*, August 1986, pp. 79-124.

²Miriam Bowers, "Anna Kraybill: A Woman Ordained," *ibid.*, June 1981, pp. 38-47.

³R. I. Witter obituary, *Evangelical Visitor*, February 27, 1967, pp. 14,15.

⁴Interviews, daughters Dorothy Schrag and Ardis Alderfer, October 29, 1990.

⁵M. M. Book obituary, *Evangelical Visitor*, May 25, 1977, p. 15.

⁶Faithe Landis, daughter, letter to author, October 14, 1990.

16. Meeting Changing Needs

¹*Midwest Regional Conference Minutes*, 1962.

²*Ibid.*, 1967.

³The above information is from the same source, *ibid.*, for years as indicated.

⁴Lawrence Riat, Dickinson County extension agent, in letter to author, July 17, 1990.

⁵The farmers: Mahlon Engle and Jared Hoover. Kansas farmers consider a return of thirty to thirty-three bushels per acre a good crop.

17. Three More Churches Disband

¹Editorial comment, *Evangelical Visitor*, July 1, 1892, p. 200.

²"Belle Spring [sic], Kansas," *ibid.*, August 1, 1891, p. 234.

³"Historic Church Sold," *Kansas City Star*, September 15, 1957; *Topeka State Journal*, September 12, 1957.

⁴State Council minutes, Zion, March 12, 1957; *General Conference Minutes*, June 12-17, 1957, pp. 81, 116.

⁵K. B. Hoover interview, April 3, 1990.

⁶Jesse Hoover interview, September 26, 1989, in his Abilene home. Participation in state and county fairs had been prohibited as early as 1884.

⁷Annual Council minutes, Bethel, December 15, 1942. The barn, or shed, was about 20 feet wide, open on both sides to accommodate horses head to head, the buggies standing outside. A central feed trough was supplied from an oats bin at one end and a hay mow overhead. During the 1936 General Conference, this structure was used to house a refreshment stand and some offices.

⁸Minutes, special meeting, Bethel, May 5, 1947; "Bethel Church to Celebrate 60 Years of Service," *Abilene Reflector*, November 23, 1947.

⁹"79-year-old Bethel B. in C. Church Merges with Abilene Congregation," *Abilene Reflector-Chronicle*, November 7, 1968.

¹⁰Bank deposit receipt in treasurer's book, Abilene Church.

¹¹*Midwest Regional Conference Minutes*, March 14, 1969, p. 15.

¹²Byer, "Pleasant Hill History," pp. 10,11.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 18.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 19. Permission to sell the church was granted by the 1980 General Conference.

¹⁵*Midwest Regional Conference Minutes*, March 21, 1980, Article VII.

¹⁶Byer, p. 20.

¹⁷*Midwest Regional Conference Minutes*, March 20-22, 1981, p. 18.

¹⁸Everett Byer telephone conversation with author, March 27, 1991.

18. Surviving Churches

¹Annual Council minutes, Abilene, 1908.

²Written report in council minutes book.

³Annual Council minutes, 1908; "A Short History of the Brethren in Christ Church," Service of Dedication, April 5, 1970.

⁴Annual Sunday School Souvenir Report, 1909.

⁵*Booster*, 1938.

⁶Faith Carlson interview, August 24, 1989.

⁷Personal memories of author.

⁸Glenn A. Hensel interview, September 9, 1989.

⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁰*Midwest Regional Conference Minutes*, March 14, 1969, p. 16.

¹¹Virgil Wenger, church trustee, telephone interview, June 1990.

¹²David Musser interview, September 22, 1989.

¹³Abilene church board minutes, October 3, 1915.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, December 14, 1949.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, October 31, 1951.

¹⁶*Midwest Regional Conference Minutes*, 1990

¹⁷Dorothy Longenecker, "History of the Zion Church," 1959, typed manuscript, Archives.

¹⁸Frances Lady, interview.

¹⁹Samuel F. Minter, *Zion Brethren in Christ Church Centennial, 1887-1987: Memories*, October 1987.

²⁰Longenecker, "Zion Church."

²¹"The Millers," *Centennial Memories*.

²²"The Ryans," *ibid*.

²³"The Bowells," *ibid*.

²⁴Mary Ann Hershey's husband, Adam Frey, attended but never joined the Brethren in Christ Church. He was first a member of the Lutheran Church, then the Reformed Church of Fairfield, Pennsylvania (*Evangelical Visitor*, November 7, 1927, p. 8).

²⁵The generational listings were supplied by Mahlon and Irene Engle, 1990.

²⁶"Service of Dedication and Homecoming," Rosebank, November 1, 1981.

²⁷Florence Hostetter, letter to the author, March 23, 1991.

²⁸Mary Rohrer, letter to the author, March 14, 1991.

19. Administrative Changes

¹Ray M. Zercher, "Highlights of the Brethren in Christ," *The Pilgrimage of the Brethren in Christ* (Nappanee: Evangel Press, 1978), p. 26.

20. Extension

¹Charles Norman, letter to author, April 30, 1990.

²Sheron Brunner, comment to author, July 1, 1990.

21. Past and Future

¹Glenn A. Ginder, letter to author, September 19, 1990.



Wilma I. Musser

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