

# BRETHREN IN CHRIST HISTORY & LIFE

VOL. XXXI • NO. 2 • AUGUST 2008



## Brethren in Christ History and Life

Published by the Brethren in Christ Historical Society. Membership and subscription: one year, \$10; contributing members, \$25; supporting members, \$50; patron members, \$100; lifetime members, a minimum one-time contribution of \$1,000. Single issues of the journal, \$5.00. Address articles and communications to E. Morris Sider, Editor, *Brethren in Christ History and Life*, P. O. Box 310, Grantham, PA 17027 (telephone 717-766-7767 or 717-697-2634; e-mail: msider@messiah.edu). Membership fees should be sent to Brethren in Christ Historical Society, P.O. Box 310, Grantham, PA 17027 or to P.O. Box A, Grantham, PA 17027. Articles appearing in this journal are abstracted and indexed in *Historical Abstracts* and *America: History and Life*. They are also indexed in *Christian Periodical Index* and in *Religion Index One: Periodicals, Index to Book Reviews in Religion, ATLA Religion Database*, published by the American Theological Library Association, 250 S. Walker Dr., 16<sup>th</sup> Floor, Chicago, IL 60606. E-mail: atla@atla.com, www:http://www.atla.com/.

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## From the Editor

Readers of this journal frequently inform me that biographies are among the features they most appreciate and enjoy. Perhaps I should not be so surprised as I am with this view. Biographies, of course, are about people in whom we often identify traits and actions that tell us something about ourselves. More particular to this journal are the biographies of people many readers know or about whom they have heard. In a sense, to read their biographies is to visit them in a vicarious but nevertheless in an intimate way.

Undoubtedly a large percentage of the members of the Brethren in Christ Historical Society, publishers of this journal, know Dwight and Faye Bert either personally or by name. This is no accident: for decades they have been influential servants of the church (including generous financial supporters of our Historical Society) and the broader society, as well as leaders in the business community of Southern California. In the first article of this issue, Donald Clucas highlights the background of this Brethren in Christ couple and reviews the contributions that they have made in the various circles in which they move.

In the next section of this issue, eighteen Brethren in Christ (all members of the Historical Society) each relate the influence of home and congregation on her or his life. The inspiration for these accounts came from similar autobiographical presentations made at the annual Heritage Service in the Ringgold meetinghouse in Maryland. (The articles by Eunice Zook and Nancy Hunsberger are from the Heritage Service in 2007.) All writers are of sufficient age to reflect on their childhood and youth to evaluate the experiences from that part of their lives. I find their accounts warm and surprisingly appreciative of the homes and congregations that helped to shape their lives.

Erma and Harvey Sider in the following article helpfully analyze these personal accounts. They find many parallels in the stories, but also some differences, all of which are helpful in understanding the Brethren in Christ past and present. The Siders rightly point out that another collection of accounts by people no longer members of the denomination could also tell us something about our past. Such a collection may be a consideration for a future issue of this journal.

Richard Neff's description of his work as a painter is the second in a series of articles on Brethren in Christ and the arts (the December 2007 issue featured the photography of George Bundy). Neff's work reminds us that interest and activity in the arts is for all ages, not only for the young. As editor, I invite readers to inform me of other Brethren in Christ artists (working in various media) whose work might be featured in this journal.

Leonard Chester's short history of the Theological College of Zimbabwe is important to us because of the college's Brethren in Christ connections. Some of its administrators and faculty have been and are Brethren in Christ—some from North America, others from Zimbabwe. Brethren in Christ Africans are among its student body, and a growing number of African Brethren in Christ pastors are graduates of the college. In the future, we shall very likely learn more of the work and the contributions of this institution.

This August issue comes unusually early because of plans to release it at General Conference at the end of June.

E. Morris Sider

# Serving God and People: The Lives of Dwight and Faye Bert

*By Donald Laine Clucas\**

## Introduction

Who are Dwight and Faye Bert? My wife Joanie and I first met them formally when we became a part of the Alta Loma Brethren in Christ Church in California in 1989. We had observed in them such things as loyalty, friendship, generosity, and hospitality. I knew the two were involved not only in church affairs, but also in the community. I realized Dwight was a successful businessman and Faye was involved as a member of the Board of Trustees at Azusa Pacific University. As time progressed, I had the privilege of interviewing Dwight as I was researching information for two books I was writing concerning the city of Upland. During that time, I got to know a little more about him.

After researching and writing the following story about the Berts, I have come to realize more fully what a marvelous couple they are. They are two people brought together by the Lord to share a life of serving him as well as others.<sup>1</sup>

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\* Donald L. Clucas is a member of the Solid Ground Brethren in Christ Church in Alta Loma, California. Before retirement he was a teacher, athletic coach, and administrator in California schools. In retirement he has been an adjunct professor at Azusa Pacific University, and has written extensively on people and places in Southern California.

## The Bert Heritage

Dwight Bert's recorded heritage began in the small village of Pragalato located in the Italian Alps. These mountains rise from the Po Valley giving the area the name Piedmont, which means the "the feet of the mountains."<sup>2</sup>

Peter Bert's mother, Elizabeth Bastre Bert, immigrated to America in 1830. After arriving in the United States, Elizabeth, Peter, and his half-brother Jacob traveled to Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. Having no home there, they slept in a barn.<sup>3</sup>

On the second day in their new "home," Peter was hired as a weaver by Jacob Winger, a River Brethren (now Brethren in Christ). Peter's new employer regularly held family worship in his home. Soon, as related by Sarah Bert, "he became convicted of sin and was converted."

Peter's mother disapproved of his Christian stand, so she took Jacob and moved to Waterloo, Illinois. At Waterloo, she met and married a Mr. Preiffer. Peter's mother later became seriously ill and sent for him to come pray for her. He did, and she was converted. Thus began the Christian heritage of the Bert family.

In 1879, Peter gave his farm near Chambersburg to his son John, and moved to Dickinson County, Kansas, with the remainder of his children who had been born to his second and third wives, Maria Hoover Bert and Anna Hoover Bert, respectively. The Berts were part of a colony of Brethren in Christ who moved west together.

According to his daughter Sarah, Peter "was an ordained minister of the gospel in the Brethren in Christ Church. He was a deeply spiritual man, with a keen insight into the problems of the human heart; a man of very high principles, with a fine sense of right and wrong. As a wise counselor, he was not only much sought after for his godly advice while he was living, but his sayings were often repeated long after he had passed away. As a business man, he was industrious and farsighted, and may be well described in the Apostle Paul's

words, "Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord" (Rom. 12:11).<sup>4</sup>

Following the death of his first wife, Elizabeth Sollenberger Bert, Peter married Maria Hoover. The couple had two children, John H. and Maria H. After Maria's death, Peter married Anna Hoover. Peter and Anna had eight children: Samuel H., Anna H., Elizabeth H., Peter H., Jacob H., Michael H., Daniel H., and Sarah H.

The ninth child, Daniel, married Susan Page. Together, they would eventually become the paternal grandparents of Dwight Bert. Daniel was described as having spent most of his life on a farm north of Abilene, Kansas, except for a few years in California. He was held in high esteem by his neighbors and friends. It was said that his life was above reproach. He often expressed his appreciation for the prayers and teachings of his father and for what they meant in his life. Daniel and Susan were parents to six children. The second child, Joseph Page Bert, was Dwight's father.<sup>5</sup>

Joseph grew up on the Kansas farm of his parents. Typical for farm boys at that time, his education was often interrupted. He finished grammar school and had no further formal training. Deciding he did not want to spend his life farming in Kansas, he traveled to California where he met Ada Ruth Franklin in Upland, the city where Joseph lived until his death. Ada was the daughter of Nathan Thomas and Emma Franklin. Ada had an older brother, Roy, and a younger sister, Mae. Joe and Ada were married in 1910.<sup>6</sup>

The two were parents to three sons.<sup>7</sup> The firstborn, Nathan Theodore, died in 1914 at the age of a little over a year and a half.<sup>8</sup> Shortly after Nathan's death, Joe and Ada moved to Kansas where Joe once again tried his hand at farming. By 1916, the Berts had returned to California, purchasing a small dairy in the San Joaquin Valley.<sup>9</sup> While living on the farm, they attended the Brethren in Christ Church in Waukena.<sup>10</sup> In 1917 the second boy, Eldon Franklin Bert, was born.

When Eldon was three years old, both Joe and Ada were impressed by the Lord that they should sell the farm and move to San Francisco where they would help at the Life Line

Mission. To determine that the Lord was truly speaking to them about the move, they decided that if a buyer made a reasonable offer for the farm in a short period of time, that would be a sign that the Lord did, indeed, want them to begin work at the Mission. The sale was made shortly thereafter.<sup>11</sup>

In about the year 1922, Joe and Ada decided to finish their work at the Mission and move back to Upland. The couple, along with little Eldon, moved into a house on 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, just below the Pacific Electric Railroad tracks (now the Pacific Electric Bike Trail).<sup>12</sup> In this home, in 1923, the third child, Dwight Eugene Bert, was born.<sup>13</sup> When Dwight was approximately one year old, his family moved to 563 Third Avenue.

Dwight is not certain of the reason why his parents' families chose Upland as their residence except that it was a center for people from the Brethren in Christ Church, of which his parents and grandparents were members. He does know that his father wrote a letter to his parents in Kansas describing his first impressions of the area. He wrote that he sat on the corner of Arrow Highway close to Mountain Avenue and witnessed three automobiles pass by. He was impressed because automobiles were just then coming on the scene.<sup>14</sup>

As a member of the Brethren in Christ Church, Joe served on the Upland congregation's church board for many years and also on the board of Beulah College (later Upland College). Although their house was small in size, Joe and Ada would often give free living quarters to Beulah College students who could not afford room and board at the school.<sup>15</sup>

During the mid-1920s, Joe worked for several years in the new San Antonio Hospital in Upland. In later years, his son Dwight would serve as chairman of the Board of Trustees of the expanded hospital.

In Upland, Joe became employed by the Citrus Belt Milling Company. The company owned several stores in the Pomona Valley, including one at the northwest corner of Third Avenue and "A" Street in Upland. Joe became responsible for loading trucks, hauling hay, and making deliveries.<sup>16</sup>



Dwight Bert's great-grandfather, Benjamin Byer (around 1910). (All photographs are from the Bert family collection unless otherwise indicated.)



Dwight Bert's great-grandmother, Nancy Byer (around 1910)

In 1926, Joe was invited to become a partner with J. C. Mehl and Bert L. Decker in the Upland Feed and Fuel Company. Mehl and Decker had bought the former Citrus Belt Milling Company store in Upland. As a partner with Mehl and Decker, Joe became a successful merchant in the hay and grain business.<sup>17</sup> At one point, J. J. Atwood, the founder of Atwood's Department Store, was one of the owners of the Upland Feed and Fuel Company. A pioneer rancher from Ontario by the name of Walline was also a partner in the company.

Dwight's mother, Ada Franklin, also moved to Upland from Kansas with her parents in 1899. Ada was the daughter of Nathan Thomas Franklin and Emma Byer Franklin. Emma was the daughter of Benjamin and Nancy Byer who were farmers in Brown County, Kansas.<sup>18</sup> Dwight remembers his mother recounting her school days at the old grammar school at the southeast corner of Euclid Avenue and Ninth Street in Upland.

In 1948, Joseph and Ada were traveling through New Mexico on their way to Joseph's Aunt Sarah's funeral in Kansas, when they were involved in a tragic accident. Ada was killed in the crash.<sup>19</sup> Several years later, Joseph married Jane (Jennie) Plum who had lived all her life in Upland.

Dwight vividly recalls his school days at Fannie D. Noe School and Upland Junior High School. He fondly remembers that there was "a good deal of fun as well as mischief."

He recalls that as a young boy he would slip out of Upland Feed and Fuel and head for the police station just a couple doors south of the store. Slipping into the narrow walkway which is just to the north side of what was the jail at 126 N. Second Avenue, he would come to a door with bars set into it. To his delight, and to the delight of the other boys who were with him, he would get a chance to talk to inmates housed in the facility.

Across the street from the jail was the Zenz Café. Dwight recalls two distinctive things concerning the eatery. One was that a person could buy a hamburger and malt for fifty cents.



The Bert family (around 1936).  
Left to right: Eldon, Dwight, Joe, and Ada

The other was that food was purchased there and delivered to the men being held in the jail.

In 1936, when Dwight was thirteen years old, his father told him that a friend, Harold Rowe, had asked if his son would be interested in working for him at his service station weekdays after school and on Saturdays. While his father was talking to him about Rowe's inquiry, Dwight assumed he was referring to a job for his older brother Eldon, six years Dwight's senior. When it was made clear that it was Dwight whom Rowe wanted to hire and not his older brother, the young boy jumped at the chance and could not wait to begin work.

Rowe's service station was located at the southeast corner of Second Avenue and Arrow Highway, less than one block from the Bert home on Third Avenue. He walked to the station the following Saturday morning, beginning his new job at 7:00 a.m. After working a ten-hour shift, Dwight was asked by Rowe how much he thought he was worth per hour. Dwight replied that he would accept whatever his new employer felt he was worth. Rowe then asked, "How does twenty-five cents per hour sound?" "Fine, Mister Rowe," Dwight answered.

When Dwight arrived home that evening, his father asked him how much money he had made that day. When Dwight told him the total was \$2.50, his father told him he wasn't worth that much. He told the boy he was only worth fifteen cents an hour. At least for a while, Rowe paid Dwight the lesser amount.

Sunday followed Dwight's first time at work. Before church, the elder Bert told his son that he was to put twenty-five cents from his wages into the offering plate that morning. Dwight realizes, now, that he needed the experience of tithing from his wages more than God needed the twenty-five cents. The discipline has served Dwight and Faye well throughout their married life; they have always used ten percent as their minimum tithing goal, along with the biblical context of tithes and offerings.

When Dwight reached the age of sixteen years, Rowe began leaving him in charge of the station when he and his

family went on vacations. Rowe would sign checks and leave them in the office safe in order that Dwight could pay bills during Rowe's absence.

Dwight continued to work for Harold Rowe through his high school days, and during vacation times while attending college. Their relationship as employer and employee came to an end when Dwight was drafted into the Army during World War II.

Dwight also has fond memories of days at the family cabin located in Barrett Canyon near "the Hogsback" in San Antonio Canyon near Upland. The family would spend weekends at the cabin and hike through the mountains. The family would also entertain fellow Brethren in Christ people at the cabin.

### The Foreman Heritage

Faye was born Evelyn Faye Foreman in Dayton, Ohio, on May 24, 1922. Her parents were James E. Foreman and Iva May Arnett Foreman. Her father was fourth from the youngest of thirteen children born to Henry Foreman and Margaret Adaline Lephart Foreman. James had three brothers and nine sisters.

Henry Foreman's father (Faye's great-grandfather), Reizin Foreman, was married to a Blackfoot Indian woman. The couple had five children, but in the family genealogy she is listed as "wife unknown." Reizin Foreman was killed fighting in the Civil War. His wife was not able to raise her five children by herself, therefore she gave them up for adoption.

Faye's father, James, was a United States Marine during World War I, serving in Europe. During his tour of duty, he was wounded twice and was reported "Missing in Action." After being wounded the second time, he was taken to a French hospital by French medics. During his time of recovery he was reported missing. Following his safe return home, he and Iva May were married.



Faye Bert's parents, Jim and Iva Foreman



Faye Bert's grandmother, Lydia Wright Arnett (around 1890)

Margaret Lephart's family were immigrants from Prussia and Germany. Faye's great-great-grandfather, Augustus Lephart, a farmer, was born in Prussia in 1819. Their eldest child, Henry, was to become Faye's great-grandfather. Henry married Sarah Moyer and together they operated a kiln on their 160 acre place in Ansonia, Ohio.

Faye's maternal grandparents were Andrew (Andy) Jackson Arnett and Lydia Wright Arnett. Andy Arnett was born in Potsdam, Ohio, in 1868. The couple had nine children, two of whom died in infancy.

Andy was a carpenter by trade and also played in a band. He kept a very interesting diary his entire adult life. In it he recorded an enormous amount of everyday family history. He wrote concerning such matters as farm, construction, and Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church life in Southern Ohio. (The denomination is now known as the Missionary Church.) Some of the interesting notes concerning the church were about "protracted meetings," evangelistic meetings which lasted about six weeks. There are also entries on politics, the weather, and getting haircuts.

Faye and her brother became members of their parents' church following their confession of faith in Jesus Christ and their baptism which took place in a creek near Ludlow Falls Camp Ground.

When Faye was five years old, her family moved about twelve miles northwest to the small town of Union. Little Faye was very upset about the move because her parents had told her there was no kindergarten class in Union. Faye would live in Union until 1939 when she enrolled in Messiah College Academy for her senior year of high school. Following graduation in 1940, Faye completed two years at Messiah Junior College.

Faye was involved in various aspects of the school life at Grantham. One of her most vivid memories was being cast in a dramatic production in which she played the part of a nurse and Dwight's cousin, Orville, was cast as a doctor. Class advisor Norman Wingert, who was the father of Faye's friend, Lois Wingert Tidgewell, was playing the part of a man who

was in need of a leg amputation. Mr. Wingert was used in this capacity because he actually did have an artificial leg. During the scene, the "amputated" limb was then draped over Faye's arm and she was to carry it off stage. Faye was under the impression the prosthesis would remain straight as she carried it away, but, to her surprise, it bent, causing her to let out an unscripted scream. Needless to say, she was embarrassed, but the show "did go on!"

In the fall of 1940, during her time at Messiah Junior College, she met Dwight. She inquired of another student about Dwight and his cousin Orville. She was told they were the Bert boys from California. This apparently explained why they were dressed differently from most of the male students from the East who typically wore black suits with either plain coats or vests.

#### Marriage and Noncombatant Military Service

Dwight and Faye began dating in the spring of 1941. At the time the two were staff members of the *Flash*, a predecessor of Messiah's *Wittenberg Door*. Faye was the typist for the publication and Dwight offered to help her with the typing. During this time, Dwight asked her out on their first date.

Faye's parents, as well as her brother, became quite concerned upon hearing she was dating a boy from California. Faye's brother received the news in a letter from a friend who was attending Messiah. The friend wrote, "There are two guys from California and they wear long pants and they know it." Faye never understood the statement.

While at church on Sunday morning, December 7, 1941, word came of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. As with so many young American men on that day, Dwight realized that it was quite possible he would be drafted into the military, and he made a statement of that nature to Faye. Dwight then decided this would be the proper opportunity to ask Faye to marry him. When Dwight proposed, he asked, in Faye's

words, "Will you marry me, or does it depend on the weather?" The "weather," presumably, was the notion Dwight had that another young man at the school had asked Faye for a date and her answer was, "It depends upon the weather." Faye's response to Dwight was positive.

Following the end of the school year in May 1942, the couple traveled to her home in Ohio in order for Dwight to meet her family and to let them "look him over." Dwight went home to Upland and Faye followed in January 1943 to meet with her prospective in-laws, and then returned home to Ohio. During their time apart she and Dwight continued to correspond with each other by mail until Dwight was drafted into the United States Army in 1943.

Faye had met Dwight's parents on a previous occasion when they had traveled to Messiah College to pick him up for a family vacation touring the east coast. She remembers she was to have a part in a piano recital that day and was frightened about the prospect that the elder Berts and the parents of Virginia Bert Alderfer (Dwight's cousin), who were traveling on the tour also, would come to see her play. She begged her instructor, Francis Smith, to "let her off the hook," but to no avail. Faye remembers how her peddle foot shook uncontrollably, but she got through the recital.

That Dwight, as well as other young men in the Brethren in Christ Church, had made a decision to become a part of the armed services caused a little stir within the church. Historically, the denomination had taken a very strict position of not allowing members to join the military even in the role of a non-combatant. The matter was serious enough that members were told that if any joined the armed forces, their names would be stricken from the church. Some of the men in the Upland Brethren in Christ Church who could be drafted were Eldon Bert, Norman and Donovan Byer, as well as others. The mothers of the young men got together and made it clear to leadership that if their boys' names were taken from the rolls of the church for serving their country, their names would need to be removed also. The boys' names remained.

Dwight joined the Army as a non-combatant. After being drafted into the army, he spent some time at several camps. He was initially assigned to Camp Barkeley a few miles southwest of Abilene, Texas, for basic training. Dwight was not issued any firearms due to his non-combatant status, but all other activities were the same as for all recruits.

Several weeks after arriving at the camp, Dwight was notified he was to meet at a large hall that had been modified as a classroom. He was one of about fifty men assembled there. The soldiers were told they would be given an examination to determine their exact skills.

Several days later, Dwight was informed by the drill sergeant that he was to report to the Base Commander Office. When he arrived, the commander told him he had some questions regarding his non-combatant status. His first question was, "Are you afraid to die?" Dwight answered, "No, I am not because I am a Christian and not afraid of death." The officer then asked why Dwight had chosen to be a non-combatant. Dwight explained that he had been born and reared in a conservative evangelical church that embraced the peace, or conscientious objector, position for the young men of the church. Dwight said that he struggled with the position for some time, realizing he would probably be sent overseas at some point during the war. However, he also realized he was not comfortable with the conscientious objector position, therefore he had registered as a non-combatant.

His answers to the questions seemed to satisfy the commander who then proceeded to tell him that was not the reason he had called him. The officer had actually wanted to talk to Dwight about the results of the test he had taken several days earlier. Dwight had received a very high score and the officer wanted to recommend that the young soldier be sent to officers' training school.

The commander explained that because of Dwight's previous college training he would, most likely, never be required to use arms and to fight in combat. However, in order to proceed with the transfer, Dwight would be asked to disclaim his non-combatant status. Dwight thanked him and



Faye Bert with her mother (Iva) and brother (Bob)

told him he truly appreciated his offer, but he did not feel that giving up his non-combatant position in order to become an officer was something he could do. The officer then thanked Dwight and excused him.

Later, Dwight was assigned to Camp Carson, near Colorado Springs, Colorado.<sup>20</sup> Dwight wrote to Faye stating that because he would be shipped out soon, he wanted to get married as soon as possible. Without the possibility of furlough or time off due to the urgency of the war, Dwight and Faye made the decision to be married before he went overseas.<sup>21</sup> Faye was not quite twenty-one years old at the time; her parents had made it clear she could not get married until she had reached that age.

Dwight and Faye were married in Pueblo, Colorado on May 25, in the home of the officiating pastor, Millard Powell of the Friends Church in Pueblo. Reverend Powell was an old friend of Faye's parents. Because Dwight was in the Army, he was able to obtain a waiver which allowed him to get his blood test and other matters taken care of in a very short period of time.

Other than Faye's mother, the only people in attendance were the pastor's wife and children. Joe Bert was not able to attend the wedding because of his responsibilities at his feed store, but Dwight's mother, Ada, and his brother, Eldon, decided they would take a train to Colorado. At the time, most railroads were operating primarily for the military, but the two were, surprisingly, able to secure reservations. Ada and Eldon boarded the train at the Santa Fe depot in Upland at nine o'clock in the evening. The train ran very slowly, however, because of the numerous times it had to take a siding and wait for troop trains to pass. By the following morning, the train had only reached the town of Barstow<sup>22</sup>

It was a slow trip all the way, and when the two finally reached Pueblo, they carried their luggage several blocks to the address Dwight and Faye had given them. They were not to be found, so mother and son began a search for them. As they walked through a small city park, they discovered Dwight

and Faye sitting on one of the park benches. It was then that they discovered the wedding had taken place the day before.<sup>23</sup>

Soldiers who were married were given permission to live off the base grounds, therefore Dwight and Faye were able to live together for three months in Colorado Springs. A nice older couple owned the place where the newlyweds lived. Rev. Powell had made the contact because he was acquainted with the couple who attended the Friends Church located across the street from their home. The couple's children had grown and left home, so there was room for Dwight and Faye to move in. Faye describes their "big" apartment as having one living room with a couch and a hot plate. The two had to share bathroom facilities with the older couple. Rent for the room was \$2.50 per week.

The Berts did not have a large income, as was standard for military personnel. For entertainment, Dwight and Faye would take the city bus to a park where they could listen to a band. Occasionally they received a little money from their parents which allowed them to have something extra, such as dinner at a restaurant.

During their three-month stay at their residence, the couple attended the Friends Church across the street. Faye served as a teacher and played the piano for Bible school at the church.

The following September, Dwight was sent to San Francisco where he was assigned to the 124<sup>th</sup> Station Hospital. He was informed the unit he was assigned to was to build and operate a station hospital in the war zone of the South Pacific. While Dwight awaited orders to be sent overseas, Faye returned home to live with her parents in Ohio.

Dwight was overseas for almost three years. His company arrived in Australia, then went to New Guinea, at that time quite uncivilized. From there, Dwight was assigned to a Liberty Ship which traveled north, not knowing exactly where its destination would be.

The second night at sea, Dwight was sleeping in the back of an army truck which was loaded with ammunition. At about midnight, he was awakened by a terrible grinding sound.

Thinking an attack was occurring, Dwight and others jumped to their feet. But the ship had run aground on a coral reef at low tide. The vessel was so badly caught on the reef that all of the troops were ordered to get on the side of the ship that was tilted upward, hoping the action would "balance out" the craft. After two days had passed, a tug boat arrived and pulled them free from the coral reef.

With its crew and cargo intact, the ship continued north until it reached its destination of Red Beach on the island of Leyte in the Philippines, two days after the Philippine "D-Day" of October 20, 1944. During his time at Red Beach, Dwight was visited several times by Faye's brother Bob, who was assigned to a navy mine sweeper in the South Pacific.

While Dwight was engaged in the war operations in the Pacific, he wrote every night to Faye (she still has most of those letters in her possession). But during the invasion of the Philippines she did not receive any mail from Dwight for a total of forty-five days. During that time, as with most wives and families who had loved ones involved with the military, Faye had that "uh-oh!" feeling anytime she heard a knock on the door. Faye's father, who had served in World War I, continually reassured her that Dwight was fine and was probably going with invasion forces in the Philippine Islands. Her father's words were of some comfort to her. However, she could not help remembering that two young men from the small town in Ohio where she was raised were missing in action at that time. It was a relief to her when she came home from work one day and found forty-five newly-arrived letters waiting for her.

Later, Faye would learn from Dwight that during the invasion of the Philippines the closest he came to any accident was when his outfit was readying to go ashore. A Japanese kamikaze airplane flew directly over the bow of the landing craft he was in and hit and destroyed the ship next to the craft. The airplane was so low and so close, Dwight could see the pilot's face.

While Dwight was overseas, he and Faye both cherished some special Bible verses which they agreed to read as often

as they could while they were apart. The Scripture they held dear was Psalm 91 which begins with these verses:

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.

He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

### Helping Raquel

During Dwight's service in the Philippines, a local woman by the name of Silveria came to the hospital where he was working and gathered dirty clothing from the men. She would wash them in a nearby river and pound the clothes with a rock, and return the clothing fresh and clean. She had five little children at the time, and Dwight would write home to Faye asking her to send items such as thread, needles, and yard goods for Silveria and her children. Silveria began writing to Faye as well as giving woven handbags, hats, and other items to Dwight to send home to Faye.

After the three years in the South Pacific and the end of the war, Dwight returned to the United States accompanied by slightly more than fifty percent of his original company.

In the spring of 1974, Dwight received a letter from Silveria stating that she had a twenty-one-year-old daughter named Raquel who wanted to come to the United States for schooling. She asked Dwight if he could help her. Dwight and Faye discussed the matter. At the time, the two were living in their home on North Euclid Avenue in Upland, California. The place was referred to as the "Cracker Jack House" by local



Dwight and Faye shortly after Dwight's return from nearly three years of service overseas in World War II



The "Cracker Jack" house (around 1976)

residents, because Henry Eckstein, developer of the packaging for the Cracker Jack confection,<sup>24</sup> had built the house as a winter residence for his family.

The Bert house was large and the two decided they could, indeed, give Raquel a place to stay while she was going to college. The Berts remodeled a room which had been used as a servant's quarters before the Berts purchased the house and turned into a bedroom for the young woman.

Dwight and Faye then helped Raquel to enroll as a student at Chaffey College in Alta Loma. They also signed an affidavit of support for her, and they purchased her a round-trip airline ticket. All of these items were required in order for her to be eligible to come to the United States.

Raquel moved from Leyte to Manila and stayed with relatives while applying for her visa. During the wait, the Berts and Raquel continued to correspond with each other. After approximately six months, Raquel wrote that she still had not received the visa. The Berts then traveled to the Philippines to investigate the problem.

Raquel, accompanied by some of her relatives, met the couple upon their arrival at Manila. The following morning the Berts took the young woman to the United States Embassy on Roxas Boulevard in Manila. They made their way to a room crowded with Filipinos desiring to travel to the United States.

A man approached Dwight and Faye and asked, "Aren't you in the wrong place?" After explaining their purpose for being there and telling the man they had done everything necessary to help Raquel get to the United States, the man led them to an adjoining center. The story was again explained to another man, and within a matter of minutes, the visa was issued. After receiving the visa, Raquel stood smiling and as she and the Berts turned around to leave, all of the Filipinos who had been waiting for their documents began applauding.

Dwight and Faye, now in the position of official sponsors, immediately took Raquel to get her appropriate vaccinations as well as a new outfit. The following morning, they boarded an airplane bound for the United States.

The couple knew Raquel belonged to the Roman Catholic faith, therefore, after arriving in California, they telephoned a priest at one of the local Roman Catholic churches to inquire about finding someone who could take her to church for Sunday services. The priest, in turn, recommended some people with whom the Berts were already acquainted.

After attending mass for about six weeks, Raquel came to Dwight and Faye and said, "Mom Bert and Dad Bert, I would like to go to your church."

After Raquel had been attending the Upland Brethren in Christ Church services for a while, Faye contacted the First Baptist Church in Pomona which was a few miles away from the Bert home. Faye had learned that the Pomona church had, as one of its ministries, an international program.

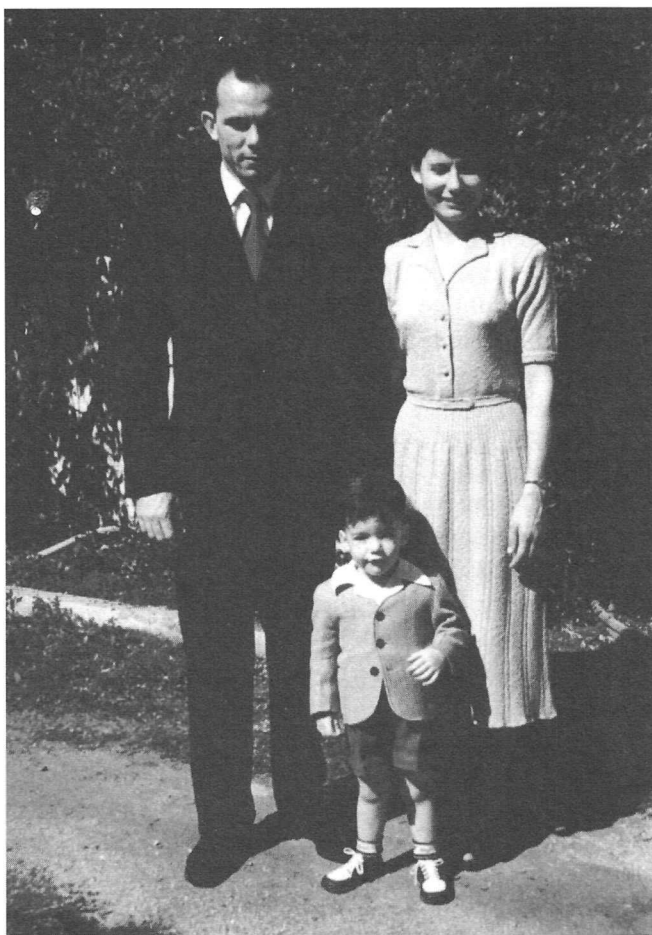
While spending the summer in Bible study and other activities provided in the international group, Raquel made many friends, including Antonio Tuazon, the man who would later become her husband. Bob Hempy was the officiating pastor for their wedding ceremony. The Berts once again remodeled the former servants' quarters. Raquel and Antonio lived there until they were able to find a new place for themselves.

At her first Christmas with Dwight and Faye, Raquel received a Bible as one of the gifts from the Berts. A few days following the holiday, Dwight asked her if she was enjoying her new Bible. "Oh, yes, Dad Bert," came the reply. "I'm on page. . . ."

Raquel proved to be a very intelligent young woman. She graduated from Chaffey College in two years even though she did not know the English language very well.

During one Christmas holiday, the Berts decided to bring Raquel's mother to the United States for a visit. The couple contacted Stan Long at the Christian Light Bookstore in Upland about purchasing a Catholic Bible for Silveria. After that, every photograph she sent to the Berts included her holding the Bible.

Raquel was like a sister to the Berts' sons, Ted and Joe. However, as boys will do, they had a habit of teasing Raquel,



Dwight and Faye with their first-born son, Theodore, in front of the first house the Berts purchased in Upland

causing her to call the boys “gago” in her native Tagalog language. The word means “stupid.” When Silveria was visiting the family, she overheard her daughter make the comment toward the two. Silveria was embarrassed by the word and immediately told Raquel she was being disrespectful.

Dwight and Faye’s two sons, Theodore and Joseph, were born in 1949 and 1953, respectively. Faye recalls that Ted and Joe were typical little boys—getting dirty, getting into trouble, and, to their mother, “being the most adorable little creatures in the world.”

### Business

During the 1940s, Dwight’s father had continued to operate Upland Feed and Fuel along with Dwight’s great-uncle, Bert Decker. Their only employee was Oren Decker, Bert’s son. During this time, Dwight’s brother Eldon and Oren’s brother Kenneth were silent partners in the business. At the end of 1947, Joseph and Bert retired. The two had decided to simply liquidate the inventory, sell the trucks and various items, and “close up the shop.”

Not wanting to see the business close, Dwight and Bert’s son Oren decided to try to keep the business going if their fathers would sell them the business. (Dwight was a student at Woodbury University at the time.) Their dream became reality: the two kept the business in operation until Oren passed away in 1972. Dwight remembers the venture as a fine partnership.

In an interview in 1978, Dwight stated that he and Oren had finally begun manufacturing their own feed. From there they went into operating their own ranches where they produced eggs for market. They then went into marketing, and as their industry progressed, they turned to “integration,” that is, they became a vertically integrated company in which they performed all the functions from manufacturing feed, to raising chickens that ate the feed, to producing and processing

the eggs, to the final marketing in Los Angeles.<sup>25</sup> They also shipped eggs to Arizona, Las Vegas, and Hong Kong.

During this period of growth, several owners of large chicken ranches joined Upland Feed and Fuel Company. The various entities were then combined to become Quality Farms. Dwight became president of the new company.

In 1975, a group of men from Arizona approached Quality Farms to purchase the business. Several of the men were related to the Babbit family of that state. Quality Farms accepted the offer and the process of selling the organization began. Dwight and his brother Eldon owned the building which housed the Upland Feed and Fuel retail store. The two decided to retain ownership of the building and the retail business. Ray Stump had managed the store for them for many years and was willing to remain in that position.

Eldon had previously moved to Pennsylvania and made the decision to sell his interest in the building and the business to Dwight. During the transition, Ray became a partner in ownership of both the business and the building. This partnership lasted until 2004 when Ray and Dwight decided to sell the building. Ray continued as manager of the store, and later bought Dwight's share of the inventory.

Dwight was in the feed and egg production business the longest portion of his business life. When his career ended, his business had grown to two million laying hens with a production of 20,000 cases (over seven million eggs) per week.

During these years, Dwight was a member of the Pacific Egg and Poultry Association (PEPA), a regional nonprofit agricultural trade association. PEPA covered egg, turkey, and poultry interests in eleven western states and British Columbia. Dwight was selected president of the Association in 1976.

At the event when Dwight officially assumed the role as president, the guest speaker for the evening was U.S. Chairman of Consumer Affairs Virginia Knauer, who held the post under President Richard M. Nixon. She was introduced



Brothers restaurant near Grantham, Pennsylvania

by Faye Bert who states she was scared to death as she introduced the chairman.

Dwight was not only a successful businessman in the feed and fuel business, but also in several other establishments. Art Bert recalls that the very first partnership his father Eldon and his uncle Dwight were involved in together other than Upland Feed and Fuel was a big plantation-type house which they remodeled into apartments on the southeast corner of Euclid Avenue and Arrow Highway where the city hall and library are now located. The two men purchased the property and later leased it to the Shell Oil Company. Shell Oil then built a service station on the land. Later, the City of Upland purchased the property by means of eminent domain for its new civic center.<sup>26</sup>

Dwight and Eldon were also owners of real estate near Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, on which the Brothers Restaurant was built. Two sets of brothers (hence the name), Norman and Art as well as Eldon and Dwight, owned the business. The restaurant opened its doors in 1980. Norman was an absentee partner. Eldon usually reconciled the monthly bank statements while Art prepared the bills. Eldon also loved to mow the lawn at the facility. The four were very proud of the restaurant because of its success.<sup>27</sup>

Dwight has also been involved in several business-related positions. One of these was as treasurer of Upland Savings and Loan. During his tenure, the group constructed its building at the southeast corner of Euclid Avenue and 9<sup>th</sup> Street. When Upland Savings was sold to San Diego Federal Savings in 1985, Dwight was invited to become a part of the board of Pomona First Federal Savings and Loan. He was a member of the board from 1985 to 1997. During that time, he served as chairman of the Loan Organization and Asset Review Committee.

Dwight has been a citizen of Upland for many years, having grown up in the city. He has also been a successful business man and an instrumental part of many organizations, including the Upland City Personnel Hearing Review Board.

One member of the police department who Dwight and his father knew quite well was Chief Eugene Mueller. Dwight recalls that Mueller was "quite a character." He was always perfectly dressed, even when working in the field.

Another person Dwight remembers well was Judge Fred Jacobs of the Upland Justice Court. He recalls two things about Jacobs: he was handicapped and confined to a wheelchair, and he was a very good judge.

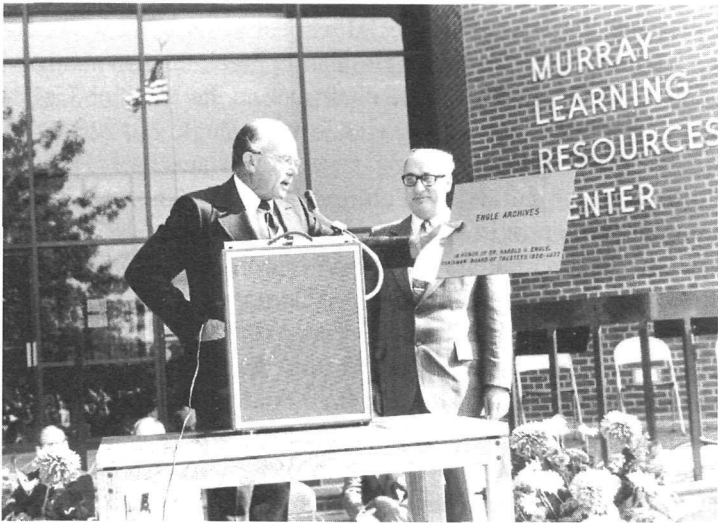
### Service to Church and Community

In 1957, Dwight was appointed as a member of the Upland City Planning Commission. At the time of his appointment, he had been serving on the Personnel Hearing Review Board for three years. He served on the Planning Commission for three years.

Dwight has also served on numerous boards and commissions for the Brethren in Christ Church, the City of Upland, California, and business groups. On the denominational level, he was chairman of the Board for Media Ministries (formerly the Publication Board) which included publishing, Evangel Press, Media Ministries and denominational bookstores; a founding member and chairman of the Jacob Engle Foundation (now the Brethren in Christ Foundation). Lester Fretz, who served with Dwight on both the Brethren in Christ Publication Board and the Jacob Engle Foundation, remembers Dwight as being grateful, polite, and courteous at all times. Fretz always seemed to get some enjoyment out of what he referred to as Dwight's "pithy comments." Once during a meeting, Dwight was heard to comment, "Share groups tend to have too much share and not enough prayer." At another time when Dr. Arthur Climenhaga said, "I am going to be Solomonic here," Dwight replied, "I'd be glad to be . . . if I knew what it was!"<sup>28</sup> Ray Musser also served on the Jacob Engle Foundation with Dwight. Ray believes Dwight's many years of involvement and experience



Elbert Smith, pastor(left), and Hiram Alderfer (right) pass the position of treasurer of the Upland Brethren in Christ congregation to Dwight of the younger generation. Alderfer had been treasurer for many years.



Dr. Harold Engle and Dwight Bert at the dedication of the Murray Learning Resources Center, Messiah College (courtesy of the Historical Library and Archives of Messiah College)

with Upland and Messiah College boards were of great help to the Foundation.<sup>29</sup>

For the Pacific Conference, Dwight was a founding member and chairman of the Board of Upland Manor, a retirement home in Upland along West Arrow Highway. He was very involved with denominational schools and colleges. He was chairman of the Board for Messiah College (he is now a trustee emeritus); board member for Upland College; vice-chairman of the Board for Western Evangelical Seminary in Oregon.

With the closing of Upland College in 1965, Galen Oakes and Dwight Bert were invited to serve on the Messiah College Board of Trustees. Throughout the time they served together, Galen was very impressed with Dwight's calm demeanor and wise counsel. Dwight was chairman for five years while Galen served as his vice chairman. Galen has stated that he was "privileged to observe the character, intensity, and integrity of this special man."<sup>30</sup> Dr. D. Ray Hostetter, former president of Messiah College, has stated that Dwight proved himself to be a prime trustee, drawing special respect in terms of his overall leadership.<sup>31</sup> Dr. Harold Engle also appreciates the manner in which Dwight served as vice chairman on the Messiah College board while Engle served as chairman. Engle has stated that the roles should have been reversed because of Dwight's skills, but Dwight always deferred to Engle. The pair worked together for approximately twenty years.<sup>32</sup>

On the community and professional level, Dwight was director and treasurer of Upland Savings and Loan; director and chairman of the Loan Organization and Asset Review Committee for Pomona First Federal Bank and Trust; trustee emeritus and chairman of the board for San Antonio Community Hospital; first president of Upland Chamber of Commerce (serving a total of three terms); member of Upland City Planning Commission; member of Upland City Hearing Review Board; member and chairman of Upland Lions Club; member and chairman of the board for Pacific Egg and Poultry Association.

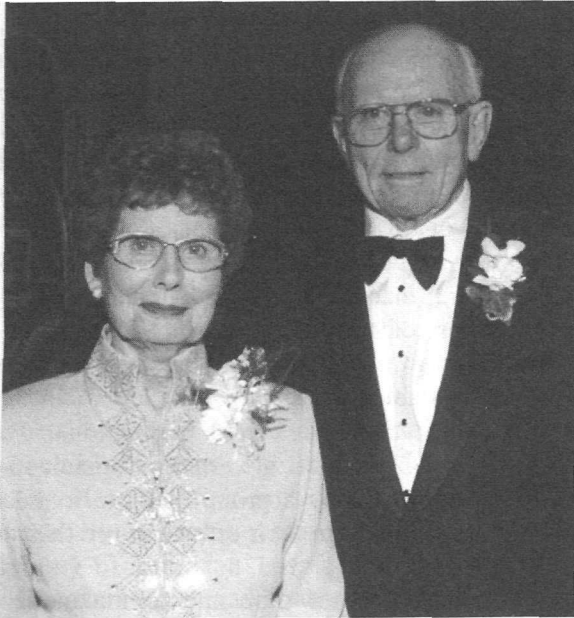
Ron Sackett, who served as CEO and President of San Antonio Community Hospital, recalls the pleasure of serving with Dwight. Dwight told Ron that he loved the hospital but he truly loved the Lord and his family more. He also said that he had recently been appointed as a delegate to the General Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church; he would be available to Ron except when he was attending the denominational conference. Because of their common faith in God, Ron believed that Dwight and he “fit together like a hand and glove.”<sup>33</sup>

Coy Estes has known Dwight Bert for almost fifty years. During that time, the two have served together on the San Antonio Community Hospital Board of Trustees. Coy believes Dwight to be one of the most respected leaders with whom he has had the pleasure of working. When Estes was appointed Chief of Police of the City of Upland, he worked closely with Dwight whose term on the City Personnel Review Board coincided with Coy’s administration. Dwight was appointed to the board in 1956 and set an unbeatable record of tenure with more than fifty years of service. Coy always found Dwight to be a very quiet leader, one who guided without a great amount of fanfare, one who was always effective and efficient. Estes has stated that he has never met anyone who has ever had a bad thing to say about Dwight. He maintains that Dwight and Faye have made the community a much better place to live because of their many contributions, including donating thousands of hours of hard work and giving financial support to many projects in the community. Together they are one of Upland’s most valuable assets.<sup>34</sup>

Dwight also had a role with International Executive Service Corps (IESC), a quasi government organization. This organization was formed by a group of large foundations to help developing countries in their efforts to use their abilities, such as farming, building, and business, to become more efficient in management of time and to make the process profitable. This was all made possible with the blessing and guidance of the United States Government. Dwight was initially approached by the IESC to go to Indonesia for three



Dwight (third from right) with fellow board members of Pomona First Federal Bank and Trust, New York Stock Exchange, PFB



Dwight and Faye at the president's dinner for the San Antonio Community Hospital. At this event, Dwight was named Trustee Emeritus of the nearly century-old hospital.

years or more to help the feed mill companies manage their mills' productivity and profitability. On this trip, Faye later joined him after caring for business matters relating to beginning a car wash business in Chino, California. The owner of the mill Dwight advised was the Minister of Finance of Indonesia. The Berts say that they are happy to have had the opportunity to live a short time in another country and to participate in a different culture from their own.

Dwight's nephew, Art Bert, recalls that a favorite vacation spot was the Salton Sea in the Colorado Desert of Southern California.<sup>35</sup> While on a boating adventure there, the family was outside a snack shop when someone came out asking if there was someone in the group by the name of Dwight Bert. The man then told Dwight he had received a phone call from Bishop Henry Ginder who said that it was important for Dwight to return the call. Frightened that something was wrong, Dwight immediately phoned Bishop Ginder only to discover he was being asked to join the Board for Schools and Colleges. Dwight accepted the invitation, beginning what was to be a long and wonderful experience.

When Dwight was a member of the Upland College Board of Trustees, he was faced with one of the most difficult decisions he would ever have to make. Because of financial difficulties, the college closed in 1965 and merged with Messiah College in the same year. In her biography of Bishop Alvin Burkholder, the presiding bishop at that time, Frances Harmon quotes a comment made by Dwight: "The local congregation was traumatized; the city of Upland and the local newspaper questioned certain things that brought about the closing; the General Conference raised many questions, and Alvin addressed all of these publics in a way that few could have, simply because of the respect he enjoyed from all of these groups."<sup>36</sup>

In reflecting upon the closing of the college, Merle Brubaker has stated that there were a great number of debts to deal with. Dwight's knowledge and connections were extremely important in getting through the situation without a scandal and bad publicity.<sup>37</sup>

Dwight could always be counted on as a reliable resource in the congregation. Eber Dourte recalls that when he and his wife Ruth came as the pastoral couple to the Upland Brethren in Christ Church, "Dwight was a layman in the church whom he could always depend on for good advice and information."<sup>38</sup> Other pastoral couples such as Bob and Barbara Hempy and Ron and Barbara Graff have also been recipients of the Berts' gracious and serving nature.

Shortly after the Hempys accepted the Upland pastorate, the Berts told them they wanted them to see Messiah College, a place the new couple had not previously visited. While visiting the college, Dwight arranged for Bob to speak at chapel. The Berts also rented an automobile for Bob and Barbara so they could see some of the sights in Pennsylvania. When the Hempys' daughter, Bev, was planning her wedding ceremony with her fiancé, Dave Ryan, the Berts offered their home (the historical "Crackerjack House") in Upland as a site for the festivities. The Berts also invited the Hempys to stay at their home for the week surrounding the wedding, and they offered their automobile for use by the family during that time. Barbara was even given the opportunity to take visiting family members on a tour of the lovely home. This was simply another way in which the Hempys experienced the Berts' hospitality and generosity.<sup>39</sup>

"Dwight and Faye Bert are the kind of quiet, strong supporters that every pastor would love to have," states Ron Graff. Ron notes that they had been "pillars" of the Alta Loma Brethren in Christ Church (now Solid Ground Brethren in Christ) for many years before Ron was called to be pastor of the church. They remain pillars today. Ron also recalls with appreciation that Faye was a member of his church board at a critical time for him. She kept him from resigning from the church during what he calls "the only crisis of such magnitude ever faced by the church." She convinced Ron and Barbara to stay a little longer to see what the Lord would do. They accepted her wise counsel, and have always been thankful that the Lord spoke through her at that time. Ron remembers Dwight as an esteemed member of the school board at the



Pastor Ronald Graff leading in prayer at the Berts' fiftieth wedding anniversary



Sons Joe (left) and Ted (right) at the Berts' fiftieth wedding anniversary

church for a time. During his tenure on the board, Dwight pointed out some of the board's weaknesses and helped to make the meetings much more efficient.<sup>40</sup>

Dwight has been the recipient of many awards for his participation as a businessman, as well as a civic and church leader. Included among those awards is the Upland Kiwanis "July, 1957 Layman of the Month." He was the first to receive this honor given to local church laymen who have given outstanding service to their church and community. Upland Brethren in Christ pastor and Pacific Conference Bishop Alvin C. Burkholder noted at the award ceremony that Dwight had assumed major responsibilities in the church for the previous ten years, especially in his outstanding leadership as chairman of the church's recent building fund drive, which resulted in unprecedented success.

Throughout the years, Faye has given much of her time and expertise to various educational institutions. Her relationship with these groups began when the Berts' son Ted was a student at the newly opened Baldy View School in Upland. Faye joined the Parent Teacher Association at the school, where, as she says, she "started at the bottom." She became a member of the publicity committee which, among other things, had the responsibility to keep a history of school events. To do this, she clipped many school-related articles from the local newspapers. She then took on the position of secretary and eventually became president of the PTA. She also served a year on the board of the 5<sup>th</sup> District of the PTA.

In 1966, Faye was awarded the PTA Honorary Life Award for her service to the organization. A local newspaper gave the following account of the award: "Mrs. Dwight Bert has held nearly every elective office in Baldy View PTA and many volunteer responsibilities at the Elementary, Junior High, and Foothill Council level, and is a charter member of Baldy View PTA. The honoree has been active in community service which includes: the well-baby clinic, two years secretary of Visiting Nurses Association, and was instrumental in making the Multi-Purpose Room at Baldy View a reality. Mrs. Bert is a Sunday School teacher in her church and has been active in

the Women's Group there. Bert lives in Upland with her family, sons Ted and Joe and husband Dwight, who is co-owner of Upland Feed and Fuel and currently President of Upland Chamber of Commerce."<sup>41</sup>

In the 1970s, Faye was asked to be a member of the architectural committee and the planning committee for the City of Upland. These positions spanned a total of eight years. She was required to give up her seat on the committees only when the city started a redevelopment agency. Because the Berts owned stock in Upland Savings and Loan, a conflict of interest would have occurred if she had remained in her position.

In 1976, Ray Musser asked Faye to consider becoming a member of the Azusa Pacific College Board of Trustees. She was reluctant, but was encouraged by Dwight to pursue the matter. She agreed to an interview with Ray and Dr. Paul Sago, president of the college at the time.

At the meeting, held at JoJo's Restaurant in Upland, she was informed it would be the first year that the board included a female member. The thought of being the only female on an all-male board was a little unsettling to Faye. She believed she would probably have to be very careful with her ideas. She reminded the men that Dwight was a member of the board at Messiah College and that the couple's church and college were very important to them. She inquired as to whether that would influence their desire for her to serve at APU. Being assured there was no problem with the situation, she discussed the matter with Dwight who responded, "Do it!"

She accepted the invitation. Her first three-year term was followed by other terms for a total of twenty-one years. Following a one-year hiatus, she was asked to return by Ted Engstrom, the school's interim president at the time. She served another nine years on the board.

Faye recalls her first board meeting of 1976 as an interesting one. After many years of Dr. C. P. Haggard's leadership, it was difficult for some people to accept the change to a new president. She later learned that the chairman of the board was concerned that a few of the members might



Ernie Boyer (far right) with his Upland Brethren in Christ Sunday school class in the early 1960s.  
Dwight is second on the left, Faye is the fourth on the right.

be questioning the process and selection of the new president at the meeting.

The school had operated in the "red" for many years, and during the period of the 1960s and 1970s, many small colleges had either closed or merged with other institutions. In fact, several had merged with Azusa Pacific College. The board inherited some members of those institutions which had been a part of those mergers. Azusa Pacific was fortunate to have some people from those schools who were astute business men who understood the problems of finances in small schools. During this period, several apartment buildings were given to the school in the form of an annuity. Faye witnessed the institution grow from a small Christian college into a university with a program of graduate studies and several professional schools.

She served under three presidents during her tenure on the board. She believes God has truly blessed the school and that God has orchestrated the coming and going of each president, as each has had to perform in different ways to accomplish the growth that took place under each individual administration. As she reflects on the past, she believes Dr. Haggard laid the foundation for the school. Dr. Paul Sago built on that foundation and enlarged it by changing from Azusa College to Pacific College to Azusa Pacific University.

In speaking of Dwight and Faye, Dr. Felix, the current president, has commented that he remembers Faye as being one of the "classiest" people on the board. Because of their relationship to Azusa, Upland College, and Messiah College, Dwight and Faye were not strangers to Christian higher education. Dr. Felix knows that many good things have come from Messiah College, and the Berts have been an instrumental part of what has taken place.

Dr. Felix has also remarked that when Faye spoke at board meetings every member listened to what she had to say. She didn't speak often, but when she did, it was noteworthy. She brought with her three distinct viewpoints which were extremely important to the makeup of the board: being a

woman, having had a relationship with Messiah College, and being the “successful woman behind the successful man.”

She recalls only one time voting against the other members of the board. The school had purchased property which had formerly been used as a strawberry field. The price for the land had been ninety cents per square foot. Faye states that it was quite a risk at the time. A portion of the acreage was sold to the Free Methodist Church. In the 1990s, APU built a complex for the School of Theology and the School of Music on the main campus. The contract which the university had signed with the contractor who was building the complex contained a clause stating that there would be certain penalties for “over-runs” and missed dates of completion. The contractor for the project had begun to reach the penalty phase of the contract. The penalties had grown to about \$90,000. Because the contractor was a Christian, the other members of the board felt the matter should not be pursued. Faye, on the other hand, stated it would not be good stewardship to do so. She commented, “I cannot conscientiously go along with voting for this because we have a fiduciary responsibility to the college.” She believed that because it had been so extremely difficult to pay the original ninety cent per square foot price, the board should not pass up the \$90,000 provision. She felt that one individual person was being favored over the students.

As Faye reflects back upon her time at Azusa Pacific, she thinks of it as a good experience. She remembers the service of many dedicated people at the college.

Faye has also been very active in her church and other Christian endeavors. While a member of Upland Brethren in Christ Church, she was involved in the women’s ministry. From time to time, the women would gather together for dinners and a time of fellowship. She, along with Joyce Hostetler, formed the small groups which included twelve women in each “unit.” Individual units served the church in different capacities. Older women were part of a prayer unit.

Another ministry in which Faye has been actively involved is Pacific Lifeline, a transitional shelter for women



The Berts with friends at the Boyer Common Day of Learning at Azusa Pacific University. Left to right: William Boyer, Esther Boyer, Kaye Boyer, Faye and Dwight Bert



*To Evelyn Fay Bert  
With best wishes,*

*Barbara Bush*

Faye Bert meets First Lady Barbara Bush at a White House brunch in 1988

and children in Upland. This organization is the Southern California expansion of the original Life Line Mission in San Francisco where Dwight's parents had served. Dorothy Gish recommended Faye for the position on the board. When Dorothy was serving on an emergency operational board at Life Line in San Francisco, a vacancy occurred on that board. Dorothy immediately thought of Faye as the perfect person for the open position. She had become aware that Faye was not interested in "small talk," which became evident while serving on the Life Line board. Faye would not say much at a board meeting, but her ideas were always worth listening to. She often introduced her comments by first asking an astute question. Dorothy noticed that Faye was always able to see the larger picture and analyze situations. She was also very good at keeping the board focused on the business at hand.<sup>42</sup>

#### A Visit to the White House

In 1988, Faye was surprised to receive an invitation in the mail to join First Lady Bush at the White House for a special brunch. Faye told her friend Doris Hensley about the invitation. Later, Faye received a phone call from Mrs. Bush's secretary. Thinking it was her friend Doris playing a practical joke, Faye made a "wise-crack" to the woman. Fortunately, the secretary said she had a friend who was always playing tricks on her, therefore she understood. They both got a laugh out of the situation. The phone call was being made to confirm the invitation. Not usually being strongly politically-minded, Faye's first thought was to decline. However, Dwight told her she should accept. Faye responded that she would be willing to attend the event if Dwight would go with her. He agreed to accompany her to Washington, D.C., but insisted she attend the brunch alone.

Upon arriving at the White House, Faye was taken to an area where some large tents were set up. Several service people were there and she, along with other ladies who were attending the event, had to undergo security measures. Inside

the White House, a group of about one hundred invited women met and were escorted to the lawn area where the brunch was to take place. Faye was given the opportunity to meet Barbara Bush and have a photograph taken with her. As she was walking up to meet Mrs. Bush, all she could think was, "I can't believe this. Faye Foreman, Iva Foreman's little girl, meeting the First Lady!" Faye remembers Barbara Bush as a very gracious and lovely lady.

### A Rescue

It has always been well-known that Dwight and Faye have kept, as a main priority, the care of and concern for others. One incident which portrays this characteristic came in an adventure off the coast of Southern California in the mid-1970s.

The Berts had invited Bishop Arthur Climenhaga and his wife Lona to join them on their boat for a day of sailing to Santa Catalina Island. Approximately half-way between Long Beach and the island, the four friends were passed by another craft speeding its way to Catalina. When a distance of about one-quarter mile separated the two, the Berts and their guests noticed smoke streaming from the other boat.

As the boat in the lead slowed down, Dwight sped up to check the problem. As the Berts and Climenhagas approached, they realized the boat was ablaze and its fiberglass hull was melting. The cockpit was on fire. It was evident to Dwight that the craft would soon be going down. The Bert party noticed two people on the flying bridge who were prevented from getting to their life jackets which were in the cockpit. Dwight and Faye recognized the people in danger as a couple they knew from the landing where they docked their boat.

Dwight and Lona climbed to the flying bridge of their boat while Faye and Arthur were on the swim step. As Arthur threw a line to the couple with a life jacket tied to it, the man yelled back that his wife did not know how to swim. Realizing

the urgency with which they had to act, he pushed his wife off the boat, and jumped in after her.

As the frightened couple rose to the surface of the water, the husband was cursing heavily. Safely on the Berts' boat, the two were introduced to Arthur and Lona. Upon realizing that Arthur was Dwight and Faye's bishop, the woman was extremely embarrassed by her husband's language. Later, when the couple was being interviewed on a television news program, the wife said she thought she had "died and was in heaven" when they were being introduced to a bishop.

In the meantime, Dwight contacted the U.S. Coast Guard, which gave him instructions to give a "long count" in order to get a fix on their location, and ordered them not to leave until they arrived. At about the same time, the pilot of a seaplane which had just taken off from the island saw what was taking place and made an emergency landing in the channel. By that time, the couple was safely on their rescuers' boat. The unfortunate couple was then transported to Long Beach on the airplane. By the time the Coast Guard arrived, all that was visibly left of the boat were a couple of tanks floating on the surface of the water. The Berts received some slight damage to their boat when a window exploded due to the extreme heat of the fire.

The Berts received a commendation from the Coast Guard for their action in saving the couple from what would have been certain disaster and possible death.

Charles and Katherine Engle were driving cross country to attend the Brethren in Christ General Conference at the time and heard the report of a boat accident on their car radio. Although the Bert and Climenhaga names were not mentioned in the report, Katherine turned to Charles and said, "I wonder if that could have been Dwight and Faye who saved those people." Of course, although she did not know it at the time, she was absolutely correct.



The Bert family, left to right: Lee Tuazon, Antonio Tuazon, Raquel Tuazon, Dwight Richard Bert, Suzi Bert, Ted Bert, Faye Bert, Cindy Bert, Dwight Bert, Joe Bert

### A Summary

The words of Dr. Kim Phipps, president of Messiah College, may be used to sum up the kind of wonderful people Dwight and Faye are.<sup>43</sup> As provost of the college she had heard their names frequently mentioned, and with high regard. Then, while serving as interim president of the college, Dr. Phipps traveled to California where she and her husband, Kelly, spent the day with the Berts. Dr. Phipps recalls that it was a delight to get to know them and to hear their stories. She came away very impressed by their love for the Lord, the Brethren in Christ Church, Messiah College, and Azusa Pacific University. She believes that as Messiah's eighth president, she stands on the shoulders of gifted women and men who have been exemplary servant leaders at the college. She knows that Dwight is one of those leaders.

During the past four years, Dr. Phipps and the Berts have become, in her words, "precious friends." She usually visits them once or twice a year in California. On occasion, Dwight and Faye return to Pennsylvania for Messiah College dinners and other events for trustees and former trustees.

Dr. Phipps recognizes in Dwight the characteristics of trustworthiness, commitment, and intelligence. She knows that his financial acumen has helped place Messiah on a firm financial footing.

Dr Phipps considers it a privilege to thank the Berts for all they have contributed to Messiah College.

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Acknowledgements are due to many people. First, I want to thank Dwight and Faye Bert for the many enjoyable times we had talking with each other about their life together and the wonderful

new things I learned about them and the Brethren in Christ denomination.

And, of course, I am greatly indebted to Dr. E. Morris Sider for his knowledge, his wisdom, and his years of dedication to the historical work of the Brethren in Christ. My wife Joanie and I had a wonderful time enjoying the company of Morris and his wife Leone while visiting in Pennsylvania, as well as during a trip of theirs to our hometown of Upland, California.

I offer my sincere thanks and gratitude to the following who met with us and gave interviews either in their homes in Pennsylvania or at Messiah College. We truly enjoyed sharing some tremendous times with Art and Donna Bert (nephew and niece of Dwight and Faye), Merle and Ila Brubaker, Eber and Ruth Dourte, and Dr. Harold Engle.

I am just as grateful, also, to those who shared information with me in the form of interviews in California, as well as e-mails and telephone conversations. They include Coy Estes, Dr. Dorothy Gish, Barbara Hempy, Dr. Richard Felix, Lester Fretz, Ron Graff, Dr. D. Ray Hostetter, Ray Musser, Galen Oakes, Dr. Kim Phipps, and Ron Sackett.

Invaluable help was also given by others, including Emily Wilson-Hauger who, while serving as Interim Archivist at Messiah College, assisted in my research on the Berts. My gratitude is also given to Chris Wheeler and the staff of Ignite Design. Chris, who scanned photos for the project, is an extremely talented graphics artist with whom I have had the pleasure of working on previous writings.

<sup>2</sup> For a detailed account of the heritage of the Bert family before its arrival in the United States, refer to *History and Genealogy of Peter Bert* by Sarah H. Bert with Peter Bert, n.d., as well as the revised edition, *A History and Genealogy of Peter Bert*, Eldon F. Bert, editorial chairman (Harrisburg, Pa.: Triangle Press, 1987).

<sup>3</sup> Bert, *History and Genealogy of Peter Bert*, p. 16.

<sup>4</sup> Eldon Bert, *History and Genealogy*, p. 31.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 220.

<sup>6</sup> Eldon F. Bert, *Walk Memory's Lane* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Triangle Press, 1992), p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Eldon F. Bert, *A History and Genealogy*, p. 225.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 227.

<sup>9</sup> Bert, *Walk Memory's Lane*, p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Donald Laine Clucas, *Century of Community: Upland, California—The First One Hundred Years* (Upland, Calif.: Dragonflyer Press, 2007), p. 45.

<sup>13</sup> Bert, *Walk Memory's Lane*, p. 12.

<sup>14</sup> Clucas, *Century of Community*, p. 208.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>17</sup> Clucas, *Century of Community*, p. 45.

<sup>18</sup> Bert, *Walk Memory's Lane*, p. 1.

<sup>19</sup> Bert, *A History and Genealogy of Peter Bert*, p. 225.

<sup>20</sup> Bert, *Walk Memory's Lane*, p. 51.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Donald L. Clucas, *Upland Trails* (Upland, Calif.: California Family House, 2002), p. 137.

<sup>25</sup> Clucas, *Century of Community*, p. 207.

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Art Bert, Dwight's nephew, the son of Dwight's brother Eldon, April 24, 2007.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> From an e-mail from Lester Fretz, September 17, 2007.

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Ray Musser (a businessman and city council member in Upland), in September 2007.

<sup>30</sup> From an article of June 22, 2007. Galen Oakes served on boards at both Upland and Messiah Colleges. He followed Dr. Ernest Boyer who had been preceded by Dwight Bert as Chairman of the Board at Messiah.

<sup>31</sup> From an article of July 28, 2007.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Dr. Harold Engle, April 24, 2007.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with Ron Sackett, July 31, 2007.

<sup>34</sup> From a typed manuscript, July 17, 2007. Estes is a former police chief and city councilman in Upland, CA.

<sup>35</sup> From an interview in Dillsburg, Pennsylvania on April 24, 2007.

<sup>36</sup> Frances L. Harmon, *For Christ and the Church: A Biography of Alvin C. Burkholder* (Grantham, Pa.: Brethren in Christ Historical Society, 1995), p. 83.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Merle Brubaker, April 24, 2007. Merle and Ila Brubaker were the pastoral couple at the Chino, California, Brethren in Christ Church.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Eber and Ruth Dourte, April 25, 2007. The Dourtes were in the pastorate at the Upland Brethren in Christ Church in Upland.

<sup>39</sup> Interview with Barbara Hempy on September 24, 2007. Barbara's husband, Bob, was pastor to the Berts at the Upland and Alta Loma Brethren in Christ Churches. Bob went home to be with the Lord in 2004.

<sup>40</sup> From an article of July 22, 2007. Ron Graff is pastor of Solid Ground Brethren in Christ Church in Alta Loma, California.

<sup>41</sup> *The Daily Report*. Ontario, California: March 3, 1966.

<sup>42</sup> Interview with Dorothy Gish on October 27, 2007. A former Brethren in Christ missionary to Zimbabwe, Dr. Gish has also served as acting Dean of Students and Academic Dean at Messiah College.

<sup>43</sup> E-mail from President Kim Phipps, October 12, 2007.

## Growing Up Brethren in Christ: The Influence of Home and Congregation

*Editor's Note: The following short articles derive from similar presentations made at the annual Heritage Service, sponsored by the Brethren in Christ Historical Society, at the Ringgold meetinghouse. I invited some Historical Society members (representative of gender, regions, congregations, and occupations) to describe the influence that the home and church of their youth had on their later life. Almost all of those invited to write such an article accepted the invitation, resulting in a total of eighteen pieces.*

*The usual identification of an author, carried on the first page of the article, is absent in this collection. The authors sufficiently identify themselves in their articles; however, addresses may be found at the end of this issue.*

*The next article, by Harvey and Erma Sider, analyzes the preceding personal statements, thus giving additional meaning to and understanding of what the eighteen writers have presented.*

\* \* \*

Jeanne (Hess) Bye

These days it is fashionable to critique the church, to find fault, or to identify the harmful and oppressive aspects of a dysfunctional childhood church experience. I do not wish to dismiss these views of the church; certainly churches are flawed institutions made up of flawed individuals, and many

people have suffered at the hands of these institutions and people. While acknowledging this to be true, I cannot place myself among those who view their church upbringing in a negative light. My own experience, growing up in a solidly Brethren in Christ family within a traditional Brethren in Christ congregation, was almost embarrassingly positive and nurturing.

I believe that much of the credit for this must go to my parents, Roy and Esther Hess. As an adult, I can look back at the church of my childhood, the Pequea congregation, and recognize that it was not perfect. Even as a child, I was vaguely aware that not everything was as it should be, and not everyone behaved as they should. My parents, however, never spoke negatively about the church or its people in my presence. Their love for the church was evident. Perhaps it could be argued that it does no good to shield a child from harsh realities. I tend, rather, to view this positive view of the church, nurtured by my parents, as a gift. The harsh realities have a way of making themselves known eventually, and I think that by the time I realized the church wasn't perfect, it was too late for the knowledge to destroy my positive view of, and love for, the church. I often wonder what view of the church I am giving to my own children.

My family also modeled generosity and hospitality, especially in the church, which formed the greater part of our circle of acquaintance. My parents, despite a modest income and three children to provide for, always gave generously (sacrificially, I suspect) to the local church and to various denominational ministries. They were particularly concerned that the church should provide generously for its pastors. I remember once hearing them discussing how our pastor couldn't afford a new pair of glasses that he needed. The result of this discussion was the presentation of a check to the pastor for the cost of the glasses, and the planting of the conviction in me that within the body of Christ one cared for the other members of the body.

My parents were also generous with their hospitality. We regularly had guests from church for Sunday dinner, and this

was a time we all looked forward to. Guests were always honored with the good china and a company meal. My parents modeled the fine art of making guests comfortable in their home, of listening to them and valuing their company and conversation. They were intentional about welcoming newcomers and those on the fringes. They enjoyed the company of many who didn't receive invitations elsewhere, the "poor souls" of this world.

When I was in junior high, an unusual couple began attending our church. They were committed to simple living and implemented their convictions in ways that were, in those days in rural Lancaster County, downright radical. They chose to live below the poverty line in order not to pay taxes that supported the military. They lived in a ramshackle old farmhouse with few modern conveniences. They were vegetarians who grew their own food and milked their own goats. They asked uncomfortable questions that no one else was asking. In my congregation of fairly conventional meat-and-potatoes farmers and businesspeople, to say that they were an oddity would be an understatement. In spite of that, they were welcomed into our congregation. My parents and our pastoral family at the time led the way. Our family learned to know and respect this couple. My dad milked their goats when they were away. We sampled carob brownies and goat's milk ice cream, and were challenged by their views and lifestyle. I have always been impressed by the way my congregation, and my family, showed Christ-like hospitality to these strangers, and allowed themselves, to varying degrees, to be challenged by them. I learned that in the body of Christ even the offbeat can find a place.

In another way I continue to feel the influence of this couple, as my husband and I find ourselves contemplating some of the same questions and lifestyle issues, and being drawn to explore the same sort of radical discipleship (minus the goats!). I am hoping that my childhood congregation, to which we expect to return, still exhibits the kind of openness and generosity of spirit that was shown to this couple thirty years ago.

From my family and from the church, I also received a solid foundation in Scripture. From my earliest childhood until I left home, our family had daily devotional times. In the morning we often read from *The Daily Bread*, and in the evening before bed my dad would read Scripture to us, followed by a time of prayer. Years ago my parents began the habit of reading through the Bible together in the course of a year. My husband and I have attempted this several times, but have not yet succeeded in finishing the entire Bible in a year. We do, however, gather our family every night before bed for Scripture reading and prayer.

At my childhood church we were constantly exposed to Scripture, and encouraged to memorize it. In the days before pre-packaged sermons and topical series, we got a steady diet of solid, scripture-based, expository preaching. I did not appreciate this as a child as much as I appreciate it now. We memorized Bible verses in Sunday school, Vacation Bible School, Good News Club, and in order to earn financial support to go to Kenbrook Bible Camp. As a member of the quiz team, I learned entire chapters of Scripture by heart. This depth of familiarity with Scripture is perhaps the greatest gift I received from my Brethren in Christ family and church.

I also learned to sing at church. My home congregation sang from the hymnal, and many people were able to sing in parts. My mother directed the adult choir and an occasional children's choir, and from these experiences I gained an appreciation for the art of four-part singing. Benefiting from the safety found in numbers, I learned to carry my own part. It is only in recent years, as four-part singing has all but disappeared from the typical Brethren in Christ worship service, that I have become aware of the theological implications of this kind of musical expression. When many voices, each singing their own part, join to create a whole that is greater than the sum of the parts, it is a multi-sensory expression of what the church is in Christ.

As a child, the church was at the center of my family's life. The cliché, "Every time the church doors were open, we were there," was true in my family. We attended Sunday

school and worship on Sunday morning, Wednesday evening prayer meeting (with clubs or youth group for the children), and church on the second and fourth Sunday evenings of each month. We attended revival meetings and other special services. We were always among the first to arrive and the last to leave. This was the way it was, and it rarely occurred to me to question or resent our attendance at church. I do remember occasionally feeling that the Sunday evening services were a bit too much of a good thing, but in general I enjoyed going to church and accepted it without thinking much about it. My husband and I have made church attendance a non-negotiable in our family as well. And although we are rarely the first to arrive, we still often find ourselves locking the doors as we leave!

My lifelong experience of the wider Brethren in Christ Church has also been an important influence. The same people I met at Kenbrook later became my rivals in Bible quizzing. I'd see these same friends when I attended Messiah College homecoming with my parents, and later they would be my friends and roommates when I myself was a Messiah College student. I lived with many of these same people in the Brethren in Christ voluntary service unit in New York City. Today these same friends are pastors, missionaries, seminary professors and denominational leaders in the Brethren in Christ Church. Many of my adult friendships in the church have roots so far back in my childhood that I have trouble remembering where and when they began. In many cases my parents and grandparents knew, or were related to, their parents and grandparents. This connectedness across generations and distances is the gift of my Brethren in Christ heritage, and I value it. I have rarely felt myself a stranger when visiting a Brethren in Christ church or attending a Brethren in Christ function.

In reflecting for this article, I've come to a new appreciation of the profound and far-reaching influence that my Brethren in Christ heritage, both within my family and as a family in the church, has had on my life. It continues to influence, in many ways obvious and subtle, the choices I

make as an adult, the convictions I hold, and the way my husband and I have chosen to raise our family. It reminds me of habits that are worth establishing or preserving. My desire is that my children will look back on their own formative years in the church and recognize a heritage that they are proud of (in a humble, Anabaptist way)—a heritage that continues to nourish them as adults, a heritage that is worth passing on.

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#### Nancy Heisey

I did not grow up in the heartland of the Brethren in Christ. Perhaps such a place never existed, but in my childhood imagination it did, and movement between that heartland and my home at Navajo Brethren in Christ Mission in northwestern New Mexico shaped much about how I see the world today.

My parents (Wilmer and Velma Heisey) began their work as missionaries, just off the edge of the Navajo reservation, 800 miles from the nearest Brethren in Christ enclave, when I was six weeks old. I always knew about difference. We were plain—we girls and women had long hair; my mother and the other missionary women wore coverings; we played volleyball in skirts. But the swirling satin skirts and the coin-decked velvet blouses and the “Navajo pillow” hairdos of most of the older Navajo women in our congregation also seemed normal to me. Louise Werito and Ernestine Chavez were just as certainly part of our faith community as Verna Mae Ressler and Mary Olive Lady. There was no judgment of Navajo styles; in fact, when we were “back east” we would at times dress up in the Navajo way to show others what it was like; and while it was probably exotic to those who watched us, for us it was just the way Navajos did things. We sang in Navajo

in church on Sunday afternoons, to the tunes of American evangelicalism: “Shí k’ad Jesus bekéé’ yisháał doo (I have decided to follow Jesus).” On Sunday evenings, after the release of the 1963 Brethren in Christ hymnal, we learned hymns (somehow I understood that Dad found this music more satisfying) such as “Ask ye what great thing I know,” and “And can it be that I should gain.”

The mission was on a dirt and gravel road two miles from the state route between Farmington and Albuquerque. It was home, yet seemed far from everywhere. Dad’s shopping trips were all-day affairs, which kept us by the window as darkness fell watching for the blinking of his headlights coming over the hill. Still, people managed to find us. Our little cluster of cinder-block houses and buildings hosted many strangers who dropped in because they were looking for Chaco Canyon National Monument, twenty-five miles further south on the road that led past our gate. Our location also became a blinking light on the Brethren in Christ map every five years, when General Conference was held in California, and many families trekked from the east to attend, stopping off for a meal and an overnight at the mission. These were “my” people—some were cousins, all the children were potential short-term playmates, and even at a young age I began to think of some of the boys as potential spouses. I found an important role as part of the hosting effort by taking many a carload of Brethren in Christ visitors to Chaco Canyon, and adding my own tour notes to the words of the national park guides.

The work of the Brethren in Christ was our work, I was taught from an early age. Mother was at the heart of the hosting effort, cooking and cleaning and doing laundry. From the time I was small she engaged me in these tasks, especially folding laundry, and taught me a basic menu so I could prepare a meal for guests when she was away. Dad shared in the urgency of our roles as mission children—at first we were paid a penny per nail, picked up on the driveway around construction sites; later we were given the more advanced task of emptying trash cans in the mission office and hospital. We communed with the heartland almost every summer as work

teams came to help build classrooms and dormitories. We children carried Kool-Aid to these workers from Oklahoma and California for work breaks during the hot days and played volleyball with them in the evenings. Mission board meetings were also a denominational affair. Leaders whose names we read in the *Evangelical Visitor* showed up at our house: Henry Ginder and Alvin Burkholder; people from the nearest congregation in Albuquerque also participated: Bill Boswell and Virgil Books. Some of these church leaders took an interest in us, and we enjoyed listening in on the grown-up churchly dinner conversations as they "ate around" the different mission households during their stays.

We knew that the church mattered because Dad also seemed very busy elsewhere as well as at the mission. We drove out to the main highway to put him on the bus for winter meetings in Pennsylvania, and then drove out a week or so later to meet the bus dropping him off. At least once, each of us children was allowed to ride along with him, and to spend time with our Brethren in Christ grandparents back east while he was in meetings. Every few years, Mom and Dad pushed us into the back of the mission station wagon, added two or more other mission staff, and headed out for a marathon trip to General Conference in Ohio or Pennsylvania. The first stop was Kansas, where we were hosted by people we knew because they had been on work teams at the mission; stops in Brethren in Christ communities in Indiana and Ohio were also treasured breaks in the lengthy drive. And then there was Conference itself. If we were there, we enjoyed children's and youth meetings. If we weren't, we looked forward to Dad's return, and to going through all the notes he had received from other Conference delegates, sometimes commenting on Conference proceedings and sometimes just the little jokes to keep each other awake.

I didn't know that the Brethren in Christ were just beginning to seek ways to break out of our sectarian past during my childhood. Yet I saw my parents living a life of faith that openly accepted and welcomed people of faith who were different. This difference was nothing new for Dad and

Mother. Some of our best entertainment as children was watching slide shows from their days working in relief with Mennonite Central Committee in post-World-War II Philippines. Those Filipino faces were part of our family; the Disciples of Christ pastor, Pablo Bringas, who married them was within our community, as were the Abra Mountain High School students whom Dad had led in choral singing. Mom and Dad had been there, we heard, because the Brethren in Christ were a committed part of a larger community for whom peace-making was at the heart of Christian witness.

One of our treasured evenings was the monthly fellowship meeting with three other mission groups among the Navajos in the “checkerboard area” (land belonging to Navajos, Hispanics, and Anglos, just off the reservation). The services moved from our mission to the Grace Brethren, the Church of the Brethren, and the Berean stations. Only much later did I learn that Dad had to struggle to get these other groups to agree to worship with each other, because of the Church of the Brethren’s membership in the National Council of Churches. To us children, as our parents lived it out, we were all in Christian mission together. We also made friends with Methodist missionaries who ran a high school in Farmington, and became avid members of their cheering squad when their interscholastic sports teams took on other area schools. Mom and Dad also made friends with the people they did business with, including the Roman Catholic farmer in Bloomfield from whom we bought hay, and the Latter Day Saints hardware store owner in Farmington. They presented these colleagues to us as friends—people whom they respected. I learned from them that being Brethren in Christ did not mean keeping ourselves apart, but rather building fellowship in a broader circle and even finding goodness in those with whom we differed greatly.

The question of when and how I would choose to follow Jesus Christ and join the faith community was with me from early childhood. My first memory of accepting an invitation, at a General Conference children’s meeting, is blurred, but I guess now that I was not yet school age. I believe that my

parents tried to spare me this early pressure, for when I requested baptism from Dad at age nine, he demurred because I was too young. Yet the incessant drumbeat of invitations to get the spiritual steps right took their toll on my spiritual growth and understanding. While I tried and tried to make my salvation happen according to the plans presented by various preachers, at youth camp, General Conference, and during my high school years after our family moved to Pennsylvania in congregational revival meetings, my parents stood by quietly and supportively. My baptism and church membership experiences, during early adolescence, are a jumble of mixed emotions and confusion. The pressure was such that it seems now I mostly went ahead to please others. When, toward the end of my college career, I both confirmed my choice to follow Christ in life, and began to explore career ideas that included Christian service, I was grateful for my parents' steady example of the committed Christian life, in a posture of peace-making and service, that had been played out before me day by day throughout my childhood. That same posture was the one I met in the other Brethren in Christ missionaries in New Mexico, among the Navajo believers, and indeed, in many of the women who gathered round me at Cross Roads footwashing services.

Meanwhile, a "heartland" Brethren in Christ congregation, Cross Roads (Mount Joy, Pennsylvania), became my church home during my high school years. Here I had a chance to practice my gifts more freely than had been the case in New Mexico. Three of us young women (cousins, it happened) formed a women's trio and sang not only in our congregation but in other Brethren in Christ gatherings. Together we cut out matching dresses and sewed them. I joined the Bible quiz team, and one year our team won the regional conference competition, and traveled together to General Conference in Ohio. To this day, the book of Acts carries a particular resonance for me, and I find my excitement growing as I teach my Gospels class when we talk about how Luke wove together his picture of Jesus' new community in both gospel and Acts. On the Sunday evenings when the youth group was

in charge of the service, I took my turn preparing a “topic,” and began to understand the feel of standing in front of a group of fellow believers encouraging each other to be faithful. I taught a sixth-grade class in Bible school. In short, even in a context where the concept of “women in ministry” would have seemed strange and threatening, I was being encouraged to learn leadership skills.

When it was time to think of college, my sense of Brethren in Christ identity, and my hopes for being prepared for further Christian service, led me no further than Messiah College. From there, my story branches out, and that would be another article. While I have spent my whole adult life living and working in Mennonite institutions, I have always understood my placement there to be the fruit of, and in direct continuity with, what I learned and how I was shaped by my parents and their community during my Brethren in Christ childhood.

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#### Grace (Herr) Holland

My understanding of God as Father began in strong and solid home life. My father, Ohmer U. Herr, was pastor of the Fairview Brethren in Christ Church (Ohio) and my mother, Rozella (Boyer), was the daughter of Brethren in Christ home missionaries in the city of Dayton. Their focus was on God and his love shown through his revelation in the Bible. Family worship was daily, with scripture reading, singing and prayer. When the Boyer grandparents visited, we could count on a somewhat extended time as Grandpa knelt on one knee, grasped the chair back with both hands, and poured out his soul to his heavenly father. I once timed his prayer at five minutes—a long time for a young girl—but there was no doubt that he was in communication with God.

We children knew we were loved. Father was not paid by the church, so he was busy with his dual responsibility of leading the congregation and supporting the family through his landscaping business, but he took time to encourage us in school, take us on trips, and peel apples for us. Mother read Bible stories, was rarely willing to leave us with anyone else, and taught us to work beside her. Her serious talks after misbehavior were more painful than spankings. We children helped to care for chickens and cows, made garden, cleaned house, and helped with the evergreens.

The whole family and the church were serious about discipleship. My father's messages were almost always expository, digging into a passage of Scripture in its context. There were Sunday morning, Wednesday evening, and every-other-Sunday-night messages, and I remember a whole series on the word "walk" in Ephesians. There was wonderful emphasis on singing in our home and in our congregation. My Grandma Herr seemed to me to have a sweet voice even in her later years, and she sang duets with my hearty-voiced blind Uncle Ralph who lived with her. One Wednesday evening during testimony time, kindly old Brother Cassel made the point that it is important for all of us to pitch in and work together, and he concluded, "It sounds better when I sing too." We smiled to ourselves thinking of the rasp and discord he sometimes emitted. But we agreed with the truth he expressed.

Part of discipleship was serving. I remember evenings when I lay in bed waiting for light from the car to climb the wall and travel across the ceiling as my parents returned from visiting needy people in the congregation and the community. Grandma Herr was known for her generosity; Grandpa and Grandma Boyer served the poor in the inner city. I watched as Grandma completely remodeled a winter coat for a girl who attended the mission. My passion for flowers often won me a little bouquet saved from one of the more than 1,300 funerals Grandpa conducted during his ministry. He was available for any and all in the city who needed a caring hand and voice at a time of death.

Financial gifts were important too. We were very thrifty (a trait I put to good use in missionary service and still feel conscientious about), but Mother once said, "It doesn't do any good to save so much if we don't give it away!" Each of us four children was given a dime for Sunday school every week besides what our parents gave—and that was just Sunday school. With inflation as it is sixty-five years later, how much would that amount to annually today? We were not paid for our work as children nor given an allowance, but we sometimes received gifts. We were taught tithing and practiced it. I saw the blessing that came back in material provision and in the deep joy of obedience. No one can tell me that tithing doesn't pay, though pay is not its motive.

The faithfulness of the congregation in worship rubbed off on me. The pastor's family was there every time the doors opened, of course, but the congregation of about eighty was consistent in attendance. In the home, in the local church, and in the larger church, we were taught the message of peacemaking. I was impressed by the lives of young men who went to work in camps and hospitals as conscientious objectors rather than into military service.

Denominational understanding on various issues came to light in General Conference, to which we traveled every year. There, in children's meeting, I took my first step of commitment to Jesus at age four. I knew that I was a sinner and needed Jesus in my life. I also learned much from the business and inspirational sessions I was required to attend when not in children's meetings. I can still picture the earnestness of those now gone to heaven who discussed issues of how to help the church carry out total obedience to God.

Commissioning missionaries and hearing their reports were important parts of General Conference and of our own church. Many missionaries visited in our home; some of them had gone out from nearby Brethren in Christ churches. Effie Rohrer seemed to embody the work in India. The farewell for the Brenemans is etched in my memory. The Halls described their rescue from the sinking *Zamzam* during World War II.

Missionary letter and prayer nights were a welcome change from the routine prayer meeting.

The Brethren in Christ I knew were focused on God and his will. Our assistant pastor, Isaac Engle, was one of the humblest and most heart-sensitive people I have known. Our deacons, Leighton and Harriet Mann, were faithful at their task for many years. When Howard Hoke got revived, nothing could hold him back, and he and his wife, Martha, became another loyal, fervent, faith-filled deacon couple.

But it wasn't just the older people. There were young people's meetings every other Sunday night where we learned to lead singing, give talks, keep records of meetings, and prepare special songs. Strange thing—the adults attended too and affirmed our efforts. The individual youth groups of the (then) five churches of Southern Ohio met periodically and spent all of New Year's Day together singing, speaking, learning, and praying.

Most of us “dressed plain,” so it was encouraging to be together as friends. Being different was something I was always conscious of as a Brethren in Christ young person. Sometimes that seemed difficult; at other times it seemed consistent with the fact that Christians were headed in a different direction from unbelievers. As I look back I wish that we had been a little freer to mingle with other young people at school and in the community. No doubt our separateness seemed unattractive to most of them, and we had too little time and opportunity to show them Christ's love. Another hazard of our heritage seems to have been a temptation to pride. Although our constant emphasis was on humility, it was easy to think that we were better than others because of our strict walk. I was personally confronted in my heart with this concern at various times, and I constantly asked God for a true and humble evaluation of my standing with him and with others.

Some have criticized the Brethren in Christ of those days for practicing a works religion. It would have been easy to fall into that trap, though that was not our theology. On one occasion my mother, who was a staunch defender of the

“standards” of the church, told me of a deep truth the Lord had brought to her mind. With tears she said the Lord had reminded her that there was absolutely nothing she could do to win salvation, but that it was all done for her on the cross.

How do I feel now about growing up Brethren in Christ? I am deeply grateful for the absolute commitment to God and his Word that I imbibed from my family and my church, and I pray daily that I will pass on the good heritage I received. I am grateful for my experience at Messiah College where self-sacrificing Brethren in Christ professors encouraged us to explore our beliefs but passed on to us their sound faith. I am grateful for a home congregation that sent us out as missionaries and supported us for many years with prayers, letters, and gifts—long before the days of Mission Opportunity Sending Teams (MOSTs).

Such a summary may sound idyllic, but it was not an easy journey. We worked hard even as children. Our family had its tensions. The death of my Grandpa Levi Herr when my father was fifteen seemed to lend an unusual seriousness to his life. He found it hard at times to fill the role of pastor, husband and father, son, and supporter. There were tensions in the congregation, though I didn't find out about them until later, since my parents did not burden us children with such things. The denomination has gone through painful times of struggle and change. But the love has been strong, the commitment has been sound, and the faith has been consistent. I am eternally grateful to God for his gift of letting me grow up Brethren in Christ.

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Earl Engle

I begin with the story of my grandfather, Millard Gish Engle. As a twelve-year-old, he with his parents, Jeremiah and

Susan Gish Engle, emigrated to Kansas with hundreds of other Pennsylvania Brethren in Christ families, boarding a train in Marietta. The families settled on farms in North and South Dickinson County and soon established several Brethren in Christ congregations.

My eighth grandfather back, Ulrich Engel, was an emigrant from Switzerland. His son Jacob was one of the founders of the Brethren in Christ Church, then called River Brethren. Therefore, being Brethren in Christ was from birth my family, spiritual, and cultural heritage.

I was born April 6, 1928, on a farm six miles north of Abilene, Kansas, and a mile south of the Zion church, the fourth of six children of Earl Wenger Engle and Minnie Lady Engle. My father was the oldest child of Millard and Kathryn Wenger Engle.

Prayer was a vital part of my formative years, with family worship after breakfast. My maternal grandmother, Mary Olive Frey Lady, when staying in our home, prayed for each grandchild by name. Prayer was offered before all meals, as well as at extended Engle and Frey reunions.

Early memories include regular attendance at Zion Sunday school and worship and Sunday evening services, as well as midweek prayer meeting at church, or, in the winter, in homes of members.

One of my first Sunday school teachers was Ruth Zook Hoover. She taught us the simple Bible stories and gave us small picture cards to take home, illustrating Bible stories (after seventy years my wife still has some of hers in a scrapbook). Mrs. Hoover was also a community leader of the Women's Christian Temperance Union and would visit our one-room country school, Glenwood, located a mile west of the Zion church. She demonstrated the ill effects of nicotine in cigarettes by collecting nicotine from a burning cigarette in a glass tube. With an eyedropper she then dripped the nicotine into the mouth of a bird. We watched the bird drop dead from the poisonous nicotine. I never took up smoking! Also, my father had promised his children a seventeen-jewel Bulova

watch if we refrained from smoking by the time we were seniors in high school. All of us received the promised watch.

As a child I was sobered by tragedies in our community. These included the shocking death of three neighbors killed in a car crash; their three caskets were lined up in front of the Abilene Methodist church. My mother's sister, Anna Lady Hoover, died tragically in a kitchen explosion, leaving Uncle Irvin with five small daughters to raise. Later their house was destroyed by a tornado.

When I was four or five years old, my sister Kathryn was born. She was soon diagnosed with severe Down's Syndrome. The demanding care of her affected all of our family members, no doubt developing in me sympathy for abnormal people. My saintly mother, who suffered the loss of her first fiancée to death from illness, as well as the loss of a stillborn son, regarded tragedy and adversity as part of life, saying things could have been much worse.

Growing up on the farm, we had many chores which had to be done before playing ball or other games. Thus we were taught the value of work and taking responsibility.

In those days, telephones hung on the wall on a wooden box. Ours was a party-line phone, with rings made by cranking the handle. Our number was one long and one short ring. We were instructed not to "listen in" on others' rings to hear perhaps some neighborhood gossip or news. We should mind our own business.

Hospitality was an integral part of our home life, extended to church families as well as to relatives and to visiting missionaries and evangelists. When we had company at meals, my father instructed his children that "children should be seen and not heard." We could learn much by listening to the adults and being quietly respectful. Caring for the poor and lonely was illustrated by an old decrepit neighbor man being invited occasionally to dinner at our house.

A nice memory of childhood is attendance at the Saturday Bible schools conducted by Pastor Joel and Faithe Carlson at the Abilene Brethren in Christ church. Farm families typically went to Abilene on Saturday afternoons. They dropped off

their children at the church, which accommodated both children and parents.

Grandfather Millard had been converted as a young man in a large revival effort at the Belle Springs church in South Dickinson County. For a time he and Grandma Kathryn lived in an addition to our large farm house. By this time he had been elected a bishop, so that we grandchildren grew up enriched from close exposure to their many preacher and missionary guests.

My conversion occurred when I was twelve years old, during a revival conducted by Bishop E. J. Swalm. I went forward to the altar and received Jesus as my personal Savior. I remember the joy and relief I felt that night at bedtime, that if I should die I would go to Heaven. What sweet peace I felt in my soul because I had placed my faith in Jesus.

On Sunday afternoons, if the weather was such that we could not play outdoors, Mother often gathered her children around the piano to sing hymns. Many of those hymns are stored in my memory and bring blessing, comfort and inspiration to my soul in these later years.

Our first radio became a source of entertainment to our family. Humorous programs we loved were "Amos and Andy," "Henry Aldridge," and the Saturday night drama of "Gangbusters." Sunday afternoons we listened to the "Old Fashioned Revival Hour," with Rudy Atwood at the piano and great singing by the male quartet. Charles E. Fuller preached strong evangelical sermons, and his wife "Honey" read letters of appreciation from listeners. Weekdays at noon Dad listened to the market reports for current prices of grains and cattle. One memorable newscast was on a Sunday night, December 7, 1941. Returning home from a revival service at the Bethel church, we heard the shocking report of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

Another influence of my early teenage years was my Uncle LeMar Engle taking our Sunday school class to visit the Catholic Church in Abilene. He wanted us to observe the reverent behavior of the congregants during the Mass. In our own worship services, often "unsaved" young people, who sat

in the back of the church, whispered during the service, and were sometimes reprimanded from the pulpit to show better behavior.

As a young Christian, my concept of living was based upon avoiding taboo activities rather than on a relationship with Jesus. Because of this thinking, I felt that as a person soon ready for high school, I could not be a Christian and have any fun there, so I confess my high school years were not a time of spiritual growth. Those years did provide social development and wholesome relationships on a broader base than did the local church. My primary interest in high school was to play basketball and to have a girlfriend. The church taught that going to movies, dancing, and playing cards definitely were not appropriate for a Christian young person. My own parents tended to be more lenient in their thinking.

As country children, we sensed the "town" kids' superior attitudes over the "country" kids. This perception carried over into our high school years, as country students were bused to Dickinson County Community High School in Chapman. My cousin, Wendell Lady, played basketball for Abilene and I played for DCCHS. This competition was keenly felt in a personal way; however, it was a highlight of the school year for both high schools.

Having been taken to the Zion church as a baby and nurtured therein, it is difficult to separate the influences of home and church. Many of the church people were close relatives, including two of the ministers. During my years there, the three ministers who rotated preaching duties were Monroe Book, Uncle Chris Frey, and Grandpa M. G. Engle. Each had his own style of preaching and faithfully adhered to the beliefs of the Brethren in Christ Church.

Rev. Book offered any child a nickel who memorized Psalm 24. I still can quote that Psalm by memory. Grandpa Engle admonished his grandchildren not to read the funny papers, quoting the Scripture that says to abstain from all appearance of evil. But he also, if we ran across him in Abilene, treated us to a root beer at the drug store.

My step-grandmother, Anna Graybill Engle, occasionally preached in a Sunday evening service. I was impressed with her organized Scriptures by which she supported her sermonic remarks. She was the first ordained woman minister in the Brethren in Christ Church, having been ordained by a mission organization to India where she served for a number of years.

There was wonderful congregational singing at the Zion church, with song leaders such as brothers Lowell and Harold Hoover leading. These years laid the foundation of my learning and loving the hymns of the church. Grandpa Engle often chose "A Charge to Keep I Have" as a closing hymn. Of course, we loved the quartets that toured the denomination in the summertime from Beulah or Messiah College. Sometimes they sang at our August tentmeetings held in a grove near Grandpa's farm.

During testimony time on Sunday evening or midweek services, individuals who rose to give the most "glowing" testimonies were often viewed as the most spiritual. My father did not participate in testimony time. He was entrusted with church finances, being treasurer for many years. I was proud that my father was honest and was respected in the wider community. My parents taught us more by example than by precept.

In reflecting back on sermons during my growing up years, I believe emphasis on grace would have been of more value than stressing the legalities of the denomination at that time, and of hearing guilt-producing admonitions. Of course, that changed in later years. Regarding dress, my own parents were less strict than some other members. My brother Mahlon, my father, and I work neckties and I believe my sisters Doris and Maxine did not wear caped dresses or strings on prayer coverings.

Zion was well known as a missionary-sending congregation. My great Aunt Elizabeth Engle, M.G.'s sister, served in Africa. She later married Lewis Steckley from Canada. I recall that in our attic there were stored exotic animal skins from Africa. Perhaps Uncle Lewis was a hunter as well as a missionary. Missionary talks and visits enlarged

our vision of the world. Seven of my first cousins served in Africa, as well as Uncle Harvey Lady who died there.

The leadership and influence of Homer Engle was an important aspect of my spiritual growth in later years. He directed the three-day August youth conferences for the Kansas, Oklahoma, and Iowa young people, which were the high point of the year. We loved Homer—with his gifts in understanding our social, emotional, and spiritual needs. These conferences were beneficial to me personally. I first met my wife Esther, from Iowa, at one, held at beautiful camp Washun-ga near Junction City. My father liked to tease us that he got both of his wives (the first died in childbirth) within a few miles of his home, but that I had to get my wife from out of state.

In my youth the Zion church was a simple white frame building, built on a rise overlooking the lovely Kansas prairies. A cemetery is nearby, in which three or four generations rested even before I was born. Visiting that cemetery is a reminder of the godly people who were our forebears, whose prayers no doubt are still efficacious in behalf of their descendants.

The Bible teaching and spiritual foundation for life provided by the Brethren in Christ denomination in which I was raised has been and continues to be a wonderful blessing, for which I am profoundly thankful. The nurturing provided in those early years has provided strength, security, and direction for my life.

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Mary (Wideman) Sider

I was born into a Christian home in 1934, the only girl with an older and a younger brother. My father, Joseph Wideman, had left the Old Mennonite Church to join the

Brethren in Christ congregation at Heise Hill before he married my mother, Martha Cober. We lived on a small farm in a rural Ontario community. I remember daily life including morning family worship and bedtime Bible reading and prayer with us children. We were taken to church twice on Sunday as well as to Wednesday prayer meeting every week. We attended Bible conferences, love feast weekends, and regular revival meetings with guest preachers. My life was saturated with church.

My first awareness of conviction of personal sin came at eight years of age in a revival service conducted by Samuel Lady. I knelt at the altar to pray. Someone prayed with me, but I received very little counseling or follow-up. I simply knew my load of sin was gone, and that I loved Jesus and wanted to please him.

The things I heard preached at church were also lived out in my home. There was never any ill will or fighting between my parents. When my mother expressed impatience with my father, she always followed up by asking forgiveness, and his immediate response was, "I've already forgiven you." The clear teaching at church combined with exemplary living at home provided me a very good foundation for Christian living.

The church strongly emphasized separation from the world, which included the wearing of plain clothes, and not getting involved in "worldly" activities. In my home, although we were encouraged to agree with the church, we were also allowed to question and to search out answers for ourselves. We took part in the songs and plays of the annual Christmas concert of our little one-room school. The only other Brethren in Christ family represented at that school did not participate because they thought Christmas concerts were worldly.

My father served for many years as the secretary of the school board, and in that position he took an active role in community activities. My mother frequently organized community showers for newlyweds and was involved with her neighbors. Their broader vision and example certainly helped us children to get involved outside the church as we made

decisions for ourselves. I played a leading role in the high school play and my brother played baseball with a local team, all with our parents' approval but not with church approval. Issues were freely discussed with biblical input and church interpretation, but then we had freedom to make a personal decision. I realize now that these attitudes in my home were not the norm for that time. Because of my parents' openness, I never felt that I needed to rebel against the church like so many of my peers did.

The years of my childhood and as a teen were difficult economically for my parents. Even though money was scarce due to a major recession, we did not feel deprived or neglected. We always had good meals from garden produce and farm livestock. Our clothes met with our approval even though my mother remade them from their own older, outmoded items.

My father lived with chronic disability, the result of an accident on the farm. The medical treatment he received at the time of the severe head injury was very poor, and he was left with severe headaches for the rest of his life. Despite this handicap, he farmed his land, cared for the livestock and provided for us as family. We saw our mother taking on more management responsibilities in order to help relieve him from stress. They always worked together as a team.

Some people in the church questioned my father's spirituality because he didn't give public testimony in services, join in with the singing, or take any leadership position. These activities seemed to trigger his headaches and he soon learned to avoid them. At home we knew him as a quiet man who often expressed his desire to live for Jesus in such a way that he'd be welcomed into heaven at the end of life's journey. We never heard him complain of the headaches; in his suffering we saw patience and strength that was a powerful example to us of true spirituality.

My father always told us that when one couldn't keep his promise to a commitment, one's duty was to go to the person involved and make fresh arrangements. We saw my father go to the banker and negotiate a repayment plan when he couldn't

make his payment on a loan. He was never turned away and he always paid his bills. This was very important to him as being the Christian way to live. We children were aware that there were some prominent church members who ran up large bills at the grocery store and were tardy regarding payment. When my brothers and I grew up and became more independent, we realized more and more just what it meant to be the son or daughter of Joseph Wideman. His very name meant reliability, integrity, and honesty in the community. We felt very rich to have this heritage and it has helped us to be dependable and responsible in all our dealings with others.

At nineteen years of age, I entered Wellesley School of Nursing in Toronto. Living in a dormitory setting among non-Christians was a big change in my life. It was then that I realized that I wasn't really tempted with the party life of dating, drinking, and smoking that was the accepted lifestyle of others. The Nurses Christian Fellowship group was active and I became involved in it. One day I was asked to lead a Bible study for the group on a specific Scripture. It was then that I realized I had never done anything like that before. All those sermons, Sunday school classes and Bible conferences didn't seem to have prepared me for the task of preparing and leading a Bible study. I had no idea of where to begin. I did it somehow and my presentation seemed to be well received, but I felt as if my church had somehow let me down by not preparing me for this kind of leadership. My involvement in Nurses Christian Fellowship was very positive as I attended retreats and special studies. My faith was increasingly becoming mine personally and I became less dependent on my church.

As I reflect on later opportunities for Christian service as a wife and mother, whether it was leading home Bible studies, teaching Sunday school or a community Good News Club, I am thankful for the strong foundation that my church and home gave me. I had a wonderful sense of security that surrounded me in my early years from church and home that helped me to have a strong faith. Watching my parents deal with financial and health difficulties provided a pattern for my

own family life of trusting God in the midst of life's problems. My parents were involved with their neighbors in a way that showed their faith in action even when the church teachings at that time promoted separation. During a time when the church had well-defined guidelines for living, my parents modeled a process of using Scripture to guide personal lifestyle decisions. I am thankful for the wonderful balance and foundation this provided in my life and the model it gave me in the years to come.

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#### June Byers Gibble

The major influences building spiritual and material values into my life were my Brethren in Christ parents, John Alfred and Ida Hess Byers, and the local Brethren in Christ Church: the New Guilford District, and later the Antrim Brethren in Christ Church in particular. Neither of these influences could have performed its God-assigned task for my life alone. It was their intertwined cooperation that built the foundation. Over seventy years later, that foundation remains in place and still is the source of a multitude of blessings to me.

Throughout my childhood, our local administrative unit was a district with one to three churches under a bishop and several ordained ministers and deacons. The New Guilford District had three churches. My father was ordained as a minister by the district in 1934 and rotated with the other three ministers to preach at the three different churches. Later this changed and each minister was assigned to a particular church.

The Antrim congregation had no regular services at the time of my father's ordination. By 1936 a growing interest of several families resulted in the reopening of a year-round Sunday school. Closely related to the reopening, my father

was assigned to Antrim as a pastor, but with continued rotation.

I went with my parents to the other churches of the district on the rotation basis and benefited from the influence of all three congregations. Before the end of rotation, my parents decided we children should be at Antrim every Sunday. On the Sundays that my father was assigned to preach at another church, my parents drove us extra miles to a member's home so we could go with that family to Antrim. This decision gave me a sense of belonging to our assigned fellowship and allowed me to earn awards for regular attendance. However, worshipping at the other churches blessed me with a wider circle of friends and a greater variety of experiences.

My mother was the one who invited me, during an altar service, to pray to accept Jesus as my Savior. At the age of eight, I knew I wanted to do this and it was helpful to have her encouragement to make the decision. The teaching that I received at home, in Sunday school, and at revival meetings the Holy Spirit used to convict me of my sins.

At home, my parents used encouragement, worship, Scripture, rules, and correction to shape my life for service and fruit-bearing experiences. My siblings chipped away some undesirable behavior from my life. They also contributed to developing good qualities. My sisters and I once tried a Bible verse memorization marathon. My brother preached the sermon when we played church. My mother frequently admonished us with Scripture, some of which she used so often that I had automatic memorization. She corrected my misunderstanding of the Golden Rule when I tried to use it to get even with a sibling because I was sure he started the verbal battle and the Golden Rule justified my returning his behavior.

We had family worship with Bible reading and kneeling prayer every morning. I do not remember morning worship ever being sacrificed for a crowded schedule. This practice impressed me with the importance of reading God's Word and prayer on a daily basis. Today I appreciate the bonding power the Word of God had in our home.

I had four Sunday school teachers who made Sunday school interesting and profitable for me. They increased my understanding of the Bible and nurtured my love for it. Martha Wingert, my junior teacher, encouraged Bible verse memorization with stickers on a chart as our reward.

Also, I heard the regular reading of a portion of Scripture at the beginning of every service in the same version so often that sometimes I felt I had memorized it. One of the rotating ministers quoted I Samuel 15:22 in nearly every sermon. I definitely had it memorized. Today I receive a special blessing from the truth of that verse and the memory of one of God's faithful servants.

Missions have always been a part of my family and congregation. I had three older cousins who were missionaries in Africa and India and their parents and siblings kept us informed about their lives and ministries. Our church regularly invited missionaries to present their work in services. Slide presentations were a new and interesting means of communication I enjoyed. In our home, missionaries were special guests whose stories came to life as we interacted with them around the table.

My parents taught the importance of treating all persons with respect. Our home was zoned to attend the elementary school which sat on the edge of the African-American population in Chambersburg. While some parents sent their children to another school to avoid African-American association, my parents sent me to the assigned school. This decision provided me with a beneficial inter-racial learning environment. They also used this same approach in ministry to all people in our neighborhood and church. My parents demonstrated how to be generous with the unfortunate and took us with them on visits to them.

We entertained individuals in our home regardless of their life status. Some visits lasting a week were difficult for me. Some were delightful and exciting, like having the evangelists stay with our family during a two-week revival meeting. We frequently had guests for dinner on Sundays and members of the congregation invited our family to dinner and fellowship in

their homes. I enjoyed the two-way blessings of Christian hospitality; when I was married, Ken and I continued the practice which brought us blessed fellowship and lasting friendships.

When I was a teen, a youth pastor was not a part of a church staff. However, I was most fortunate to have what amounted to one. The young people's Sunday school teacher, Ray Gible, along with his wife and family, arranged exciting and enriching experiences for the youth of the church. They gave freely of their time, their home, and probably finances. One of those exciting trips was a bus trip to Washington, D.C., to hear Billy Graham preach in the early years of his ministry. At Christmastime, Ray invited the youth and young-at-heart of the congregation to climb into one of his business' flatbed trucks with sides, filled with bales of straw, to join in Christmas caroling to people living around the church and in the nearby villages. This was especially enjoyed by shut-ins. I, along with the other singers, had the thrill of seeing the joy we brought to many people.

My father in particular was concerned about my learning to be frugal. He had lived as a young man through the Great Depression and believed I had to learn how to live without everything I wanted. That lesson seemed unnecessary to me, but I had the lessons anyway and they have stuck with me.

He gave us numerous opportunities to share with others and to minister without thought of compensation. At the time, I often did not like some of the farm work I had to do when he was away holding a revival meeting, nor was it always convenient to type his Messiah Village board minutes or the Antrim church bulletins, but in retrospect I am thankful for the privilege of serving with him in ministry and learning the importance of serving behind the scene.

The entertainment of my life was definitely prescribed by my family and the congregation. Activity on Sunday was extremely limited when I was young. As we became older, the rules were relaxed. My entertainment was mostly with the church. A special entertainment of the New Guilford District was Children's Day. The three churches rotated the location of

a Sunday morning service. While the adults listened to a sermon, the children went outside to have a final rehearsal of recitations to be presented to the adults after the sermon. Every child went to the platform at some time to give at least one speaking part. The most eventful activity for us children was the lunch served by the church. We called it our Sunday School Picnic,

The church and my parents condemned other entertainments. Motion pictures were said to come from an evil source and, therefore, to be avoided. Radio was not condemned, although some families kept it out of the house and in their barn where it could be heard while milking. We did not have one in my home until around 1945, so I have a blank spot in my radio cultural, as well as in television since my family did not have a set while I lived at home. This gap became somewhat of a handicap as I moved from my rural upbringing and into the wider cultural background I experienced in the classroom as a teacher. God gave me a husband who helped me over some of the most embarrassing spots.

Dancing was seen as contributing to undesirable consequences. Plain parents and leaders arranged with the Chambersburg High School for an alternate assignment when dancing was taught in gym class. Attendance at high school sports events was discouraged. I had no real interest in such activity and no transportation to get there. However, my brother did go with a friend when he was in high school without Daddy's permission. Someone saw him and reported it to our father. There were consequences.

This viewpoint of sports, particularly on football, caused me some embarrassment when, as a faculty member, I went to my first football game. I spent the evening wondering what was happening on the field and when to cheer.

Reading was an acceptable activity, especially reading the Bible. Antrim congregation provided several sources of good reading material. It belonged to the Traveling Library circulated by the Brethren in Christ publishing house in Nappanee, Indiana. The librarian, an avid reader in the

congregation, encouraged me to read. The Sunday school also subscribed to the Sunday school papers published by the denomination. Sometimes continued stories were a big temptation to read during the sermon. I knew doing that was on the "do not" list and would have undesirable consequences. My family subscribed to the *Evangelical Visitor* and I increased my reading of that paper as I better understood the topics.

My family and the church not only taught separation from the world in behavior but also in appearance. While my parents made sure I understood that my dress did not save me, I was to understand that God's work in my life would cause me to follow the pattern of plain dress. My parents were not legalistic, but they were conformists to the doctrines of the church. I do not remember when I first stopped wearing a caped dress with my parents' approval, but it was probably when I went to Messiah Academy.

My father's view of a career for women was secretarial work and then marriage. During the two years I worked in an office in Chambersburg, I developed a strong desire to go to college. I approached my father with a little fear, but he agreed that I could enroll at Messiah College where I was able to use my secretarial skills for the next decade to pay for my college education. It also opened the door to work for the General Conference Executive Secretary during General Conference and contributed to my better understanding of the inner workings of the Brethren in Christ Church.

By the time I returned home to teach at the local high school, I had changed my dress and hair style so that I was no longer a plain person in appearance. This created some difficulty for my father. While some members wanted more teaching on plain dress, his daughter was appearing less plain. When an invitation came for me to become part of the team opening the historic Ringgold Brethren in Christ Church, I accepted and this seemed to ease the tension. I did care that some in the congregation were grieved with my behavior.

When I married and left Pennsylvania in 1963, the influence of my Brethren in Christ family and church did not

end. In the early 1970s, Charlie Byers, bishop of the Southeastern District, asked Ken and me to arrange a dinner for the "Brethren in Christ Scattered Abroad in Florida." This broadened our denominational contacts, especially with Camp Freedom personnel, and was an annual experience for approximately two decades.

Although I have belonged to several denominations since 1963, I have looked for congregations that hold to the faith taught by my family and the Brethren in Christ Church. I have a special bonding with my family and many friends of the Brethren in Christ because of our common life experiences and our oneness in Jesus Christ. My roots are deep and unchanging.

\* \* \*

Gerald Tyrrell

Now in my thirty-seventh year of ministry, I am pleased to be serving as pastor of the Cheapside Brethren in Christ Church. It is the church of my childhood. It is the church in which not only I but also my parents (Grant and Rhoda Tyrrell), maternal grandparents (Levi and Henrietta Cronk), and great-grandparents (Christian and Margaret Cronk) were nurtured in the Christian faith.

The story of the Cheapside Brethren in Christ Church and that of my maternal family is linked closely together since the founding year of the church, which was in 1920. It was in that year that a tent meeting was held on the farm of Hiram and Barbara Weaver—a deeply devoted Brethren in Christ couple. This first tent meeting was a great success. Among the twenty-seven new converts were my great-grandparents, Chris and Maggie Cronk, as they were affectionately known, and my grandparents, Levi and Ettie Cronk. Great-Grandpa Chris was about sixty-five years of age at the time of his conversion. He

became a faithful church member and attendant for the rest of his time on earth.

Many years later, as a child I was privileged to hear my grandmother, Ettie Cronk, give testimony to their conversion within that early tent meeting. Grandma said, "I'm so thankful that the meetings ever came to Cheapside. When I asked Levi if he thought we should attend he said, 'Well, if they can't do us any good, they can't do us any harm! Let's go.'" I suspect Grandpa offered a similar response when asked by Grandma if they should go forward to accept Christ.

The number of conversions made it necessary for weekly services to be started at Cheapside. That there was neither church building nor minister made little difference to the new converts. The Weaver home now became the place of meeting. Not only did the Weavers make provision for Sunday worship, but also their table seemed to supply a never-ending provision of food. Ministers from the nearby congregations of Springvale, Wainfleet, and Bertie took turns in providing a preaching ministry for these people. In 1926, Earl Sider became the first pastor of this fledgling congregation. My mother, Rhoda Mae Cronk, was two years old at the time. In 1929 a church building was acquired from the United Church and moved about ten miles to Cheapside.

My mother, Rhoda Mae, was the sixth and final child born to her parents. She attended the services of the Cheapside Brethren in Christ Church in the company of her parents, along with four older sisters: Ruth, Nettie, Lucie, and Lena; and one older brother, Jack. The church record states that Rhoda was converted in 1930 at the age of six and baptized in 1931 in the waters of Lake Erie at the age of seven. Pastor Earl Sider baptized the young believer. She was received into membership the same year.

My father, Grant Hubert Tyrrell, was the fifth and final child to be born of his parents, William and Jenny Tyrrell. They were a godly couple, and attended the neighboring Cheapside United Church. Grant's mother often taught the adult Bible Sunday school class. Not until Grant was dating Rhoda did he make a public confession of faith. This took

place in a rather dramatic fashion at a revival meeting within the Springvale Brethren in Christ Church. Grant was one who seldom demonstrated any emotion publicly. But apparently, in the moment following his conversion at the altar, he jumped up, hurried over to Rhoda, embraced her and said, "I'm saved!" He was experiencing a newly-found joy in the Lord! His conversion is noted as having taken place in the early spring of 1942. He was baptized the following year, at the age of twenty-one, in the waters of Lake Erie, and by Pastor Earl Sider. He was received into membership of the Cheapside Brethren in Christ Church in 1943. Grant and Rhoda were married on September 12, 1942.

During the early years of their marriage, Grant and Rhoda dressed in the conservative style of the day. Rhoda wore the full, white prayer covering, complete with ribbons. She also wore the plain dress, with a cape. Grant, who had been the more stylish dresser of the two, now put on a plain suit and vest, buttoned up to the collar of the white shirt beneath. What was to mark their life together for the next fifty years, however, was not the style of their clothes, but rather their love for God and for people!

Rhoda was told by the family doctor that she would never be able to bare a child. So, in 1944, Grant and Rhoda adopted an infant boy, whom they named Howard Grant. In 1946, a surprise was on the way! On June 30, 1946, Rhoda gave birth to a healthy, good-looking little fellow, whom they named Gerald Edward.

I have mostly fond memories of my early childhood years. I felt loved by my family, and I felt loved in the church. The two were nearly inseparable to me. The church family was simply an extension of my immediate family. Our little family, which was later to grow considerably, attended the three regular services of the church each week. These were Sunday school and worship, Sunday evening service, and the mid-week prayer service. And I remember feeling happy about it.

I recall an incident that occurred when I was just a toddler—probably not more than two years old. Dad had been out "running ditches" in the fall of the year. That is, he was

using a wooden V-shaped ditcher, upon which he was standing and being pulled by a team of horses named King and Queen. Suddenly, the ditcher struck a stone and was overturned, throwing Dad head-over-heels. He suffered a broken arm. The horses ran away.

That evening, five or six women of the congregation came over to the farmhouse to be with mother. They sat together in the kitchen, forming a circle by the window. As a toddler, I was in the middle of the circle. The dear women extended their arms and hands to me, welcoming me to come to them. They made such a fuss over me. No wonder I remember the incident so well!

A closely related incident was soon to follow. Standing by the same kitchen window a couple of days later, I was wide-eyed in seeing a colorful parade of about a dozen tractors coming in the lane, each pulling a two-furrow plough. I can still see them in living color: red and yellow (Massey Harris), green and yellow (John Deere), green and red (Oliver), orange and red (Minneapolis Moline), and orange (Case). I can also name the brethren to whom each tractor belonged. These men had come to the farm to complete the ploughing for the season. I was impressed! What a wonderful display of kindly brotherhood!

Family devotions were a regular part of our daily routine. Following breakfast, we assembled ourselves together in the living room. Normally, Dad read the Scripture, Mother read the daily devotional, and we knelt together for prayer. Dad, or Mother, or Grandma Cronk, would lead in prayer. We concluded by praying together The Lord's Prayer.

Bedtime prayer was also a part of my daily routine. I developed a little prayer that I remember to this day. The first part was a common prayer, but the latter part was of a more personal nature. The prayer was as follows:

Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul  
to keep.

If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul  
to take.

God bless Mommy and Daddy, Grandma, John and Howard . . .

Jean and Chuck, Aunt Lena and Uncle Jesse, Milton, Nettie, and Cloyce

And help me not to tell lies to anyone. In Jesus' name, Amen.

John was a young Englishman who had come to live with our family when I was about four. Jean and Chuck were neighbors, living across the road. Aunt Lena and Uncle Jesse were my mother's sister and brother-in-law. Milton, Nettie, and Cloyce were their children, my first cousins. I spent considerable time with this family during the first five years of my life. Aunt Lena and Uncle Jesse had lost a son six months before I was born. Thus, they were still grieving at the time of my birth. Apparently, Aunt Lena enjoyed caring for me during my infancy. She became a very dear woman in my life. I loved her much! She passed away when I was ten years of age. I grieved deeply. I can still recall going alone to the upper part of the barn, and "talking" to Aunt Lena during my grieving time.

Uncle Jesse had a sister named Hettie. My first Sunday school teacher, she was a petite woman, conservatively dressed, and an outstanding teacher. The classroom was a small 12' x 12' enclosed room located at the front of the sanctuary, a room that now serves as the pastor's study. Aunt Hettie was ahead of her time in teaching methods. She would make miniature characters, hand-painted, and placed in a sandbox. Here we could re-enact the Bible story of the morning. She had many other handmade visual aids to capture and hold our attention.

I also loved my pastor, the Reverend Earl Sider. He preferred the simple title, "Brother Sider." So it was in this manner that my parents referred to him. He demonstrated a warm spirit, and I felt his compassion and concern for me as a youngster. Brother Sider shook my hand and greeted me warmly every time I came to church. He showed special

interest in me. It is little wonder that I was converted at the age of four.

Revival meetings were being held at the Cheapside church, and the evangelist for the two-week meeting was Brother John Rosenberry. He was a tall, good-looking man, and a dynamic preacher. Sometimes he would kick his right foot up over the pulpit in an athletic manner. An invitation was given at the close of each service for people to come to the altar of prayer. I felt the tugging of God's Spirit in my heart, but wasn't brave enough to simply go forward without first talking to my parents.

One evening, in riding home in the 1950 Chevy in the company of my family, I said to mother, "Tomorrow evening, Mom, when the invitation is given, I want to go forward to get saved." Mother said, "Gerald, I think you're a little young for such an important decision as that!" I pleaded! Grandma Cronk eventually spoke up and said, "Rhoda, if Gerald really wants to go forward, I think we should let him." That settled the issue. The next evening, when the invitation was given, I stepped out into the aisle to go forward. Surprisingly to me, Aunt Lena, who had been seated just a pew or two ahead of us also went forward. I had certainly known Aunt Lena to be a fine Christian. We knelt together at the altar.

I share the experience from the perspective of my pastor, Brother Earl Sider, and in his own words, later printed in *The Pilgrimage of the Brethren in Christ*: "At a revival meeting one night, Gerald, at the age of four, came with others to the altar. He being so young, I didn't think he would understand the need, or what it meant to be forgiven or saved. I knelt beside him and said, 'What did you come to the altar for, Gerald?' He replied with a clear statement, 'I want to be saved.' I instructed with a clear and brief statement; then when I paused a few moments, he began to pray, asking forgiveness for all he had done wrong, and for God to make him a Christian. After a short prayer and a pause, he said, 'God has saved me.' He showed every mark of being a child of God."

Two years later, at the age of six, I was baptized in the waters of Lake Erie. Our district bishop, Edward Gilmore, was

assisting the pastor. The bishop and pastor alternated in baptizing the candidates. Bishop Gilmore was about to take my hand to lead me out into the water. I refused. I said, "No! I want Brother Sider to baptize me." Bishop Gilmore informed Brother Sider of my desire, and kindly handed me over to the pastor. Shortly thereafter, I was welcomed into the membership of the church.

I share one further statement from Brother Sider concerning my experience. "At the age of seven, Gerald came again to the altar and dedicated himself to God, and received the Holy Spirit and was sanctified. Then four years later, at eleven years of age, he came to me one Sunday morning and told me that he felt God was calling him to the ministry." This calling was later to be confirmed by the Lord in a wonderful manner, within my young adult life. I started preaching at the age of twenty-three.

I always enjoyed listening to Brother Sider's preaching. His sermons were well prepared, practical, and delivered in a clear and convincing manner. I agreed with the statement as offered by Grandma Cronk on more than one occasion, "Cheapside is blessed in having one of the best preachers in the Canadian Conference." My parents also thought very highly of Brother Sider—and supported his ministry with their faithful attendance and a willingness to do whatever was asked of them.

I especially enjoyed the love feast service, in which I gladly participated as a boy from the age of six. Having been received into membership, I was one of "the brethren." Often as a boy, I was seated beside my father and my brother, and shared the experience of feetwashing with them. While I recall getting "the giggles" on one occasion while washing my brother's feet, it was normally a very meaningful experience for me, and it continues to be to this day. I recall having to memorize the communion response. In those days each communicant held the strip of unleavened bread in hand, breaking off a piece for the person standing next to him and saying, "My beloved brother, this bread which we break, is it not the communion of the broken body of our Lord and

Saviour, Jesus Christ?" The person would then respond in the affirmative. A similar statement was shared concerning the cup.

My parents and family were to continue in worshipping with the Cheapside Brethren in Christ Church until I was about seventeen years of age. At that point, we were invited by Bishop E. J. Swalm to drive into the city of Hamilton to assist Rev. J. Allen Heise in planting the Ridgemount Brethren in Christ Church. By this time our family had grown to thirteen in number: Grant and Rhoda, an adopted son, two biological sons, one biological daughter, three foster sons, and four foster daughters. Thus we would at the very least swell the ranks of the fledgling congregation at Ridgemount.

One of the best things coming out of this experience for me personally was that it was at Ridgemount that I was to meet, befriend, and grow in love with Jane Leckie, a lovely community girl coming into the Sunday school and church. Today, she and I have been married to each other for nearly forty years. Our marriage is now blessed with three fine adult sons, two lovely daughter-in-laws, and five grandchildren. We are delighted that our children are following in the way of the Lord.

What I have shared in this paper is but a sampling of my fond memories of growing up in a wonderful Christian home, and being nurtured in a loving congregation at Cheapside. With so many fond memories as these, it can readily be understood why I am so pleased to have come home to continue the journey with the people at Cheapside. I pray that God will use me as he used Brother Sider in touching the lives of others for the sake of His Kingdom!

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Nancy Jane Hunsberger

History says a Benjamin Beyer was among the early group who helped form the River Brethren. Benjamin Beyer/Byers was in my line of ancestors. Maybe that is one reason why I have always had a love for my church. I have a strong background in the Brethren in Christ. Although I appreciate my Christian heritage, I am thankful I was taught the need of accepting Christ for myself. Salvation is a personal experience of sins forgiven and a new life in Christ.

The Chambersburg congregation was my home church. Bishop Charlie Byers was pastor and my father, Rev. Daniel Burkholder, was associate pastor for most of my growing up and young adult years. I remember sermons preached by both of them.

I am thankful for ministers who believed the Bible as God's Word revealed to man to bring us to salvation in Christ. Uncle Charlie used to introduce the Gospel Tide Hour by saying the Scriptures are the irrefutable Word of God.

Scripture memorization was encouraged when I was a child, starting with our primary class. I remember being a little carried away with memorizing verses and told my Sunday school teacher I had a new verse to give her. It went like this:

Humble we must be, if to heaven we would go,  
High is the way there, but the gate is low.

Of course she told me that was not really a scripture verse. It came from a story book we had. Anyway, I am glad we were taught to hide God's Word in our heart. It has been most helpful to me down through the years.

Not only were we taught the necessity of accepting Jesus as our Savior, we were also admonished about heart purity. You could not sit under the preaching of Charlie Byers and not hear the message of holiness. I embraced this message for

myself. I am thankful for the Holy Spirit in my life. He gives us power to live differently from the world.

Someone has said: but the Brethren in Christ Church is a small denomination. True, I wish there were more of us. However, we have produced some godly, some great, some highly intelligent men and women that any evangelical church would be glad to own. The Rev. E. E. Shelhammer of an earlier generation said, "I would rather have a clean work, than a great work."

Another important part of our church life was outreach. The Gospel Tide Hour helped to give our congregation publicity. But we did not rely on that alone. We conducted Vacation Bible School which brought in many children from the community. We were strong in Sunday school visitation, competing at one time with another congregation to see who would have the most growth. Missionaries went out from our congregation which connected us to other countries of the world. We are not just a North American church. We have brothers and sisters in Christ around the world.

There was instilled in us a strong family emphasis. God established the family and this is his plan for mankind. My mother carried a strong concern that we would always get along as siblings and as extended family. If we were treated unfairly, she quoted the verse, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay saith the Lord" (Rom. 12:19). Learn to forgive. We will not always think alike, but we still care about each other and can communicate.

I was part of a congregation that was open to change. We are called to serve the present age. I will not say that all change is good. Some important issues cannot change. I will not go into change too deeply, but give some of my observations.

When I studied the Civil War in school, I saw pictures of men who wore suits with the erect collar. I asked my parents why we observed a practice that dated back to the Civil War. Well, eventually we did not need to travel to Elizabethtown or Lancaster to purchase a "plain" suit for my father. But they now call that type of jacket the Nehru jacket. I have seen some

highly-tailored, expensive Nehru-styled jackets worn by high society. So this type of jacket is acceptable today.

Air Hill love feast was a large gathering of Franklin County churches. As we observed Holy Communion in the evening, one minister would take a tray of long pieces of communion bread to several benches of participants. We broke off a piece of bread and we said the ritual to our neighbor. After the service, the deacon wives would give small pieces to children who went up front for it.

As we observed the ritual of the cup, a minister would go to the same group of persons, with a pitcher of grape juice and one cup. This same cup was shared by several benches of sisters or brothers. (We sat on separate sides of the church.) Eventually this was considered unsanitary. Then we used small individual cups. Now, in many cases the individual cups sit in the cupboard unused. We just use one large cup again. Of course we do not drink from the cup. A very small piece of bread is dipped in it. So we see changes do come.

When I was married, it was thought proper for all the men in the wedding party to wear a necktie. (Up to this time, some did and others felt conviction against it.) Now even the necktie has lost its prominence. Men can be considered properly dressed without it. I mention these instances to say to young people: do not be overly concerned if your parents seem to be "behind the times." Their style may be in vogue tomorrow.

Sin and salvation, the atoning work of Christ, the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer, these issues may change in presentation, but the truth of them cannot be negated. Our acknowledgment of sin and faith in Christ brings us to salvation and hope for eternity.

Living simply is one of our core values. Esther Spurrier has written: "We value uncluttered lives, which free us to love boldly, give generously, and serve joyfully." I grew up in the time when we did live more simply. We did not have television (until later), computers, high tech this and that. In my younger years we were often all at home as a family on Sunday afternoon. We might enjoy a game of croquet on the lawn, or walk back to the creek, or play a ball game of our

own. We did not have endless toys and gadgets. We were happy and contented. We cannot go back to those days, but it would do us good to again read Esther's chapter on the simple life and ask the Lord to help us to live simply, not tied to too much "stuff." We will have more time and money to give, and less clutter to take care of.

The Chambersburg congregation recently celebrated its one hundredth anniversary. Since that was my home church I was a part of that celebration. What excitement, what joy to meet old friends, former Sunday school students, hear from former ministers, etc.. Now I look forward to the reunion in Heaven. We want to see Jesus first, but I believe we will have opportunity to thank those who have gone before. "What a day of rejoicing that will be."

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Mary O. (Gilmore) Fretz

I was very blessed to have been born into a committed Christian family. My mother's Sider Brethren in Christ roots and my father's Gilmore liberal church background came together in a coincidental way. As was common, the Wainfleet Brethren in Christ Church was having extended revival meetings during the winter. My Grandmother Gilmore wanted to attend these meetings. Grandpa Gilmore wasn't interested but was prepared to provide a way for her to attend. My father, Edward, the oldest son at age fifteen, was assigned the responsibility of driving her to the meeting each evening by horse and sleigh.

During these meetings both grandparent and grandson responded to the invitation to commit their lives to the Lord. Grandpa Gilmore, along with other children, made the same decision. Thus began the Gilmore relationship with the Brethren In Christ. Grandpa Gilmore's siblings never left their

original church, but we maintained close ties with them and their families with significant family events.

My parents were often asked to be helpers in summer tent meetings. Tents were pitched on church members' property and an evangelist invited to speak. My parents would look after the tent, assist with music, lead special events for children, and counsel seekers following the evening service.

Just before my birth, my parents received an invitation to pastor in the Houghton area in Ontario where a revival had been held. For some time, ministers from the Wainfleet, Bertie, and Springvale areas had tried to shepherd new converts as a result of these revival meetings, but local people were asking for a resident pastor.

Rev. Walter Taylor from Michigan had responded earlier to this call, but upon his premature death, the emerging group was left without a pastor. Because my parents had been involved with summer tent meetings and had a desire to respond to the need of the church and call of the Lord, they were willing to accept the invitation.

In reflecting on their willingness to do so, I can imagine that it wasn't an easy choice. They had just built a new house with conveniences not common in that time, and their first child was only weeks away from birth. Dad went on ahead and Mother joined him after I was six weeks old. Their decision was indeed significant because twenty years later, we followed in their footsteps and began our teaching careers in this same area. We were warmly welcomed and quickly accepted because of the legacy left by much loved and respected parents. We soon became youth leaders and supportive of the local work.

Because Mother had gone to high school to become an elementary teacher when few of her peers went beyond elementary school, education was important to her as well as to the extended Sider family. My father, because of working on the family farm, wasn't able to attend high school, but he too valued education and completed high school in his adult years. While a full-time minister, he attended teachers' college in his late fifties and obtained a teaching certificate.

Education was becoming important in the Brethren in Christ Church, but leaders were concerned that youth would be negatively influenced by the “world” if they attended secular education institutions. Career choices were largely limited to teaching, or also nursing for girls.

Thus, the need for Ontario Bible School (later Niagara Christian College) was born. Youth, including myself, mostly wore head coverings and some wore plain dresses, while the boys did not wear neckties. Going to NCC made it easier to attend high school without looking different and minimized the negative influence of worldly events and teaching. As youth, we were protected from sinful events in a spiritual atmosphere influenced by church leaders and revival meetings. Many found life partners in this environment.

Family ties with both the Sider and Gilmore relatives were strong. The extended family was always together for special occasions and dinners. As the family grew, more plates and chairs were added. Singing was always a part of these events. Music was extremely important to both extended families. Education was especially important to the Sider family, so sharing how relatives were progressing was commended with interest. Dinners would always begin and conclude with a prayer by Grandpa Sider or his oldest son, Earl.

My childhood was firmly rooted in Brethren in Christ traditions and church life. During childhood and teen years, I knew little of other church activities beyond the Brethren in Christ Church, likely considered formal churches less spiritual, and had very limited association with them. This idea was not consciously given to me by my parents but likely developed by what I heard and observed.

As I grew up, the “call of the church” was heard as a “call from God” for particular service. During World War II, the church needed a minister to go to British Columbia to pastor young men who chose alternative service as conscientious objectors rather than participate in any form of military service. Although having a young daughter about age eleven and a son age seven, Dad responded to this need to serve for six months at these camps. This wasn’t easy for our mother

who was left to manage the home, but it was decided that Dad was to serve the Lord in this manner.

In our early married life at campmeeting, my husband Lester and I heard of the need for two teachers with Canadian certificates to go to Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) to teach for two years to allow four missionary teachers to be furloughed. The example of my parents, I'm sure, made this decision easy to accept.

My parents' church involvement locally as well as at the General Conference level provided frequent opportunity to become well acquainted with highly respected church leaders such as Charlie Byers, Henry Ginder, Luke Keefer Sr., and E. J. Swalm, in addition to many missionaries. My parents' extending of hospitality in this manner was a model and motivation for our own home that we frequently enjoy and practice. These opportunities have enriched our lives over the years.

Many significant opportunities became available because of my father's denominational involvement. His election as bishop of the Wainfleet District presented many occasions for us to attend love feasts, Bible conferences, camp meetings, and General Conference. Thus, I became acquainted with many people and leaders on a wider denominational basis. Because of my professional career and acquaintance with church leaders, I was elected to the General Conference Board of Christian Education as the first woman on that board, on which I served for many years. This connection resulted in an invitation to be a Brethren in Christ writer for the Foundation Series, a joint venture with other denominations in writing Sunday school literature.

When children's camp ministries were introduced to the Brethren in Christ, my mother was among the first to respond as a counselor, working in rented facilities at Fraser Lake. When the Canadian Conference decided to buy Camp Kahquah in 1962, my father was a strong supporter and promoter of this new venture. Here again, their camping interest probably motivated us and was a factor in influencing

our involvement in our early retirement years to direct retreats for twelve years.

The Bible was held to be very sacred and important in our home, even to the extent that we were discouraged from placing anything on it. I cherish the old, tattered Bible of my mother, with many of its verses carefully underlined, including promises that guided, directed, and comforted her life.

Family worship always followed breakfast. Before leaving the table, Dad would read a portion from the Bible, then he or Mother would pray. They presented family concerns, local church needs, and missionary families to the Lord. This wasn't a substitute for personal devotions; it drew the family together in prayer and thanksgiving at the beginning of the day.

Tithing was a very important model in my home, and also strongly preached at church. When my father was paid, a tenth always went into a special small purse. As wages increased, the purse increased in size. My brother and I each cherish one of my parents' tithing purses. That money belonged to the Lord, through the needs of the church. I knew the tithe came first before any purchase or need at our home; it just didn't belong to us. That value has always been important to us throughout our married life.

Another value modeled and taught by the church was refraining from worldly entertainment and materialism. I was taught that movies, dancing, alcohol, tobacco, and fairs were viewed as wrong as well as a poor use of money. I learned by observation that I didn't need the latest or the most expensive material things. That is a principle that my husband and I still hold as important.

Keeping Sunday as a day of rest and worship was instilled by my parents in my value system. Shining shoes, pressing trousers, ironing dresses, and making the house ready before Sunday were weekly rituals. Church attendance both morning and evening as well as mid-week prayer meeting were part of our weekly schedule. Dad ensured that the gas tank was full, the lawn mowed. Mother did the grocery shopping well before Sunday. Keeping the Sabbath Day holy was a well-respected

commandment at our house. If an emergency arose, then flexibility was exercised, but those times were very few. Would we all not be wise to discipline our lives to practice these values today?

In summary, the church and family influences were:

- A personal relationship with the Lord
- Involvement in service both in the local congregation and on broader denominational level
- The call or need of the church identified as the call of God
- Wise use of resources, practice of tithing, and generosity with resources given by God
- Providing hospitality and being sensitive to the needs of others
- The gift of family relationships

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#### Eunice (Deardorff) Zook

Growing up, I was a part of two very different worlds—my Brethren in Christ Church world and the world of my extended family. My parents, Frank and Pearl Hoover Deardorff, grew up in homes in which their parents did not attend church. In fact, none of my grandparents attended church as adults and Daddy and Mother knew little of church attendance and the life and practice of Christians. They farmed in the Antrim Brethren in Christ church area and were invited to revival services, which they attended regularly. One snowy night they and the pastor, John Byers, and the evangelist, Charlie Byers, were the only persons present. Instead of preaching to Daddy and Mother, they spent the evening presenting the plan of salvation and answering questions. That night, my parents accepted Christ and began their lifelong journey as members of the Brethren in Christ Church.

During this period of our church history in our area, it was uncommon to receive members from the outside. Thus began a period of mentoring and teaching my parents Brethren in Christ ways. Remember they were influenced by the Roaring 20s but now Daddy could no longer wear a tie but would need a plain suit and Mother would have to put aside her diamond and wedding ring, let her hair grow long, and wear cape dresses and black stockings. Goodbye stylish clothes! Imagine the consternation of their families when they learned Frank and Pearl had gone plain! Many of the family attended no church and it must have been a shocking experience for them.

As shocking as it was, I know of no bad family reactions when Daddy and Mother made this dramatic change. We were always very much a part of the larger family but a family far different from our Brethren in Christ family. But we were not treated as religious fanatics. We frequently visited Grandpa and Grandma Sunday afternoons where cousins played outdoors, aunts and uncles visited, and there was always a group in a smoke-filled side room playing cards, pinochle I think. How much fun they seemed to have! As a Brethren in Christ teenager I never really understood why it was so wrong to play cards for fun. There was no gambling—just roars of laughter or silence as they slapped the cards on the table. As to the smoke-filled room, there were times when we needed to hang our coats on the line as soon as we got home so they would smell fit to go to our Brethren in Christ Sunday evening service.

We moved freely in these two worlds which were so very different. As an adult I wonder how my parents adapted so readily to this new way of life. Of course, they were new creatures in Christ but Brethren in Christ ways were so different from their old ways.

In reviewing my life it is difficult to determine who had the most influence on my Christian walk, the church or the teachings of my parents. They knew nothing of tithing but early in their walk they sensed and were taught the importance of giving 10% to God and transmitted that concept to us as children. As farmers they sought ways to help us earn money

and when they purchased baby chicks in the spring they always bought a number of red ones for the children. Then when grown, the red ones were sold and, presto, we children had earned some money. But 10% tithe came out first, and then usually the larger remaining part went into our savings accounts. I heard sermons about tithing but my family taught me how to practice it, making it so much a part of me that, as an adult, tithing and giving to God and the church is as natural as breathing. Many of my cousins and aunts and uncles would not have known the meaning of the word "tithe."

The extensive use of slang was a common practice in my parents' families—especially Mother's. They did not swear (very much) but slang was injected into much of their speech. One aunt used one certain word so much that I almost affectionately remember her as the one who said . . . so much. In church I was taught not to take God's name in vain and that idle speech is not good, but it was at home where such teaching was put into practice. Daddy and Mother allowed no slang in our home and Daddy would not even permit words he considered borderline. One never referred to a male animal as a bull (we used the word duke) and one would certainly never call a donkey an ass. I'm grateful for the Brethren in Christ teaching about clean language and my parents reinforcing it.

My first six years of life were spent in the New Guilford congregation (my parents having moved to Duffield). As was the custom at that time, males and females sat on separate sides of the church and I always sat with Mother until my sister was born; then I needed to sit with Daddy and the men. I did not like it but a spanking convinced me that it was a necessary change in my world. Sunday school teachers used visual aids to help convey the lesson to us. I still remember a teacher using a syringe in water to teach us the lesson of the lame person who needed to get to the troubled water. It was a treat to help move the figures in the sand tray as the teacher told the story.

When I was six years old, my parents bought a farm in the Scotland-Greenvillage area and we attended Air Hill. In those days Air Hill and Mt. Rock alternated Sunday evening and

Wednesday evening services, and we were always in attendance. Chambersburg also was a part of the mix, and because Daddy and Mother had warm feelings for Antrim and New Guilford we attended revivals there also. It was our pattern to get the farm work done early so that we would miss no services.

At age twelve I accepted the Lord at a revival at the Chambersburg church. Revivals were a scary experience for me and I still remember some of the stories the evangelists told and demonstrated in the children's period, like magnet people representing those who could go to heaven and those left behind. While I accepted the Lord at a revival and am thankful, I wish there would have been a better way to bring us to accepting the Lord than some of those scary sermons.

After accepting the Lord, the following spring I was baptized in the Conococheage Creek at Red Bridge by Bishop Charlie Byers and became a member of the church. This coincided with the Air Hill love feast so that my first communion and feetwashing was at love feast. I put aside my regular clothes and wore a covering and plain dress and even black stockings for a time. I do not remember that it was a traumatic experience for me to dress plain, although none of my girl cousins even remotely looked like me. I still had good times with both families, Brethren in Christ and the Deardorffs and Hoovers. During my teenage years the youth were an integral part of the Sunday evening service which we called Young Peoples' and later Christ's Crusaders. I had my share of needing to speak on an assigned topic, and while it was difficult to talk in front of people, I see it now as a wonderful training ground for becoming a part of the church. We have lost the inter-generational services of those days when the sisters or brethren would come to thank us for our words and for taking part in the service.

At least once a year, special emphasis was given in the Sunday school hour to teaching the avoidance of alcohol and tobacco. I was never tempted to use tobacco despite that my aunts, uncles, and male and female cousins commonly used it. I was not invited to smoke nor would I have accepted an

invitation to do so. Alcohol was and is not a temptation either. Those temperance lessons remain with me and, even without the temperance lessons, I am scared to death to taste alcohol. The tendency toward alcoholism could be in my genes!

During my teenage years in the 1950s, the Brethren in Christ had peace conferences in which we were taught the principles of peace and non-resistance. It was an easy concept for me to accept, partly I think, because peace and not fighting back was a way of life in our home. We were taught forgiveness by example, and back talk and fighting were not tolerated. Daddy, especially, set the example; he was not harsh with us but was always careful to ask forgiveness if he felt he needed to do so. Meantime, we had World War II, the Korean conflict, and the Cold War with my uncles and cousins serving in the military. My parents were never judgmental of them, nor they of us and our peace stance. We rejoiced and had reunions when some of them returned safely from World War II. By the time of our marriage we were prepared to do our I-W service in South Dakota while my close girl cousins were joining the Navy. Again, we were worlds apart in belief and practice but we were family.

During my twenties I spent a lot of time reflecting on my Christian life and practice. Never a rebellious individual, I wanted to serve God to the best of my ability. Ralph Wenger, my employer at Christian Light Bookstore, had a major impact on my Christian walk, and then, away from the Brethren in Christ in I-W service with my husband Avery, the General Conference Russian Mennonites impacted my thinking. We delighted in telling them of our Anabaptist/Wesleyan/Pietist strands and they, in turn, told us of theirs and also their journey of suffering. During those two years my faith matured and I was certain of my love for the Brethren in Christ and the Mennonite Church. It was also at the beginning of our I-W service that I chose to style my hair differently and before marriage I no longer wore plain clothes. I continued to use black hose. Those years in I-W were important to us as we established our home, thinking, and practice. I graduated to "wings." My parents gave me roots and while difficult for

them to bestow wings, they were glad to see me fly on my own, God helping me.

The various services of the church have been meaningful to me—the love feasts, the baptisms, the weddings, the funerals. The funerals of the Brethren in Christ people are so different from our Deardorff-Hoover family funerals. Brethren in Christ people usually have our funerals in church with the singing of hymns, scripture readings, remembrances, prayer, and a sermon; and we rejoice that they have gone to heaven. We're sad but glad. Not counting my parents, all of my extended family funerals but one have been held in funeral homes, frequently with a minister that few know reading the obituary, *Scripture and prayer, and in fifteen minutes we are on the way to the grave site. How I appreciate the warmth and family feeling of our Brethren in Christ funerals!*

These are some of my memories of growing up Brethren in Christ. I have no regrets that my parents drove a stake with the Brethren in Christ. I am grateful for the religious heritage they gave to me, and I value the life-changing decision they made. I am grateful too for my biological heritage when they merged the Deardorff and Hoover lines. Although we continue to have extended family members who do not attend church or know Christ, we now have family who are active in liturgical churches, are Baptists, Church of the Brethren, even Brethren in Christ, and others. And, we have something in common with them—an understanding of what it means to follow Christ. I still have two families but they are merging.

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James Sollenberger

You might say I was immersed in Brethren in Christ culture and life. I grew up in Brethren in Christ churches, was nurtured and trained in its organizations and institutions, and

have pastored three of its congregations. Presently I serve the West Side congregation near Chambersburg, Pennsylvania.

My roots in the Brethren in Christ are deep. My great-great-great-grandfather was Christian Lesh, the first bishop west of York County, Pennsylvania. His story and writings were presented by Dr. Martin Schrag in previous issues of this journal. While my grandmother, Alice Sollenberger, attended church at Montgomery, Pennsylvania, where her father was a deacon, my grandfather, John Sollenberger, was Old Order River Brethren. After their marriage they joined the Old Order River Brethren, our spiritual cousins. My grandfather was a deacon in their church as long as I could remember until his death in 1976. My mother's parents, Simon and Lila Myers, were also Old Order River Brethren. Simon was a minister for a number of years in his church.

My parents, Jacob and Ada Sollenberger, were both converted during a revival movement in the 1930s among the Old Order River Brethren. Their life change was dramatic and obviously genuine as they sought to get right with God and man. They practiced restitution and adopted "plain" clothing prior to baptism. This was quite a change for my mother since she worked in the office of a large clothing manufacturer. Shortly after their conversions they began to date. They were engaged on their second date, and were married in a little over three months on December 14, 1940, by my Grandfather Myers at his house. You could certainly call it a whirlwind romance.

Having experienced a Brethren in Christ tent meeting, and then a Montgomery revival meeting with Rev. Roy Sider, my parents decided to begin attending the Montgomery church in 1951. They appreciated the "life" they experienced there and also wanted their children in Sunday school. That set the context for my own life with the Brethren in Christ. I was born on November 9, 1953, so Montgomery became my first church home. During our Montgomery sojourn, my father became instrumental in starting an extension church at Searights, Pennsylvania. They supported the work there for a

number of years after Rev. William Martin left Montgomery to become the pastor at Searights

In 1955 we moved to a farm along Back Creek several miles west of Chambersburg. Of course, I don't remember that because I was less than a year and a half old. My parents decided to attend the Chambersburg Brethren in Christ Church, pastored by Bishop Charlie Byers and Rev. Daniel Burkholder. My parents were quite active in the teaching ministry there and we attended regularly, often taking other people with us. With as many as ten in our car I usually had to sit on someone's lap. On one occasion, my parents left me at church and someone else ended up taking me home. I'm sure that was a traumatic experience.

My family began to attend the Air Hill congregation in 1963. That became my home church until I left for seminary in 1986. There, as a child, a teen, and a young adult I was nurtured in the faith and fully "immersed" in Brethren in Christ culture. I was literally immersed in baptism at age fourteen in a local stream. The pastor during my youth was Rev. Roger Witter. During that time many of the church youth made church activities a priority. We looked forward to youth group activities, some of which were youth planned and led. They were a primary part of our social life. A tradition was Christmas caroling on Christmas Eve, traveling on the exposed back of Chester Sollenberger's truck. Also part of that era was Christ's Crusaders in which the youth often planned and led the first part of the Sunday evening services

My parents brought conservative thinking from their background. They maintained "plain" dress throughout their lives, even as church teaching changed through the years. To their credit they were able to fellowship with Christians who looked quite different from them. We didn't have a television as I was growing up, which probably helped to spawn my interest in reading and history. We were also very careful to honor the Lord's Day with worship and rest, although I was allowed to play sports with neighbor boys, an almost every-week occurrence.

My parents were very open about their faith, which was evident by their commitment to Christ and the church. They practiced hospitality and went to great lengths to keep peace with neighbors and others. They were also persons of prayer. In fact, I am likely a product of those prayers because my mother told me that they were praying that one of their sons would be a preacher. Guess who received the call?

Several of the things that interested me as a young person and helped connect me with the Brethren in Christ Church were Bible quizzing and athletics. In my early teen years at Air Hill, Bible quizzing was an "in thing" with the youth. In fact we had playoffs in front of the congregation on Sunday evenings just to determine who would make the team. We tried to memorize the entire Scripture we were quizzing on. We had a great time practicing on Monday evening at the home of our coach. The highlight of those years was winning the national championship at the 1966 General Conference before about fifteen hundred people. We beat Palmyra by five points on the last question.

I participated in Brethren in Christ sports leagues for many years in the Franklin County area. These leagues included basketball, volleyball, and softball. I also played several sports in the Sunday school tournament, held annually at Messiah College. These interchurch activities were instrumental in helping me to get to know young people and adults from other area Brethren in Christ churches. That has remained a real blessing to me through the years. In fact, if it wasn't for those years of competition, I don't think I would know nearly as many Brethren in Christ people in my area, or feel as connected to the church in this section of the Allegheny Conference.

Beside youth activities I was also nurtured and disciplined by the traditional ministries and programs of the time. I regularly attended Sunday school and Vacation Bible School, until eighth grade. Wednesday evening prayer meetings were a regular part of our week, as were bi-monthly Sunday evening services. My parents also held "cottage" prayer meetings in our home that we were expected to attend. Air Hill held

annual love feasts for three local Brethren in Christ congregations until the 1970s. Roxbury Holiness campmeeting was the highlight of our summers. We spent a lot of time during which we could escape the incessant farm work. For the last twenty-four years we have co-owned a cabin there and have had our children come to appreciate the camp's ministry. I have also served for almost ten years on the camp's Board of Directors.

At Air Hill, revival meetings were usually scheduled twice a year, spring and fall. When I was younger, these extended meetings usually lasted two weeks. I remember wonderful times of spiritual breakthrough and seeking the Lord. We normally attended about every night and twice on Sunday. My parents also took us along to neighboring revivals. Sometimes they were at quite a distance, so we didn't get home until late at night. My parents enjoyed getting into other churches beside our own.

It was after a wonderful altar experience on a Sunday morning in 1985 that I shared with the Air Hill congregation that I was feeling called into the ministry. My home church was wonderfully supportive, as were both sets of parents. My wife's parents also attended Air Hill. I had been active in the local congregation serving in a number of leadership roles. We left for Ashland Theological Seminary with two children and a call upon our lives. It has been a journey of faith for over twenty-one years.

After attending Messiah College (1971–1975) I worked with emotionally disturbed teens in Lancaster County. In late 1976 I returned to Franklin County where I noticed a young lady at Air Hill who had grown up in my absence. Actually, I first asked her out at one of those church softball games. On June 2, 1979, I married Deborah Strite. Today we have three daughters, Kimberly, Krista, and Katie.

After Ashland Seminary I began to serve the Brethren in Christ as a pastor, beginning at West Shore near Mechanicsburg. Since then I have pastored the Homerville Grace Brethren Church in Ohio, the Hollowell Church near Waynesboro, and now West Side.

Throughout my journey, I have cherished my connection to the Brethren in Christ Church. I was birthed in her influence, pointed to Christ by her preachers and teachers, nurtured and sheltered in her care, trained at her school, guided and equipped by her leaders, and matured in her service. Truly, I am an “immersed” brother in Christ.

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Connie (Engle) Hoffman

I come from the longest line of Brethren in Christ. My father, Gordon Engle, is a descendant of Jacob Engle, the founder of the Brethren in Christ Church, and that means I am a descendant, too. Dad, now eighty-seven, was a teacher in both a Christian school and a public school, and a lay leader in the church, leading Bible studies, helping to prepare the way for a church plant, serving as chairman of the board of a church preschool, counseling couples, and more. Dad was also a member of the denominational missions and finance boards. His father before him, Homer, is said to have been before his time as he spoke out on behalf of the Brethren in Christ youth of the Midwest.

My mother, Eunice Hoover, now eighty-four, grew up among the Brethren in Christ in Kansas and she, as did my granny Myrta, Homer’s wife, served faithfully by her husband’s side. Mom and her young sisters survived the emotional trauma of watching their mother die in a cook-stove fire and of watching a tornado destroy their house and the dresses they were going to wear to Grandpa Irvin’s marriage to his new bride. Through generations the church has been there for my family, and my family has been there for the church.

Dad was invited to teach at Upland Academy, so he and Mom moved to Southern California where I was born. My

first home was on the men's dorm of Upland College where Dad was Dean of Men. We later moved close by to a tiny house on Vernon Drive. My brother Vaughn was born and twins Lou and Lucille followed. I was five years old at the time of the twins' birth and clearly remember people from the college bringing money to my financially-stretched parents.

My two brothers and sister and I were brought up in the Upland church, participated in the youth group, and my sister and I were married there. Its first location was on 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, a brick and stone church with huge steps going up to the front door. With my mom's help, I gave my life as a child to Jesus after a revival service. It was there that I was baptized and began to wear a doily for a head covering. The Scriptures concerning women covering their heads for prayer continued to concern me into adulthood. I have just decided to count on grace as I intend to be fully obedient to God's Word.

I remember hanging out on the front steps of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue church with other children, some of whom I remember fondly from my teenage, and later, college years. Most distinctly, I remember singing in a children's choir for the funeral of a young boy in our church. We sang "Jewels, precious jewels, His loved and His own."

While I was growing up, my pastors were Alvin Burkholder, Eber Dourte, John Byers (associate), and Elbert Smith who married Warren and me. I am grateful for their ministry. I am also grateful for the faithful service of those in the children and youth programs. One of my favorite memories is that of "Bible sword drills." Each child started with a closed Bible. When a Bible verse reference was given, we would scramble to be the first to locate it. I loved it, probably because I was good at it.

I treasure the memory of one woman in particular, Frances Musser, who led our Girls in Christian Service club. She hosted a sleepover, complete with experience in cooking our own supper in a can over an open fire.

I attended Mile High Pines Camp, a ministry of the Brethren in Christ congregations in Southern California. After one camping season, some youth were formally asked to share

their experiences in the Sunday morning service. I was one who spoke. Afterwards Dad told me I would make a good public speaker.

The church provided many music opportunities for me. I am thankful to my parents for starting me on the violin in elementary school. I still remember the time they purchased a better violin when they determined I was serious about it. My instrument has provided opportunities for participation in worship. I am thankful to the church for the experience I have gained under its tutelage. All of our daughters, also string players, continue in the service of worship music.

My family, especially my mom, sister, and I, sang together at home and around the campfire. Here I learned how to harmonize. The church then provided further opportunities for me to sing. There were the children and youth choirs. Seventeen, a group of teenage girls under the leadership of the director of music, Myron Tweed, was an opportunity to learn to harmonize and sing in a more select group. I fondly remember an earlier director of music, Royce Saltzman, for his voice and his leadership, and his friendship. To this day I like songs from the present blue hymnal, further back to the red, and way back to the brown.

My family attended services regularly—Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and clubs and choirs midweek. We also attended revival services. At one of these services as a teenager I went to the altar to rededicate my life to Christ. There was at least one memorable time when services were being held in the Upland College campus chapel. During worship and music women waved white handkerchiefs and at least one man danced in the aisle. I remember debriefing about this activity with my parents who carefully guided my thinking without disparaging or discrediting anyone. I have come to appreciate those people, though I do not know who they were.

My family tried to keep Sunday sacred. I used my afternoons for writing letters and reading. Along with that of my husband, my concern to honor the Sabbath continues to the point that our practices go deeper than those of my parents.

Because Warren was a pastor as our daughters were growing up, we had the particular challenge of making Sunday special, and we have good memories of listening to Warren read a chapter of children's classics Sunday by Sunday and of *not* practicing instruments or doing homework.

We were not allowed to dance and did not go to movies in my growing-up years. I was glad to have an excuse not to dance, but missed the socializing. I am grateful to my parents who made an exception for square dancing during gym class. In my role as class secretary, I helped to decorate the high school gym for a dance. After the gym was ready, I left. At another school dance I took coats. I don't feel deprived and am glad to have avoided the temptations that attending dances might have provided, but I do wish I could have the personal ability to express worship more freely that might have come from learning how to dance.

In my home growing up, my family consistently had "family worship" each morning after breakfast. This practice has continued for Warren and me through the raising of our daughters. Personal time in God's Word and in prayer were important to my parents, and this continues to be my choice for myself.

I attended public school, but never questioned my parents' encouragement to attend a Christian college. I was planning to attend Upland College in the fall of my freshman year when the college closed and another decision had to be made. I am thankful that Messiah College picked up my scholarships to Upland and welcomed me there. Best of all the results, I met Warren at Messiah College.

As I reflect on my life, it occurs to me that the values I learned from my parents and through the church are in line with Brethren in Christ core values. As our family continues to observe them, the values of the church are surviving through generations. Jesse Engle, another ancestor, was among the first Brethren in Christ missionaries to Zimbabwe. Warren and I served at the Navajo Mission for four years and all of our daughters are presently serving in some form of missions or Christian service in the United States and Thailand. In his

younger years, my father spent three years in Civilian Public Service as an alternative to serving in the military; I continue to embrace the church's call to pursue peace. My parents chose to live simply, something that continues to be important to Warren and me.

One challenge that continues into my adult years is my desire for perfection. This may be in part the result of my being a first child. I also think it comes from the church's frequent call to be holy. I have had difficulty accepting and owning grace, but I have no regrets for the training and experience in the Word and with God's people that my parents and the church have given me. I know I am blessed.

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Eleanor (Herr) Poe

I am fortunate to have grown up in a loving family which included primarily my parents, sister, brother, and two sets of grandparents. All of these attended Brethren in Christ Churches and were strongly influenced by Brethren in Christ teachings and practices.

My mother's father was from a family who had been Brethren in Christ for several generations. Grandma Thuma was a member of the Old Order River Brethren, the church of her parents. My grandparents were conservative in thought and dress and followed a simple life style. They were hard-working farmers and the parents of eleven. All but one of the nine children who reached adulthood went to college or received technical training. Among them were four nurses, one medical doctor, one telephone technician, one secretary, and one teacher who was also a pastor and bishop. Two of these spent many years in Zambia and Zimbabwe as missionaries. After high school, my mother worked as a housekeeper.

Both my paternal grandparents were first-generation Brethren in Christ. My Grandpa Herr, also a farmer and an intense man of prayer, was a preacher in the Brethren in Christ Church but never a pastor. My grandparents upheld a very strict personal standard for behavior and dress. Seeing this as an indication of a faithful Christian walk, they believed others should do the same. They held strong beliefs and expressed them passionately.

My father, Amor, loved and respected his parents but did not agree with some of their beliefs. He wanted to play basketball and be on the wrestling team in high school but his father would not allow this. He did not join the church because he would not agree to dress plain. After completing high school, he learned the tool and die trade, bought a new car, and wore fashionable clothes.

My mother, Mary Thuma, followed her family's tradition, wearing her plain dress and covering even to high school. After graduation, her work as a live-in housekeeper for wealthy families in the city of Dayton thirty miles from home enlarged her world view and helped her develop interpersonal and useful domestic skills. Mother often told us about her life there, which included serving food at their parties and accompanying them on their family vacations. Along with other young Brethren in Christ women working in the city, she attended the Dayton Mission on Sundays and was included in the families of the church leaders there.

I am amazed that my parents, two very different young people, agreed to marry. The Brethren in Christ congregations in Southern Ohio had what they called a tri-county youth group. It was at these meetings that my parents met. Daddy told us that Mother was the prettiest girl he had ever seen, and he gained her attention. I can imagine this "worldly"-appearing young man in his fancy car, proudly driving up to a big house in Dayton to visit his beautiful but plain-dressed girlfriend. Throughout his life, he always said there was no one prettier than she.

After their marriage, my parents built a house beside Daddy's parents. There was a brick walk from our house to

theirs, through Grandpa's orchard where my sister, brother, and I often played. We spent a lot of time with Grandpa and Grandma Herr, sometimes helping them with chores. We learned about what they considered important and received lots of advice. In the summer, we spent many hours sitting on the porch with Grandma, hulling peas or snapping beans after Mother picked them. During those times we learned some songs from Grandma.

Life in our home was generally calm. Mother was always present when we got home from school. Because of Daddy's work, we saw him only in the evenings and on Sundays. Our family always ate together around the table. It was not only a time to eat but also a time to talk together. My parents were strict but fair in their discipline, expecting their three children to obey. They accomplished this with Daddy's authority, tempered by Mother's more peaceful manner. They also expected us to do our work well, to do our best in school, and to treat people with respect.

Since we lived ten miles from the Springfield Brethren in Christ church in Ohio, my family and our grandparents always rode together to church. We attended every service at the church—Sunday morning and evening, Wednesday evening, and all revival services. Many times Daddy and his mother would argue about something during these drives. Often it related to something from the sermon. Even though I was assured they were not angry, their heated discussions distressed me.

Springfield Brethren in Christ was the church in which my father grew up. With no nursery or junior worship, we children learned to sit through the services with our parents. The church had a busy Sunday school where it ministered to many children from the city in a purposeful outreach. I remember caring Sunday school teachers and adults who showed personal interest in us. But I remember church in general as being rather severe. The members wore plain clothes, the messages were strict, and altar calls were long and intense.

Because my father never agreed to wear a plain coat but wore a necktie, he was frequently targeted by visiting preachers who would come to him during altar calls and try to get him to go to the altar to “get saved.” He would not go because he believed he was already a Christian. He simply did not dress as the preacher wanted. That kind of behavior by people, including his parents, who judged him because of the way he dressed, upset me then, and stays with me as a negative memory of church. Even today, hearing certain invitation hymns reminds me of the prolonged pressure of altar calls during my childhood. I remember when Daddy eventually decided to be baptized and join the church in order to be a “good example for his children.” The church allowed him to do this, even with his tie. I appreciate the concern my father showed for his children.

My mother’s parents lived an hour away near Pleasant Hill, Ohio. Probably at least once a month, we drove to Grandpa and Grandma Thuma’s farm and spent a Sunday afternoon with them in their quiet and peaceful home. There were always letters to read from our two aunts and uncles in Africa. We watched Grandpa feed the cows while Grandma milked Old Gerz. With our aunt nearby, we ran through the field where the meadow tea grew and watched the Stillwater River fall over a very small dam. Dinner time meant we got to sit on the bench behind the table and eat Grandma’s Sunday evening special—milk sup—which featured her homemade bread. What a wholesome way to spend a day as a child, surrounded by caring family!

About once each year, we went to the Old Order River Brethren love feast at Great Uncle Jake Etter’s barn in the neighboring county. There were so many new sights and sounds to absorb that we did not get too tired in the long service. The names were familiar since Mother often talked appreciatively about Uncle Jake, Aunt Elizabeth, and Aunt Mary, as well as many other people who belonged to that group. As far as we knew, all those peaceful people were our family.

Recently I attended an Old Order River Brethren service in a barn in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, where the people treated me as if I were family when they learned I was a grandniece of Jake Etter and granddaughter of Fanny Etter Thuma. I value this heritage and appreciate my mother who demonstrated to us respect for family and people who may believe differently from us in some matters.

When I was ready for fifth grade, my parents bought a farm near Pleasant Hill, Ohio. Their stated purpose for this was that their "three children would learn to work." Since Daddy worked twelve-hour days in Dayton, he hired a man to do the farming when we were young. However, on weekends the farmer was off, and Daddy and we children did the milking. During our high school years, for a couple summers, my brother had the responsibility of running the farm. I helped him make hay and cultivate, and our sister helped us milk the cows. Daddy was meeting his goal of teaching his children to work and we were earning money for our future college education. Because of the farm work, we did not have time after school to join band or sports teams. However, our parents believed that we were learning and experiencing invaluable life lessons. We learned to be responsible and gained experience working together as a family on the farm.

When we moved to the farm, we lived closer to Grandpa and Grandma Thuma. This gave us the opportunity to be more involved in their lives. Also passionate in following Jesus, they had a very different way of expressing their faith from my other grandparents. They influenced me by their peaceful life, love for their family, and concern for others.

With this move, we started attending Pleasant Hill Brethren in Christ Church, which was my mother's home church. This church was also conservative in dress and teaching, but as I recall, less severe. It was there that I accepted Christ and joined the church. I remember being influenced to live for Jesus by Sunday school teachers and other caring people in the congregation. The church actively included the youth in the life of the congregation. I took my turn playing the piano for the services. The youth were

encouraged to develop their talents and leadership skills by helping to plan and lead youth activities.

I was aware of world missions during my early years. I remember my mother talking about her sister, Esther, and her brother, Alvan, and families in Africa. When they would come home, we had special family times. I remember that the pastor of the Springfield Brethren in Christ Church, Dale Ulery, with his wife Betty and family went to Cuba as missionaries. From our congregation at Pleasant Hill, Paul and Esther George were in Africa, Bill and Mary Hoke in India, and Elwood and Dorothy Hershey in Africa. When they came home for furlough, their children attended school with us. I learned from them that people in other countries had the same needs as I had but often with fewer resources to meet those needs. When I became a nurse and started earning money, I realized I was one of many nurses in the United States and started wondering about the value of simply putting my money in a bank when others had so little. Knowing missionaries increased my awareness of the needs of the world and helped me to be sensitive to God's call upon my life.

Attending Messiah College was part of my plans, even though it was 500 miles from home. Yearly when the Choral Society from Messiah College toured through Ohio, we heard their program, and often at least two members of the choir would stay in our home overnight. For me as well as for other youth from Southern Ohio, Messiah College was the place to study. Although I transferred to another college after two years, I value the years I studied there, where my classes and friendships introduced me to a much larger Brethren in Christ and non-Brethren in Christ world.

As an adult, I know I made some decisions my parents did not like. I knew they were not pleased that my husband and I decided to wear wedding rings. But I never knew for years that Daddy did not think we should have been missionaries. Even as my parents and grandparents made their expectations very clear to us, they also taught us to make our own decisions. My parents taught us as best they could, then purposefully decided that they would not interfere with the

decisions of us children and our spouses. Mother often expressed to us her hope that we children would love each other and get along well together as adults. Thankfully, her prayer was answered.

I am thankful for the Brethren in Christ Church which helped give my grandparents, parents, and me a strong and healthy desire to follow Jesus. The individual personalities of my parents and grandparents plus the contrasting characteristics of the two congregations of my growing years significantly contributed to my spiritual and social formation. These unique and interesting sets of influences during my growing years helped me recognize and appreciate the diversity of the body of Christ.

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#### Paul Sides

I was two weeks and two days old when my father died. My mother found a rental property in the village of Refton in Lancaster County, and moved in with four children. The house had no indoor plumbing and no central heat. The double house was next to the Refton Brethren in Christ church. My mother being a Methodist had a strong desire for her children to attend Sunday school and church. I was not happy about attending Sunday school but the teacher, Lizzy Slaymaker, always had candy treats for her class of small children, so I began to enjoy Sunday school. The pastor, Cyrus Lutz, would call at our home on a regular basis. He had great compassion for a widow who had very limited resources and was trying to raise four children. He was vigilant in learning to know the people of the community and focus on their needs. Following the death of my mother the pastor knew that the two younger children would need a home; he made arrangement with my aunt to have the boys come and live in her home.

Following the death of my mother, the Lutzs arranged with my aunt for the two youngest boys to live with them. Our new parents were now Pop and Mom. Our adjustment was difficult because my brother and I did not know the rules about slang words and general manners. Family worship was a part of evening meal time and I soon learned to give attention to prayer and Bible reading. We had many happy times when we played outside in the summer and inside table games in the long winter months.

As I grew older I learned to enjoy summer Vacation Bible School. Memorizing Scripture came easy for me. Winter revival meetings were always a part of our required attendance. After school I would do my chores, quickly do my homework, and hurry off to church, usually falling asleep on Mom's lap on the way home.

Discipline was strict but usually given sparingly and fairly. One Sunday afternoon while playing ball in the side yard with Roy and Glenn Ginder, I hit a ball that went straight through the window where Pop and the bishop were meeting. After everybody went home, Pop said, "Tomorrow we will go to the hardware store and get a new window pane and you will help me put it in."

I was ten years old when I got saved. We had come home from revival services at Refton. We had already gone to bed. I went over to my parents' bed and said in a quiet voice that I would like to get saved. I remembered so well the object lesson Henry Ginder gave illustrating the second coming. A shallow sand box was the cemetery. Buried in the sand were small nails, representing Christians and wooden toothpicks representing non-Christians. As he passed a magnet over the box, the Christians went to be with Jesus, but the non-believers were eternally lost. We three knelt by our bedside and I gave me heart to Jesus. The following summer I was baptized in the Big Conestoga Creek in Charlie Hunt Sr.'s meadow.

I remember the deacon visits each year. I was expected to give a testimony concerning my Christian walk. Those visits were a little scary for a young boy who was a new Christian.

Now as a member of the church, I could take part in communion and footwashing services. Perhaps my most precious memory of communion service was observing C. N. Hostetter Sr. leading the service in his most gracious way. I listened with great interest as the men gave their testimonies as they washed one another's feet. Communion service was a very sacred service and I was not allowed to go out and play after service as I always did after other services.

As a young boy my circle of friends included my new cousin Roy Hess and his cousin Henry Hess, both of whom became as close as brothers to me. What a good influence their extended family had on me. Youth conference was a large part of my early training. How exciting it was to go to the college at Grantham and listen to Bible teachers helping young people grow spiritually! Carlton Wittlinger, among others, was willing to give his time to those classes. What fun it was to cross the swinging bridge over to Treona to sleep in a dormitory with many other boys.

Our home was usually visited by evangelists, missionaries, preachers, and sometimes bishops. As these people told stories about mission fields in far away places, I developed secret desires to some day go there myself and help those less fortunate.

Each year we attended General Conference. As a small child, I attended children's meetings and then youth meetings. In 1951 General Conference was held at Manhattan, Kansas. I was privileged to wash the feet of Walter Winger, the man who taught all the children Matthew 6:33. He was a tall, stately missionary whom we all revered. What a delight to wash the feet of the patriarchs in the communion service.

Communion was held at all four of the churches in the Manor-Pequea District, with the love feast only at Pequea. Saturday afternoon service was examination preparation for the communion service Saturday night. How well I remember seeing men standing by the horseshed speaking in low tones, sometimes weeping and embracing one another in brotherly love, making what I am sure was restitution with one another. This was very much a part of molding my young life. These

experiences helped to develop in me a love and respect for the people of my denomination.

When I entered high school, I made many friends who were raised differently from me, including being taught to believe in eternal security. Now as I listened to sermons in my church I became confused but I never lost my moorings. It was about at that time that the Youth for Christ organization began to have a strong appeal for our young people. In addition, there was a growing non-denominational church that was drawing people young and old alike from groups all across the county. As youth leader of our small congregation, I had difficulty making three topics on Sunday night sound very appealing as opposed to exciting movies being shown by the YFC.

I go now to the early and mid-1950s to further explain the decisions that needed to be made in my life concerning my convictions. Henry Hostetter was our bishop and his style of leadership followed the pattern of his brother and father. Here I quote from the book, *Messenger of Grace* (p. 17). "Hostetter [the father] exercised a benevolent paternalism over his congregations, thus the Manor-Pequea District had a reputation of being moderate, relaxed and relatively progressive."

While I did not understand the dynamics of this leadership at the time, I later realized how important it was to my maturing in a community of believers. I was the first young man to wear a necktie. A few years after graduating from high school, I needed to decide the position I would take concerning nonresistance. Both my brothers had entered the military during hostilities against the United States. Even though we were in peace time, there was an active draft board and there was a strong likelihood that I would be called to service. I registered on my eighteenth birthday; I did not agree with those who obstinately refused to register. I volunteered with a classification of 1-O, a classification acceptable to the draft board. The draft board required a written statement concerning our conviction. My statement is as follows. "I believe in the way of love and peace as taught by Jesus in the

sermon on the mount and that the spirit of God within a Christian, according to Romans 8:1-4 enables him to live according to the righteous law of God which says 'Thou shalt not kill.'" I took the regular army physical and through the help of Isaiah Harley entered the MCC mental health program, which then changed my classification to 1-W.

My life now was centered on a staff of Christian people who had a strong Christian faith and a call to Christian service to help those less fortunate. These were young men and women from many states and Canada who were conscious of the need to complete their obligation to the national requirements but remain dedicated Christians. We had regular Bible study and I was able to enjoy my singing interests and leadership. During this time I was fortunate to be a part of the Hollowell congregation under the leadership of Eber Dourte.

I always had an interest in music. In high school I played the tuba. I was in glee club, boys chorus and music appreciation. But I had only limited interest in classical music until I became interested in singing in the Grantham Oratorio Society. I knew I had to take a personal audition with Prof. Earl Miller. What a joy when he said I could be a part of the group and sing. That was my greatest singing pleasure. I learned compositions from Handel, Bach, and Haydn. This training increased my interest in congregational singing. The church hymnal was treated second only to the Bible in our home. I learned to lead congregational singing and experienced several new printings of the Brethren in Christ hymnals. How I enjoyed each new edition. I believe there is a close correlation of the words of spiritual songs and hymns and Bible teachings that molded my life. I believe strongly that one can find salvation by singing and paying close attention to the words of the hymns of the church that have long endured the stress of time.

How do I summarize the journey of a young boy learning to walk by Christian faith? How does he learn the Christian principles as taught by Jesus? My Mom often quoted the verse, "Line upon line and precept upon precept" (Isa. 28:10). I was raised by people who were not my parents; they were

my Pop and Mom. At a very young age I recognized that they were different from other people I had known because they acted and talked differently and were dressed very differently. I was a mischievous boy but never a rebellious person and I soon complied with the rules as astringently enforced.

I have the deepest feelings of respect and love for the passion that I observed in all of the leadership in the Brethren in Christ denomination. At each General Conference I learned to know many more leaders and saw kindness, compassion and complete devotion to the church. All of the preachers, at least in the Manor-Pequea District, had to work at their chosen vocation and then be ready to preach on Wednesday night and Sunday morning. Some were paperhangers and painters, many more were farmers. Their only monetary remuneration was an offering taken once a quarter in all four of the churches in the district and divided by four. This was graciously received by Mom and Pop.

The thread I have woven through this writing cannot be seen clearly unless some understanding is given of who Cyrus G. Lutz, my Pop, was. His messages were profound in a simple sort of way. His sermons were clear and the listener could identify with what he was saying. He did not ramble and his sense of compassion was felt in his sermons. His love for the denomination was evident in all of his counseling, and his knowledge of the Bible was superb. His life was consistent at home, at work, in board meetings, and in the pulpit. When my Pop preached people listened. He added enough humor to keep my attention. His influence on my life was profound.

My early training and devotion to the church has provided a firm resting place for the difficulties of today. It may be true that not all change in the church of today is progress, but I know I have weathered the storms of life because I was molded in my formative years by the Brethren in Christ Church.

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## Connie (Marr) Harper

Mine was an idyllic life, growing up in the fifties in the little hamlet of Springvale, Ontario. I grew up in an old, spacious, yellow-board and batten house graced by a large verandah with gingerbread trim. I was the second child and daughter of Merlin and Naomi Heise Marr and was born with an inherent ability to view the world through rose-colored glasses, usually seeing the glass half full, rather than half empty.

My world was uncomplicated. Family and church were the greatest influences in the first decade of my life. My friends were my sisters, Lucille and Phyllis, and Marjorie Hall, the only other young girl who attended our church. We spent many hours playing with our little brother, Ronnie. The Brethren in Christ Church we attended was less than a quarter mile from our home. Our denomination was already in the flux of gradual change and was about to relax much of the legalism which had marked it.

Church played a dominant role in the life of our family. Both sides of my family could trace their roots to respected Brethren in Christ pioneers. My parents were committed and loyal members of the well-established Springvale Brethren in Christ Church. I attended this church from the time of my birth, at that time still under the leadership of church father, John Nigh. When he died tragically in the fall of 1951, his son Paul, who had been sharing the responsibility with his father, was my pastor throughout the rest of the years I attended.

Paul was a kindly man, and encouraged me when, as a child I was about to be baptized, by telling me he had noticed that I "listened, really listened" during the services. He was easy to listen to as he preached. I enjoyed our church. As a family we attended church Sunday morning and evening services as well as the Tuesday night prayer meeting.

We also attended several nights of any series of revival services, conducted in the spring and fall by popular evangelists of the day, such as Henry Ginder, John Hostetter, Luke Keefer, Charlie Byers, and Bishop E. J. Swalm. They were usually quite understandable in their approach to salvation, sanctification, and the predicted end times, which was almost always preached upon on the last night of the campaign.

By times, however, we did hear other evangelists, although not at our church, who spoke of the evils of open-toed shoes, decorative clothing, and an impending communist takeover. Despite frightening dreams on at least one occasion of communism in our town, I managed to keep a positive perspective and didn't spend an abundance of time and energy mulling over these things. After one particularly stirring message, I recall Mother coming over to our bedroom to offer reassurance despite the disturbing content of the evening message. Over the years as my understanding increased, I would often step out and go down to the altar at the time of invitation to surrender my life once again to the Lord.

Sunday school teachers, such as Norma Nigh and Alvin Hall, faithfully taught me as a child the biblical truths I still hold dear. Later, as a teenager, I also had opportunity to teach in the Sunday school. Temperance Sunday was observed on a regular basis, with an emphasis on the evils of tobacco and alcohol being addressed in our Sunday school classes.

During these years, the church was a small group of several dedicated families who served and gave financially to keep the work afloat. I don't recall any new family or individual joining the church nor do I recall any individuals leaving. It remained the same.

Along with the spiritual foundations that were being laid, our social life was being cultivated. As an extrovert, I enjoyed the times of love feast with the predictable menu and aroma of Schneider's wieners, red jello with fruit cocktail, Nettie Teal's wonderful potato salad, and homemade pies, all accompanied with the smell of coffee brewing. The day would finish with the feetwashing service. The slight odor of feet, the deacon's

wife guarding the end of the pew with a large towel, and members passing the large aluminum pail along were all part of this ceremony. I particularly enjoyed this, and any event, when people from neighboring Cheapside or other churches would join with us.

After years of listening only to four-part harmony during the singing of hymns, the church acquired an organ in the early 1960s. Having taken piano lessons for a number of years, I had the opportunity to play at church.

Our church was involved in outreach. Each Sunday my father and others would drive out to the Indian Reserve and pick up children and some adults to bring to our Sunday school. The church also organized an annual summer Vacation Bible School in the local Springvale hall to which many children from the neighboring concessions were brought in cars and even in the open back of a pick-up truck. This gave an opportunity for me to serve as well in my teen years.

Many missionaries visited our church, telling of adventures of faraway India and Africa. I was always particularly interested in the medical stories, and the sometimes graphic pictures. I believe that along with my mother's encouragement (she was a registered nurse) these tales influenced me into my own registered nurse profession.

My parents exposed us to the larger church. We often attended camp meeting at Niagara Christian College (NCC). We were able to go to General Conference at different locations such as Messiah College in Pennsylvania and West Milton in Ohio. I was able to participate with the Canadian Quiz Team on a couple of occasions. Being privileged to attend NCC through my high school years also contributed to my spiritual formation. It was there that I met a wonderful young man, Tom Harper, from the Amherst congregation in Massillon, Ohio, who was doing his two years of volunteer service. Later we were married.

I remember our home usually being a place of peace and harmony. My parents loved each other very much and we children knew that we were loved as well. My parents practiced hospitality. We often had guests for roast beef dinner

and homemade pie. We would get out the good dishes and make sure the table was set just right. We often invited friends to our home after evening services for delightful snacks of sandwiches, date bread and the like, when with mother's instruction, and using the good china teacups, I learned how to serve with some finesse.

We knew that we were a "separate people." At the local field day events, it was hard being different, not being allowed to wear shorts as did the other girls. We were not allowed to play organized softball with the other neighborhood girls or attend the occasional Valentine's dance at school. Activities thought to be appropriate, however, were encouraged. I attended the young girls' group, "Explorers," at the neighboring United Church as well as the local 4-H clubs in the area. After becoming members of the church and baptized at a young age, we wore the covering. We walked to prayer meeting on summer evenings through the little town of Springvale carrying our Bibles and wearing our coverings.

In 1962 our church ran a campaign called "Read It Through in '62." I at age twelve and my dad picked up the challenge and read the Bible through that year. I was later told that my paternal grandmother read the Bible through forty times in her lifetime.

We witnessed parental involvement in church with Dad being involved on various church boards, teaching Sunday school and being church treasurer. Mom served as nurse at church functions. Both Dad and Mom were involved in the early work of the church camp efforts both at Fraser Lake Camp and Camp Kahquah and took us with them from our earliest recollections.

They made an effort to comfort the bereaved by visiting funeral homes and attending funerals. They didn't believe in shielding their children from the reality of death. I remember when one of the very young Sunday school boys drowned that we as children were taken to the viewing and were fascinated by what we saw.

My love of music was fostered from my earliest recollections. Sitting on my parent's knees in church as an

infant, I heard the clear bass of my father and the sure alto of my mother. Both my paternal and maternal grandmothers played piano. My mother was able to purchase a stereo with a record player in 1959 and promptly bought "The Messiah" which she played frequently.

Being raised in my Brethren in Christ family and attending the Springvale church during my childhood and teen years had a great influence on my life. I learned loyalty, commitment, and steadfastness by watching the example of my parents' life in the church. I have learned to love the church, the home church as well as the church at large. I had sound teaching about the privilege of tithing and about financial principles. The importance of prayer has been foundational in my adult life. I now read the Bible through yearly, as do other siblings of mine. Comforting the bereaved is a duty and privilege that I hold to. Music is near and dear to my heart and soul. I have played piano and organ in church, I enjoy singing alto in congregational singing, I love to listen to "The Messiah," as well as other gospel and classical music.

The interest and the influences of the people in our small church were nourishing to me as a young girl. I was encouraged to begin to use the talents that God had given to me. Parental example has spoken louder than words could ever have spoken.

Most importantly, these influences began a lifelong quest to know Christ ever more deeply and to love Him with my whole being. Surely I can say with the Psalmist: "The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance" (Ps. 16:6).

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Anna (Brechtbill) Martin

My Christian faith and who I am were very definitely influenced by the Brethren in Christ Church. I was born into a family in which both parents were Brethren in Christ and their ancestors had been members for several generations.

My father was Jesse Brechtbill. His grandfather, Christian Brechtbill, was among the group who went from Pennsylvania to Kansas in the latter part of the nineteenth century. He located twelve miles from Abilene, Kansas, in the area where the Bethel church was to be built. My grandfather, David Brechtbill, is mentioned in Dwight Eisenhower's book, *At Ease*, as a Brethren in Christ preacher who traveled with his uncle, Abe Eisenhower, on an evangelistic trip to the Oklahoma territory. My mother, Abbie, was a Climenhaga from Ontario, Canada. My great-grandfather, Martin Climenhaga, preached at times at the Bertie church.

However, at the time of my parents' marriage, father, who was twenty-eight years old, was not a church member. The Kansas Church went through a period of emotionalism which was influenced by a group from Iowa. Many spoke of the emotionalism as wildfire. Mother had joined the Brethren in Christ Church in Canada while quite young. Part of their engagement agreement was that father also would join the church. From the time of their marriage in 1907, both were faithful members, and while part of the Bethel congregation, both served in many areas. Father was Sunday school superintendent. Mother taught Sunday school and led singing. I have many fond memories of Kansas and of our Brechtbill relatives there. Even though we moved to Pennsylvania in 1924, the western influence is part of our heritage and who we are.

That mother entered the marriage with a strong faith developed in the Canadian Brethren in Christ Church also

influenced our home and the way we were taught. This was an added balance to the way the church's doctrines and values were taught and lived in our family. Mother was strong in teaching values but was not restrictive. She was open and honest with us. Correct social conduct was taught and considered very important, as was modesty in dress. However, the plain dress of the church was not of prime importance.

Mother was a wonderful storyteller, and I continue to remember many important concepts that she taught us through stories and songs. Mother also had the gift of hospitality, and since our home was on the Messiah College campus, many young people lived with us while attending the academy and college.

Father, along with his very faithful church attendance, read widely and was interested in Christian authors and speakers outside our denomination. He often asked us children if we wanted to go with him to hear a well-known speaker or Bible teacher who was speaking in Harrisburg. He also believed in and supported missions, and he kept informed of the work of the church as a whole. He regularly took the family to General Conference. Father and mother were people with sincere faith. Our earliest memories are of coming down in the morning and finding father reading his Bible.

Father taught me many things about aging. I remember coming home one time and asking him how he was. He responded by saying, "This old house I live in is falling apart, but the real me is just fine." I remember him quoting Spurgeon (I believe) and telling me that in the evening there would be light. He applied this to old age. He was strong in faith and died with great assurance.

After moving to Pennsylvania, we regularly attended the services in the Grantham church. Services were held in the Messiah College chapel in the old administration building. The influence and contributions of college teachers and staff added to our church life. These provided opportunities that we might not have had in another setting. Sometimes it is difficult to separate the impact made by the church from that made by

the college and academy, but there are several memories related to the church that stand out in my mind.

I remember one Sunday school teacher who made (my class) a good experience. Sarah Brubaker, who later spent years at the Chicago Mission, related well to us children. She used methods, pictures, etc., which I believe were a bit unusual, during my early Sunday school years. She also entertained us in her home, which in later years became the missionary home for returned missionaries and is located in the center of Grantham.

I am not sure when the church as a whole began to conduct Vacation Bible School. However, one that I attended at the Grantham church is etched vividly in my mind and memory. I may have been about thirteen or fourteen years old. My class was held in one of the college classrooms and was taught by a returned missionary, Frances Davidson. This was after she had spent many years in Africa. She was very strict and taught us good behavior as well as the Bible. She had us learn the eighth Psalm and said she wanted us to over-learn it so that we would never forget it. She also taught us all four verses of the hymn *O Worship the King*. She taught us well. I continue to remember the Psalm and I do not need a hymnbook when singing the hymn.

Bible conferences, which were held each year, gave us opportunity to hear special speakers from the church as a whole, as well as from outside our denomination. This was also a time of revival. I remember wonderful services around the altar, when we were encouraged to seek and do God's will. It was during one of these services that I opened my heart and life to the Lord. I continue to remember and feel the reality of that experience. It has led me to many opportunities in Bible study, both in study and leadership.

As I have reached old age and look forward to a new heaven and new earth, I continue to remember white-haired Bishop Wilbur Snider. At the close of a communion service, he would say, "Now let us sing a hymn about heaven." Without doubt, this has more meaning to me now than in the days of my youth.

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## Wilma (Wenger) Musser

The sight of sheep in a meadow always evokes pleasant memories of my Sunday school days at the Brethren in Christ church in Abilene, Kansas. Each child in the Beginners Department had an attendance chart with the picture of a shepherd whose flock was increased each Sunday as a little lamb sticker was attached.

The child-sized chairs enticed us, too, as did the little red chair with the red bow. It was called the birthday chair and only the child observing a birthday could sit there. A wooden cake painted white and bearing real candles made this an event no child would want to miss. An added benefit for my timid twin brother and me was that our mother was our first Sunday school teacher.

From the Beginners Department in "the little room" at the back of the church, we were promoted to the Primary and Junior Departments which met in the large room in the balcony above the church entrance. Here I memorized many of the Bible verses which I can still say today. The department superintendent, Elizabeth Zook, had a long list of things from which we could choose to memorize. Upon repeating the selection to her, we received a cardboard symbol to tape to the red ribbon bearing our name and tacked to the wall. The selections were mostly chapters of Scripture such as Psalms 1, 23, or 100, or I Corinthians 13. Others included naming the twelve disciples, reading the four Gospels, or learning a hymn.

Being competitive and enjoying memorizing, I soon had the longest string. I still have it today. It measures five feet and contains seventeen symbols. A few spaces are empty where some symbol has fallen off or disintegrated over the years. Elizabeth Zook, a single woman caring for her aged parents, spent hours making those white cardboard prizes and edging them in red. Today it would be hard to get children to

memorize for such an insignificant prize. I even heard a man tell recently that he could not get his grandchildren to memorize Psalm 23 for a ten-dollar reward. As I think of it now, I am amazed that I learned all these things when I was only in the third, fourth, and fifth grades. I must give credit to my dear mother who encouraged me and listened to me recite before reporting to Miss Zook.

In addition to learning Scripture for Sunday school, our Bible knowledge increased through games our parents played with us in the evenings. These games were Bible Lotto and Bible Authors. On the walls of our home, mottoes with scripture verses also influenced our lives.

To encourage regular attendance, a large Robert Raikes diploma was given for the first year of perfect attendance. In each subsequent year, a large seal of a different color was attached. This was a worthy goal but so hard to accomplish because "perfect" meant "perfect." No credit was given for missing a Sunday due to illness or for visiting another Sunday school. Each time we missed, we had to start all over again, beginning with a new diploma. I think I earned four or more diplomas, each sporting none or one or two or three seals.

How well I remember when I was in seventh grade that the Sunday I was to complete a year of perfect attendance, I had to stay home with measles. I was most unhappy when, at the end of the next year on the very day I would have completed another year of perfect attendance, I got sick and missed earning a new diploma. My father, David S. Wenger, was more fortunate. He did not have to miss if one of the children got sick, for it was mother who stayed home.

I have always been proud of my father's record. He had grown up in an Old Order River Brethren (sometimes called Yorker) home in Franklin County, Pennsylvania, and did not go to Sunday school before he attended Messiah Bible School where he met and married my mother, Ethel Haynes, of Abilene, Kansas. When the Abilene Church entered the Robert Raikes contest, Father put forth a special effort to always be present. Some years later when this project was discontinued, Father wanted to continue his record and the church gave him

recognition each year. When he died, he had completed thirty-eight continuous years of “perfect” attendance, which I think is the record for the Brethren in Christ denomination. This record did include two or three Sundays of visitation at other churches in his later years which was then accepted by the church.

His effort to be present was an inspiration to me. One Sunday morning when Mud Creek flooded our part of town, a motor boat came down the street transporting people to higher ground. When the motorist asked, “Where do you want to go?” my father answered, “To the Brethren in Christ church on Buckeye and Seventh.” He got there in time for Sunday school!

Another time he needed an operation and was asked to go to the hospital at Salina for the weekend to have surgery on Monday. He said to the doctor, “You will have to change that date unless you release me to go to Sunday school on Sunday.”

I had a cousin who was a nurse in that hospital and the doctor gave permission for her to take my father and bring him back. He did admit that he was mighty glad to get back in bed, but I think the doctor must have wondered if he was operating on the right end.

With such an example as this, is it any wonder that when I was away from home in college and had the option to miss Sunday school, I always felt compelled to go? It had become a lifelong habit. My family always went to church three times a week—Sunday, morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday night. We also attended every night possible when revival meetings were held for two weeks straight.

Our children’s classes were divided according to age and I was the only girl in a class of about six boys. When special programs were planned, the boys were reluctant to participate so I was usually drafted to represent the class. In junior high the boys and girls had separate classes and I was skipped ahead a grade to be with the girls. I continued to be used in special programs and often gave readings at Bible conferences

and meetings at other churches. This was good experience for me and I appreciated the opportunity of speaking in public.

Once a quarter we had a temperance lesson. I'll always remember the effect of alcohol poured on an egg white which was supposed to resemble a brain. These talks, along with the fact that my parents set the example of neither drinking nor smoking, caused me to be a life-long abstainer from both of these evils.

Our Sunday school and church often had missionaries as guest speakers. Frances Davidson, one of the first Brethren in Christ missionaries, lived her last years in Abilene with her sister Ida Hoffman. In my mind's eye, I can see her sitting in a rocking chair at the end of the last row of benches near the furnace register. I am sorry that at that time I did not realize her importance. Then there was Beulah Musser, an Abilene member who had served in home missions in Chicago and later in Africa. Once she spoke at the children's story hour at our public library. She had me assist her by carrying a doll on my back illustrating how the African women carry their babies.

I cannot remember learning to tithe. It was just something we did. Every month when Father cashed his pay check, the tithe was taken out and put into a metal box. Our church had the envelope system of giving, and each of us children had envelopes of our own. We always had money for missions or special programs. It was just natural for us children to tithe as we began to earn a little money of our own, and, of course, the habit has continued to this day.

Rev. George Whisler was my pastor except for an interval of five-and-a-half years when Rev. Joel Carlson was there (1934-1940). Both of them were very good ministers. Rev. Carlson's wife, Faithe, started a Saturday afternoon Bible school which attracted about 125 children each week. In addition to the town children, many children from the country attended while their parents shopped in town. I was in high school then and assisted my mother in teaching in the Beginners class, which often had twenty to thirty little ones. Using us young people prepared us for future service.

The church loved and nourished their young people. On Sunday evening before the worship service, children attended Junior League while the rest of the people went to Christian Endeavor. However, when I was in junior high, a new group called Intermediate League started for youth ages twelve years through second year of high school. We got lots of practice in planning and presenting our own programs. Our Abilene congregation also joined with other Brethren in Christ churches in the county in having summer camps and a quarterly Sunday afternoon meeting.

Youth were important and though we were few in number, the older people always tried to pamper us. I clearly remember that when I was in my first year of high school we had an "old" lady for a Sunday school teacher. She realized that we were bored. One Sunday she asked us to write and bring the following Sunday an article entitled "What I Expect of My Sunday School Teacher." We girls saw this as an opportunity. In addition to all the "religious" requirements, we added some rules and wishes of our own. I suggested that the teacher allow us to have a party once a month. The next month was Halloween and she allowed us to have a party in her home basement. We were never bored after that as we looked forward to the occasional social affair.

The Abilene congregation had many older people as retired farmers who sold their farms and moved to town. I attended numerous of their funerals with my mother. They were always impressive. I recall "The City Foursquare," "Safe in the Arms of Jesus," "The Eastern Gate," and other funeral hymns sung by a mixed quartet from the balcony.

Testimonies at Wednesday night prayer meetings by godly, older people made me hungry to become a Christian. One thing that embarrassed me, however, was that they often asked each other, and us young folks as well, "How is it going with you?" and "Do you have the victory?" I observed that whenever a girl was baptized and received as a church member she became the recipient of hugs and kisses by the elderly women. My family, while loving, was not into this

kissing business, and I dreaded thinking about doing that if I should join the church.

I had gone to the altar a couple of times in early youth but I was sixteen when during a revival service by Rev. C. R. Heisey, I surrendered my life to God. I was then willing to be baptized and join the church. Abilene, like most, if not all Brethren in Christ congregations, would not baptize a person unless he or she joined the church. This meant that the girls were required to wear a head covering. In looking back, I realized that some people were lost to the church because of the strict dress code and because no musical instruments were allowed. Eventually changes took place but foundational, biblical principles remained the same.

Remembering the sheep on the attendance chart, I realize that the little lamb who placed them there has grown strong because of Christian heritage, home training, and church teaching, all given with love. I am grateful to God, the Good Shepherd, that I grew up in the Brethren in Christ pasture.

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#### Lois Jean (Kreider) Peterman

I was welcomed into my Brethren in Christ family in the spring of 1935, a few years before the eruption of World War II. My family circle included my parents, John and Anna Kreider, two brothers, John (five) and Henry (four), my maternal grandmother, Martha Kuhns, and her sister Annie Grove. In our peaceful farm setting, only radio and ration books reminded us of world turmoil. I held the privileged position of an only daughter and youngest child; my days were spent playing with our pets, exploring the creek and meadow with my brothers, and eventually joining them in the daily trek to a one-room school.

Each morning after farm chores and breakfast my parents would read the Bible and pray with us (including the hired man who lived with us). Regular attendance at church on Sunday morning and evening and Wednesday evening was unquestioned, and I never knew a time when we began a meal without giving thanks. My father was the son of a Brethren in Christ bishop, Henry K. Kreider, and my mother's family had close ties with the Mennonites. The relatives who visited seemed to be just like my family—loving and gracious, dressed in the plain attire of the Mennonites or Brethren in Christ, and always interested in us children. Even the close farm neighbors were Mennonites and valued family friends.

As my mother, her father, and his parents and grandparents had all lived on our farm, we often heard stories that had been passed down through the generations. I was impacted by accounts of seemingly miraculous deliverance from accidents; an experience of angelic singing so beautiful that it caused the horse to stand trembling until the music ceased; a vision of God's encouragement during a dark time in my grandfather's final illness; and stories of other relatives I had never known.

One of my earliest memories is of memorizing verses for Grandma Kuhns for a small reward. Among the first was Psalm 117: "O praise the Lord, all ye nations; praise Him all ye people. For His merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the Lord endureth forever. Praise ye the Lord." Grandma was a strong lady and sometimes when I was a teenager I resented her opinions and counsel, yet I respected her spiritual commitment and recognized her concern for me. She also left her influence on my brothers and the hired help. Years later one of the hired men said to me, "She was a classy lady—a saint if there ever was one." My brother Henry recalled the time when as a young lad he was asked to kneel by her chair and she prayed for God's blessing on his life. He commented, "She wasn't perfect. She would often argue with her son-in-law (our father, who farmed her land) and later come and ask forgiveness." Having come to faith as a twenty-two-year-old fashionably-dressed adult, she seemed always to

be concerned about the pitfalls of pride, and would repeatedly admonish me with “O ye young, ye gay, ye proud—you must die and wear a shroud!” However, soon she would remind me to pinch my nose, which she felt was a little too broad to be beautiful!

My parents were not demonstrative, but I felt loved and secure; they modeled a faith and commitment to God that led me to trust God’s love without question. Daddy was usually somewhere on the farm, often singing as he worked, “O could I speak the matchless worth . . .” or “There is a happy land far, far away. . . .” He worked hard as a farmer, but having also been a school teacher he also read widely and made time to diligently study the Bible. He would share with us things he had learned. In later years he sought to memorize the opening verses of all the Psalms, which helped him to review many Psalms that he had previously memorized.

My father instilled in us a deep love for God’s creation. Most Sunday afternoons we walked in the meadow and quarry, and he taught us to recognize various trees, plants and birds. He usually found the most four-leaf clovers. Bluebells and dogtooth violets were springtime joys! He planted and protected trees, counting almost forty different kinds growing on the farm. Most highly prized was his cedar of Lebanon, planted as a little sapling, and he would often remind us of Psalm 92:12: “The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.”

Both of my parents had attended Messiah Bible School, and were committed to helping us also have Christian education opportunities. As a young adult, Mother had given up her desire to become a nurse; instead she helped her parents on the farm so that her brother could study to become an orthopedic surgeon. Now they worked hard and made major sacrifices to let us have the privilege of at least one year at Messiah Academy and four years of college, and to assist my brothers through medical school, debt-free.

Mother did not talk a lot about her faith, but was fully supportive of her husband and his ministry at church. She enjoyed music, and arranged that her children had piano

lessons. She shared her gifts of hospitality freely with visiting ministers, missionaries, church families and our friends—even the tramps who stopped at our door, and families in need. But the time that I saw her quiet faith most clearly was one spring night in 1944 as she tucked me into bed, she asked if I wanted to give my heart to Jesus. I had never thought about it before! I was ready, and this decision set a clear direction for my life. Months later, I joined others for baptism in a local creek, and soon after that I began to wear a cape dress and head covering for worship as a member of the Brethren in Christ Church.

Mount Pleasant Brethren in Christ Church was my first church home, but I have few memories there. I was about seven years old when our family began attending Elizabethtown Brethren in Christ Church. Here my father became a deacon, Sunday school teacher and church board member, and the pastor's daughter became my lifelong friend. Sara Brubaker was a year older than I; we spent many hours visiting in each other's home, sharing Grace Livingston Hill novels, sitting together in church and riding the school bus together. Our mothers were good friends and made opportunities for us to be together. We have special memories of attending General Conference in Ohio, going by car with my father and another delegate. We had almost a whole week together, and were trusted to behave without our mothers present!

At the small Elizabethtown church on Arch and Hanover Streets, I remember kind and gracious ministers such as Rev. John Lebo, Rev. Samuel Brubaker, Rev. P.W. McBeth, and Rev. C.R. Heisey, as well as dedicated Sunday school teachers whose interest in me continued even after I moved on to high school and college. Occasional Sunday school class parties and youth meetings also made us feel special.

In the spring of 1948, Rev. John Rosenberry led a four-week revival at the Elizabethtown church, and our family attended nightly. I was becoming aware of areas in my life where I failed to live as I knew I should and the sermons were awakening me for the first time to the reality of the Holy Spirit as the power for a Christian's life. One evening we were

unable to attend, and the next day on the bus Sara exuberantly informed me that she had “received the Holy Spirit.” I wondered what she meant and I didn’t ask anyone at home; but I searched through the huge bookcase in the living room—through Daddy’s books, the *Manual for Christian Youth*, reading everything I could find about the Holy Spirit. As I listened to the sermons, prayed and hunted verses about the Holy Spirit, I realized that God had already given me the Holy Spirit, but I had never yielded my will to his. I couldn’t have imagined then what wonderful blessings that decision would bring!

We Elizabethtown girls were blessed by a mentor, Miss Emma Enterline, who knew us by name and showed interest in us individually. She was a counselor at my first Grantham Youth Conference, which I attended with Sara. Emma kept watch over her girls, gathered us for devotions at bedtime, loved and laughed with us. Youth Conference was an unforgettable first time to be away overnight with a gathering of teens from many churches, stretching me spiritually and socially. I can still recall the inspiring songs led by Emerson Frey and how upon returning home I would sing them again and reflect on the words as I weeded the garden.

Looking back, I think the person who influenced my life the most in the Elizabethtown congregation was Walter Martin. A local businessman, he served on the church board and was also a Sunday school superintendent with innovative ideas for helping us learn. One idea was assigning each of the children and youth classes a passage from the Bible each month to memorize. As a young teen, I remember some fairly challenging ones: Isaiah 53, Isaiah 55, selections from John 1, John 14, John 15, Romans 5 and 8, and many of the Psalms. After four weeks, our class would be expected to recite our verses before the congregation. Of course, we often crammed the last week, not wanting to look foolish! And we complained a lot, but I know my memory skills were sharpened, and now I am thankful for the lifetime store of God’s Word in my heart.

Walter also stretched me musically. While the Youth Conferences awakened my awareness of God speaking to me

through music, Walter fostered that sensitivity in various ways. For several years, it seemed, he promoted a “Hymn of the Month” for the whole congregation to learn and memorize. Often these were unfamiliar songs in our hymn book, and we learned to enjoy singing “a new song” as well as becoming aware of the challenging words that stirred our souls. He led a youth chorus of fifteen or more Elizabethtown youth—my first choir experience—and those thrilling gospel songs became the foundational expression of my spiritual life. Throughout college years at Messiah and Greenville, participation in music groups became a delight, and music continues to be a joyful avenue of service. When Walter invited me to play the organ at church, I was motivated to work harder in piano and organ lessons. Home from Messiah on weekends, I often played for the morning service.

Throughout childhood I was spared major traumas, but the first sadness I felt was my mother’s suffering caused by a too-late diagnosis of glaucoma. About age forty-nine she began suffering severe headaches and nausea, needing to rest in a darkened room. She was no longer able to read without a magnifying glass, sew, and do the fine needlework she enjoyed; and relief came only when the diseased eye was removed. By then, it had already affected her vision in the other eye. I became her eyes: reading recipes, writing checks and letters, learning to sew, cook, and bake. I didn’t realize till later her sacrifice when she willingly let me become a boarding student at Messiah Academy and College.

For a brief time as a child I felt distressed by a conflict within the family. When emotions would escalate, I didn’t know what to do. I knew only one answer: run upstairs to my room and pray. Thankfully, God restored harmony and the conflicts passed.

As a teenager I became aware that the Church Leadership Board was divided over a pastoral issue. My father, a deacon on the board, was loyal to the pastor whom our family dearly loved, while another influential member was seeking to replace him. I was torn between my loyalty to Father and our pastor, and my respect for and trust in the member who

wanted a “new” pastor. Although I couldn’t accept this member’s view, I decided I would continue to respect and appreciate his clearly evident commitment to God.

The most crucial test came when my brother John became ill during his first year in medical school. Diagnosed with symptoms of multiple sclerosis, he had to return home. He had been hospitalized on the “star” (13<sup>th</sup>) floor of Jefferson Hospital, so my father looked for star (13<sup>th</sup>) verses of encouragement. He found many and reminded us of them often, especially Romans 15:13: “Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.” It was a time of urgent prayer for all of us, and of great thankfulness when we saw God restore health to John.

I have been richly blessed—not through perfect people, but by ordinary faithful ones. I had more fine college professors than I can mention. My brothers showed me by example the satisfaction of serving Christ, caring for others, and using one’s unique gifts wherever God leads. Two special city cousins who spent weeks with us on the farm each summer showed me that faith in God does not need to be dressed in “plain” clothing. Most of all, my husband Roy, has led and encouraged me as we followed the Lord into fulfilling opportunities of growth and service.

Planted in good soil—watered with love, prayer and faithfulness—I have been immeasurably blessed! I can only be grateful to God and seek to provide a nurturing environment to others on their path of life.

# Growing Up Brethren in Christ: Observations

By Erma and Harvey Sider \*

## Introduction

Nostalgic and indelible memories emerge from each of the authors in the preceding accounts as they reflect on the influence of growing up in a solid Brethren in Christ family and church. While some trace their roots to the founders of the denomination, others can recall when their parents became the first family members to become Christians and join the church. Regardless of such background diversity, all express remarkably similar and positive feelings. This speaks volumes about the two major influences that shaped their lives.

The following observations relate to the two crucial facets identified in the theme. To provide focus we have attempted to divide the influence of family and church. However, one quickly observes how the two are intertwined. Such an intimate relationship strongly affirms the complementarity of home and church. To provide some intimacy we include brief quotations about family, but use a more general approach with the church.

Stories and observations from everyone's memories deserve serious reflection. A number of practical and

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theological issues emerge from what the authors share about their formative years. Despite many commonalities permeating the stories, how you read these marvelous stories and what we found in them might be quite different. Hence a final section provides an opportunity to develop a renewed appreciation for our heritage as well as to encourage thoughtful dialogue on family and church life.

### Family

Since the stories indicate that the home bears the greater weight, more observations are lodged here. We identified more than twenty significant family factors contributing to the shaping of a positive Christian character and appreciation for the home. A few influences quickly emerge as dominant, noted by the number of times mentioned by many of the authors. *Lacking more dialogue with each writer, prioritization of the major themes would be unwise if not impossible.*

### *Modeling*

Parental modeling, “practising what they preached,” shines as the overwhelming force that encouraged children and youth to follow in the steps of Christ and the church. One called this “principled” living. Modeling took many forms with added significance for those familiar with particular contexts. Most expressed the primacy of modeling in phrases such as: “I saw my parents living a life of faith” (Nancy Heisey); “My parents . . . modeled a faith and commitment to God that led me to trust God’s love” (Lois Jean Peterman); “Watching my parents . . . provided a pattern” (Mary Wideman Sider); and “my parents gave me roots” (Eunice Zook). Many times the mother appeared to carry the dominant influence on the children, but for a few it was the father, while for others it was both parents. Modeling set the atmosphere and encompassed much of what happened in the home.

Numerous references indicate how both parents served as the primary life-shaping influence. For example, Anna Brechbill Martin writes an entire page to show how both her mother and father played different but pivotal roles within the family, summarizing with, "Father and mother were people of sincere faith." Eunice Zook's "My parents gave me roots" indicates the involvement of both parents. Other comments reflect the typical expectations of the era with the father taking the lead in general and the mother more specifically in the home, the latter often providing the more explicit teaching of Christian values.

### *Worship and Prayer*

Families practiced corporate worship which usually included both scripture reading and kneeling for prayer. While this generally occurred in the morning either before or after breakfast, Paul Sides remembers that "Family worship [was] a part of the evening meal." Regardless of work, school or travel pressures, seldom did anything interfere with a family leaving home until together they participated in worship. Commitment to this priority as a lifestyle obviously required discipline and purpose since a day's early hours can be hectic. But parents seldom succumbed to the temptation to allow time constraints to crowd out this priority. June Gibbles's words, "I do not remember worship being sacrificed for a crowded schedule," accurately describes such a lifestyle. Because the authors noted this practice so often, either specifically or more tangentially, one wonders if any devoted Brethren in Christ household of that generation did not engage in some form of daily family devotions to seek God's presence, protection, and guidance.

Families and churches emphasized the role of personal prayer in shaping life so that, with family worship, both became part of "my daily routine" (Gerald Tyrrell). No wonder that for most of the writers prayer profoundly influenced a family's life. Earl Engle expressed how prayer

played such a central role by devoting a paragraph to the subject, indicating that "Prayer was a vital part of my formative years. . . . My maternal grandmother . . . prayed for each grandchild by name". . . . Engle shares how the grandchildren remember to this day listening to their grandmother pray for them. While family worship helped set the tone for the day, hearing and in other cases knowing that parents prayed for each member of the household exerted a powerful influence. Jim Sollenberger, recognizing his parents as "persons of prayer," believes he is "a product of those prayers because . . . they were praying that one of their sons would be a preacher," a call to which he responded.

### *Hospitality*

Parental hospitality provided one of the most enjoyable aspects of life, enabling the emerging family to appreciate and understand the value of others, of friendships, and a way to give of self and material. Engle summarized the practice well: "Hospitality was an integral part of our home life, extended to church families as well as to relatives and to visiting missionaries and evangelists." In a longer explanation of the very broad scope of hospitality in her home, Jeanne Bye was impressed that her mother would honor guests with "good china and a company meal . . . listening to them . . . welcoming newcomers and those on the fringes . . . many who didn't receive invitations elsewhere, the 'poor souls' of this world." Connie Harper speaks with fond memories of often having "guests . . . for roast beef dinner . . . homemade pie . . . making sure the table was set just right." She goes on to talk of the wonderful snacks after evening services when her parents invited friends home. Hospitality seemed to be universal as it related to the church people, relatives and friends primarily, but not exclusively within family and church

*Service*

We see modeling in a host of other refreshing expressions. Despite financial constraints during the depression years and lack of modern technology, these men and women understood and practiced serving others and the church as integral to their core values. Both of Harper's parents, deacons in the Springvale church for decades, volunteered unstintingly on church boards, providing leadership with the emerging Camp Kahquah ministry, visiting the bereaved, and her mother frequently serving as the volunteer nurse at church functions. Mary Fretz describes how her parents sacrificially subjected personal plans to serve the church. An expression used and understood by that generation and practised by her parents profoundly influenced her life was, "the 'call of the church' was heard as the 'call from God' . . . for service." Fretz's broad service to the church locally, overseas, and denominationally emerged from observing her parents. Service threads its way through the majority of these stories. Little wonder the progeny speak of service as a part of following Jesus.

*Instruction*

Parents considered intentional instruction an essential part in the development of family members. The church significantly supplemented the teaching ministry, but parents understood that the home laid the basic, enduring foundation upon which children would develop biblical life styles. Teaching included a very literal approach to Scripture and a valued tradition influenced by decades of church leaders' interpretations of core values, of which separation such as dress was one of the more noticeable. While some variations existed in things such as acceptable entertainment, generally parents related principles of separation to the more visible aspects of life. For example, Connie Hoffman recalls that her parents did not allow her to dance at school but made an

exception “for square dancing during gym class” and, unlike many in the eastern sector of the church, she “wore a doily for a head covering” rather than the more traditional apparel.

Dress and socialization served as two of the more visible separation factors. On the one hand these seemed reasonably accepted by our authors, on the other they often raised concern and questioning. Grace Holland devotes an entire paragraph to the pros and cons of such austere forms of rejecting the world. On the one hand it facilitated youth seeking association with those of like appearance and faith, perhaps saving them from the “world.” But these same instructions built barriers to a witness of Christ’s love. She for one wished that “we had been a little freer to mingle with other young people. . . .” Different writers mentioned how things such as movies, Christmas concerts, and community sports teams were either frowned on or forbidden, again somewhat determined by the locale. More “progressive” leaders and districts were more flexible. But generally youth found entertainment in recreation within family circles or with others of similar appearance and interest.

### *Generosity*

It appears that parents taught tithing more than the church. Perhaps that reflects the self-supporting pastoral aspect of the era with little need for regular Sunday offerings. Many writers appreciated this teaching by their parents. Even more importantly, parents exhibited generosity as a way of life. Holland’s two paragraphs on this virtue show some of the breadth of generosity demonstrated by many: tithing their weekly dime in Sunday school, observing her “Grandma completely remodel a winter coat for a girl” and her mother’s expression, “It doesn’t do any good to save . . . if we don’t give it away.” Wilma Musser never “learn[ed] to tithe. It was just something we did. . . .” from observing how her father always took out the tithe from every pay check, putting it

directly into a metal box. Parental practice became generosity's own best teacher.

While other family emphases could be mentioned, two more must be noted. The impact of parental concern and practice for missions and outreach, locally and overseas, reveals itself in the writings. Eleanor Poe, Grace Holland, and Mary Fretz expressed how the home atmosphere definitely affected their ministry overseas, the former two for many years. The second area relates to core values such as peace, reconciliation and forgiveness mentioned by several. Even "if we are treated unfairly . . . learn to forgive" Mary Jane Hunsberger recalls the injunction of her mother, using Romans 12:19 as one of her favorite verses.

### The Church

As indicated, in nearly every instance the influence of home and church complemented each other so intensely a separation of the two is difficult. "I felt loved by my family, and I felt loved in the church. The two were nearly inseparable" (Gerald Tyrrell) speaks of the healthy relationship that existed between the two. His expression "the church family was simply an extension" of the immediate family rings true throughout the thrust of all authors. At the same time, the church did play its own unique and important role in the support and development of the families represented. We have chosen to summarize this influence under four major areas: the social context, leadership (particularly that of the pastor), church programs, and instruction.

#### *The Social Context.*

"My life was saturated with church" (Mary Wideman Sider) relates primarily to the congregation but extends to all aspects of denominational influence. Without the attractions

provided by modern technologies such as television, internet, and the rapid increase of wealth in the West facilitating travel excursions around the world, the social life of a separated people centered primarily in and around the church. In this context one finds that the church and family provided a place to share life with its joys and sorrows. For some youth, Brethren in Christ sport leagues replaced the secular sports where in most cases even the inter-high school teams were considered "worldly." So, in general youth socialized in congregational settings, including sports, social games and gatherings, sometimes even on a Sunday afternoon.

A variety of inter-church conferences and institutions met social needs. It is rather amazing how many mentioned the importance of General Conference, our Christian institutions such as Messiah College, and the impact of world missions personnel. These opened opportunities where people met their spouse, fraternized with those whom they would otherwise never meet, and enlarged a vision for a world of service with our own mission board and others, such as Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). Many other gatherings of the era, such as the popular Bible conferences and love feasts, attracted youth from neighboring congregations. Such opportunities became vital forms of socializing which strengthened a love and appreciation for the church.

### *The Pastor*

While many leaders in the church impacted the writers, second only to the parental influence the pastor served as a role model. At least three things contributed to this. The parents taught respect for the pastor, he (in those days men only served as pastors) was seen as one with authority, and such respect for clergy linked "the man of the cloth" with the "man of God." Adding to the aura, many outstanding pastors such as Henry Hostetter, E. J. Swalm, Charlie Byers, Earl Sider, and Henry Ginder filled the pulpits. Some served as

prominent evangelists and conference speakers, enhancing the respect they carried locally and through the church.

Several important characteristics emerge as the authors reflect on their youth. The pastors exhibited integrity, flexibility, gentleness, sacrifice, and faithfulness. Such qualities gave weight to the instructions given by leaders. Writers with pastor fathers appreciated that "they practiced at home what they preached from the pulpit." Several mentioned how the flexibility of the pastor and his gentleness in dealing with them enabled them to remain with the church in an era of conservatism and rigidity. Words or expressions such as "kindly man," "encouraged me," "warm spirit," "compassion and concern for me as a youngster," "showed special interest in me," "most humble," "heart sensitive" positively impacted the lives of the youth. While some mentioned the influence of others in the church, clearly at the leadership echelon the pastor served as the dominant influencer among youth.

### *Church Teachings*

Location and the district emphasis influenced to some extent how pastors portrayed the various church doctrines. The cultural context of the midwest and western sectors tended to be less rigid in areas of overt separation. However, overall the writers reveal considerable uniformity in the teaching of the church's core values.

Many recall that "the church strongly emphasized separation." This included the wearing of plain clothes and avoidance of worldly pleasures such as dancing and movies. A couple of writers noted that the wearing of a tie or refusal to comply with the plain coat (the so-called Nehru jacket), rated some men as second-class Christians with their salvation questioned. Some wondered about the validity of such teaching since it restricted witness and the ability to build close relationships with community people. Despite the positive feelings toward the church, the issue of separation did raise questions even among those of the previous generation.

Discipleship also involved living the simple life style and extending generosity to the needy.

Another common thread included the teaching of peace, reconciliation, and forgiveness from our Anabaptist heritage, and holiness from the Wesleyan. Teaching forgiveness, mentioned by numerous authors, indicates the role it played in everyday human relationships and was reinforced on our love feast occasions. The holiness emphasis represents less uniformity with some confusion. Some of the variations include an outright rejection of holiness teaching, a misunderstanding of "perfection," a bent toward emotionalism in some isolated instances, and, with others, a more "American" holiness emphasis.

Despite how leaders may have taught some of our core values, a positive sense remained about the teaching provided in the church.

### *Programs*

With life revolving around family and church, one might expect required attendance at the Sunday morning and evening worship services and midweek prayer and Bible study. Many attended church every time the doors opened. For some, music and the church hymnal were second only to the Bible as part of worship. Most appreciated and affirmed this. Sunday school became a significant place for teaching, including the memorizing of Scripture. Some noted how the effect of memorizing Scripture stayed with them through life.

Other commonalities include the frequent revival meetings, often twice a year and normally lasting one to three weeks. Emerging programs included Bible quizzing, youth meetings (Christ's Crusaders), and conferences as an obvious attempt to meet changing needs of the youth, enhance Bible knowledge and further facilitate socialization among the youth and their retention by the church. That all writers noted these church programs indicates very strongly the large and

important role they filled in keeping youth attached to the church.

### Reflection and Response

Reading these wonderful stories raises both positive feelings for a great heritage and questions. They bring back pleasant memories of family and church life in a simpler time. But they also cause some wonderment, raising issues for significant reflection. Consider, for example, the following four:

First, a quick and casual reading portrays family and church life as idyllic. Thus, one reflection focuses on why most authors major on the positive aspects, tending to skirt the challenges and even explicit negatives. Is it possible that life in any era can be as good as these memories portray? True, a fair number identify problems such as the challenge of “dissenting,” that “revivals [were] scary,” some people and churches tended to be “judgmental,” youth were not being “prepared for leadership,” etc. But one is almost overwhelmed by the idyllic atmosphere portrayed by memories of a bygone era. In no instance does an author refer to “the good old days” yet pervasively they remember their days as good, despite some of the recognizable negatives.

Second, as an extension of this reflection one wonders why these authors happily remained with the church through the seismic shift of the 1940s through the 1970s when many, perhaps the majority, did not; some outwardly rejecting the church and all their parents and church taught them. Perhaps a greater understanding of both the particular home and church would assist in understanding the difference between the two. But even within the same families and congregations some succumbed to rebellion, drifting away while others accepted and continued with the church to the present. One way to address the issue would be to have those no longer with the church write their stories of family and church life, with a

focus on their departure. It might be helpful to pursue this issue.

Third, since those of the former generation responded with such positive feelings about their family and church support, what does this say about our own past and present influence? Constructive reflection on our own history has the potential to enhance the influence we can make today for the present and future. It is never too late to adapt to changes that experience wants to teach. We must remember everyone continues to exert some influence until life's journey is complete. We can still "turn the page" in our area(s) of weakness.

Fourth, these inspiring, short autobiographies should stimulate excellent discussion and perhaps pertinent revelation about our own present life and commitment, simultaneously projecting beneficial actions for the future. After all, a major point of story telling (history) is new growth, a learning from the past.

We found the stories fascinating, reminiscent of much of our own life journey. Hopefully this can be a step to further exploring the past, but more importantly to help shape the present and future of our family and church.

## The Paintings of Richard H. Neff \*

My art experience began in 1964 during an introduction to art course that I was required to take as part of my undergraduate education at Shippensburg University in Pennsylvania. The students of the class were required to submit one project at the end of the year. For some reason, I chose to do an oil painting. I painted a still life of a vase of daffodils, and found that I enjoyed it far more than I expected! Even though I have been a mathematics teacher and professor all of my adult life, I have continued to paint for enjoyment and relaxation.

After teaching mathematics for thirty years in both public schools and higher education, I retired from Messiah College as a mathematics professor in 1998. In preparation for retirement, I audited a variety of art courses at Messiah College over a period of two years. I remember the joy of discovery in these courses as I was introduced to pastels, charcoal, colored pencils, and ink. Although all of the art professors were very enjoyable and helpful, Cathy Prescott was a significant influence at this time in developing and maturing my skill and interest in art expression, appreciation, and history. After all of my years of left-brain thinking, art has been a refreshing change.

Since then, I have studied locally with other artists such as Earl Blust, J.D. Wissler and Carl Foster. With their assistance and much practice, I have found my own style and preferences in painting. Although I do paint some in encaustics, oil paints are my favorite medium. They are easy to alter, very rich and

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\* Richard H. Neff, a member of the Grantham Brethren in Christ Church, is retired from the faculty of Messiah College.

lustrous, and easily transported. Oils do not dry quickly and if protected they can be used for several days.

Recently, I have done some work with encaustic painting after meeting an encaustic artist while my wife Ava and I were on a trip to Arizona. Hot is the appropriate word for encaustic. Taken from the ancient Greek *encaustikos*, encaustic means "to heat" or "to burn." Heat is used at every stage of encaustic painting. The medium consists of beeswax melted with a small amount of resin to impart hardness which becomes paint when pigment is added to the molten wax. Painting requires the artist to work quickly, for encaustic begins to harden the moment it leaves its heat source. Encaustic painting involves melting wax, adding pigment, painting, and then fusing.

What makes encaustic unique is the application of heat between layers of brushstrokes. Heat binds each layer to the one set down before it, thus while the image may consist of discrete compositional elements, structurally the entire surface is one carefully crafted mass. One of the joys of encaustic is the luminosity. Layers of pigmented wax deliver color in a way no other medium can, for as light passes through those layers and is reflected back up to the surface, the painting is actually illuminated from within.

This technique of painting is very ancient. In Greco-Roman Egypt, from 100 B.C. to A.D. 200, head and shoulder encaustic portraits were set into mummy casings. Many of these wax paintings have remained in almost perfect condition for over two thousand years, thus demonstrating the durability of this medium.<sup>1</sup>

Due to the logistics of the technique, it is virtually impossible to paint en plein air using encaustics. Therefore, I have done each encaustic painting as an interpretation of one of my own oil paintings.

Landscapes and portraits are my exclusive subject matter. My landscapes are virtually all started plein air. Going into the field and being physically a part of God's creation in the scenery that I am painting adds a spark of inspiration that is not possible otherwise. For example, I remember many times when I was in the process of painting and the light would

change for just a brief moment revealing a beautiful highlight. It was as if God were speaking and saying, "Check this out!" To capture such a moment on canvas is a great thrill to me. At other times an interesting person will walk into the scene and I can either quickly paint him or her into the picture or photograph the person for later inclusion.

A painting begins with an inspiration—something that attracts me to the particular location. Then, after setting up my easel, etc., I will make a charcoal sketch. The sketch is to change and rearrange things so that I get the composition that I like. This is a very important step because if a painting is begun with a poor composition, it is almost impossible to save it. Then I transfer the composition onto the canvas with one or two thinned colors. I spend two to three hours in the field developing the painting and lastly finish it in my basement studio. To finish a painting in the studio, depending on the size of the painting, I may spend a considerable amount of time using the digital photographs that I have taken while painting. However, I always try to preserve and emphasize the original inspiration that attracted me to that scene.

A major objective in any painting that I do is to actually push the original concept that inspired me beyond the limits of reality. For example, if I am inspired by the way that the sun falls behind a building or woods, I might take a large amount of bright yellow paint and apply it heavily with a palette knife depicting a scene that is more pleasing than realistic. In other words, the ultimate objective that I have in painting a landscape is to make a far better painting than a realistic view of the same scene. To achieve this, I use the impressionistic style of loose spontaneous brushwork and bright colors. John Singer Sargent is my favorite artist and I strive to emulate many of his ideas in what I do.

I display and sell my work in various art galleries in South Central Pennsylvania. Much of my work is on display at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Gallery in Mechanicsburg.

Although I have been painting for over forty years, for the past ten years I have been able to focus on an avocation that I have loved virtually all of my life. I enjoy the experience of

going out into the field, and being inspired and challenged by the beautiful scenery of Pennsylvania. Most of my paintings are done plein air from around Mechanicsburg, Harrisburg, and Perry County. Art, for me, is a special moment in time that is captured and shared with others.

#### NOTE

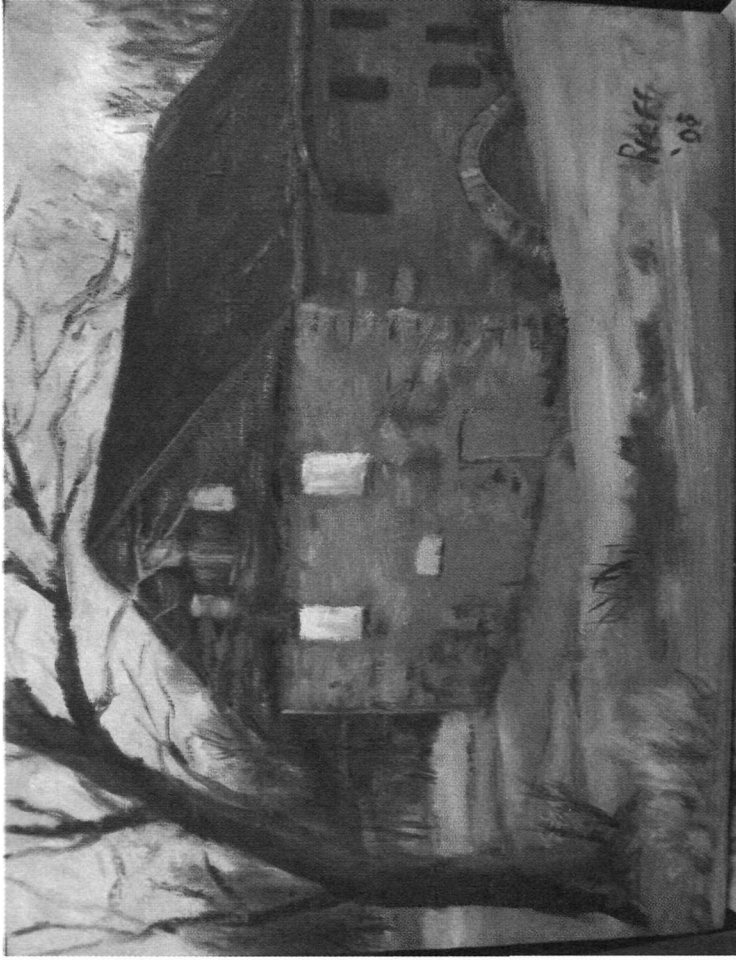
<sup>1</sup> Some of this information has been taken from Joanne Mattera, *The Art of Encaustic Painting* (New York: Watson-Guption Publications, 2001).



*Fall in Pennsylvania (18" x 26," oil/canvas)*



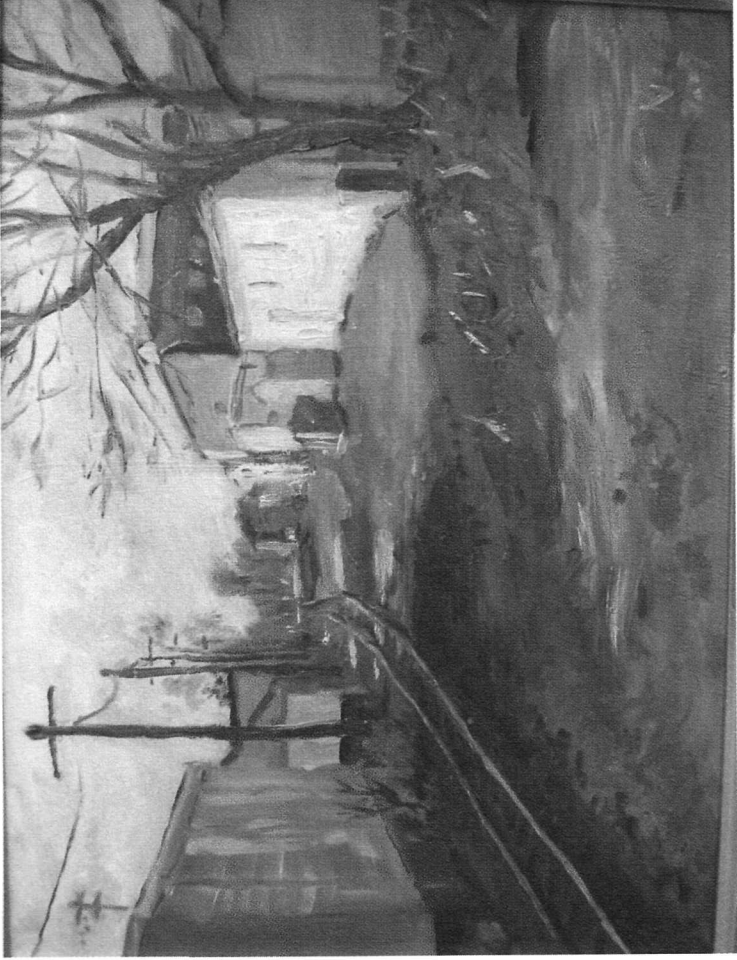
*Old Oil Tanks* (18" x 24," oil/canvas)



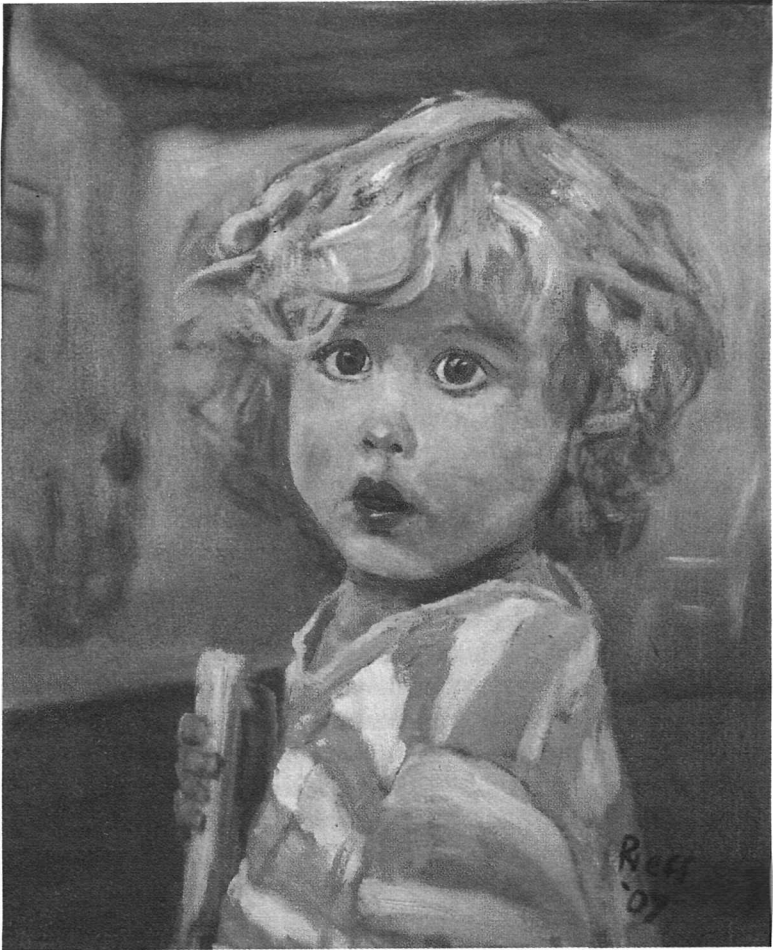
*Willow Mill* (10" x 13," oil/canvas)



*Mammoth Sunflowers (24" x 30," encaustic/wood)*



*Train Tracks* (12" x 16," oil/masonite)



*George (16" x 20," oil/canvas)*

## “Reliable Leaders . . . Qualified to Teach”: The Story of The Theological College of Zimbabwe

*By Leonard J. Chester \**

For one hundred years faithful leaders have preached the gospel and disciplined new believers in Zimbabwe. This diligent sowing of seed has resulted in a vibrant, growing church. Brethren in Christ personnel have linked up with faithful leaders of other denominations to form and operate the Theological College of Zimbabwe in Bulawayo. II Timothy 2:2 gives the model for reliable leaders to be qualified to teach others, who are able to continue the learning cycle. Numerous graduates of the college are serving in pastoral and other leadership roles in the southern part of the African continent, many in Brethren in Christ ministries.

The life of every educational institution involves many stages of evolution. The original dream launches the project; however, the process of re-creating the institution moves it through many stages as each year passes. All of this applies to The Theological College of Zimbabwe. The story of the life of the college attempts to trace the significant changes through which it has survived and achieved positive impact on the lives of the students and alumni.

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\* Leonard and Ruth Ann Chester served as host and hostess at Youngways Guest House in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, from September 2006 to the end of February 2007. During that time, college personnel invited him to write the history of the college, which he did on site. He is the Associate for Resource Development in the Canadian Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church and an associate pastor of the Port Colborne Brethren in Christ Church.

### Early Years

In May 1979, the African Evangelical Fellowship (AEF) founded the Bulawayo Bible College, on Lobengula Street, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, in the former YWCA building. This school offered the London Bible College program, with Frank Morley as principal. The prospectus for 1980 states the aim for the college: "To provide Bible Training for Full-Time Workers and Laymen." A "Basis of Faith," with explanatory notes, was included. Entrance was limited to those with the Ordinary Level General Certificate of Education (similar to Grade 12). Men and women were welcomed as students, with practical Christian work being emphasized for all those enrolled. Jenny Smith was a faculty member from 1981, teaching day and evening courses in several disciplines. Other faculty also offered evening courses in addition to the day classes.

### The Dream

Brethren in Christ missionary, Jacob R. Shenk, encouraged the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ) to consider giving leadership to the founding of a college that would offer more advanced degrees and diplomas. The EFZ was hesitant to respond to the proposal, as some denominations perceived that they might forfeit their unique theological perspectives should they co-operate with such a venture. This proposal, made in 1983, included having each sponsoring denomination second a top-notch lecturer to the school, probably to allay some of this fear.

After further encouragement from Shenk in 1984, the EFZ named a Theological Education Committee to study the concept of a combined college for the evangelical community of Zimbabwe. Shenk was named as chair for the committee. The report from the group to a later meeting of the EFZ was affirmed, including the recommendation to begin such a venture. Following these more serious discussions around an

advanced type of college for Zimbabwe, the Bulawayo Bible College offered to combine its efforts into the new school, to sell its property to the EFZ, and to reduce the asking price for the existing property (owned by the AEF) as a form of contribution towards the new project. This reduction was to be their financial contribution for the first five years of the new institution being under the EFZ. Haward Beckett, the AEF Field director at the time, helped to create a positive connection between the Bulawayo Bible College and the EFZ, as he had previously served with the EFZ.

EFZ unanimously decided to begin this new school in January 1986, with the name as The Theological College of Zimbabwe. The ownership of the building, furnishings, equipment, and library holdings were all to be transferred from the AEF to the EFZ at a cost of \$31,000Z. Objectives were to “provide sound evangelical, biblical, theological and culturally relevant education for students who qualify for higher education (i.e., post secondary), and who are considered by the College to be suitable for Christian service and ministry of the Word.”<sup>1</sup> EFZ accepted a constitution for the TCZ. Frank Morley continued as the principal, W. Keddie as lecturer and in Student Ministries, Jenny Smith as academic dean and lecturer, J. Morley, lecturer and librarian, and Michael Burgess on study leave. H. Beckett and Jake Shenk were named by EFZ to serve on a Board of Governors for the new college, along with others to be named by the participating groups.

Jake Shenk, life-long missionary to Zimbabwe, has served as chair of the Board of Governors continuously since its inception. Other Brethren in Christ who have served on the board are P. M. Kumalo and Albert Ndovu (both appointed by the EFZ executive). The latter is an alumnus of the college and pastor of the large Lobengula Church in Zimbabwe. Brethren in Christ who have served as church representatives are (in succession) Stephen N. Ndovu, Martin Senda, Isaac Mpofu, and, presently, Easter Sizeba.

The October 1986, board minutes<sup>2</sup> indicate that the college had twenty-three full-time students, as well as about twenty

students who were taking evening school courses. A former Brethren in Christ missionary, Fred Holland, had taught a week of Theological Education by Extension (TEE) training at the college. Eight students were expected to graduate in December that year. In April 1987, the record shows that twenty-four students were enrolled in the first term (nineteen men, five women), with twenty-one in part-time evening courses. The board minutes, January 1988, indicate that forty students were enrolled, with six in the degree course. This was a positive beginning for the new school. A logo contest, held across the community, produced the current logo used since 2002.

Because EFZ owned the college, it was expected that the Fellowship would provide ongoing, significant, annual financial contributions, as well as consistent encouragement by the member denominations for their prospective students to attend the college. After all, the Fellowship was responsible for the school's well-being and accountable for its operation. Annual reports were made to EFZ by the college's Board of Governors; as well, issues from the college were on the agenda of the EFZ Executive Committee from time to time. The operation of the school was delegated to the Board of Governors, but the ownership was definitely held by the Fellowship. Over the years, these issues created several points of tension between the EFZ and the college, focused in limited financial support and the lack of students sent by the members.

### Accreditation

Gaining accreditation with some responsible body immediately came into sharp focus. How can a college operate and produce graduates without this? The first group approached for accreditation was the Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa (ACTEA). This application involved various steps, culminating in a self-evaluation report by the college, dated August 1990. The basic report covers forty-six pages, with another fifty pages of Appendices

attached. After repeated delays by the visitation team, ACTEA made a number of recommendations for the growth of the college including better library space, and stronger administrative structure with increased personnel. The team addressed the low level of financial and student support from the owning body. In light of these issues, the college was denied accreditation. To safeguard a possible future with ACTEA, the college withdrew its application for membership in ACTEA in January 1995.

The college explored several additional options simultaneously with that of ACTEA. Could TCZ operate under the umbrella of the University of Zimbabwe? By February 1992, the board minutes report that the University of Zimbabwe Department of Religious Studies had forwarded a recommendation to their Senate for Associate Status for TCZ. Eventually, this was deemed as unwise by the college (June 1994), because it would cede significant control of teaching from an evangelical perspective and the hiring of evangelical faculty to the university. The University of South Africa (UNISA) was considered for accreditation for the Bachelor of Arts in Theology program, as well as for the Advanced Diploma. February 1999 revealed no resolution of the accreditation issue. The college explored a possible linkage to Messiah College, Grantham, Pennsylvania or to Ashland College, Ashland, Ohio (February 1999).

The possibility of applying directly to the Zimbabwe Ministry of Education for a charter to grant degrees was considered by July 1999 but with no results. The November board minutes indicate that UNISA has granted de facto recognition for some time. An honors year was to be accredited by the University of Pretoria under a co-operation agreement, but this was slow in materializing. The May 2002 board minutes report that the recently formed Association of Colleges of Theological Education for Zimbabwe (ACTEZ) would provide accreditation and standardization to theological colleges in Zimbabwe; at the same time ACTEA had given TCZ correspondent status, with another self-study under way. UNISA dropped out of the picture due to legislative changes

in South Africa. The latest decision by the board was to pursue full accreditation through ACTEA within the next four years.

### Merger Discussions

In 1988, a British Trust Fund became involved in developing the college. One of the recommendations of this project was to move the college to Harare, which was approved by the board (November 1988). However, during an informal meeting of the board in the following January, and at the subsequent official meeting of the board in March, this decision was reversed. The board also acknowledged that the establishment of a complementary but distinct theological college in Harare, with a different academic perspective, could be advisable. This became the Harare Theological College. During 1991, the idea of merger with the college in Harare surfaced. The leadership of TCZ deemed that theological differences as well as excessive control of the Harare College by The Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM) were substantive reasons not to merge.

During the same year, a national theological consultation among four schools discussed co-operative development, which might reduce duplication and wastage. Two trustees were appointed to represent TCZ. They soon realized that, apart from TCZ, there was not much interest in this level of collaboration. A proposal in 1992 for a Graduate School of Theology for Southern Africa also did not gain interest.

Following the return of Harare Theological College to the table to discuss merger, in January 1993, the board agreed in principle to negotiate. Harare had accreditation at the diploma level and was looking toward the same for the degree level; TCZ did not. Harare could accommodate expansion on their current campus, including faculty housing; TCZ could do neither. The limitations (space, deterioration of buildings, the bore hole problems) of the TCZ campus site weighed heavily in these discussions. Differences over some theological issues, too much control by TEAM, as well as the potential vacuum

for theological training in Matabeleland (Bulawayo area) were negative considerations. How would a proposed board be structured? Such a new school could be a member of the EFZ, but would no longer be owned by the Fellowship.

The TCZ board accepted the proposal for merger (June 1993), with the proviso that continued ministry to the Matabeleland community be investigated with the target merger date of April 1994. The Harare board had approved the proposal prior to June. The annual General Meeting of the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe accepted the merger proposal, on the condition that the Fellowship had control of the board. The TEAM conference did not accept this, and delayed action. The merger target was moved back to August 1994. The June 1994 minutes of the TCZ board indicate that the merger had been called off by the Harare Theological College because of problems at the staff level. How very frustrating!

Mergers and affiliations have surfaced off and on since then—again with Harare Theological College, November 1998; London Bible College, September 1999; and Petra Schools, Bulawayo, February 2000. None has produced fruit.

### Academic Programs

The Theological College of Zimbabwe serves students from across south-central Africa, with recent ones coming from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, and Zambia, in addition to Zimbabwe. Students are trained adequately and with excellence to minister in the context of the church from their country of origin.

The Bachelor of Arts in Theology is a three-year, full-time general theological degree. Electives are included in the third-year curriculum, enabling students to specialize in an area of ministry. One biblical language is required for graduation. Specific entrance requirements may be found in the current

prospectus for all courses. English proficiency is a requirement for all studies.

The Advanced Diploma in Theology is a three-year, full-time course of study, following the same core curriculum as degree students, with fewer overall courses. With satisfactory grades, a fourth-year may be taken in order to graduate with the B.A. degree.

The B.A. Honours in Theology is a post-graduate program, which is research based and informal tutorial. At least one year of one of the biblical languages is required for entrance. Possible fields of study include Biblical Studies (Old or New Testament), Systematic Theology, Practical Theology, and Missiology.

The Certificate in Women's Ministries completed in 2006 a pilot one-year program to equip women in all areas of life to be well-prepared to serve in the local church. Sample courses involve the student in computer literacy, communication, HIV/AIDs, doctrine of God, biblical counselling, leadership, discipleship, teaching methods, and many more.

### Leadership and Faculty

Frank Morley continued as principal until the end of June 1989, as did his wife in her faculty roles. Michael Burgess served as acting principal, with Daryl Climenhaga (Brethren in Christ from the United States) as acting vice principal following him. In 1987, Daryl and Lois Climenhaga had been refused a work permit by Zimbabwe, but the permit was granted in 1988. May 1990 saw Robert Heaton appointed as acting principal, even though he was new to the college. Jenny Smith was vice principal.<sup>3</sup> Heaton brought in some administrative changes to lighten the load of other faculty members and to improve morale; improvements to the buildings were implemented. He presented goal statements, which included appointing a Bulawayo group of the Board of Trustees to initiate a proposed master plan for developing a new campus (July 1990).

Rheuben Mabhena (Brethren in Christ Church, Zimbabwe) had completed a Master's degree in the United States, and joined the faculty in 1990, where he continued until 1994. Bishop Stephen N. Ndlovu of the Zimbabwe Brethren in Christ Church taught part-time beginning in 1994, which he maintained until his health deteriorated in 1999. Susan Pierce arrived from the United States in 1998, as student ministries co-ordinator under the auspices of the Brethren in Christ Mission Board; she completed this term at the end of 2000. Fred and Grace Holland taught for a short term in 1999. Phyllis Engle, long-time Brethren in Christ missionary, arrived to serve in the college library early in 1999; she has continued this ministry through 2008, often alternating periods of time at the library of the theological college in Zambia. In 2001, Glen and Linda Pierce accepted the position of vice president of development at TCZ. In addition to this position, Glen later served as acting president (2004–2006). Mthokozisi Ncube, a Zimbabwean Brethren in Christ leader, began working as dean of students in 2005. The current Brethren in Christ bishop, Danisa Ndlovu, teaches a course from time to time.

The college advertised for students in several newspapers, although with limited results in enrollment. It began to adjust from an American marking system to a British system. A new prospectus was printed, and the first self-study report (mentioned above) was completed. A sabbatical leave policy for faculty was established. Heaton led the faculty in encouraging the board to become more involved in the financial well-being of the school.

Jenny Smith served at TCZ until 1999 as lecturer and academic dean.<sup>4</sup> Among the major rewards she noted were students with a “zeal for God's work and His Word—a real heart for ministry” and the many alumni who have gone forward in effective ministry in the country.

By May 1997, Principal Heaton recommended to the board that they appoint a new principal, preferably a black Zimbabwean, because he felt he was not gifted in the areas of developing the new campus under consideration at the time. In

January 1998, following a strategic planning session of the board and the faculty, the leadership of the college changed. Heaton would no longer be principal. Dale Brantner, a faculty member, replaced Heaton as principal, with Victor Nakah, also a faculty member, as deputy principal. Brantner (a *Brethren in Christ from Pennsylvania*) served from February 2000 through July 2001. Nakah began as principal in August 2001, and continues in that position. At last, the college had a black Zimbabwean as administrative head.

Robert Heaton stayed on with TCZ as a faculty member. While his demotion from principal was somewhat painful and came partly as a result of his own initiative, he graciously returned to his love of teaching, developing church leaders in the disciplines of practical theology, spiritual formation, communication, administration, leadership, and church growth. Since 2001, he has also been dean of academic affairs. He is most challenged in the area of leadership development. Alumni interviewed spoke appreciatively of Heaton being very committed, yet quite realistic in advising the students where they are lacking. He is highly regarded as a long-time faculty member. Heaton is nearing the end of his doctoral studies.

Dale Brantner's primary contribution to the ongoing development of the college was focussed in the eventual move from the Lobengula Street site to the current location on Gwanda Road, Bulawayo. Heaton claims that Brantner's management brought the college to the Hilltop campus. Another plot of city property had been agreed upon for the development of the new campus (on Coghlan Avenue, Kumalo sub-division, Bulawayo), but when this development stalled, and economic circumstances in the nation changed drastically, other options were considered. What about purchasing an existing building, rather than starting from nothing? After surveying several possibilities, the college leadership and board settled on the former Hilltop motel as a viable site. Purchase was agreed upon, fundraising undertaken, and the college moved to the property in May 2002, with the official opening on July 14, 2002.

A further long-range contribution of Brantner to TCZ was the formation of a support team in the United States, called Friends of TCZ. This group, incorporated in the United States, is a prayer, financial, and friendship base for the college. A similar group has formed in the United Kingdom.

Victor Nakah graduated with the B.A. from TCZ in 1998. He returned to the pastorate in Bulawayo, but was invited to become a junior lecturer at the college in 1999. As principal, Nakah has brought his capacity for vision and development to the college administration. His desire is to see the college in full partnership with the evangelical church of Zimbabwe, to provide a Master's degree by 2010, by 2010 to have eighty percent of the faculty to be local, to strengthen the women's ministries program since much of congregational life involves women, and to institute connections with other organizations to have students experience more cross-cultural ministry. He is in the final stages of completing his doctorate.

While Nakah has pursued his studies, Glen Pierce (a Brethren in Christ from the United States) filled the role of acting president, in addition to continuing his work in the development department. The administrators share together as a management team. Glen completed his service at TCZ in March 2007.

Michael Burgess served as acting principal for a short period, as well as academic dean, but his passion is to teach theology in the classroom. In 1979, he began teaching at the Bulawayo Bible College. He is currently head of the Systematic Theology Department. He has worn other hats at the college, for example, helping to set up the library. His vision is to see students of the college returning, after further education, as lecturers. One of his concerns is how to speak about justice in a non-partisan way in Zimbabwe. Alumni spoke of Burgess as very humble, yet knowledgeable.

While mission agencies and churches in North America, the United Kingdom, and Australia have provided many fine faculty and staff members, the board and administration's goal is to have most of the faculty from the local Southern Africa

community. This is coming to fruition in 2007, ahead of President Nakah's goal.

### Finances and Property

Every educational institution must raise enough money to pay its bills, yet at the same time keep the cost of the education within economic reach of prospective students. This has been a large challenge for most of the life of this college, with occasional shortages for faculty salaries or utility bills.

The body which owned the college in the earlier years failed to offer the kind of support needed financially and in student enrollment. Various fundraising dinners and promotional programs have been sponsored, with modest success in most cases. Foreign sponsorship from the United Kingdom and the United States provides valuable assistance; the Friends of TCZ groups in both nations are a special asset. Specified gifts for support of the library, as well as the matching gift for the purchase of the Hilltop motel, blessed the school. A 500 Club was instituted in which a number of donors give \$10 per month to the college, which assisted during the 1990s in keeping the college solvent.

When the nation experienced significant economic tension, the stress on the college's enrollment and financial situation was intensified. In March 1996, EFZ seriously considered closing the college, hoping to open a new one later. However, the decision was to make some adjustments at the time, rather than trying to re-gain momentum for a new venture in the future.

In September 1997, the college faculty stood in favor of the college becoming autonomous, no longer owned by EFZ. The next year, TCZ was granted its independence from the Fellowship, and was given the movable assets, along with the use of the Lobengula Street building, with the condition that the college pay the taxes and upkeep. The college registered as the Theological College of Zimbabwe Trust, for non-profit status. It continued as a member of EFZ. On February 18,

1998, the inaugural meeting of the Board of Trustees was held, with an official trust deed to follow in July. Differences of perception around what was being transferred to the college from EFZ emerged during 1998, but were eventually clarified. If EFZ should sell the Lobengula Street property, some funds would be shared with the college because of the improvements the college had made to the property.

After the proposed merger failed in mid-1994, and the Lobengula Street property needed serious investment of capital for improvements without gaining more space, the decision was made to pursue a new site. The seventeen-acre site on Coghlan Avenue, in Kumalo sub-division, was eventually designated to the college by the Bulawayo City Council, with the proviso that buildings had to be erected before a full deed to the property could be issued. The college still has claim to this site, although no building has occurred, and the alternate site on Gwanda Road has been purchased and occupied. Ideas for additional student housing on Coghlan Avenue for the growing student body have been put forward. Could the Coghlan Site be swapped for additional land adjacent to the Gwanda Road property? No decisions have been made.

Prior to the move to the Gwanda Road site, a remodelled and enlarged library had been developed, and named the Adamson Nyoni Library, in honor of a former student who had died while at the college. The name continues to be used for the library facility at the current location.

### Community Relationships

TCZ has offered numerous opportunities for connections to the Bulawayo/Matabeleland area. Several World of Zimbabwe seminars are prime examples; one theme was the sociological aspects of urbanization/industrialization. The college served as the Southern Africa Centre for the Institute of Christian Impact, which offered similar seminars on how to impact society as Christians. In-service workshops for

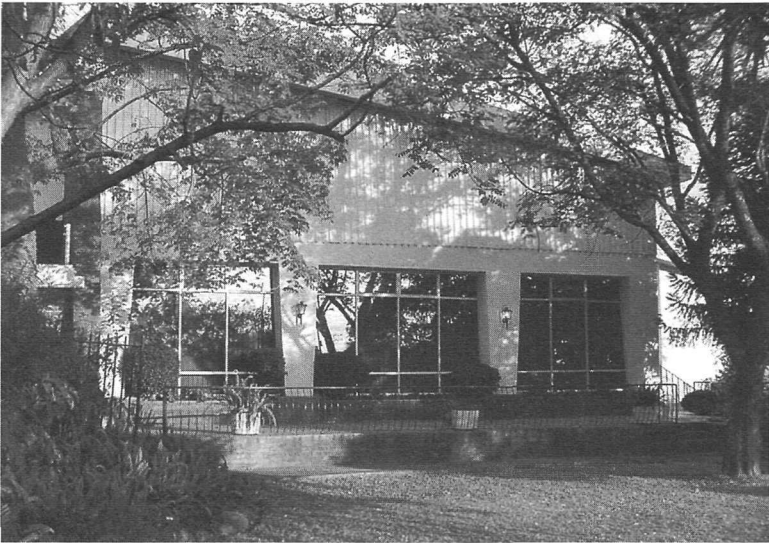
community pastors and church leaders are offered periodically. Bulawayo area pastors are invited to join the library, to take advantage of books (14,500 volumes) and 60 periodicals received. The book catalogue is being computerized. Auditing regular courses is an option for those desiring to learn but not aiming for a diploma or degree.

Alumni of TCZ serve all across Southern Africa. Effective pastoral and parachurch leadership is in evidence. Several alumni have pursued further studies and are returning to teach at the college. Baptist, Presbyterian, Alliance, Assemblies of God, and other denominations are being enriched through the ministries of the alumni. Brethren in Christ alumni fill several of the Brethren in Christ pulpits in Bulawayo and beyond. Busani Sibanda earned both an Advanced Diploma and a B.A.; one of the good things about his experience at TCZ is that he discovered how much he did not know! He is committed to being a lifelong student as he serves as pastor of the Cowdray Park Brethren in Christ congregation in Bulawayo. Mandlenkosi Moyo, pastor of the Pumula Brethren in Christ Church, Bulawayo, completed the B.A. and the Honours B.A. at TCZ. He feels that he received wholistic training, and wants to pursue leadership development for himself and the congregation.

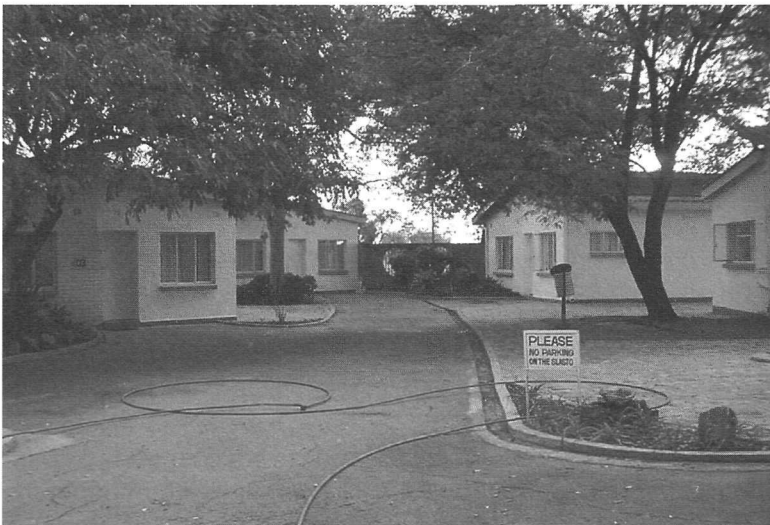
The college community has developed an annual *Journal of Theological Reflection, Indaba Ezinhle*. The title means "good news" or "good controversy" in Ndebele, which is a fitting name for such a journal.

### The Present and the Future

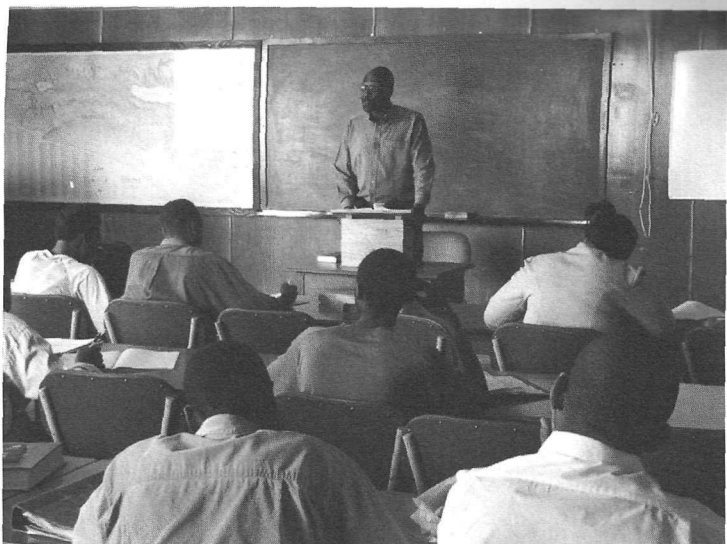
The stated core values of the college are godliness, servant leadership, academic excellence, evangelical, promoting diversity, African and global relevance, and excellence in ministry in both church and society. These motivating values have been affirmed by the trustees, faculty, and staff. A clear statement of purpose has been formulated, which emphasizes the development of Christian leaders committed to effective



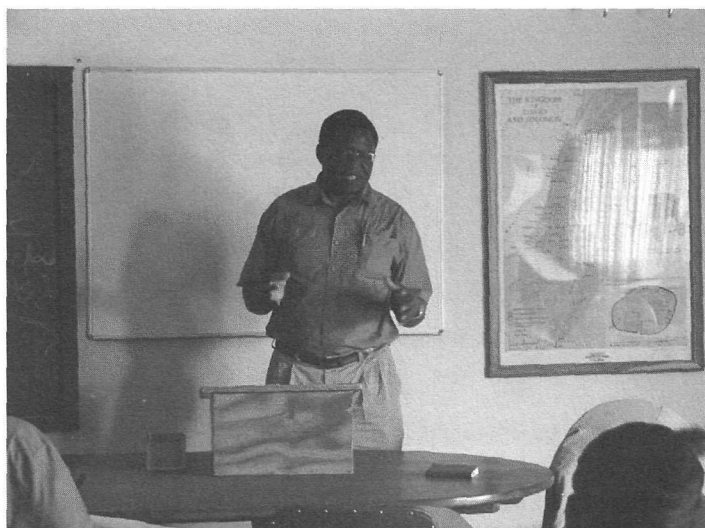
The main building on campus contains four classrooms, the library, faculty and administrative offices, and the auditorium (shown above) which seats up to 400 persons.



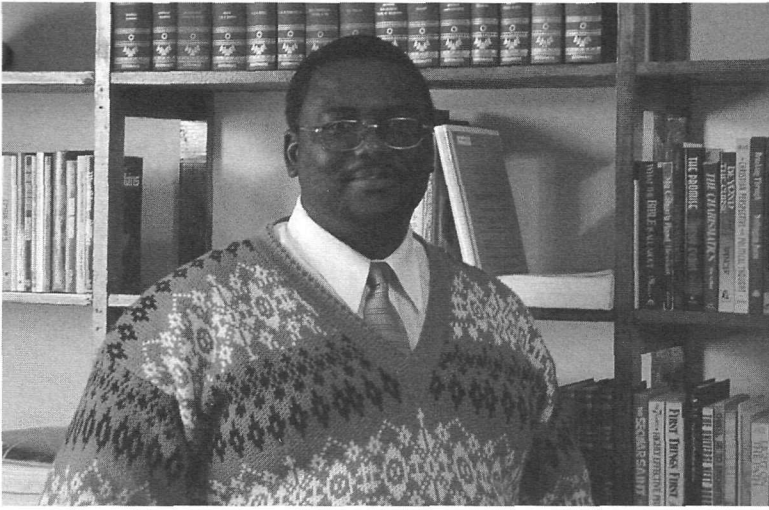
The Theological College of Zimbabwe provides some housing on campus (some of the married student chalets are shown here), which arrangement is especially helpful for students from surrounding countries or from elsewhere in Zimbabwe. A number of local students commute to the college from their homes in Bulawayo.



In addition to twelve full-time faculty members (three with earned doctor's degrees), several adjunct faculty teach occasionally, such as Bishop Danisa Ndlovu shown above teaching a course in communications. In 2008 only two faculty members were not born and reared on the African continent.



Mthokozisi Ncube is a Brethren in Christ faculty member lecturing in Christian Education and serving as Dean of Students. He is currently on study leave at LaTrobe University in Australia.



Rev. Victor Nakah has served as college president since 2001. He received his doctoral degree from the University of Stellenbosch (Cape Town) in 2007. His connections with the Brethren in Christ Church go back to his days as lecturer at Mtshabezi Secondary School, under the leadership of Easter Siziba, headmaster.



Some of the Brethren in Christ students at the college in 2002. Since their graduation, one of these students (Rev. Sipheto Dube) was named Overseer for the Bulawayo Urban District, another (Rev. Obert Ndlovu) is active in the AIDS ministry of the church, and six are pastors of urban congregations. In recent years, the highest percentage of the college's students by far are from the Brethren in Christ Church.

leadership and ministry in both the church and society. The approved statement of faith is soundly evangelical, and thoroughly orthodox in the Christian faith. All faculty affirm the statement of faith on a regular basis.

The faculty is upgrading itself as each year passes. More earned doctoral degrees are in evidence, or nearing completion. Several worthy faculty have been assisted financially with their doctoral programs, with a view to their return to enrich the academic life of the college. This level of academic background should assist the college in moving toward offering a Master's program in the near future.

The college has the largest teaching faculty of any independent school in Zimbabwe, according to Heaton, and could welcome more students without increasing the number of faculty by filling out some of the current classes. With sixty students in 2007, and the quality of the faculty expanding, it is hoped that ACTEA will be open to moving TCZ from a corresponding member to full accreditation membership soon. New courses needed to increase ministry in the local context could include Justice and Peace, Conflict Resolution, Finances and Administration: students must be equipped to articulate the African perspective and challenges.

Greater financial support is sought from the local Zimbabwean community for the college. While foreign donations are very helpful, ownership of the college by the churches in the nation is a deeply-felt need. With only seven percent of the costs of a student's education at TCZ paid for by the student's tuition, it is paramount that greater local support be identified and motivated to come to the college. The development department is a critical aspect of the ongoing present and future life of this institution.

The Theological College of Zimbabwe has a fascinating history, having survived threats of financial failure, as well as relocation and merger. The present operation of the college is strong, with an excellent graduating class in December 2006: Advanced Diploma had five graduates; B.A. had thirteen; Honours B.A. had eight; Women's Ministry had nine. The future looks even brighter, even though the economic stress in

Zimbabwe provides nearly overwhelming challenges. With God's continuing guidance and blessing, the churches and communities of South-central Africa should have well equipped leaders in those who have graduated from the college.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Minutes, Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe, Annual General Meeting, January 3-4, 1986.

<sup>2</sup> TCZ Board Minutes provided dates and details throughout.

<sup>3</sup> Interviews were conducted (November 2006 through February 2007) with the following people: Jake Shenk, Victor Nakah, Robert Heaton, Michael Burgess, Ray Motsi, Bunisa Sibanda, Mandlenkosi Moyo, John Stambolie.

<sup>4</sup> E-mail communication with Jenny Smith.

## MEDIA REVIEW

*Book by Book: New Testament. Philippians* with Joni Eareckson Tada (co-hosts Richard Bewes and Paul Blackham); Study Guide (Paul Blackham)

*Reviewed by Reta Haldeman Finger\**

As the overall title suggests, this DVD with its accompanying study guide is part of an ongoing series examining each book of the Bible. Two British Bible teachers host the series. In this study of the Apostle Paul's letter to the church in Philippi, they also feature Joni Eareckson Tada, a wheelchair-bound American Christian well known in evangelical circles for her inspirational books, music, and art.

The four chapters of the Philippian letter are arranged into six units on the DVD. The first two chapters are divided in half and the last two chapters are each in their own segment. Each unit is sufficiently self-contained so a study group or church school class can easily focus on one unit at a time. A compact study guide of 100 pages written by Paul Blackham is included. It follows the DVD fairly closely, asking additional questions at the end of each unit. However, the print is quite small, with text in some of the diagrams barely readable.

Rev. Richard Bewes serves as primary host of each unit, introducing both the Philippian text and the other two participants. For this biblical book, they are meeting near Tada's home in "sunny California in the beautiful Westminster Presbyterian Church" in Westlake, California.

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After reading aloud a small part of the NIV text each time, the three participate in a spirited discussion of the entire chapter or segment.

The six units of Bible study are followed by Bewes's interview with Joni, in which she explains why Philippians is her favorite book of the Bible—because her own life circumstances are reflected in the Apostle Paul's. "I want you to know, beloved, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel" (1:12). Just as Paul writes a joyful and triumphant letter chained in a Roman prison, so also Joni sees her quadriplegic imprisonment in a wheelchair as a way for her to advance the gospel of Jesus. She details some of the important work she has done with disabled people to encourage them to use the physical abilities they have and, within their limitations, also to advance the gospel.

It is hard not to like this cheerful threesome. They know the text inside and out, at least in the best sense of the evangelical tradition. Bewes keeps the conversation on track by clearly moving from one paragraph or subtopic to the next. Paul Blackham provides some of the biblical context in his strong British accent, cheered on by the consistently radiant testimony of Joni Eareckson Tada. Simply watching Joni sitting tall in her wheelchair and moving her braced arms and useless fingers back and forth in her enthusiasm is witness enough to the amazing courage and tenacity of this woman whose spirit has prevailed over such crippling disability.

For those looking for spiritual inspiration, these studies can be very meaningful. For example, Paul constantly calls the Philippian believers to "rejoice in the Lord" (i.e., 3:1; 4:10). Not knowing whether he will be released or executed, he asserts that "living is Christ and dying is gain" (1:21). The participants revel in Paul's rhetoric, never disagreeing with each other. For example, 2:12-13 is a text that troubles some readers: "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who is at work in you. . . ." They agree that one can only work *out* one's salvation because God already saved you and is working *in* you. So you work *out* what is already inside. They are certainly correct that the

Christian life is one that demands the highest ethics—and that we must take seriously the following verse (14), which commands, “do all things without complaining or arguing.”

Throughout the Bible study, it becomes clear that the underlying theology is evangelical in what might be called the classical, or Reformed, tradition. Dedication to Christ, delight in the Word, an assumption of substitutionary atonement through the blood of the cross, and a particular spiritual vocabulary pervade the discussions.

However, as someone who also loves Philippians, I was more troubled by what *wasn't* included in this presentation. For instance, Part One plunges immediately into the first chapter of the letter, with very little historical or literary setting. From a literary point of view, what were ancient Greco-Roman letters like, and how does this letter follow or deviate from that pattern? What is the significance of the letter coming from both Timothy and Paul? What is the nature of the “Christ-hymn” in 2:6-11; was it a very early Christian hymn Paul adapted for his own purposes? Why does Paul say “finally” in 3:1, as if he’s closing the letter—and then continue on for another two chapters?

Historically and culturally, we should ask about Paul’s former relationship with this church and why he relates to them more warmly than to any other church. And who are his opponents, whom he calls “dogs” and “evil workers”? Where was Paul imprisoned—in Rome or, more likely, Ephesus? What were conditions like in ancient Roman prisons? Why did the church send Epaphroditus, one of their own, with a gift to Paul? Most important, *why* was he imprisoned? How did his proclamation of the gospel—if that was the cause—threaten the Roman government enough to incarcerate and possibly execute Paul?

For, although one would never guess it from the DVD, this letter contains many political overtones. Living in Philippi, a Roman colony where citizens had equal privileges with those on the Italian peninsula, the church probably had a higher percentage of Roman citizens than any of Paul’s other church-plants. Upperclass young men followed a “course of

honor,” leading from lesser offices to becoming important magistrates. In this context, asking the Philippians to reverse course and “let the same mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus” was utterly countercultural. Instead, Jesus emptied himself of privilege, followed a “course of humiliation,” and became obedient to a slave’s death on a cross (2:5-11). But the whole issue of class privilege and social stratification, in both Roman and Anglo-American culture today, is totally missed in this study.

I was interested to see what Bewes and company might do with 3:20—“our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ.” Considering that the Roman Caesar was revered both as savior and lord, and Roman citizenship highly prized, this statement is dangerous—even treasonous. Paul surely had to carefully sneak this letter past his imperial guards! But this study never gives a hint that Paul’s message was a political threat to the Roman powers and principalities—and that from their perspective they had good reason to imprison him.

Even apart from missing the profound spiritual depth that can come from viewing Philippians as a letter of resistance against the practices of the Roman Empire (and thus critiquing our own nation’s imperial behavior), this DVD conversation seems to float in space without concrete application to current social issues. I wish they had discussed what to do when conflict arises within a church community, as in 4:2, between two women. How important were these women in church leadership, and what might that say about female church leadership today? Is it realistic that Christ can make one joyful and content no matter what the circumstances? Are ordinary Christians like us really supposed to imitate the divine Jesus (2:5-11) and the great Apostle Paul (3:4-17) in their renunciation of social privilege? What might this mean when so many others, including most non-western Christians, have so much less of this world’s goods? None of these issues were addressed in this study.

I will, however, end on a positive note. It is true that Joni Eareckson Tada’s disability does not threaten the political

“powers” as Paul’s message did. Yet her broken and imprisoned body remains a striking symbol of how with God’s help one can accept involuntary “self-emptying” and “work out [one’s] salvation with fear and trembling”—and with a lot of guts and hard work. She has certainly witnessed to many thousands of people that “it is God at work in [her], enabling [her] to will and to act according to God’s good purpose” (2:12-13).

Furthermore, compared to many lay Bible studies and Sunday school classes I have attended over a lifetime, this examination of Philippians is far superior. This threesome stays on task. They actually read the text, sometimes line by line—unfortunately a too-rare occurrence in Bible studies. And for all the times I wince at their evangelical jargon, they do sincerely delight in this remarkable little letter to a church that did not forget their incarcerated apostle who had brought them good news of a different savior and lord.

### *Ordering Information*

*Book by Book: Philippians*, Vision Video, 2006. DVD \$24.99 (Web price \$19.99). Order from: Vision Video, P.O. Box 540, Worcester, PA 19490 ([www.visionvideo.com](http://www.visionvideo.com) or e-mail [info@visionvideo.com](mailto:info@visionvideo.com) or 800-523-0226).

## BOOK REVIEWS

MYRON S. AUGSBURGER. *The Resurrection Life: The Power of Jesus for Today*. Nappanee: Evangel Publishing House, 2005. Pp. 196. \$12.99.

*Reviewed by J. Harold Sherk Jr.\**

With this new book, Myron Augsburg, in the maturity of his pilgrimage, takes up the theme that has underlain his ministry from the beginning. A rereading of his *Walking in the Resurrection* (1976) in association with reading *The Resurrection Life* both affirms his earlier work and demonstrates the importance of the resurrection to the whole of Christian theology and experience. Beyond the understanding of Christian faith as personal piety with hiking boots (in community), which Augsburg and the Brethren In Christ continue to affirm, our good brother, in ten sections of the work, demonstrates how the resurrection affects the church yesterday, today and tomorrow.

The resurrection extends for all times, the life and teaching of the Incarnate One, Jesus of Nazareth, the Word made flesh. The resurrection means that there is no conflict between the teaching of the earthly Jesus (e.g., the Sermon on the Mount) and Paul's teaching of being "in Christ" the risen Lord. I recall an exchange during seminary days when the kerygma of Jesus and Paul was assumed to differ. Citing Jesus' statement, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me"

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(Matt.16:24), as a requirement which applies to present Christian living, I was informed that, "If you follow that directive, you are likely to end up on a cross." I agree with Augsburg that the imperative still applies and that it resonates with Paul's confession, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me"(Gal.2:20).

It was a result of the resurrection that the Holy Spirit was sent to take up Jesus' teaching and lead the community of faith into "all truth"(John 14:26). It was possibly the author's service on the board of administration of the National Association of Evangelicals which prompts him to use the vocabulary "infallible" and "inerrancy" in speaking of the interpretation of Scripture. In that context, it was probably wise to do so and to point out that "inerrancy" and "infallible" have to do with "meaning" and are "not to be tied to a proof-text legalism that claims there is no error in the words"(pp.37,99). He also uses the vocabulary of "authoritative" and "trustworthy" with which the Brethren In Christ find themselves comfortably at home. His distinction between "community hermeneutic" and "corporate hermeneutic" is well-taken (p.37).

Raised to God's right hand, Christ is demonstrated to be the Son of God, in power. This power, given to the church through Christ's presence in the Holy Spirit, was the enabler of the first community of Christians at Jerusalem. Christ's risen power is the enabling and overcoming power which delivers, sustains and propels those who follow him in community today.

Furthermore, the risen Christ, into whose hand all power is delivered (Matt. 28:18), is both our present and our future hope. Jesus is Victor. Because he lives, we also have a future beyond the grave. We do not know the details but the assurance is that we shall be with him (John 14:3) and that we shall be like him (I John 3:2).

Augsburger states that as a conservative theologian, "I hold a high view of Scripture, and this writing on a resurrection Christology is built on the biblical documents themselves"(p.25). Again on page 58 he says that it is

“demanding” to be an “avant-garde conservative theologian” (where he places himself), whereas it is much easier to be a liberal, for “you can simply project your philosophy and engage its implications.”

With this commitment to the witness of Scripture, Augsburg presents what he terms a “more relational . . . interpretation of self-substitution” than “the traditional interpretation of the substitutionary view of Christ’s death, which focuses on God using Jesus as the penalty for our sin”(p.74). I am not sure that the “reconciling” and “judicial” interpretations of the atonement are in conflict in any way. Occasionally I find myself in sympathy with Apostle Peter, when he observes that theologians sometimes write things hard to understand (2 Peter 3:16). What is clear is that, “He himself [Christ] bore our sins in his body on the tree” (1 Peter 2:24).

On pages 111, 120-121, the author takes up the same theme and citing 2 Corinthians 5:18,19 (“God was in Christ”) presents Moltmann’s concept in *The Crucified God*. “For I believe [says Augsburg] that God was suffering in and with Jesus on the cross, experiencing the cost of forgiveness at its depth in suffering the ultimate human atrocity.” My first reaction was to the old threats of patripassionism and docetism. The second response was to reach for Moltmann (my Bible was already open), and as a good Berean, commit myself to further study.

There are profound christological questions involved here, which are not about to be resolved on these pages. In response to the question, “How was God in Christ?” I hear Bonhoeffer’s demonstrated conclusion that “How” yields only the non-answer of paradox. However, “Who are you Lord?” does promise the possibility of an unequivocal answer, as Paul discovered on the Damascus road. To the person on the cross, I put my question. “Who are you, Lord?” even as he cries out, “Elo-i, Elo-i, lama sabach-thani?” I hear his answer, “I am the One who is for you.” “For me.” It’s worship time.

There is mystery here:

“My God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34)

“God so loved the world. . . .” (John 3:16)

“In him the whole fulness of deity dwells bodily.”  
(Col. 2:9)

Here we stand at the foot of the cross, Peter and Paul and Myron and me, in the community of the redeemed. (Excuse me please. I must take time out to sing.) I believe in the simple profundity of the gospel. Thank you, brother Myron.

The character of authentic Christian living, faith and activity now springs from the resurrection. The author aptly cites Norman Kraus's quotable statement, “The disciples' faith did not create a resurrection, but the resurrection created the disciples' faith”(p.111). Among the many subjects presented, readers will enjoy and profit from the treatment of evangelism in “Making Faith an Option,” including issues of presenting gospel in a pluralist world; resurrection hermeneutics; the final judgment of evil, where hell becomes the “black hole” of the universe; resurrection ethics and the application of the privilege of a priestly lifestyle to the problems of the Middle East. Included also are the author's thoughts on our responsibility to ecology in relation to creation and kingdom.

This book is a good read. It has the free-flowing, easy expression of the experienced public speaker with the advantage that, book in hand, I can pause him and chew the cud. The inclusion of references within the text (rather than in endnotes) removes the necessity of frequent page flipping. The use of capitalization is distracting. Sometimes the principle followed appears to be a form of devotional usage where nouns and pronouns are capitalized, as in “Resurrection,” “Disciples,” “Scripture” and “they were prevented from recognizing Him” on page 98. Sometimes it is the inconsistency of “that His identity . . . cost to himself,” on page 125; sometimes misquoting, as in quoting James 4:7, “Resist the Devil” on page 104. Sometimes it is a simple spelling slip. My heart felt an Emmaus skip when one of three strangers traveling in a Chicago taxi was referred to as “Him” (p. 84). These are concerns to be caught by editors. Standard

English usage for capitals, as employed for instance in English translation of the Bible, is a worthy norm.

THOMAS R. YODER NEUFELD. *Recovering Jesus: The Witness of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Brazos Press, 2007. 336 pages.

*Reviewed by Michael R. Cosby* \*

*Recovering Jesus: The Witness of the New Testament* provides a refreshingly honest exploration of issues surrounding the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith. Throughout the book, Neufeld shows himself to be knowledgeable of New Testament scholarship, yet he does not bore his readers with pedantic descriptions of methodology. He gives concise summaries of issues and works with them faithfully as both a scholar and a confessing Christian.

On the one hand the author situates himself in the life of the church—specifically as a member of the Canadian Mennonite Church. He obviously cares a great deal about addressing his subject matter with sensitivity to Christian faith. On the other hand, he addresses the material with academic integrity. He does not dismiss scholarly questions and theories as antithetical to the life of faith. Neufeld avoids writing a boring, pedantic description of the historical Jesus, but in no way does he produce an easy reading, devotional book. *Recovering Jesus* requires careful thought. Those new to the field of New Testament scholarship will find significant challenges as they read this work.

Neufeld provides no footnotes, but he does include select bibliographies at the end of each chapter so that readers can pursue topics of interest in more depth. He admits early on that one would be arrogant to assume that he or she has determined the real portrait of Jesus. However, he also asserts

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that one would be foolish not to wrestle with the early witnesses to Jesus contained in the New Testament. Neufeld gives the following, helpful image:

I trust the biblical witnesses to provide windows on Jesus. True, fingerprints, smudges of scribes, and the dust kicked up by the struggles of early followers of Jesus with each other and their detractors are found all over these windows. But I do believe that these witnesses, with their deep and profound convictions about Jesus, pulled the blinds on those windows (p. 18).

He does not naively assume that every word in the Gospels gives a historical, eyewitness account. He helps his readers to appreciate some of the complexity faced by scholars who probe into the life of Jesus.

In chapter 2 he provides a helpful model of how to dig through the layers of oral traditions that lie behind the Gospel accounts. He explains briefly the tools that scholars use to study the historical Jesus, then he summarizes the unique portrait of Jesus presented in each of the four canonical Gospels. Newcomers to this field of academic study will need to stop frequently to ponder the implications of what Neufeld explains. But if they take the time to work through the contents, they will emerge with a much deeper appreciation for what is involved in discussing the historical Jesus. Neufeld gives a good primer on cultural and theological currents in the first century.

Book chapters deal progressively with Jesus' life from his birth through his death and resurrection. At every stage Neufeld introduces his readers to scholarly questions and theories that pertain to the subjects under consideration. Those who seek to explore the life of Jesus with integrity, who face intellectual questions and ask about the relevance of these questions to the life of faith, will discover much value in this book.

Although I am aware that Neufeld writes with the bias of an Anabaptist scholar, I did not detect any sort of heavy

theological overlay to his work. I am impressed with the fair way that he deals with his discipline and with his personal faith. Although I would quibble with minor interpretive moves that he makes in the book, I have no substantive criticism of his work. My sense, however, is that those who read *Recovering Jesus* as an introduction to studying Jesus historically will benefit from the presence of a mentor who is a New Testament scholar—someone to whom they may go and seek further clarification. The book will raise many questions, and processing its material will require careful thought.

There is nothing shocking about the book's contents for those who have already studied the subject matter in depth, but it will be a sobering read for others. I would recommend it to my own students.

PAULINE STEVICK. *Beyond the Plain and Simple: A Patchwork of Amish Cultures*. Kent, Ohio: Kent State University, 2006. Pp. 159. \$22.95.

*Reviewed by Stephen Scott\**

In 1989 a book by Sue Bender was published titled *Plain and Simple: A Woman's Journey to the Amish*. Whether Pauline Stevick had this book in mind when she chose the title for her book, I don't know, but her volume certainly goes way "beyond" Bender's in giving a sympathetic, accurate, and rather comprehensive picture of Amish life.

Stevick's book is rather unique in her use of insightful vignettes to describe various aspects of Amish life as lived out by real Amish people. In the first chapter we visit an Amish family and take part in its daily activities. Next we sit on a bench through a three-hour church service. Later in the book we attend a wedding and a funeral.

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\* Stephen Scott, a member of the Old Order River Brethren, serves on the staff of the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies at Elizabethtown College.

Beyond the obvious plain and simple visible differences, we learn that the key element that makes the Amish truly unlike other Americans is on the inside. This is *Gelassenheit*, an attitude of selflessness and humble submission which pervades all of Amish life as contrasted with the self-centeredness and independent spirit governing American society. A symbolic illustration of this spirit of corporate identity is the traditional Amish style of singing in unison. Stevick sees this non-individualistic blending of voices as a metaphor of Amish life "with its goal of serving God wholeheartedly in community, based on the community's—not the individual's—understanding of the scriptures" (p. 152). She shows there is harmony in living in unison. The explanation for why the Amish wear uniform plain clothing—dressing in unison—is one of the best I have ever read. Modesty, simplicity, economy, and identification are given as the main principles governing personal appearance (p. 154). She "gets it" like few people outside the plain churches do.

While the virtues of the Amish are frequently praised, the author makes it clear that these people are quite human and subject to the same faults and weaknesses found in any other group. Various examples are given to demonstrate that the Amish are certainly not shielded from the influences of modern American society, especially the youth who often test the pleasures of this world before making a commitment to God and the church.

Many stereotypes are broken down for both individual Amish people and Amish communities. We are introduced to many Amish people with very diverse personalities and station of life: a highly intellectual accountant, a very traditional bishop who had been in the air force as a young man, a highly successful elderly businessman, a woman entrepreneur, and a housewife who writes very candid, often humorous letters about her daily life for an Amish weekly newspaper. Some of the people we meet are solidly convinced of the value of the Amish way, others are enamored by the outside world, and we read about one individual who completely left the plain and simple behind. On the other hand, mention is also made of

college-educated outsiders who leave the modern world and join the Amish.

While many of the stories take place in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania—the best known Amish community and the one where the author spent the most time—we also visit other Amish communities that are vastly different. These include an ultra-conservative settlement where few human comforts are allowed, and the Amish tropical resort community in Florida where shuffleboard and volley ball are part of the daily routine.

The author is generally quite sympathetic to the Amish, and certainly acknowledges she has learned much from them and is inspired by them in many ways. But she makes it clear that she does have some problems with certain aspects of their beliefs and practices, especially what she considers authoritarian discipline. She tries to be objective in her explanation of shunning in chapter twelve, but it is clear that she believes this practice to be excessive. She admits, in comparing herself with an Amishman, “I question both tradition and authority, he embraces them” (p. 120).

It is apparent that the author with her college professor husband has had a very close, intimate relationship with the Amish over many years. This is in great contrast to the growing number of writers cashing in on the Amish fiction market who obviously have only a very limited, superficial acquaintance with Amish life. Stevick mentions many things that only a person very familiar with the Amish would know, such as the squeak of a chair to signal the end of mealtime grace. She is also quite familiar with the prejudices and criticisms one hears of the Amish from their “English” neighbors. According to my acquaintance with Amish people over the last forty years, Stevick’s descriptions of people and places are quite accurate. In fact, I recognize several of the main characters in the book as Amish people I know quite well. I highly recommend this book for those wanting to get a very personal look at the Amish.

RALPH HARRIS. *Better Off Than You Think: God's Astounding Opinion of You*. Nappanee, Ind.: Evangel Publishing House, 2007. Pp. 156. \$16.99.

*Reviewed by Wanda Thuma-McDermond\**

Ralph Harris begins his introduction with the statement: "The single purpose of this book is that you find Jesus and life in Christ—Christianity—deeply satisfying, beyond everything you've ever known" (p. vii). Therefore, to get to the point of "being a happy bunch of God-enamored Christians" (p. vii), according to the author we need to find out what God really thinks of us. Granted, the question of what God thinks of us is an important question to ask in our Christian lives. Hence Harris explains how we need to relinquish our self-deprecatory opinions and focus on God's opinion of us as "holy, righteous, blameless, and majestic sons and daughters walking the planet" (p. viii), and live so that God's opinion of us shines through.

The fourteen chapters of the book speak to this central question: what does God really think of me? Harris's writing style is informal, colloquial, and pointedly personal, not only focusing on the second person singular, as in "You're going to love what you find through the pages of this book" (p. viii), but also on first-person anecdotes for everyday illustrations to introduce chapters. The beginning illustration is Harris's attempt to grow a garden lawn in the Rocky Mountain foothills. Despite sprinkler systems and fine starter sod, weeds take over. The constant battle with weeds represents the unseen and unknown, or invisible. The first chapter then focuses on the visible and invisible; with what God really thinks of us as part of the invisible and unseen but perfectly real, compared to the visible which is "here" and temporary. Compounding our understanding of what is "real" is the "demonic concoction" of satanic forces that influence us to

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believe the visible is real. The second chapter explains how Satan influences our beliefs in this way.

The chapter titles are catchy. For example, chapter three entitled "You Stink!" explores the Christian understanding of what death has to do with life, in the context that the scent of death is "God-glorifying" (p. 27). Chapter four deals with self awareness and is captioned "Who Is I?" Incorporating the Holy Spirit in one's life is not as onerous as one would imagine, and so chapter six's title is "He Ain't Heavy." Chapter twelve's content deals with parenting. It is entitled "Aliens Have Landed" with a subtext of "The Proper Care and Feeding of the Everyday Foreigners in Your Family." I could identify with that as a parent! In the final chapter, "Taking Heaven with You," the author claimed that God's "astounding" opinion of us should engender such joy and craving for God that we can indeed live "better off than we think."

Although Harris's book is very readable in terms of colloquial informality, I came to it at a time when I could not concentrate on it fully. Therefore, I found it difficult to understand his continuity and flow from chapter to chapter. Perhaps that continuity is not completely necessary since it struck me that this book would be amenable to Sunday school material; fourteen chapters with a little overlap would fit a quarterly schedule. The readability might also be easier for those new to organized religion and be useful for a seekers' group or class.

Another challenge for me was to ask myself "What does God think of me?" Introspection is not one of my favorite pastimes. I may also be blaming my Anabaptist, Wesleyan holiness theological background unnecessarily, but I am convinced that a little self-depreciation is important. However, Harris's presentation encouraged me to think of another aspect of God's wonderful love for me, and all of us for that matter. I may not completely agree with the author but looking at the concept from another point of view is like looking through a kaleidoscope: the colored shards at the bottom are the same,

and with a shake and a twist, show something different that may encourage us in our faith.

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*Front cover photograph:* Dwight and Faye Bert (used by permission of Olin Mills)