

HERITAGE HORIZONS



a publication of
NORTH AMERICAN BAPTIST HERITAGE COMMISSION
*...a memorial book was written in His presence, recording those who revered Him
and those who had the highest respect for His Name...Malachi 3:16*

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ENCOURAGEMENT FOR TEACHERS

from The Baptist Herald, June 1924

"Miss Toman had told the Sunday School superintendent that she meant to give up her class of boys.... 'I have done my best, but it seems to have made little impression. Of course I love the boys, but they are so unresponsive.'

"But the superintendent persuaded her to keep on. 'Even if your teaching is wasted, which I do not admit,' he argued, 'the life you have lived before those boys has not been wasted.'

"The truth of that remark came to her in an unexpected way the very next Sunday. The class was talking about heaven and how they would feel to find that some one they loved was not there.

" 'Suppose we think of it this way, boys,' she said. 'We have been together as a class for some time. We have been good friendsSuppose we got the class together in heaven and found three or four missing. You know how you would feel. Can't you see how important it is that we live...so that we'll all be present there?'

"She continued, 'That applies to me as well as to you...Suppose you were all there and you hunted everywhere for me and couldn't find me?'

"The serious looks on the boys' faces deepened. It was Jim, the noisiest and most unresponsive of all who answered for them all: 'We'd know, Miss Toman, that you hadn't died yet.'

"To Miss Toman, that was her finest compliment."

POINT OF VIEW

by Lenore Lang

Past issues of The Baptist Herald are a treasure chest of gems by earlier writers. As I look through what these people have written and reported, I am impressed by the large amount of work each one did.

But then as I read, I reflect rather sadly that what they have written and done is not remembered by anyone anymore --(that is, not unless we resurrect it in these columns!)

Furthermore, if something should happen to these old records, -- who would know anything about the past?

Who indeed! The most important One of all, that's Who! The Lord knows! He does not forget! Papers and books can burn. Computers may crash. Hands turn to trembling. Pain intervenes. Memories fail.

But -- the Lord remembers. He is from everlasting to everlasting. What we do for Him is never in vain: I Corinthians 15:58.

Sunday School teachers, pastors, church workers, deacons, missionaries, as well as writers and researchers can find a renewed sense of joy knowing that the One Who numbers the hairs of our heads is not unmindful to forget our work and labor of love.

Yes, our Lord is the best Archive Treasure of all.



A MISSIONARY'S TESTIMONY
from The Baptist Herald of January 1923

(Editor's note: Bertha Lang Griffin was a missionary to China, going to the field in 1922. Here she describes some of the heart-searching she went through before her departure for China. We may think that it was an easy decision back then, compared to decisions today! Read on to see if it was EASY.)

"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." How glad I am that God is not a respecter of persons! Were such the case, I should never be in China.

"When but a child I had a desire to be a missionary but as years rolled by and I earned my own money, the desire to go forth into his service grew less. I had told father in the early years that some day I would be a missionary, but in later years I wished I have never told him, for repeatedly he would say, 'Don't forget some day you're going to be a missionary.'

"How thankful I am today that God gave me a father and mother who loved the Lord and his work in the regions beyond, and who were not only willing to pray that reapers might be sent forth into the harvest field but were willing to send one of their very own into the Master's work. What a privilege it is to have Christian parents!

"It was not until my stay at the Moody Bible Institute that I finally yielded myself unreservedly to the Lord and his work. At first I made plans as to where I should like to go -- not asking him -- but how thankful I am now that he gave grace enough for me to say, 'Have thine own way, Lord. Have thine own way.' Today I'm so glad that he has led me to China.

"Do you wonder that my heart is filled with praises to God as I review my life and see what he has been doing? If my plans had worked out, I would not be rejoicing in this great privilege today.

"How glad I am that the work is not mine but His!"

**" THIS IS YOUR LIFE
---BERTHA LANG GRIFFIN"**

(Editor's note: In May of 1998 I received from Elton and Ruth Kirstein an undated copy of the life story of Bertha Lang Griffin, a program held in her honor, detailing the events of her life.

The article tells of her early life, and, after retirement from the work in China, of her marriage to a widowed co-worker there, Herbert Griffin. Together they continued a happy affiliation with the love of their hearts, God's work in the China Inland Mission.

Both Bertha Lang Griffin and Herbert Griffin have gone to Heaven by now, but truly "their labor is not in vain in the Lord.")

"CHINA CALLS -- GOD CALLS!"

The 1948 NAB ANNUAL carried an article by Miss Leona Ross, "our missionary in China". The sub-heading stated, "The Door to a New Mission Field has opened to North American Baptists and our missionary is already on the field in South China."

A 1957 REPORT

In the 1957 ANNUAL, we find an article by Dr. Emmanuel H. Giedt of Rochester, New York. He wrote a story of Robert Morrison who opened Protestant Missions in China in the year 1807.

Dr. Giedt (a Ph.D., not a medical doctor) and his family served in China for about thirty years. Writing in that year of 1957, he rather boldly stated, "There is no 'night' in China but only twilight. That is to say, it is only the temporary darkness preceding a new dawn.

"While all Protestant missionaries and all but about a dozen Roman Catholic missionaries have been expelled from China proper, Christianity was already so well planted and had taken such deep root that it has continued to function under indigenous leadership."

Were you aware of all this NAB involvement in the work in China?

DO YOU KNOW THAT.....

Beginning in January 1942 in The Baptist Herald, Rev. Alfred R. Bernadt of Burlington, Iowa's Oak Street Baptist Church pioneered a column with the above title. Here are some more of these for us to learn from:

(January 15, 1943): "99 years ago -- 1844--our denomination still listed but one church on its total report, the church founded in Philadelphia by Rev. Anton Fleischmann with 19 charter members, with several others who had also been baptized into their fellowship."



(January 15, 1943) "The fastest scheduled diesel train in the world is the Burlington 'Zephyr' averaging 84 miles per hour. The fastest scheduled steam train in the world is the Milwaukee Road's 'Hiawatha' averaging 81 miles per hour."

(February 15, 1943) "If you don't believe that a picture is worth at least a thousand words, just try writing a description of a corkscrew sometime."

(February 15, 1943) "There are 2,500,000 Sunday School teachers who meet each week with their classes throughout our land. What an enormous amount of volunteer work that only love for the Kingdom of God could call forth!"

(October 1, 1943) "Shoes in China that cost \$6.50 a pair four years ago, now cost \$450 a pair. A \$6.00 sack of flour now costs \$341 in that stricken, war-torn country."

RECYCLED CHUCKLES

(from a column begun by Rev. Bruno Schreiber in 1969 in The Baptist Herald.)

(September 1970) "The best looking car on the road is the one pulling out of the parking space you need."

(November 1970) "Always try to drive in such a way that your license will expire before you do."

LOOKING BACK.....

(Forty years ago, in the 1958, November 13th issue of The Baptist Herald, Rev. Jack Block of Corn, Oklahoma wrote an article, "Thanksgiving,...Sacrifice of Praise to God." Here are some excerpts of his thoughts. We can decide as we read how little or much our attitudes have changed over the intervening years!)

"For many people each year, this becomes the day for feasting at Grandma's house. Turkey, pumpkin pie, cranberry sauce and cousins, all seem to be a part of this old tradition .

"The observance of Thanksgiving is certainly one of the finest of American traditions, and we can well be proud of it. But....many of us have become so used to the abundance of material blessings that we have become accustomed to taking them for granted.

"Our attitude is perhaps similar to that of the little boy who was given a nice red apple by the grocery store clerk as he was on a shopping tour. Being quite anxious to bring him up to have good manners, the mother said, 'What do you say to the nice man, Tommy?' Thrusting the apple back to the clerk, he smilingly replied, 'Peel it, please!'

"This 'peel it' attitude is seen in the unthankfulness of many a person today. Should the weather or any other inconveniences upset our plans for the holiday, how we growl and grumble, how it spoils our thankfulness!"



OUR NEXT ISSUE.....

will be due in March of 1999. We hope you will want to keep your subscription up-to-date!

NEW DISPLAYS

In the lobby of the NAB Seminary's Worship and Leadership Centre is a new display put up by Mrs. Jeanette Kostboth who has done a remarkable job of assembling a great collection of pictures and papers of past presidents and historical items pertaining to the seminary. We trust that if you are in the vicinity, you will make a point of stopping by to view this unique and interesting display.

Mrs. Nila Rezac and Mrs. Marjorie Buseman worked together on a missions display on the lower level of the seminary library. The many artifacts give important insights into life in other lands and cultures. Our sincere thanks to these volunteers for their good work.

MUCH THANKS IS DUE.....

to Elmer Westerman for scanning the seminary Alumni/ae directory of 1987 on a disc. Now it will be much easier for the Archives office to correct and update information as it comes to us. Elmer, the brother of our assistant Heritage Horizons' Editor, Berneice Westerman, also programmed a data base program for the obituaries received in the Archives office.

We are grateful for this important volunteer help!

JUST THINK OF THIS.....

Fifty years ago the December 1, 1948 issue of The Baptist Herald reported the cornerstone laying of "The New Bismarck Home for the Aged" in Bismarck, North Dakota.

The public service was held on October 12, 1948 with Rev. Walter Stein leading the singing. Rev. A. Fischer read Scripture and Rev. H. Hirsch led in prayer., with Board Chairman Rev. J. Benke giving greetings and leading the proceedings. Dr. M. L. Leuschner gave the dedication message.

Rev. and Mrs. R. Sigmund were the managers of the Home, which "will be completely modern and fireproof,....Our Home, when completed, will have a valuation of more than \$150,000."

OBITUARIES

(An important service of our Archives Office is that of providing obituaries for those researchers and family members who may need them. According to our guidelines, there is a flat rate of \$15.00 for each obituary we can supply. The requests should be submitted to the North American Heritage Commission.)

REVEREND FRED W. MASHNER

May 31, 1916 - January 12, 1998

The Reverend Fred William Mashner was born in Cass Lake, Minnesota on May 31, 1916, and grew up in the farming communities of Saskatchewan and Alberta, Canada. He graduated from Central Michigan University and the North American Baptist Seminary (Rochester, NY).

Fred married Agnes, his sweetheart of seven years, in 1943 following graduation from seminary and ordination to the ministry. Together, they served churches of the North American Baptist Conference for 45 years, with pastorates in Wisconsin, Iowa, Michigan, Pennsylvania and New York. During his ministry he was tireless in his efforts to reach out to others, directing numerous youth camps, visiting prisoners and shut-ins, as well as teaching courses at area Bible Institutes.

Reverend Mashner retired in 1985 after serving as pastor of Winton Road Baptist Church for eleven years. He remained active in ministry following his retirement, serving as interim pastor of churches in Pennsylvania and New York.

He not only continued to "fill the pulpit" but also made countless visits to the sick and elderly. He died in Rochester, New York on January 12, 1998. He is survived by his loving wife and helpmate, Agnes; sons Marvin (Marilyn) of Pennsylvania, Melvin (Syble) of Alabama, and Milton (Monica) of Rochester, New York; daughter Marcia (David) Bittner of Glenmont, NY; step-sister, Clara Brehm; eight grandchildren; nieces, nephews and cousins.