

# 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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## POINT OF VIEW

By Lenore Lang

Behind every obituary in the daily newspaper there is a story. Some stories are longer than others: that is, some lives stretch into many decades, while others may be measured in only a few years. But each life is a story nonetheless. In this issue of Heritage Horizons we want to focus on stories of several people who lived among us and blessed us.

Something new this year 2002: the beginning of a Tradition: *Heritage Sunday*. See the Director's accompanying letter for more on this.

If recently you were able to obtain a copy of the new brochure printed by The Heritage Commission, you may have paged through and found a card about The Story Room. See the Director's Notes on this page for more information about this important place, in our future!

## NOTES BY THE DIRECTOR

by George W. Lang

As the NAB Heritage Commission dreams about the shape of a new facility, a key part of that facility we would like to set apart and designate as "The Story Room". This would be a room where we would have a place for the stories of NAB individuals who were part of NAB families, even moving

from one generation to the next. Stories of God's working in the lives of NAB people in the building of His Kingdom!

These stories written up either by the people themselves or later by family members would be put into binders, and these binders put on shelves that would make up The Story Room.

In this issue of the Heritage Horizons you will see some examples of stories to include in these binders -- a source of inspiration and of guidance for many generations to come.

## HE LIVED IN THREE CENTURIES!

In November 2001 we received news from Dr. C. David Jenkins of the home-going of his father, Carl H. Jenkins, who was a faithful lay leader in the Forest Park Baptist Church in Forest Park, Illinois. Carl served as a deacon of that church for many years and was one of the key officers of Boys' Brigade at the church. Carl's son, Dr. David Jenkins, now living in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, sent a tribute concerning his father who remained faithful to his Lord throughout his life:

"Carl H. Jenkins, a member-participant in NAB Churches for 102 years, returned to his Lord on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2001 in Boca

Raton, Florida. He was "born into" the East Side German Baptist Church in the southeast corner of Chicago in 1899. In his youth he moved to the Forest Park (Illinois) Baptist Church where he was active in worship and leadership for over a half-century. His retirement years were spent in the NAB Evangel Church in Boca Raton, Florida. He had lived in three centuries.

"Preceded in death by his beloved wife (of sixty-two years), Margaret Q. Jenkins, he is survived by his son and daughter-in-law, Dr. and Mrs. C. David Jenkins of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, two grandchildren, one great-granddaughter, nieces, nephews and church friends."

Perhaps a number of readers of this publication will have already learned of the death of Carl Jenkins, and others will remember his life with gratitude. The heritage of a grace-filled life is a blessing indeed.

## THE ESSENCE OF WHO THEY WERE!

In early February 2002 we received word of the death of **Vernon Heckman** on February 1<sup>st</sup>. His wife, **Margaret** died on June 30, 2001. One of their daughters, **Joanne Kiemele**, wrote a moving tribute to them, exclaiming at the conclusion: "Of course, an article like this did not fully capture the essence of who they were."

Here is her tribute: "Born in Minnesota to devout Christian German immigrant parents, **Vernon and Margaret (Fratzke) Heckman** accepted the Lord early in their lives, and became active in their respective churches, **Dayton's Bluff Baptist** (now **Redeemer Baptist**) in St. Paul, and **Faith Baptist** in Minneapolis. As young adults, they met at

the NAB Minnesota 'Summer Assembly' (camp), worked together in leadership roles and fell in love. For a number of years, before and after their marriage on June 11, 1938, they both served as officers for the Minnesota and National Youth Boards for the denomination.

"Vernon and Margaret lived in St. Paul most of their married life and were highly involved at Redeemer Baptist Church; Vernon as Sunday School Superintendent and deacon, Margaret as a deaconess and in women's ministries. Sunday School, choir, and wherever needed: they were both there!



"They were active in Association activities and Vernon served on the General Council of the NAB Conference....As the conference announcer at the 1967 Triennial General Conference held in Detroit, Michigan, Vernon with his booming bass voice commanded attention.

"In later years Vernon served on the board of directors for NABC in Edmonton, AB, Canada and on the President's Council of the NAB Seminary in Sioux Falls, S. D.

"In 1972, the Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, and Wisconsin churches purchased a beautiful farm near Lansing, Iowa to develop as a Bible camp. In 1974, after leaving the manufacturing company where he had worked for 28 years as general manager, Vernon was asked to become the first administrator of this camp. Margaret became the head cook and kitchen co-ordinator, and together they served through 1980. Their leadership at Central Baptist Camp, now known as Village Creek Bible Camp, was the foundation for an ongoing ministry that has impacted the lives of countless young people and adults. In



1981, they retired from the camp and fulfilled a longtime dream by taking a five-week trip to visit our NAB Mission Field in Cameroon, West Africa.

"Vernon and Margaret enjoyed 63 years of married life, often using their gift of hospitality to entertain missionaries, denominational leaders, church members and friends in their home. They had a lifelong commitment to serving the Lord, and though the last years of their lives brought failing health, they never wavered in their faith or in their ministry as prayer warriors. Margaret went to be with the Lord on June 30, 2001, at age 84, and Vernon on Feb. 1, 2002, at age 89. They leave a legacy of enthusiastic Christian living to their six children, -- Joanne (LeRoy Kiemele), Judy (Larry Friesen), Jenean (Brad Erickson), Jerrel (Diane), Joel (Sue), Jim (Darlene), eighteen grandchildren, and four great-granddaughters, relatives and friends."



In her covering letter submitted with the article, Joanne admitted as quoted earlier, -- "an article like this did not fully capture *the essence of who they were.*" (Editor's italics). She continues: "I would have to tell about Dad's effervescent spirit as evidenced with his always breaking into song. Some of his favorites were choruses like, 'Are we Downhearted, No, No, No' or 'He Owns the Cattle on a Thousand Hills' At mealtimes we always sang before saying grace.

"I would have to tell you of Mom's uncomplaining spirit even in the most difficult of times like when she was paralyzed from the results of Guillian-Barre Syndrome, and spent months in the hospital and rehabilitation center, or when they had to sell their home and move into an

independent living complex because it was becoming evident that Dad was experiencing some of the symptoms of Alzheimer's.

"I would have to tell you how young in spirit Mom and Dad always were. At Redeemer, they must have been in their late 60's when the church had no one to work with the youth so they volunteered until the church was able to find a youth worker. They were troopers."

What an inspiring story of two lives well-lived for the Lord and for others!

### HE TOUCHED MANY LIVES by Florence Miller, sister-in-law

"Edgar Wesner was born on August 25<sup>th</sup>, 1920, in St. Joseph, Michigan. His parents, Rudolph and Helen Wesner, preceded him in death. Edgar grew up on a fruit farm and spent his youthful years helping his parents on the farm. He had one younger sister, Elvera. He graduated from St. Joseph High in 1938 and began working as a machinist.

"With the outbreak of World War II, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy where he served for 3 and a half years. Stationed in Corpus Christi, Texas and Hawaii, he did not see active duty. Although Edgar grew up in a Christian home and was a member of the Clay Street Baptist Church in Benton Harbor, his faith did not really come alive until he became involved with The Navigators while in Hawaii. Through the Bible Study group he was given a love for the Word of God and was called by God into full-time Christian ministry.

"After being discharged from the Navy on May 11, 1946, he married Lillian Miller, whom he had dated before enlisting and whom he courted by letter while he was in the Navy and she in training at Mounds-Midway Nursing School in St. Paul,

Minnesota. Edgar began his theological training at Toccoa Falls, Georgia earning his B.D. degree at Northern Baptist Seminary in Chicago and his M. A. in Psychology from Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois. His first pastorate was an NAB church in Peoria, Illinois from 1951 to 1961. During his ministry there, the church was relocated and a new building constructed, named the Sheridan Road Baptist Church.

"His second pastorate was in Stafford, Kansas at Calvary Baptist Church, 1961 to 1967. From there he was called to pastor Calvary Baptist Church in Tacoma, Washington, serving eleven years. His last pastorate was at Trinity Baptist in Portland, Oregon, where he served for five years. After retiring in 1983, he was a Bible teacher and counselor at the Tacoma Rescue Mission where he touched many broken lives with his gentle, compassionate ministry.

"He was diagnosed with Parkinson's and became a resident at Heartwood Care Center in June of 2001, where he quietly passed into the presence of the Lord on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2001 at the age of 81, with Lillian by his side. He is greatly missed by his loving wife, with whom he shared 55 years of marriage, and by their seven children: four sons – Mark Wesner; Rev. David Wesner (Claudia) who pastors the First Baptist Church of Ellinwood, Kansas; Stephen Wesner (Melissa); Thomas (Jan); three daughters – Lois (Mark) Williams; Carol (Richard) Harvey and Jerolyn (Kirk) Frederick; 16 grand children and one great grand daughter, who were his great joy. Also surviving him is his sister Elvera (Rev. Richard) Cagle."

#### OTHER CALLS HOME

Mrs. Pearl (Isador) Faszter went to be with the Lord on March 17th this year, Rev. Edgar Klatt on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, and most recently, Dr. George A. Dunger on Saturday May 11, 2002. In the next issue: our tributes to these faithful servants of the Lord.



## TRAVEL WITH THE ARM CHAIR TRAVELER

By Associate Archivist,  
Berneice Westerman

Many places have beckoned to me since our last visit. Records of your friends and relatives have given me glimpses into their lives by way of their obituaries, reports of ordinations and church anniversary books.

'Volunteers at a distance', such as Gideon and Eleanor Zimmerman, have gone the extra miles it takes to get pictures identified as they took copies I had sent them to Laverna Mehlhaff's 80<sup>th</sup> "Birthday Bash" in Chicago. I am grateful for their help.

I have traveled – by Internet – to Canada, to send pictures for people to use for a calendar they are producing. My armchair memory went to Cameroon and Brazil on that trip, since the Cameroon and Brazilian choirs will have their pictures in that calendar.

One 'trip' took me to the 1912 and 1920 Der Sendbote for obituaries of relatives who lived in Canada. I am trying to find information about the Schachtschneider family. Does anyone know that name and in which area there might be relatives? Last I heard they moved to Rosefeld, Canada.

To close, a suggestion: I find that organizing and identifying pictures is easy if the sender will put the event, date, place and names of the people on the back of each picture, using a soft lead pencil, or acid-free labels. I am making progress on a huge album of pictures of our conference leaders, trying to get a picture for every person who was an NAB Conference leader. Do you think I will be able to do it? With your help – Yes! Please send me identified pictures!