

Baptist Herald

December 1986



"Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).

THE GREAT COMMISSION IS NOT A SUGGESTION IT IS A DIVINE IMPERATIVE

Just as the Bible—God's holy written Word—is not merely a book of ideas that we can casually take or leave; it is God-breathed, and we must let it guide our every step. We, as a fellowship of believers—the North American Baptist Conference—have many open doors of opportunity through which to obey this divine imperative through our mission work, church planting, and church extension work. The fact is that we have more opportunities than we have resources.

As we approach this time of year when we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, it is more than appropriate that we stretch our resources and give a special gift to His work, a gift that will reach souls and change lives to His honor and glory. A gift of \$50,000 will support an entire missionary family on an overseas field for one year. A gift of \$2,500 will provide for one month's ministry of a church planter in North America. A gift of \$400 keeps "New Day," the youth evangelism team, on the road for one week. A gift of \$70 supports a missionary pastor in Texas or Colorado for one day. A gift of \$10 provides one day of ministry to Spanish-surnamed youth in Colorado. God knows our individual circumstances and resources, so let each of us give as we are able as unto Him.

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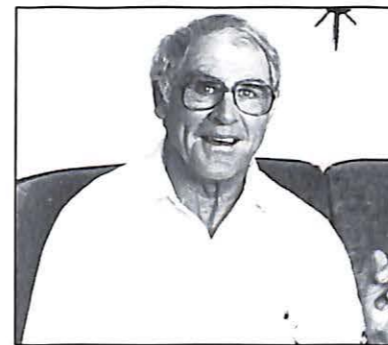
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Catching the Vision

Pursuing Age-Old Imperatives for a New Generation

by Gordon Stork

Today many people, corporations, and institutions desire us to see things the way they do. Whether it be Coke advising us they are the "real thing"; Pepsi telling us they are the choice of a "new generation"; or Toyota promising us a new "oh, what a feeling" experience. Each one of these and many other individuals and companies spend billions of dollars wanting us to invest ourselves in their perspective on a particular way of life.

I have another vision to share with you. This vision is not new, in fact, most of you have heard about this perspective as early as your childhood years. This age-old biblical imperative stretches back in time to the first century A.D. It was a time when the Word of God was proclaimed; lives were touched; decisions were made; and a church was formed. It was a time in which Christians obediently followed the Great Commission, and as a result, the world started to be dramatically different. But it took a vision, the vision of proclaiming God's plan of salvation through Christ to a world in despair. This vision became a reality as the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ was proclaimed, and a church was established. This same vision needs to be caught once again today.

Many of you will say, "Oh, so that's what you're talking about. You are right; we have heard this before."

BUT WAIT! Don't leave! The vision isn't new, but how effective have we been in fulfilling this age-old imperative?

The statistics aren't too impressive. We, as the North American Baptist



Gordon and Diane Stork

Conference, have only experienced minimal growth rates over the last number of years. It is this lack of growth that has led our Conference leaders to make dramatic moves in adopting new approaches to church growth and church planting. But let's take this scenario even a step further.

Statisticians estimate that approximately 30 percent of the population of North America are Christians as the Bible defines the Christian life. That means 70 percent of our population needs to hear and experience the authentic good news of Jesus Christ. The figures are staggering. These

figures force us to conclude that we haven't been very effective in fulfilling that age-old imperative. We need to once again catch the vision and make it a reality in our lives.

This is where my story, a true story, begins. I share it with you to encourage and challenge you. The people in this story are real and ordinary, like you and me, but they have an extraordinary vision that is grounded in a strong faith and commitment to their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Who am I? I am a young man, who, along with his wife, desires to serve our Lord, wherever He may lead. We are travelers along the pilgrimage of faith. As I share this story, allow God to speak to you. Don't expect fireworks, but do expect God to prick your heart.

The story begins in a hospital room where my wife and I join an area minister and a church extension pastor to visit an elderly man suffering from terminal cancer. In years, he was considered old, but no one ever considered him old, for his spirit was always active and young. I was told that he was a man of faith who would dream dreams other humans would consider impossible, and then see them become a reality. He was a man, who along with his wife and other church and association leaders, had a vision of seeing churches planted that would touch the lives of people in the name of Christ.

Even though I had never talked with this man of God, I sensed God speaking to me as we stood at his bedside and, along with his wife, prayed with him and for him. God spoke in silence to me as I stood there. I began to see the vision I needed to catch in

the life of members of the family of God.

Our travels took us to a new area of a growing city, into many new developments. We were amazed as we saw the streets littered with realtors' signs stating that the homes, which had not even been built yet, were sold. Hundreds and thousands of homes are being built. Tens and hundreds of thousands of people are entering this area. Churches—there were a few—but there was such a vast harvest that many more churches need to become active in ministering to the needs of the masses. People moving into this area need the Lord. They also need to become part of the Body of Christ. The field is ripe. I began to grasp the immense need for the vision.

In the hours and days that followed, we attended meetings that led us into a variety of encounters with various individuals. There was the in-depth conversation with the area minister who was convinced that God was directing this association to plant churches in an aggressive manner. He shared his desire to be on the front lines of these pioneering efforts and enthusiastically gave God the glory for what He had and would do.

There were also the Conference leaders who were present to cast their affirmative votes of confidence and support behind the vision. Their words and actions energized the troops to continue on with the work of the Lord.

Then came the pastors. Many were from "established churches," and they were thankful for their people and facilities, but they didn't want to stop there, for they realized the need to continue to reach out to a world that is lost. To venture outside of

their "seemingly safe domain" would mean changes and times of fear, but they realized that Christ hadn't called them to "sit," but to "go" forward with the salvation message.

Three other pastors were present who are involved in the pioneering efforts of church planting. Their stories were not filled with glamorous tales of conquests, for their hard work was not always visibly rewarding, and was often accompanied with emotional blood, sweat, and tears. But their eyes were full of joy as they told of the miracles they had seen God perform as He used them as His instruments to touch the lives of others and establish churches.

Finally, there were laymen and women who had been touched by the age-old imperative to a point that they had applied it to their lives. There was the farmer from an established church whom God had called to help lead a church extension committee that would be instrumental in starting many new churches. There were those who had been touched by a caring community of believers to a point of being drawn to a close relationship with the Lord. Now they were serving the Lord and reaching out to others so that they, too, could experience an abundant life in Christ. Others were so moved by the compassion of their "new" church that they now desired to help start other new churches by unconditionally volunteering their gifts and talents to fulfill the Great Commission. The testimonies were numerous, as we talked to many people whose lives had been changed. Their lives were changed as a result of the vision God had placed in their hearts. I now wanted to make this vision a central part of my life.

Who are these individuals? What are the names of these churches? Which association is this? That doesn't matter. What does matter is that God is touching lives as people obediently answer the Christ-given, God-ordained command to go into the world proclaiming salvation through Jesus Christ. What matters is that people's lives are touched by a caring body that desires to disciple and nurture individuals, whoever they may be, to grow to the full status of the mature man in Christ Jesus.

God is at work! All praise be unto Him. I believe we will see things continue to happen if we, as individuals, churches, and associations take bold steps and become serious and assertive about our commitment to the Great Commission and church planting.

It all sounds great doesn't it? But where does it all begin? It all starts with us as individuals. Ask yourself these questions. Am I committed enough to the Lord so that I am showing and sharing my faith in Jesus Christ with my neighbors, fellow workers and families who do not know the Lord? Am I willing to invest my time into the life of someone who doesn't know the Lord by being a true friend? Do I know someone who

needs the Lord?

If you are serious about your commitment to the Lord and His commands, take a piece of paper and list five people (if you can't list five, list as many as you can) with whom you come in contact on a regular basis who do not know the Lord as their Savior. Then prayerfully commit yourself to develop a significant relationship with one or two of those people where you will share and show your faith to them in the days, weeks, months, and years in the future.

After you have considered your own commitment, consider what your church is doing. Have you become a circle of covered wagons that is safe, or are you reaching out to the needs of the people outside of your circle? Maybe changes need to be made in the program of your church in order that you will be a Great Commission Church.

CATCH THE VISION! Satan and the forces of evil have placed obstacles the size of mountains before us; we need to take our mustard seeds of faith and move forward boldly. Those mountains will move with the power of God, and we will see the Gospel go forward with boldness and in truth to a point that lives will be touched; churches will be planted;

and ultimately and most importantly, God will be worshiped, honored, and glorified.

Remember the words of Jesus, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." May we answer the call of God as the Old Testament prophet Isaiah did when he said, "Here am I, send me!"

Catch the vision! □

The Rev. Gordon Stork has accepted the call from the Southern Association Church Extension Committee to begin and plant a new church in the Austin, Texas, area. This church will be started from monies received through the Special Church Planting Fund, which is over and above the Basic Mission and Ministry Budget of the Conference. Gordon is from White Rock, British Columbia, and is a 1986 graduate of the North American Baptist Seminary, Sioux Falls, South Dakota. He served as youth pastor and as interim pastor at the First Baptist Church, George, Iowa. He has been serving as interim pastor of the church extension project in Langley (Walnut Grove), British Columbia.

The Missing Days

by Roy De Brand

Did you know that there was no September 3 to 13 in the year 1752? Well, it's true. One day it was September 2, 1752, and the next day it was September 14, 1752. "Hurry and get to the reason," I hear you thinking.

The reason for the "missing days" was a change in calendaring systems. Up until then, the American Colonies, like the rest of the British Empire, had been using the Julian calendar. The Julian calendar gets its name from Julius Caesar. In 45 B.C., he decreed that there should be 365 days

in each year for three years and 366 days in each fourth year, perpetually. The only problem with this was that it was not accurate. An exact solar year consists of 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, and 47.8 seconds. So, most of the world was a little out of time because they used the Julian calendar.

In 1582, the Roman Catholic Pope tried to correct the Julian calendar. Over the years between Julius Caesar and Pope Gregory XIII, an excess of ten days had built up. So the Pope eliminated ten days from the year 1582 and instituted the Gregorian calendar system. Though not 100 percent accurate, it corrected the errors of the Julian calendar.

Some countries switched to the Gregorian calendar immediately. But not the British nor their Colonies. So, by 1752, when they did switch, another day had accumulated. A total of eleven days had to be dropped to correct the error and change calendaring systems. That's why there was no September 3-13, 1752!

Let this be a reminder to us of the importance of time. It's important how we measure time. But it's even more important how we spend our time. Time wasted can never be regained. Time invested wisely and used well pays great dividends.

Now that the calendar is straightened out, don't you think it's

high time to use every moment to the fullest? Let there be no "missing days" in this new year because of personal laziness or disorganization. Time is a precious commodity, not to be wasted.

Certainly this was what the Apostle Paul was getting at when he admonished his Ephesian readers, "Live

life, then with a due sense of responsibility not as men who do not know the meaning and purpose of life, but as those who do. Make the best use of your time, despite all the difficulties of these days" (Ephesians 5:15-16, Phillips).

Happy New Year, each day of 1987. May there be no "missing

days" in the new year for you!

Dr. Roy De Brand is Professor of Homiletics and Director of Field Education at the North American Baptist Seminary, Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

Remembering Christmas in Japan

by Florence Miller

It was the Christmas season in Japan. Everywhere the stores were decorated for Christmas with Santas, poinsettias, holly, and Christmas trees. "Christmas Sales" were enticing the people into little shops and crowded department stores. Some people could be seen buying expensive Christmas cards with pictures of Buddhist temples, geisha girls, or Japanese cranes for their foreign friends. Others were buying presents for a gift exchange at the company year-end party. Still others were buying decorated cakes to take home for the family to enjoy on Christmas Eve.

At the Y.M.C.A. where I have been teaching English Bible classes, a Christmas party was being held to conclude the fall term of English classes. All of the English teachers were asked to give a short talk about Christmas.

Being first on the program, I asked the members of the English Bible Class to join me in singing a Christmas carol we had been practicing. Then I gave a short message from the Bible concerning "The Prince of Peace." I spoke about the need to find peace with God before we could find peace among men.

When came a film presented by the Y.M.C.A. staff. It was about the atomic bombing of Nagasaki and Hiroshima. I was a bit shocked that a film of that nature would be shown on the celebration of the birth of Christ. But to the non-Christian staff members, Christmas was a time for



Mr. Sato, a teacher of handicapped children, leads the Christmas service at the Ikeda Church in Japan. Mr. Kawashima, a junior high music teacher, is at the organ.

"peace education."

The film was followed by a speech given by a teacher from England. He began by saying: "I was a Christian at one time, but now I am a Zen Buddhist. Some people find comfort in their faith; I find mine in poetry. I would like to read some English poems which express the same philosophy as Zen Buddhism." He then talked about the cold, cold winter and the warmth of friendship.

The program closed with the talk of a Jewish teacher who had been in Israel at Christmas. She related some of the pageantry that attracted tourists and pilgrims to the holy places. But she concluded by saying that she agreed with the Englishman that love and acceptance of our fellowmen without regard to nationality or race was the essence of Christmas for her.

I wondered if anything I had said about Christ would be remem-

bered, or if it would be forgotten and buried beneath the "Christless" Christmas presentations that followed. I wondered why everyone was trying to "cash in" on Christmas. Why couldn't the non-Christians "do business" at some other time and allow the Christians to explain Christmas to the world.

And then I thought how easy it is to let the non-Christian world influence the celebration of Christmas by Christians. What good are the trees, the wreaths, the candles, the gifts, without the blessed Savior's presence in the manger of our hearts? □

Florence Miller serves as a North American Baptist Conference missionary in Japan, teaching English Bible classes and working with one of the Baptist Churches there.

Through It All . . .

by Jack and Connie Sharp
as told to Glenda Grabke

Connie walked out the door. "Jack, I'm leaving you." Her second marriage was over.

As a child, Connie had attended Sunday school. Before the age of 13, she knelt with her pastor and accepted Christ into her life. As she reached the end of her teen-age years, however, her closeness with God was no longer there. At the age of 18, she married a non-Christian.

Over the next two years, Connie brought two boys into the world while enduring the beatings of her alcoholic husband. "I would have actually left him before I had the second child," Connie explains, "except that by the time I was ready to leave, I was pregnant again, and didn't want to impose on my family or friends. My parents didn't want me to marry my husband in the first place, and I didn't want to admit that they were right. It was very bad . . . near the end he beat me often, and even threatened to kill any friends that would help me." In the end, Connie swallowed her pride and went home.

The seven years after the divorce were filled with pressures that gnawed away at Connie's faith. Eventually, they drove her from the church. Connie began to work at two jobs to keep her family from receiving welfare. Finally, the pressures on Connie were so great that a doctor put her on tranquilizers.

"I was supposed to take one tranquilizer before I went to bed, but one night, in deep depression, I took them all," says Connie. "As soon as I did it, though, I looked up and saw my children's bedroom door. Thoughts raced through my mind, 'What is going to happen to my children?' I quickly phoned my doctor, and he sent an ambulance."

In 1966, Connie married Jack Sharp, a non-Christian bank manager in a small town. The first few years of marriage were good ones for Jack and Connie. They had a deep love for each other that was obvious to those around them.

"We began attending church again," Jack explains, "but for me, it was mainly for appearance's sake. After all, it is proper for the bank manager to be seen in church on Sunday morning."

As Jack received promotions, they prospered materially, and their social life became more and more important. Alcohol was always a big part of each social gathering.

During this time, the Sharps went through a great deal of heartache with their first son, Danny. "We had the boy to seven different doctors," Connie explains, "and they all said that there was nothing physically wrong with him; he just had a behavior problem. Finally, one doctor ran a brain scan and immediately discovered that Danny was extremely hyperkinetic. By this time, he was 15 years of age. The doctors said that the only help that could be obtained for him would be at a school in Winnipeg, but this was only for wards of the government."

The only way to get any help for their son would be by going to court and asking the province to take their child away from them.

"I think that that was one of the most difficult times of my life," recalls Connie. "Our marriage was nearly breaking up over this child. We went through a social worker in order to make him a ward of the province. I was devastated as I stood in the courtroom and listened to a judge ask the social worker if I was an unfit parent. Danny didn't understand either; he thought that we were giving him away because he was bad,



Jack and Connie Sharp

and we didn't want him anymore. Nothing we said could make him understand that we were trying to help him. It nearly broke our hearts."

To add to their problems, Jack's drinking gradually increased. The feeling that he once had after only one drink did not come until after eight or nine drinks. He was never one to be seen at a bar, and he didn't drink to become drunk. He was just a social drinker—well on his way to becoming an alcoholic.

During this time, two children were born to Jack, and Connie. The youngest child was sick during his first three years of life, and, in later years, had spinal meningitis. Shortly after this child was born, Connie became pregnant again, but she miscarried this child. It seemed that their world was caving in, and that things could not possibly get worse.

One after another, the crises came. Jack missed a plane that crashed, killing all on board. Their family was boating when a terrible storm, which destroyed 40 boats, came up. Connie was in five car accidents, one of which left her arm hanging only by the skin. Miraculously, Connie now has full movement in that arm. Later, the doctors told Connie that she would soon be deaf. She now wears two hearing aids and has hope that she will be able to hear for a while to come.

Looking back on these terrible situations, Jack reflects, "How could we go through all of these things and survive them if there was not a loving God guiding us through it all—whether we had done right by Him or not."

Again Jack's drinking changed. A couple of glasses of liquor now had the same effect as ten had before. He would never again build up his resistance to alcohol.

"I found that my love for Jack had deteriorated," says Connie. "When he drank, his personality changed. Sometimes he became violent and verbally abusive. Even though he hurt me, I tried to cover up for him, because I didn't want other people to know."

Two years after Jack came to work for the Credit Union in Springside, Connie decided that she had had enough. She left Jack, and went back to her home town.

This separation hit Jack very hard. Through all of their problems, he had never stopped loving Connie. "When Connie left," he said, "I had to sit down and look at myself and say, 'I am an alcoholic.' I thought back to the problems in my life, and in most cases, the cause was alcohol."

Jack immediately sought help from his doctor, and an Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselor who referred him to a rehabilitation program. Then Jack contacted a retired pastor who met with him regularly to counsel him and to study the Bible. Later the pastor of the Baptist Church in Springside called on Jack. It was in Jack's office that Jack finally bowed his head and prayed to receive Christ.

Meanwhile, in her home town, Connie recommitted her life to Christ and returned to the faith she once had known.

The next time that Jack saw Connie, Connie spoke first and told Jack of her recommitment to Christ. She said that she did not believe that their marriage could survive without having God as the center of their relationship. Jack looked at her and smiled. He felt the same way! He told Connie the news that would make the difference to their marriage.

Together Jack and Connie attended

the alcohol rehabilitation program. "What a blessing to see the miracles that God is performing there," Connie says with feeling. "My original fears were laid to rest when I discovered that my roommate was a Christian. So prayer sessions were being held in our room each evening."

During the program, the Sharps learned a great deal about alcoholism, and they now have a real burden to share what they have learned with others.

"The general public looks on the alcoholic as a 'falling-down-drunk,'" explains Jack, "but the majority of cases really aren't that way." Many alcoholics have good jobs and are well respected in the community. People often do not suspect that there might be an alcohol problem. "Another thing that many people don't realize," adds Connie, "is that alcoholism is now medically acknowledged as a 'disease' and is compared to cancer in that it is not 'curable,' but it is 'treatable.'"

"We were also excited to find that the twelve steps used in Alcoholics Anonymous and in Al-Anon (for families of alcoholics) are taken straight from the book of James."

The day of Jack and Connie's graduation from the program was certainly a time for celebration!

Several months later, Jack and Connie had a small ceremony and renewed their wedding vows to each

other. Later they gave their testimony in church and were baptized by Rev. Richard Grabke. They are now members of the Springside Baptist Church. Since that time, the road has not been an easy one for Jack and Connie. "We would like to say that the tremendous joy we had when we gave our testimonies was constantly with us, but Satan does not like the new life we are leading and has been at work to rob us of our joy."

On January 31st of this year, Jack was fired from his job. He became discouraged as he searched for a job month after month. The Church prayed with Jack and Connie and showed love to them during this difficult time. "We thank God for the wonderful love and support we have received from this congregation," says Jack, with conviction.

The Sharps believe that God answers prayer. Even as this testimony is being written, Jack and Connie are phoning their friends and loved ones to share their exciting news. Jack has a job!

"We give all the praise and glory to God our Father," exclaims Connie, "for without Him and His abiding grace, where would we be now?" □

Jack and Connie Sharp and Glenda Grabke are members of Springside Baptist Church, Springside, Saskatchewan.



Jack Sharp being baptized by Pastor Richard Grabke.

A Christian Response to the Farm Crisis

by Daniel Berger

From horse-drawn single-bottom plows to four-wheel drive diesel tractors pulling thirty-six foot chisel plows, the American farm has changed drastically. How are Christian farmers coping with the present farm crisis? What can the church do to help?

To find out, Daniel Berger, pastor of First Baptist Church, Fessenden, North Dakota, interviewed three committed Christian farmers with different levels of experience and personal history. Wes Beuchler is a farmer nearing retirement. His grandparents immigrated from Germany in the late 1800s and homesteaded in Wells County, North Dakota. His father inherited the land and passed it on to Wes. Roy Bibelheimer is in the height of his farming career. His family began farming when he was in high school. After college, Roy began farming on rented land, sharing equipment with his father who has not yet retired. Mark Edinger, a recent graduate of Valley City State College, is just taking over his family land which has been passed down for three generations.

What is the current farm crisis?

Roy Bibelheimer: It costs much more to raise a crop than what it is worth on the market.

Wes Beuchler: The Lord blesses us with abundant crops, and we produce more than what the people are buying to eat.

Mark Edinger: Cost is one major problem, but another problem involves the government's difficulty in marketing its grain. During the past ten years, grain surplus has developed, and quality has decreased. Because of this, the world market has stopped buying as much of our grain.

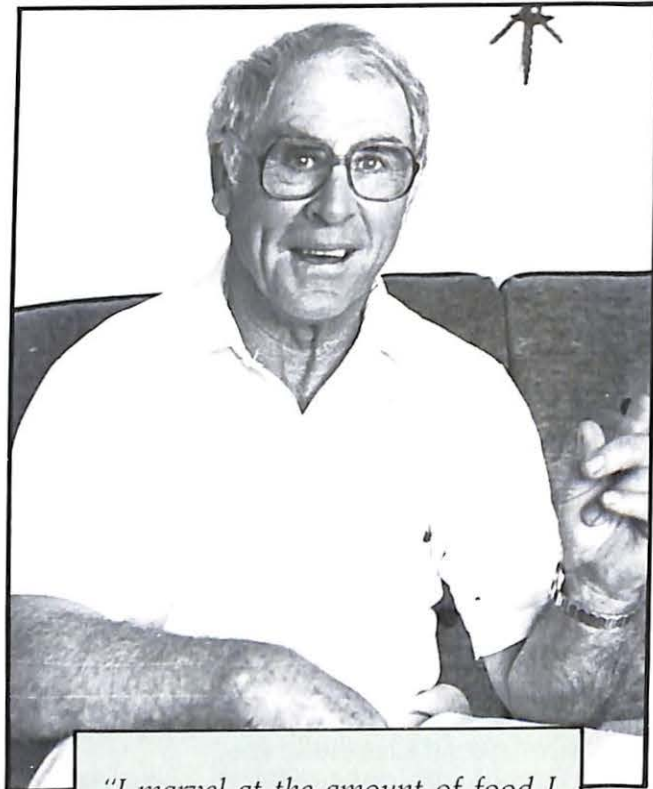
Roy: The U.S. dollar is of greater value than other world currencies, so other countries can buy their grain much cheaper from Brazil, Argentina, or Canada.

What is the most frustrating part of farming?

Roy: Making ends meet. It is even more frustrating than getting the crop off the fields in a wet fall.

Wes: I marvel at the amount of food I can produce almost single-handedly. But the people of our country do not need all of this food. To produce food for government storage is not fun. I would rather be growing crops for people who need the food.

Mark: For someone who is starting out, it is frustrating not knowing whether or not one can make it on one's own.



"I marvel at the amount of food I can produce almost singlehandedly. But the people of our country do not need all of this food. To produce food for government storage is not fun. I would rather be growing crops for people who need the food." —Wes Beuchler

What are you doing to cope with the crisis and these frustrations?

Mark: I pray a lot and take good advice from my father and other farmers who have been through it before.

Roy: I study a lot in order to come up with the best and easiest way of producing a commodity that will bring a return.

Is the answer to the farm problems political, economical, personal, or spiritual?

Mark: It is a combination of all of these.

Wes: "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." I think if we are patient and keep working while we are waiting, the Lord will provide.

Roy: The best political move would have to be in a new farm program that would support family farms as opposed to the present support of large cooperatives. The dollar also needs to come down in value, and we need to produce less grain.

Mark: We also need a better export system established, along with other countries who produce grain.

Wes: We need to convince the other countries to produce less, too. As we refrain from planting wheat, other countries break out new ground for planting. We are defeating ourselves.

What about personal and spiritual areas?

Roy: Prayer support is vital. We especially needed the day of prayer we had last spring. As an entire community, we gathered and prayed for the economy and the coming farm year.

Some families are growing closer together because of the crisis. Some are under much more stress and ready to break. These people need help.

Mark: Sharing machinery, seed and other equipment is necessary. That is a real plus for the community.

What does it mean to be a Christian farmer?

Mark: It means you wake up early every morning to spend some time in real prayer in a very basic way. You need faith that what will happen is what the Lord wants. Since God has called me to farm, I will be able to farm. He will provide for the farm, and I will be able to weather these economic woes.

How did you come to the realization that God had called you into farming?

Mark: I was in my second year of college, wondering where I was going with my life, and I started to ask basic questions about my career and God's will for me.

One weekend I was home and got a call from a neighbor saying he was retiring. He offered to rent two quarters of land to me. I had no intention at that time of beginning to farm. In today's economy, you can't just say one day, "I'm going to start farming," then start. God worked it out for me.

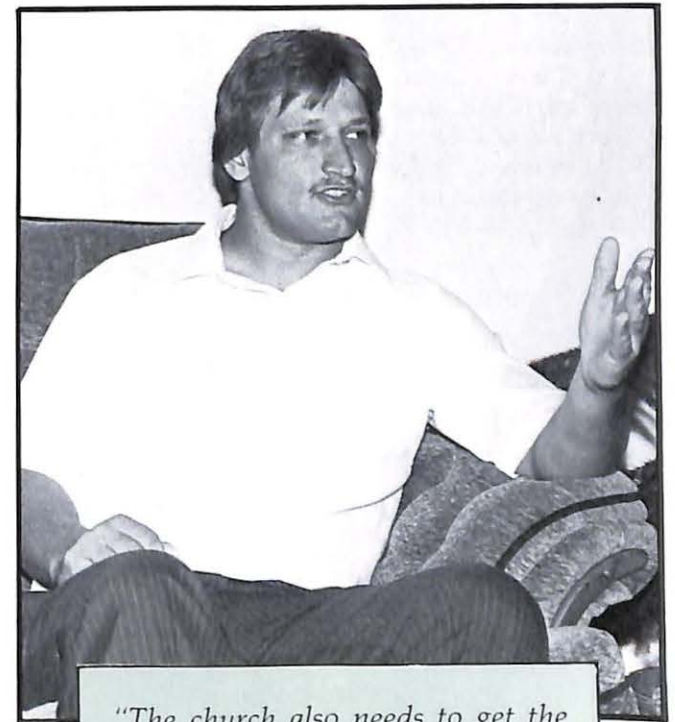
Wes: I do not see how a man can be a tiller of the soil and not believe in God. The seeds we plant are such a small part of production. The Lord sends the rain; He sends the sunshine, and He brings the fruit. It is marvelous. I think my faith in God is strengthened every time I look at a field of wheat. Without Him, we could do nothing. He is the author of life and sustainer

of life. Nature shouts out that there is a God who loves, cares, and provides for us.

Describe an event on your farm where Christ made a difference.

Roy: When I get up in the morning and walk across the yard to go to work saying, "Good morning, Lord. What do you have for me today?", He makes a difference in everything. I've leaned against my combine and prayed before harvesting. When I opened my eyes I looked down and saw a bearing that was open and needed changing. Those little things day in and day out make me recognize the Lord is walking with me and directing me.

Wes: About thirteen months after our first son was killed in an accident, the Lord blessed us with a second son. This was a direct answer to prayer. It so overshadows our life on the farm, it obliterates everything else. He was dedicated to the Lord before he was even conceived. (That son, Ryan, also went to be with the Lord when he was only seven through a farm accident.)



"The church also needs to get the word out that there are problems in America's heartland which need God's intervention. We hear much of hungry multitudes in Africa, political unrest, violence in the cities, and terrorism. The church also needs to put the farm crisis before the Lord in prayer and in action." —Mark Edinger

How can the church help farmers today?

Roy: It is a real boost when you meet Christians from the city if they say they understand and are praying for you. With people talking to the Lord about your situation, He will act. That is the greatest encouragement I have.

Mark: The church also needs to get the word out that there are problems in America's heartland which need God's intervention. We hear much of hungry multitudes in Africa, political unrest, violence in the cities, and terrorism. The church also needs to put the farm crisis before the Lord in prayer and in action.

Coping with today's pressures is tough psychologically. Some farmers get in a bind and do drastic things. They need the solid help of their neighbors and the support of the church.

Roy: My greatest help is when I turn my farm over to the Lord each day. I begin to realize that if He wants things to improve, He will act. I am simply a worker of His land, not my land. Teaching other farmers that will help them as well.

What hope do you have for the future?

Wes: I read in the Old Testament that the Lord gave a bountiful land to His children. My grandparents came over and homesteaded on the land I farm today. They passed on, but the land remains. Now I till the soil. My concern is that I leave the farm in better condition than when I received it. I hope to preserve it and pass it on to my descendants, just as God commanded the Israelites to do.

What Scriptures give you the most help?

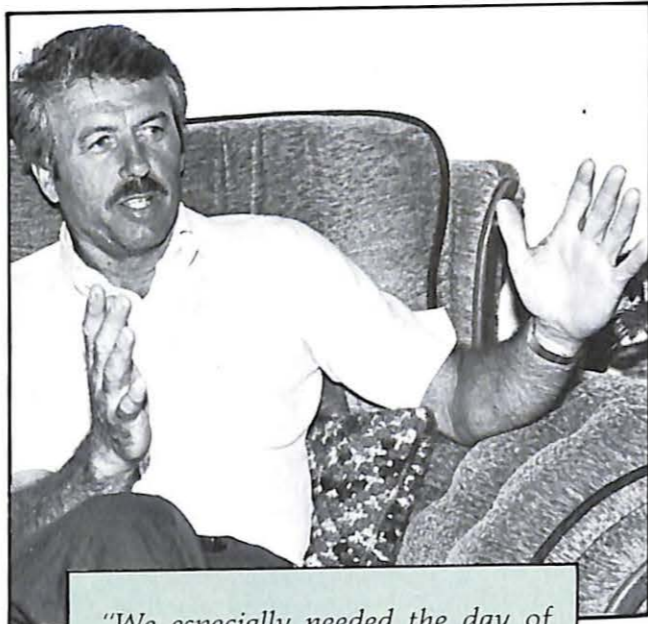
Roy: "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13). As I look at a task that seems impossible, I know it will get done because God always provides a way.

Wes: The last part of the Great Commission says, ". . . and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20). The forever presence of the Lord is my comfort and strength.

Mark: "But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). I think of that often. God is first, and the farm is second.

Wes: Farming is more than an occupation, a means of gaining a livelihood. It is a way of life. I can look out of my house at a huge evergreen tree. The last snowstorm loaded down one side, and it leaned over 30 to 40 degrees. But I wasn't concerned because I know that type of tree sheds the load, and it will come back to an upright position.

Life is that way. Problems come, burdens come. If we keep our roots deep in the Savior and wait on the Lord, casting our burdens on Him, we will stand. We will endure. That tree is a real encouragement to me. If the tree can make it, I can make it, too. The tree is rooted in the soil. I am rooted in God.



"We especially needed the day of prayer we had last spring. As an entire community, we gathered and prayed for the economy and the coming farm year. Prayer support is vital. It's also a real boost when you meet Christians from the city if they say they understand and are praying for you." —Roy Bibelheimer

Thinking BIG

A Biblical Basis for Risk-Taking

by Mel Lorentzen

This is a condensation of the speech given to the North American Baptist Conference General Council at their dinner meeting, June 6, 1986.

Self-examination takes courage. There is equal risk that we may discover faults as well as virtues, weaknesses as well as strengths. The process is particularly threatening to an organization. I commend the North American Baptist Conference churches, General Council, and staff for daring to undertake analysis of the denominational status quo.

I urge you to pursue that process for the next five years, as you covenanted to do at your 41st Triennial Conference a year ago at Anaheim. The major statements of faith that you adopted, Bible-based imperatives, are not only of timely importance but also of eternal consequence.

What you have done thus far is *long-range planning*, outlining a series of actions that look beyond tomorrow. For the people of God who live with eternity's values in view, even the temporal future invites holy boldness to venture ever-increasing risks so that the Almighty Lord of All can display the wonders of His power.

But venturing is not, by itself, the whole process. Your document includes this key phrase: *"visualizing the future."* That suggests the second activity that characterizes forceful administration: *strategic thinking*. Here is where faith takes on form by a leap ahead to "see" what any given church, or the Conference itself, could look like at a distant point in time. Strategic thinking is the logical prerequisite to strategic planning, mapping the route for getting there.



"As you continue this exciting exploration of possibilities for yourselves in a community of faith called the North American Baptist Conference, probe repeatedly for the practical implications in each of the biblical imperatives the Holy Spirit has guided you to adopt, and open your minds and hearts to the Spirit's further faithful help." — Mel Lorentzen

Let me describe a North American Baptist Conference church in the future, illustrating what strategic thinking is. This requires very specific goals with equally specific plans. The imperative, "Commissioned to Witness," based on the assertion of Jesus in Acts 1:8, ". . . you will be my witnesses . . .," gives a perfect opportunity for this.

Scenario for One North American Baptist Conference Church in the Year 2000 A.D.

At the Oncken Memorial Baptist Church on Manhattan's famed Madison Avenue, excitement supercharges the atmosphere on April 22, 2000. A triple anniversary engages everyone's attention.

It's the bicentennial year of the birth of the church's namesake, Johann Gerhard Oncken, the pioneering German Baptist evangelical who may have done more than any other single person to spread the Gospel in Europe during the last two-thirds of the 19th century. (Ed. note: While this scenario is imaginary, Johann Gerhard Oncken is not.)

Also, this day commemorates Oncken's adult baptism in the River Elbe in 1834, and the New York congregation will celebrate the ordinance of baptism this afternoon. The religion editors of major newspapers and magazines are expected to cover this most unusual event, along with photographers and a TV crew. The baptisms will be on the sidewalk in front of the church in a specially-constructed pool.

In answer to prayer, the Bureau of Streets closed off that busy intersection to all vehicle traffic from 3 to 5 p.m., and a special detail of New York police will be on hand for crowd control. Advance publicity has been placed on pages other than the religion pages in the newspapers to catch the attention of a wide diversity of readers. The Oncken Baptists believe the open air baptism will be one of the strongest presentations of the Gospel they have ever made as the new birth in Christ is symbolized.

The third focus of the festivities today is the tenth anniversary of this congregation, which grew out of the

Conference church-planting goal adopted in the late 1980s. Founded in 1990, Oncken Memorial's 100 charter members included volunteers from four existing Conference churches in metropolitan New York, along with at least three dozen new believers from the immediate neighborhood who had made their decisions for Christ in the historic three-month "Mission New York" evangelistic crusade.

That unprecedented cooperative effort in 1989 in which the Conference energetically participated, brought together in the boroughs of New York City the simultaneous ministries of 72-year-old and fiery as ever evangelist Billy Graham, as well as other well-known evangelists from around the world plus a score of new international evangelists who emerged from the Amsterdam 86 conference.

In these ten years, membership at Oncken Memorial has grown to 380, attributable to the Lord graciously blessing the "Think BIG" plan originated in the mid-1980s as Conference leaders began a six-year reorientation of their denominational priorities around "Biblical Imperatives and Goals" (hence, the acrostic "BIG").

Actually, 600 new members have come into the Oncken congregation in its first decade, 498 by baptism. This remarkable record proves that the charter members were right when they determined to maintain the valuable counselor training program offered in connection with "Mission New York" and accepted lay responsibility for evangelism instead of leaving it up to the pastor's preaching and visitation. They could not depend on lateral growth of membership through transfer of church letters for the simple reason that they weren't located in "Baptist territory." They also adopted the "Triplet Prayer" idea, dividing the whole membership into groups of three where each person shared names of three lost people for whom the others prayed.

With a renewed vision of their mission, they reminded themselves of a very basic definition of "lostness" as it related to the spiritual situation of their neighbors and daily business associates. They saw them as people

who simply did not know how to get from where they were to where they wanted to be, hence "lost." They saw themselves as godly guides to show the way to Christ by life-style and verbal testimony to their own experience with God, thus befriending the lost and helping them to get Home to the forgiving and ever-loving Heavenly Father.

This mentality of welcoming sinners instead of first trying to reform them struck the Oncken people as a Jesus-like quality, and it made them winsome citizens in their neighborhood. The fact that their total membership today is not larger simply reflects the transiency of urban dwellers.

Another city phenomenon is that 65 percent of Oncken's 380 present members are singles under the age of 45. This impacts church programming, and its terminology. For example, the church does not hold "revival meetings" or even "evangelistic campaigns" anymore. Instead, it sponsors quarterly "public lecture series," where topics of current interest are integrated with a clear explanation of the meaning of salvation, and features inclusion of a Christian testimony by someone whose name holds public attraction. Each series is conducted in the fellowship hall, and a warmly social atmosphere prevails.

These are excellent occasions for members to bring people with whom they believe the Spirit of God is dealing from their offices or from their apartment buildings. They are joyously free of any guilt trip about saving souls because they take very literally Acts 2:47: "And day by day the Lord added to their number those whom he was saving." They accept Paul's principle: "All things to all people by all means to save some . . . for the sake of the Gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:22).

In this first decade of existence, the outworking of "Think BIG at Oncken" (each congregation in the Conference was guided to interpret the plan according to its specific needs and local opportunities) has included many non-traditional services to its community.

Oncken-like, they have emphasized the ministry of Christian literature by opening a public bookstore on

church property and by a systematic saturation of the area with Gospel literature through street distribution and through direct mail to apartments. The street work has incorporated some open-air preaching, as well.

Especially noteworthy has been this congregation's clear-sighted focus on a ministry of compassion. Remembering the heroism of their forebears in Hamburg in 1842, when a devastating fire left one-third of the city's population homeless, these 21st century Baptists have made New York City's tens of thousands of "street people" a special concern just as Oncken did. They have opened not only the church building itself to carefully regulated overnight shelter services, but also many members have opened their homes to take in the destitute temporarily and help them to get a new start toward self-support. In this metropolis, where taking in strangers is viewed by most as a life-threatening situation, the compassion of these Christians has produced many life transformations and has motivated several other churches to begin similar ministry.

The original Oncken Baptists in Hamburg also experienced intense and long-term threats, persecution, and even imprisonment for their conscientious break with the prevailing state church system. In fidelity to that history, today's Oncken Baptists on Madison Avenue not only regularly send teams of trained counselors into the city's jails to witness to the inmates, but also they "adopt" inmate families and shower acceptance on them as participants in congregational life. The church has formed membership core groups of professionals in law, psychology, and vocational training who provide free of charge the indispensable "halfway" services that those who have been incarcerated must receive if they are to reenter society rather than reenter prison.

Oncken Memorial has been urged by some to add certain outreaches to its ministry but has steadfastly resisted most of those suggestions. Instead, it points to other evangelical churches in the city where ministries such as Christian radio broadcasts or Bible study groups in apartment

buildings are flourishing.

Stemming from its philosophy of stewardship, Oncken Memorial does not have a building fund, only a maintenance allocation. It has never set size goals, but always concentrated instead on quality of services rendered. It does not try to convince other Conference congregations that its position on this is to be normative, because circumstances vary from place to place. It believes it is placed by God on Madison Avenue to spend and be spent for the making of disciples and the healing of the hurting. The "Think BIG at Oncken" program, therefore, measures its objectives and achievements by biblical standards rather than by the formulas of its neighboring advertising agencies. The congregation is committed to downsizing itself by starting branch works elsewhere, rather than by enlarging existing property holdings or by multiplying its meetings in duplicate or triplicate.

As a consequence of this philosophy, the church carries on much of its internal teaching, counseling, and even preaching activities in the homes of its members. They believe this is a realistic adaptation to the dangers and inconveniences sometimes faced on city streets, and that it fosters a deeper sense of the believing community in its small group intimacy. The full congregational gatherings at the church building are for the celebration of divine worship and for the declaration of the saving Gospel to the lost.

Preaching services occur at many times during the week besides Sundays, moreover, often with lay speakers, so that noon-hour passersby, Saturday night crowds, or early workday commuters may be accommodated. It is a church geared to the pace and preoccupations of its fellow urbanites, and it confesses that it simply cannot realistically expect to get everybody together at one time for a single meeting.

For the public, then, its building is open seven days a week, with a sanctuary for quiet meditation, a counseling suite for personal staff ministries, a library of edifying spiritual literature, and even a listening room with a repertoire of appropriate

cassettes of God-honoring music that can be enjoyed through earphones in individual carrels.

The members themselves have learned the basic Bible truth that they, and not a building, are the church, the Body of Christ. Therefore, they move throughout the great metropolis every day of the

Let me offer you what may be one of the most exhilarating of all the Bible bases for risk-taking, this time in words of the Apostle Paul to Christians in Ephesus, the very place where he literally overthrew the existing order: "I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the all glorious Father, may give you the spiritual powers of wisdom and vision, by which there comes the knowledge of him. I pray that your inward eyes may be illumined, so that you may know what is the hope to which he calls you, what the wealth and glory of the share he offers you among his people in their heritage, and how vast the resources of his power open to us who trust in him" (Ephesians 1:17-19).

week as literal members of that Body reaching out to touch the lives of people they meet. Rather than concentrating on "getting people to church," they see it as their prime Christian commission to "get the church to the people." The Oncken Baptists "scat-

ter the seed" and "gossip the Gospel" everywhere, as they are directed and moved by the Spirit of God.

While this church has a decided self-awareness of being "on mission" to this section of New York City, it revels in "missions" worldwide. Since its founding, it has maintained, sometimes at considerable sacrifice, a fiscal policy, based on tithing, to equal support for local needs and for world outreach through the Conference. A by-product has been that in ten years, two of its own young people have become career missionaries overseas, and on four occasions, teams of "specialists" formed from the membership have volunteered for overseas trips to contribute their expertise to assist missionaries.

Oncken Memorial Baptist Church on Madison Avenue has no ambitions to be classed as a "super church" one day. In its binational Conference fellowship of just under 100,000 like-minded believers, it enters its own second decade, and the world's new century, on a wave of thanksgiving to God for His unfailing faithfulness, and with a forward-looking exhilaration that to continue to "Think BIC" is the most important commission it could have.

It can hardly wait for the upcoming Triennial Conference of North American Baptist Conference Churches to learn what new dreams and visions the Lord has imparted. It is convinced that the promised power of the Holy Spirit remains as valid in 2000 A.D. as at Pentecost.

As you continue this exciting exploration of possibilities for yourselves in a community of faith called the North American Baptist Conference, probe repeatedly for the practical implications in each of the biblical imperatives the Holy Spirit has guided you to adopt, and open your minds and hearts to the Spirit's further faithful help. □

Dr. Mel Lorentzen is Associate Director of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, Illinois.

news from our missionaries

Nigerian Pastors Attend Itinerant Evangelists Conference

by Elmer C. Strauss

Two Mambilla Baptist Convention (Nigeria) pastors were invited by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Foundation to attend the International Conference for Itinerant Evangelists in July. A week before their departure date, they came to Jos for help in obtaining visas for the Netherlands. Since there was no way we could get their passports to Lagos at the coast and back to Jos in a week, we sent them with DHL courier service. The day before their departure, their passports had not been returned to Jos.

The morning the pastors were to leave for the Netherlands, I went to the DHL office at 8 a.m. The plane had come in early from Lagos to Jos so I asked for our parcel. It was not there. I went to all eight courier services in Jos; none had the parcel. At 10:30 a.m., I cancelled the pastors' seats on the mission plane leaving for Kano and returned home.

Anxiously waiting on our porch, our two pastors reflected disappointment as I told them the news, but they still had hope. We decided to telephone the Netherlands Embassy in Lagos. I went to the Phone Office, but they said that they only accepted international calls, not domestic. I went to a nearby hotel. The desk clerk dialed continually for five solid minutes. As soon as she had a busy signal, she redialed. Finally, the call went through. The lady in the visa section said that she had sent the two passports with the visas the previous morning via DHL courier and that I should have had them by now . . . noon!

I returned to the DHL office where I had been four hours earlier. They checked again. Yes, the parcel came in that morning, and the messenger was out making his deliveries. The employee admitted that it was there in the back room when I had come at 8 a.m., but they had not checked.

I patrolled the main streets of Jos looking for the motorcycle with DHL on the back. In desperation, I finally went home at 12:30.

The pastors were all smiles . . . the visas had arrived. Since there was no transport going to Kano at that time, we drove them to Kano. Finally, they were airborne for Amsterdam for ten days of challenge and a renewed vision for the lost for whom the Lord Jesus Christ died, was buried, and rose again!

Missionaries Elmer and Ruth Strauss serve in Jos, Nigeria, in administration for our mission work on the Mambilla Plateau.

God Is Changing Me

by Janet L. Schaffer

Before coming to Cameroon, I thought, "What is it really going to be like over there?" I could only visualize the people and culture from my past experience of being in Kenya. The excitement and joy of serving God in Cameroon was so real in my life, yet I wondered how God might use me in the lives of the people there.



Too often we seek results, and we feel inadequate if we don't meet the expectations of others. I have learned to commit my life and the lives of other people to the Lord. I see how important it is to pray for people and to leave the results to God.

If there is anyone God is changing, I would have to say it is I. Aside from the practical and tangible experiences, God is changing me spiritually. I have learned that God is the source of my strength, and I am challenged to trust Him for every detail of my life.

I am also learning to give thanks in all circumstances as it says in 1 Thessalonians. It is so easy to complain when things go wrong, but as I think of the suffering Christ endured

for me on the cross, I realize how insignificant my trials are. It is often through trials that I can learn the most.

In order to grow I must be willing to accept those moments that are not so pleasant in addition to the positive experiences. As I grow in Christlikeness, I pray that my heart will always be teachable and that I may simply be myself. Sharing my life is the best thing I can do for people.

Janet Schaeffer is a short-term missionary from Carrington, North Dakota, serving as assistant Central Treasurer, Cameroon Baptist Convention, West Africa.

Reactions to Bibles Distributed in Brazil

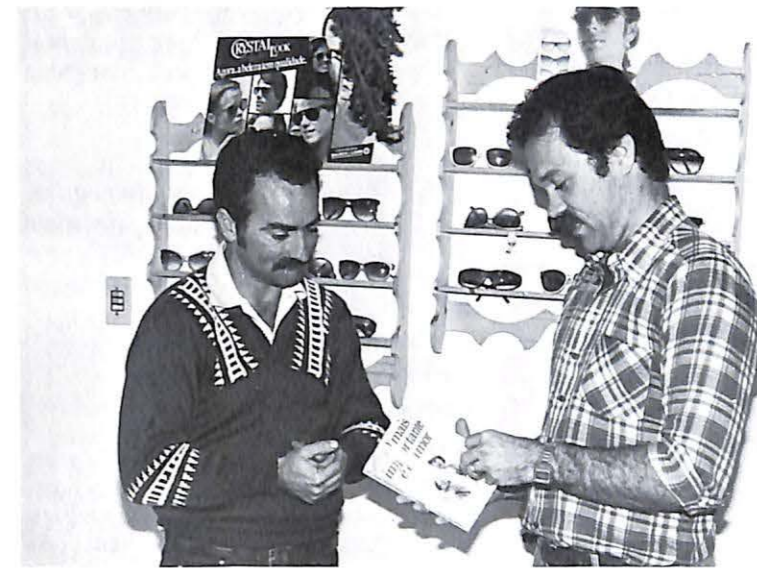
by Ken and Jerilyn Bayer

Spell the word "July" in Brazil, and what do you have? Winter. Spell the word "July" in Torres, and what do you have? Winter and hibernation. What better chance do we have of catching people in their homes than in July, we thought.

With these words, we began our project of placing 2,000 New Testaments in 2,000 homes. Little did we know that two weeks of distribution could be so varied and diversified. With the help of three seminary students and the sons of Missionaries Richard and Beth Rabenhorst, Murrey and Marcus, we experienced reactions from one end of the spectrum to the other.

One man cut the Bible in two. Ten times as many ladies refused the Bible as men, probably because of stronger religious traditions. There was refusal to accept the Bible because of fear of our "literature" or because "there must be a hidden cost or obligation." Some were afraid that the Bible was modified because of the Jehovah Witnesses.

Most people accepted the Bible because it was free. Some were going



Missionary Ken Bayer gives a New Testament to a businessman.

to use it as a charm to ward off evil spirits. It was interesting to note that the further the distance from the church building, the poorer the reception. There was better acceptance by the poor than the rich.

Right at their doorways, many asked us to pray for them, their problems and predicaments. Others came looking for us on the streets, asking us for more Bibles for relatives and friends.

The question, "Who are the Baptists?" opened doors for witnessing opportunities. Several invited us in for coffee and to discuss doubts and fears. The most common subjects discussed were life after death, works, praying for the dead, assurance of salvation, and repetition of prayers. Repeated visits were made in the same week to those who asked us to come back and explain in detail the message of salvation.

Some of the immediate visible results were the new people in church the first Wednesday night after the distribution. A few decisions were made in the following weeks. We were given the opportunity to show evangelistic films once a week at a night school (which incidentally was forced out of its facilities because of having accepted our Bible and films).

Our distribution ended, but we pray and trust God to move hearts

and lives as people open their lives to the influence of His Word. As we distributed these Bibles, we saw the ignorance and superstition that bind many. We were also amazed at the amount of fortune tellers and spiritist consultation centers in every area of town and saddened at the way the population flock to see. On the other hand, many are searching, dissatisfied with the emptiness they experience inside. Pray with us that they may find Christ. Pray that God may use us to show them the way. We covet your prayers as we really sense Satan's hold on people here. □

Ken and Jerilyn Bayer serve as N.A.B. missionaries in church planting in Torres, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil.

Japanese Family Receive Christ

by Ron and Joan Stoller

During the past 20 years, a man has been studying the Bible in one of our missionaries' English Bible studies in Tsu. Many have prayed for his salvation. After a long absence from class last November, he came to the Center and said, "I am not a Christian yet, but I want to study English." He came for a few weeks, then stopped.

During the New Year's holidays, we heard that he was in the hospital. The following month he nearly died due to complications with a reoccurrence of TB from years before. Our pastor contacted him. Through various people, he realized the need for the Great Physician.



Mr. and Mrs. Shimizu

Mr. Shimizu's life is totally different now, and he was baptized in our church this fall. God's Word doesn't always sprout immediately, but He waits for His perfect timing.

Mr. Shimizu has two daughters, one a dental student in one of Japan's most southern islands, the other works in Tsu. While Mrs. Shimizu was in the hospital, his dental student daughter wrote and said, "You and mother need the strength and guidance from God." The daughter herself isn't a Christian yet, but she attends a church in the town where she attends dental school. The Lord provides the pathway long before we even can think of possibilities. This same girl came to English conversation classes I taught 13 years ago in Tsu. She has influenced her parents recently, and now we trust and pray she, too, will come to a closer walk with God after seeing her parents' changed lives.

Pray for Mr. and Mrs. Shimizu and

their continuous work with the Lord. Pray for their daughter in dental school and the second daughter working near their home.

Ron and Joan Stoller serve as missionaries in student evangelism and as administrators of the Tsu Christian Center in Japan. They presently are on furlough visiting our churches.

Alumni Speak Highly of University Bible Club

by Ron and Joan Stoller

At a recent reunion of students who had graduated from Mie University during the past four years as well as present members of the Mie University Bible Club, some students who we thought were very uninterested in the Club during their student days spoke very highly of the great time they had.

One of these had an accident at the industrial company where he became employed after graduation a few years ago. Rushed to the University hospital with a nearly severed thumb, he prayed to God to restore it. He now is married and has a Christian home with two children. What a joy to see another alumnus active in the church after leaving Mie University Bible Club.

Pray for the Mie University alumni who are now working in various companies. Pray for Christian mates and good opportunities for them to share their faith.



Mie University Bible Club

Kraemer's Life Touched by Experiences in Japan

by Lea Kraemer

The Japan Missionary Fellowship (JMF) met recently for four days and focused on a video series, "Prayer: Life's Limitless Reach," by Dr. Jack Taylor.



Joy filled me anew with each activity, especially during our last activity together, communion. One person knelt at the communion table while another came to administer the communion and prayer for the individuals. Then that one became the administrator and another came. So it continued, one by one, over 14 times, while surrounding missionaries, seated on the floor, prayed. My heart was greatly touched by the experience.

Seven of my ten Tuesday evening English/Bible class students plus seven other English students and guests attended an Andre Cole performance in Japan recently. The filled auditorium was alive with excitement to see this Christian magician present the Gospel message through magic. Following the performance, my excited students and I went for some refreshments and discussion of what we had witnessed.

Later I learned that two students

had signed cards indicating they were interested in learning more about Christ. Signing a card is a BIG step. I have continued to watch the students for ways to further their interest. Please pray for them and the other students' minds to be convicted and their "blindness" to be healed.

Lea Kraemer is a short-term missionary from California, teaching Conversational English in Japan.

Baptism Precedes Gas Explosion in Cameroon

by Pat Meinerts

Nyos, a small village of 300-400 people about 140 kilometers north of Bamenda, was the town most severely affected by the recent gas explosion from the nearby crater lake, Lake Nyos. Hundreds of people in surrounding villages were also killed or injured.

The Cameroon Baptist Convention's small prayer group in Nyos planned to become a fully recognized church. Three weeks before the explosion, 15 of the new Christians were baptized. During the Association's "Missionary Week," held the five days preceding the explosion, Cameroonian pastor George Lang went to this small group. He finished his discipleship classes at noon on August 21, and left Nyos about 3 p.m. Around 9 p.m., the Lake erupted. All 15 newly baptized Christians were among the hundreds who died. Pastor Lang in nearby Su Bum survived; although two people in the house where he slept died. About two thirds of the 160 Christians in Su Bum Baptist Church also died.

Many Baptist Christians and some pastors lost most of their relatives. No missionaries were near the area at the time of the explosion, but Ken Priebe and Ken Gullman who toured the region a few days later experienced breathing difficulties while assisting in burying seven Christians in a mass burial.

Please pray for the survivors and those who are ministering to them.

Compelled to Serve

by Greg Myers

We know that we are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Yet in Matthew 25, where Jesus speaks of separating the sheep from the goats, there is no mention of either grace or faith. Instead, Jesus talks about a life of service. Those who have invested their lives in the service of others are sent away to eternal life. But those who have not are sent away to eternal punishment. The question is not one of good works producing salvation but rather of salvation producing good works. Jesus will not need to ask us our profession of faith. He will know what it is by the lives we have lived. Faith that doesn't produce good works is dead. Thus the North American Baptist Conference has concluded correctly that, as God's people, we are compelled to serve.

Twin Oaks Baptist Church is committed to be a people of love. One of the ways we seek to express that love is by serving one another and our community. Let me give you two examples. We have a family in our church with four children under the age of five. One is a Down's syndrome baby. Because of the age of the children and the nature of the disability, the family qualified for a special government program. It provided day care for the two older children three days per week. That gave the mother some much-needed relief, but then the funding ran out.

The mother wasn't sure she would be able to cope with this sudden change that put all of the children back in the home all at once. So she called and asked if the Church could help wean her from the government program. She thought that if we could provide two days of care per week for one month and then one day per week for a second month, she would be able to withdraw from the



program without too much trauma. It seemed like a reasonable plan.

My first question was, "How much will it cost to continue the child care on a reduced basis for two months?" It would have been around \$400. Fortunately, my elders do not think the way I do. Their first question was, "Can't the people of the Church provide the necessary child care?" Since we're compelled to serve, we decided to find out. We presented the need to the congregation, and the first day we had volunteers to provide three weeks of child care and did not expect to have any trouble providing the balance of the coverage.

Of course, not all needs are confined to the Church membership. Last November, one of our elders was approached by a neighbor who was trying to sell his CB radio. When asked why it was for sale, the man replied that it was to get money for Thanksgiving dinner. They were broke. It was our great pleasure to provide a full Thanksgiving dinner in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our elder has been nurturing that relationship ever since, and the family is now open to the Gospel and to the possibility of coming to church.

We are compelled to serve. It's the only tangible way for us to express the love of Christ to one another and the world. Serving within the body builds up both the one who serves and one who is served. That is what happened with the mother of four and those who cared for her. Service outside the body builds bridges to the lost so we can win them to Christ. That's our prayer for the elder's neighbor. Let's all express our love for Jesus by serving others for His sake.

The Rev. Greg Myers is pastor of Twin Oaks Baptist Church, Stockton, California, a church planted in 1985.

Year-End Giving—in Light of the New Tax Legislation

We may be conscious of our giving throughout the year, but at year end, it seems like all of us "take inventory" to make sure that it has been complete, allowing us to maximize the tax benefits available to us. This is especially important this year, in light of the new tax legislation recently passed by the United States Congress.

In this article, we share with you some additional information concerning year-end gifts, which we trust you will find to be of interest and value.

Cash

Cash is still the most popular way to make a charitable gift. If you itemize your deductions, your gifts to charity will reduce your tax bill. Your out-of-pocket cost will be much less than the amount of your gift.

For example, if you are in a 30 percent tax bracket and you make a \$2,000 charitable gift before December 31, you may deduct that amount from your taxable income for the year, and your taxes next April will be reduced by \$600. Or . . .

A gift of	\$ 1,000	Costs	\$ 700
	2,000		1,400
	3,000		2,100
	5,000		3,500
	10,000		7,000

Gifts of cash are deductible up to 50 percent of your adjusted gross income. If your gift exceeds the 50 percent limit, any excess can be carried over and deducted for up to five succeeding years.

If you do not itemize deductions, give consideration to doubling your charitable gifts this year. Possibly this additional amount will place you in a position to receive benefits by itemizing your deductions this year.

This can result in a sizeable tax savings, even for individuals who

normally do not itemize their returns.

If you file a short form federal income tax return, in 1986 you can deduct 100 percent of all charitable contributions, up to 50 percent of your adjusted gross income. This is a very important consideration this year, since this provision of the tax law expires at the end of 1986, and the new tax law does not make provision for its replacement.

Gifts of Appreciated Property

You can receive an additional tax savings for a gift of property you have owned for more than six months, which has increased in value. If you sold this property, 40 percent of the long-term capital gains would be taxable to you as ordinary income. By contributing the property to charity, you can completely avoid this tax and still deduct the full fair market value of the property for your charitable gift. A gift of appreciated property is deductible up to 30 percent of adjusted gross income, with a carryover of the excess for up to five years.

This is also an important year for gifts of appreciated property, because next year the untaxed appreciation on charitable contributions of appreciated property will be considered a preference item in calculating the alternative maximum tax. Therefore, it is important that you give consideration to making gifts of appreciated property this year.

Gifts of Life Insurance

A gift of life insurance is another unique way to contribute to charity. You can purchase a new policy on your life, give ownership of the policy to the North American Baptist Conference, and claim an income tax charitable deduction for contributions of the premium payments.

Or, you can donate a policy you've owned for some time and claim as a deduction its current value. You can also claim a deduction for the remaining premium payments, as you make them.

Gifts of Tangible Personal Property

When you make a gift of tangible personal property related to our tax-exempt function, you may deduct the fair market value of the property without paying capital gains tax on appreciation, providing the property is long-term capital gain property.

Gifts with Retained Benefits

It is possible for you to make a contribution to the North American Baptist Conference, retaining the income from the property you transfer. And you can receive an income tax charitable deduction when you contribute property, even though you maintain income benefits.

A gift can be designed to meet your income needs, as well as provide maximum tax benefits. Whether you own stocks, bonds, real estate, or even your personal residence or farm, by guaranteeing today that that property will be available to the North American Baptist Conference at your death, the government will allow you to claim an income tax charitable deduction.

If this type of gift is of interest to you, we will be happy to further explore these opportunities with you.

Gifts from Businesses

If you own your own business, you can receive a charitable deduction for contributions of up to 10 percent of the corporation's net income in 1986. Your gifts can be in cash, inventory, equipment, or crops. Many businesses find that contributions other than cash are more convenient to make. And

they can still receive a charitable deduction.

If you are employed by a corporation, you will want to check with your employer concerning corporate giving, since many businesses match the gifts made by their employees to approved or qualified charities.

Why Consider a Charitable Gift in Year-end Tax Planning?

Very seldom can you make a gift and have more money left after making the gift than you had before. Therefore, to save taxes alone, will not be your primary reason for making a gift to the North American Baptist Conference.

But you give as a part of your life-style, your personal commitment. And you give because you care about the mission and ministries of the North American Baptist Conference.

Saving taxes is a consideration only after you have decided to make a gift. Then, as a responsible steward, you will want to achieve the maximum tax benefits from your gift.

When making important financial decisions, consult a professional familiar with your situation . . . your tax advisor, attorney, life underwriter, or other financial counsel . . . to help you decide which of these opportunities may be best for you.

If we can provide additional information and help you plan your charitable gifts, giving consideration to your personal financial situation, please use the enclosed response card to let us know, or telephone our office at 1 - (312) 495-2000

Our assistance is offered without obligation and is completely confidential. Let us know if we can help.



I Am Considering a Charitable Gift

I have taken inventory of my giving in 1986.

Enclosed is my year-end gift of \$_____ to help the mission and ministry work of the North American Baptist Conference.

I would like to receive additional information to help me in my year-end giving. Please send me information on

- Gifts of appreciated property
- Gifts of life insurance
- Gifts with retained benefits

I have the following property which I would like to consider giving this year. Please calculate the best possible way for me to do so.

Type of property: _____
The property is now worth \$_____. My cost basis is \$_____. My top income bracket this year is estimated to be _____ percent.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State/Prov. _____ Code _____
Birthdate _____
Spouse's Birthdate _____
Telephone _____

Return to:
Dr. C. Salios, North American Baptist Conference, 1 South 210 Summit Avenue, Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181.

Thanks for Your 1986 Giving for Capital Funds

The year 1986 will soon be history for all of us including another year of receiving and disbursing Capital Funds monies.

Your support for the Capital Funds Campaign, "Building on the Foundations of Faith," has been remarkable. Missionaries, church extension pastors, home mission pastors, Conference educational leaders, and North American Baptist Conference International Office Staff salute you for your willingness to give to support ministries that would not have been possible without the Capital Funds Campaign.

Ministries You Funded

Some of the ministries or buildings for ministries that you funded through your gifts are

A Church Growth Strategy to assist our churches in learning church growth principles including the assimilation of new members and building disciples; a dorm for girls at Kom Baptist Technical School in Belo; a library addition for North American Baptist Seminary in Sioux Falls; a hostel for missionary children at their School at Ndu; assistance to the North American Baptist College/Divinity School which helped liquidate the debt on the Schalm Memorial Library; a Land Rover for ministries in Nigeria; and office automation and audiovisual equipment for the N.A.B. Conference International Office Staff in Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois, to aid in their important support ministry functions.

Your continued faithfulness to the Capital Funds Campaign is needed to reach \$400,000 for 1986 by December 31 to keep us on target to achieve our goal of receiving \$3,583,000 in cash before the campaign is concluded.

For all that you are doing, a sincere and genuine thanks is expressed. God bless you richly.



Christmas in Japan

by Sharon Woyke,
missionary in Japan

"Silent night . . . holy night . . ."

The sound of this beautiful Christmas carol fills the air of the department store. Many displays are trimmed with colored lights, fake snow and there are Christmas trees with all the trimmings. The toy department especially is filled with the hustle and bustle of holiday activity. Where do I find this? In the land of Japan.

Even though less than one percent of Japan's 120 million people are evangelical Christians, most know that there is a holiday called Christmas, but they may not know why it is celebrated.

Many stores have copied the commercialism of Christmas and use this time to push for extra sales. Schools, too, take advantage of this time for pretty decorations, programs and parties. Children love all of the activity but really don't care about the reason behind it all. We asked one little boy why he had a Christmas party in school, and he replied that he thought it was Santa's birthday but wasn't really sure. Others thought it was a way to celebrate the end of the school year before the big New Year's celebration.

For most people, business goes on as usual as Christmas is not an official holiday in Japan. Stores remain open and office routine continues. There may be a feeling of excitement in the air, but that is probably because they are looking forward to the end-of-the-year drinking party that is coming soon.



l. to. r.—Todd, Sharon, Joyce and Doug Woyke

The average Japanese family does very little to celebrate Christmas at home. Houses are not decorated and very few have a Christmas tree, partly because there isn't room in their small homes and apartments. Often parents will buy one special gift for each child, but the children do not buy or make gifts for their parents or brothers and sisters. One Christmas the European custom of eating a decorated Christmas cake on Christmas Eve. Since this is not a special holiday for most, there is no reason for the extended family to gather for a special meal and celebration. Another reason why even Christian families do not have a big celebration at home is that New Years of the Japanese year, is only one week away. That is when the entire house is cleaned and many special treats are cooked. There is also a lot of visiting between families at New Year's time so no one is very interested in going somewhere the week before—they are just too busy.

So, who does celebrate Christmas? The Christian churches do! The missionaries in their English classes do! The missionaries in their families and groups do! It is a very special time for us to share the true meaning of this holiday with the people around us.

For the Heijo Christian Church in Nara, with which we work, Christmas is a time for a special evangelistic thrust. The school children practice hard to

perfect their play for the special program that they present on the Sunday afternoon before Christmas. Parents and friends are invited and usually the church is full to hear the complete gospel message—the story of Christmas with the birth of Jesus. The Easter message is included as this is the first time many visitors enter a church and they know nothing of why Jesus came or the purpose of his life. After the program, there is a bag of treats for everyone and a time for fellowship and getting acquainted.

The Christmas worship for adults is held on Christmas Eve. We usually have special music and a guest speaker. Before this service, an invitation and a Christmas tract is taken to each home in the New Town and to the surrounding communities. God has blessed this effort with new people coming each year.

Many of our N.A.B. missionaries teach conversational English. Christmas is an excellent time for them to share the true meaning of Christmas and the power of God to change lives. It is interesting, yet sad, to note how often the comment comes up, "I didn't know that Christmas was celebrated in church."

Christmas is a very busy time for most missionaries as we don't want to miss any opportunity that might give us a chance to share Christ with someone. People seem to be more open with their questions and, if we don't take the time to answer, they may not ask again.

In spite of all this busyness, we try

to keep some special times just for our family. Christmas day is usually a family day with a special dinner shared with another missionary, a Japanese friend or even a serviceman who is far from home. We read the Christmas story from the Bible and sing a carol or two before opening our gifts. A big jigsaw puzzle often keeps us busy for most of the afternoon. Since Japanese television is not dominated by sports on the holidays, we have time just to be together.

During the week following Christmas, the N.A.B. missionary family gets together for a special Christmas fellowship. We share a traditional dinner with all the trimmings and a worship service with each family or area bringing a special number. This group is our "family away from home" and from it we receive rich fellowship, a hug of encouragement, prayers offered with real understanding, advice, and the many things that only families can give.

As a wife, mother, pastor's wife, English teacher, P.T.A. chairman, etc., how does the missionary wife keep a balance during this busy season—and all year through for that matter? It is something that each individual must struggle with before God. God gives different strengths, talents and challenges to each of us. Some are able to teach, others entertain, and others do a lot behind the scenes that few ever know about. My role in Japan has been, for the most part, a supportive one—one that changes from time to time. It can mean opening our home for meetings, baking 60 dozen cookies for Christmas activities in church, typing letters and minutes, or a variety of other activities. My number one priority, however, is my family. God impressed us with the fact that there may be others who can do the mission work, but we are responsible for our children. We try to keep one evening a week as family night and before school each morning we have

our family devotions and prayer time. Our children know that we love them and as they see that we love God and are concerned about the people of Japan, they join us, where they are able, in the ministry at church.

At Christmas time in Japan, church, mission, and family activities blend together in a special way for that one purpose of sharing Christ and the meaning of His birth and life.

Consider Attending . . . Mark Your Calendar

Our N.A.B. Women's Missionary Fellowship, along with 18 other Baptist denominational groups on our continent and neighboring islands, will meet for their Continental Congress in Niagara Falls, New York, October 1-4, 1987. Further information will be supplied in upcoming issues.

President's Corner

Showing God Is With Us

by Sara Pasiciel, WMF president,
Steinbach, MB

Many years ago we spent our first Christmas in Cameroon—a very unusual Christmas, it seemed, away from snow and families and the usual trappings associated with the season. We tried very hard to keep the spirit and even some of the North American customs of Christmas alive for our two children, then six and three. But we learned an important lesson from our daughter when we returned from the Christmas Eve service, strange to us because of palm tree decorations and drum music; she said, "It's all right; Jesus is here too!"

Christmas ties in with this year's WMF emphasis, "Called to Witness," one way to be Women of Hope. Isn't it possible that the way we celebrate Christmas is a witness to those who observe? It is good for me to think of the message that my neighbors, my co-workers, and especially my

children and other family members get from the way in which Christmas happens in my home.

Does my facial expression and even my posture convey the joy of Christmas as I shop or bake or decorate or entertain? Does the tone of my voice and the eagerness with which I approach responsibilities and extra activities show a sense of anticipation and eagerness for this important season?

Do the words I use on cards and letters, or even in my conversations with my family, give a sense of celebration for such a marvelous event as the coming of God to earth?

Does my choice of the ways in which I spend both time and money give an indication of my delight in demonstrating to God my gratefulness for his most welcome gift?

When I think about it this way, it occurs to me that there is no better time for us to be called to witness—a time when the focus of the most humanistic, even atheistic, elements of our society is on the remembrance of his coming. How crucial then becomes my witness to the presence of God in the world . . . my witness through voice, appearance, behavior and attitude. This is a time to show that Emmanuel is still truly "God with us."

Commanded to Care

Various groups within churches have been responding to the Biblical Imperative, *Commanded to Care: First Baptist Church, Minitonas, Manitoba*, celebrated the 93rd birthday of Mr. Rudolf Krisophiski by praising God for His care and leading in the life of Rudi and for Rudi's closeness to God throughout his life, according to Nora Gust, church clerk. *The W.M.F. of Bethel Baptist Church, Harvey, North Dakota*, presented a program of music and devotions and fellowshiped with the residents of the Harvey (North Dakota) Nursing Home.

Commissioned to Witness

Eight Join Getzville Church

The Rev. Edwin W. Colson, pastor of Bethel Baptist Church, baptized six persons recently. Eight persons were received into the fellowship of the Church.

Bethel Baptist Church designates Wednesday night as "Family Night" at the Church. The evening begins with dinner followed by the newly organized Awana program, prayer, and Bible study, and choir rehearsal.

The Awana program, organized by Associate Pastor Gary McClenthen, had a very encouraging start. Fifty-five children joined the program, which is staffed by 28 Bethel workers. "We look to our Lord to use this program in a mighty way," reports Betty Lou Kroecker.

Martin Women Focus on Witness

MARTIN, ND. "Compelled to Witness through Fellowship and Evangelism" was the theme of the W.M.F. meeting of Martin Baptist Church. Mrs. Dayleen Poppinga, Anamoose, ND, guest speaker, challenged the 31 members and guests to concentrate their missionary efforts in their own homes. —*Delma Kost*

Meadowlark Welcomes Nine New Members

EDMONTON, AB. Three young women were baptized at Meadowlark Baptist Church, Sept. 28, 1986. They and six others were received into membership following the baptismal service. The Rev. Ken MacDonald is pastor of the Church. —*Carol Fulmore*

Grand Forks Church Welcomes 13 Members

GRAND FORKS, ND. The Rev. Phyl Putz, pastor, welcomed 13 new members into Grace Baptist Church, Sept. 21, 1986, three by baptism. —*Mrs. Fred C. Kranzler*

Five Join Carrington Church

CARRINGTON, ND. The Rev. Robert Lang baptized three teens and two adults at his last baptismal service at

Calvary Baptist Church. They were received into the fellowship of the Church the following Sunday. —*Lillian Fuhrman*

Three Baptized at Hutchinson Church

HUTCHINSON, MN. The Rev. Harold Kelm baptized three adults at Bethany Baptist Church recently.

"We also have an outreach program which is showing results," reports Elenore Fratzke. "We thank God for new people who are worshipping with us."

Two Join Hilda Church

HILDA, AB. Two young men were baptized in the South Saskatchewan River by the Reverends Herb Bachler and Jim Davey, July 27, 1986. After the service, they were welcomed as members of Hilda Baptist Church. —*Linda Anderst*

Compelled to Serve

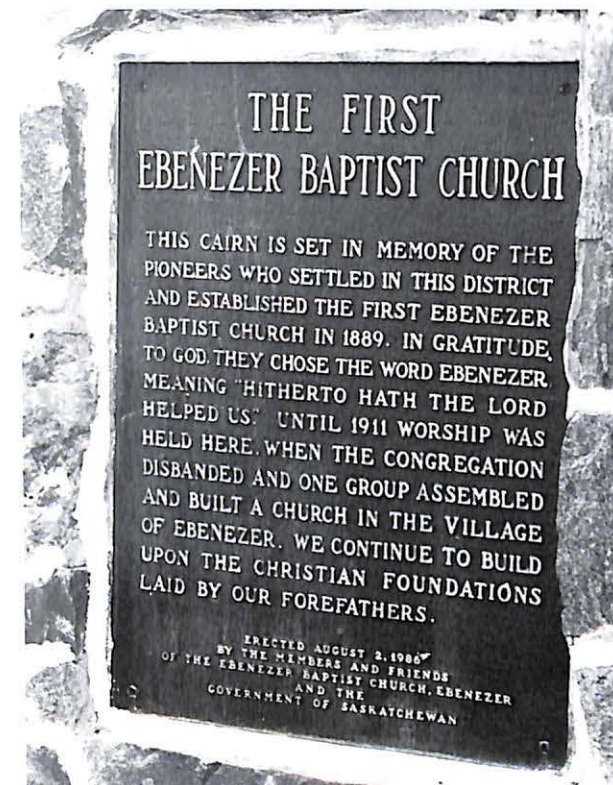
Ebenezer Church Celebrates 75 Years

EBENEZER, SK. Ebenezer Baptist Church celebrated its 75th anniversary, Aug. 1-3, 1986. Approximately 300 people from Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, the Dakotas, Minnesota, Illinois, and California attended.

The Friday evening reminiscing service included special music from the Church and former members. Former pastors and their wives who attended included Mrs. Betty Beutler, Lodi, CA; Mrs. Bertah Engel, Medicine Hat, AB; Rev. and Mrs. Walter Hoffman, Medicine Hat, AB; Rev. and Mrs. John Wollenberg, Osoyoos, BC; Rev. and Mrs. Norman Taylor, Regina, SK; and Rev. and Mrs. Steven Patrick, Carol Stream, IL. The Rev. Sig Schuster, area minister, brought greetings.

After a Saturday morning pancake breakfast at the Church, all went to the cemetery for the unveiling of a cairn. The Church honored its pioneers by erecting this cairn on the original 1891 church site which is now the Church cemetery. Representatives from the Saskatchewan government and the local village council attended. The Rev. Gordon Freiter, pastor, spoke and gave the dedication prayer.

Other Saturday events included an afternoon picnic and a banquet. Participants included the Rev. John Wollenberg, master of ceremonies, and the Rev. C. Rempel, Calgary, speaker. The Rev. Steven Patrick, former pastor, spoke during the Sunday morning worship service. At the afternoon closing missionary service, Doris Knoll, former member and former missionary, and Dr. R. Schilke, Oak Park, IL, spoke. "Another milestone in the history of the



Church can be related to the Scripture verse, 'Hitherto hath the Lord helped us,' reports Martha Dreger.

The Church has had 24 pastors throughout its 75 years of ministry. Also, 13 sons and daughters of the Church are in full-time Christian service.

Eastern Association W.M.F. Celebrated 20 Years

GUELPH, ON. The Eastern Association W.M.F. held their 20th retreat at the Guelph Bible Conference grounds, June 6-8, 1986. Mrs. Elsie Kerber, Calgary, AB, spoke to the 237 ladies attending on the theme, "God's Precious Promises," and the theme verse and chorus, Proverbs 3:5-6.

Events included testimony and sharing times, singing, skits, and quiet time. The instrumental choir from German Baptist Church, Hamilton, ON, and the Pineland Trio provided special music.

During the business session, the ladies set goals, gave reports, and elected officers: Lavina Schuessler, president; Diana Batke, vice president; Dinah Herd, secretary; Barbara Parnell, treasurer; and Brigitte Kumutski, White Cross chairman. —*Dinah Herd*

Bethlehem Church Has Missions Conference

BETHLEHEM, PA. Calvary Baptist Church held its an-

nual fall missions conference, Oct. 3-5, 1986, with the theme, "Every Baptist a Missionary." Speakers included Patricia Lenz and the Rev. Dale Fuchs, missionaries to Cameroon.

The Rev. Larry E. Burd is pastor of the Church.

Salt Creek Church Observes 90th Anniversary

DALLAS, OR. "Great Things He Hath Done" was the theme of Salt Creek Baptist Church's 90th anniversary celebration, Sept. 27-28, 1986. "God truly has blessed us here over the past 90 years as is evidenced by the 31 young men who have gone out from the Church into the ministry," reports Ruth M. Saunders.

The Church set a goal of raising \$25,000 for debt reduction by the time of the anniversary celebration. This goal was met and exceeded.

Anniversary events included a Saturday evening banquet served by the Church young people. Several former pastors and the Rev. LeRoy Schauer, area minister, attended. A time of reminiscing followed the afternoon meetings. Several longtime members were honored and recognized for from 60 to 80 years of continuous membership.

The Rev. Don Ganstrom is interim pastor; Mr. Linus Toland is assistant pastor of the Church.

Grant Park Celebrates 25th Anniversary

WINNIPEG, MB. Grant Park Baptist Church celebrated its 25th anniversary, June 29-Aug. 31, 1986, with the theme, "25 Years Touching Lives for Jesus Christ." Four of its former pastors, including the founding pastor, attended.

Events included a Church barbeque, mass choir, slides, reminiscing, with ladies and youth in charge of programs, and former pastors challenging the Church. Former members came from far and near. "We look forward to the next 25 years of touching lives for Jesus Christ," reports Darlene Sonnenberg.

Called to Worship

Edmonton Youth Attend "Glimpse of Glory"

EDMONTON, AB. On Saturday, Sept. 13, 1986, almost 300 high schoolers, college and career age youth, and young adults, mainly from N.A.B. Conference churches and the North American Baptist College and Divinity School, attended a citywide "Glimpse of Glory" sponsored by Central Baptist Church.

"Aside from a few introductory remarks, the evening consisted of two uninterrupted hours of praise and worship," reports Kurt Remus. "Between the psalms, hymns,

biblical imperatives in action

and spiritual songs' there was an atmosphere of total silence and reverent awe, as people were struck by the majesty of God."

At the conclusion of the service, participants were briefly challenged to remember they have the power of the Spirit of Christ living in them and to therefore make a difference in the lives of people around them.

The Rev. Terrence Fossen is senior pastor of Central.

Committed to Give

400 Women Attend Alberta Retreat

BANFF, AB. The 400 ladies attending the Alberta Baptist Women's Association's 30th Annual Retreat gave an offering of \$7,637 towards mission projects on each N.A.B. Conference mission field, and for the North American Baptist College/Divinity School and North American Baptist Seminary.

Daisy Hepburn spoke on the retreat theme, "Today's Treasures: Tomorrow's Memories." "We should make a contribution of ourselves to others," she said. "It's our choice as to what sort of women we want to be."

Lois Ahrens, missionary from Colorado, shared her testimony of God's faithfulness in the ministry to Spanish-surnamed people in the San Luis Valley. LaVerna Mehlhaff, women's work director, brought greetings and encouragement.

Freda Kanwisher, president, led the retreat, which featured a chorus composed of 31 ladies, all former executive committee members. —*Caroline Zeitner*

Martin Church Has Harvest-Mission Fest

MARTIN, ND. "You are to be commended for faithfully contributing to the Lord's work in these strained economic times," Pastor Bill Keple told the congregation of Martin Baptist Church after their Harvest Mission Offering of \$7,500 was received.

Miss Annemarie Hattenhauer, guest speaker, showed slides of the different phases of her school work in Cameroon. "She challenged us to help by contributing and by faithfully upholding them in prayer," reports Delma Kost.

congratulations

Congratulations to the following church for joining the Church Family Subscription Plan to the *Baptist Herald*:

Ebenezer Baptist, Detroit, MI; Norman Vernon, interim pastor; Mrs. Nancy R. Grimstead, agent.

To these churches for renewing through the Church Family Subscription Plan to the *Baptist Herald*:

Community Baptist, Beiseker, AB; Rev. Robert Hoffman, pastor; Mrs. Muriel Anderson, agent.

First Baptist, McIntosh, SD; Rev. James Grupp, pastor; Mrs. Rosemary

Grupp, agent.

First Baptist, Medina, ND; Rev. Raymond Hoffman, pastor; Mr. Wilbert Staiger, agent.

Trinity Baptist, Sioux Falls, SD; Rev. Eric Coulon, pastor; Mrs. Marjean Johnson, agent.

First Baptist, Valley City, ND; Rev. Richard Lute, pastor; Mrs. Terry Diretha, agent.

Checklist for Year-end Giving

A checklist is provided here for you to use in planning your year-end giving.

- | Yes | No | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do I need additional tax deductions this year? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Will my income taxes be higher this year than next? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do I have highly appreciated property that I wish to dispose of? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do I need to receive more income from low or non-income producing property? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do I have existing life insurance policies which I do not need? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do I have commitments to my church or to other charities which I have not completed? |

If your answer is yes to any of these questions, we would like to assist you in meeting your needs, as well as providing for the mission and ministry programs of the North American Baptist Conference.

To assist you, we have prepared a Special Planning Report entitled, "How to Give a Gift That Saves You Taxes This Year."

Please complete the coupon below to receive your free copy or to let us know how we can help you with your year-end gift planning.

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 State/Prov. _____ Code _____
 Birthdate _____
 Spouse's Birthdate _____
 Telephone _____

Send to Dr. C. Salios, North American Baptist Conference, 1 South 210 Summit Avenue, Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181.

in memoriam

IDA MENKE (79), Columbus, NE; born May 11, 1907, in Colfax County, NE; died May 26, 1986; married William Menke, 1931; member, Shell Creek Baptist Church, Columbus, NE; survived by her husband William; six children: Duane, Gardner, KS; Marcella (Mrs. Ray Hauser), Columbus, NE; Vernice (Mrs. Edwin Voight), Corn, OK; Luella (Mrs. Ray Luchsinger), Columbus, NE; Ruth Ann (Mrs. Dale Durkop), Humphrey, NE; and George, Columbus, NE; 15 grandchildren; and one great-grandchild; Rev. Clyde Zimelman, pastor, funeral service.

WILHELM RENN (90), Edmonton, AB; born March 12, 1896, in Kosmatschiff, Russia; died Sept. 29, 1986; married Pauline Breikreuz, nee Kern, in 1919; member, Zion Baptist Community Church, Edmonton, AB; survived by three stepsons: Ewald Breikreuz; Eric (Evelyn) Breikreuz; and Arthur (Violet) Breikreuz, all of Edmonton, AB; 19 grandchildren; 38 great-grandchildren; four great-great-grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews; Rev. Henry Goliath, pastor, funeral service.

NELLIE L. STEVENS (81), Lansing, MI; born in 1905; died Sept. 12, 1986; married James Stevens, who predeceased her; 31-year member, Colonial Village Baptist Church, Lansing, MI; predeceased by her only daughter, Vivian; survived by four stepgrandchildren; several nephews and nieces; and one sister, Mrs. Mabel Lifford; Rev. Elmo Tahrn, pastor, funeral service.

Correction

We apologize for the errors in the obituary of Walter Riske, published in the September *Baptist Herald*. It should have read:

Mr. Riske immigrated to Trochu, AB, in 1928; his daughter is Mrs. Phillip Davis.

VENTURIA BAPTIST CHURCH VENTURIA, NORTH DAKOTA

will celebrate its 75th anniversary
July 11-12, 1987.

Former members who plan to attend are asked to write to the Church for more details at Box 26, Venturia, ND 58489

Randall C. Tschetter, pastor

Swanson Named Development Director



Mr. Walter W. Swanson, Jr., of Nashville, Tennessee, has been appointed Development Director by the General Council

of the North American Baptist Conference according to Dr. John Binder, executive director. The appointment took effect November 1, 1986.

Mr. Swanson comes to this position with a strong background in raising financial support (development) and estate planning, for Christian organizations such as Barrington College, Lee Bernard and Company, the Salvation Army and Thomas Nelson Publishers. He has also been a private Christian stewardship consultant.

"My wife and I feel this is the Lord's will for us now, and we are very excited about working with the North American Baptist Conference," states Mr. Swanson.

Mr. Swanson is a graduate of Barrington College with additional work in business from other colleges and universities. He is an ordained deacon in a Southern Baptist Church, where he also has been a Sunday school teacher.

While serving in the military from 1960-68, he was awarded ten medals including the bronze star and the army commendation medal. He presently is a Lieutenant Colonel in the Army Reserve.

A dedicated family man, Swanson and his wife Penny have been married 25 years. Their daughter is in her last year of law school in California. One of three sons graduated from Columbia University last year; the other two sons, ages eight and ten, are at home. Swanson was born into a Baptist minister's family in Providence, Rhode Island, and has been involved in Baptist churches since.

We welcome him to the North American Baptist Conference and to the position of Development Director.

Mr. Swanson succeeds Dr. Connie Salios who concluded his ministry as Development Director in June 1986.

Mr. David John Aldrich was ordained by the Ridgmont Baptist Church, East Detroit, Michigan,

what's happening

August 17, 1986. At the same time, he was commissioned for work with Wycliffe Bible Translators.

Mr. Daryl Dachtler was ordained by the Hillside Baptist Church, Dickinson, North Dakota, on October 5, 1986. He is Associate Pastor at that Church.

Calvary Baptist Church, Billings, Montana, disbanded in 1986, and was removed from the roll of membership of the Central Dakota-Montana Association at its annual sessions.

The Rev. John Wollenberg resigned as pastor of Osoyoos Baptist Church, Osoyoos, British Columbia, effective the end of November 1986, to accept the pastorate of East Olds Baptist Church, Olds, Alberta. He has served as pastor of Osoyoos Baptist Church since 1981.

The Rev. Robert Lang accepted the pastorate of Shakopee Baptist Church, Shakopee, Minnesota, effective October 1. He has served as pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Carrington, North Dakota, since 1980, and also Cathay (North Dakota) Baptist Church since 1985.

King's Highway Baptist Church, Bridgeport, Connecticut, held its last service on Sunday, June 1, 1986, with area minister, the Rev. Wilmer Quiring, as guest speaker. Members were recognized with a gift or corsage for their years of faithful service. Members and friends gathered for fellowship at the home of the pastor, Rev. Walter Schmidt, that afternoon. The Church was organized in 1888, but actually carried on a ministry in Bridgeport, Connecticut, for more than 100 years.

The Rev. Walter Schmidt retired from the full-time ministry in June 1986 after having served King's Highway Baptist Church, Bridgeport, Connecticut, since 1973. Following his graduation from the North American Baptist Seminary in 1946, Rev. Schmidt served Cathay Baptist Church in North Dakota, 1948-51; First Baptist Church, Arnprior, Ontario, 1951-58; First Baptist Church, Norridge, Illinois, 1958-65; and Bethany Baptist Church, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1965-73. "I am thankful for the many years of service in our North American Baptist Conference fellowship," writes

(continued on next page)

Rev. Schmidt. He and his wife reside in Stratford, Connecticut.

The Rev. Rick Laser, pastor of Bethany Baptist Church, Vancouver, British Columbia, received the Doctor of Ministry degree from Princeton Theological Seminary in New Jersey in June 1986. His project dissertation dealt with *Lay Pastoral Care and Church Discipline*. He will be teaching a course by that name in the Spring Mini-Session at the North American Baptist Divinity School, Edmonton, Alberta.

Mr. Wayne C. Dickau has been the Associate Pastor at Sturgeon Valley Baptist Church, St. Albert, Alberta, since September 1985.

Mr. Larry Watkins is the pastor to young adults at Glencullen Baptist Church, Portland, Oregon.

Mr. Jim Ricks is the Associate Pastor for Youth at First Baptist Church, Elk Grove, California, since August 17, 1986.

Mr. Lamont Loudenslager is Pastor of Church Growth at Century Baptist Church, Bismarck, North Dakota, as of November 2, 1986. He served as pastor of First Baptist Church, McLaughlin, South Dakota, since 1982.

The Rev. Steve Turner became pastor of Whitehaven Road Baptist Church, Grand Island, New York, effective May 1986.

The Rev. Anthony Guenther retired as chaplain of the North American Baptist Home in Madison, South Dakota, on July 1, 1986. He and his wife have moved to Crystal, Minnesota.

Mr. Reid Galbraith was ordained to the Gospel Ministry by Moosehorn Baptist Church, Moosehorn, Manitoba, on October 12, 1986. He is the pastor of that Church.

Mr. Louis Petrie was ordained to the Gospel Ministry by Melville Baptist Church, Melville, Saskatchewan, on October 26, 1986. He is pastor of that Church.

The Rev. Harold Neff resigned as pastor of Walnut Grove Community Fellowship Church, Langley, British Columbia, a church which he founded in early 1985.

The Rev. Tucker Gunneman was ordained to the Gospel Ministry by Colonial Village Baptist Church, Lansing, Michigan, in May 1986. He is Associate pastor at that Church.

Mr. Perry Friesen is the Assistant Pastor for Youth at South Calgary Community Church, Calgary, Alberta. He is a 1986 graduate of the North American Baptist Seminary, Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

The Rev. Steve May is Associate Pastor of Christian Education and Youth at Park Meadows Baptist Church, Lethbridge, Alberta.

Pace Resigns as Associate Development Director

Mr. Steve Pace, associate development director, resigned effective October 1 to accept a similar position in development with the World Evangelical Fellowship, Carol Stream, Illinois.



Pace joined the staff at the North American Baptist International Office in 1976. His responsibilities were to define data processing needs at the office and to assist in selecting data processing equipment to meet the then perceived and future needs at the International Office.

From there, he moved to the Development Department where his major responsibilities have been with promotional offerings, direct mail, and general fund-raising.

Pace plans to continue his membership at Cornerstone Baptist Church, in Carol Stream, a North American Baptist Conference Church Extension project, which he helped to start, and his participation in the Illinois Association.

Mr. Dennis Snyder is Associate Pastor of Youth and Families at Napier Parkview Baptist Church, Benton Harbor, Michigan.

The Rev. Lester Hirst resigned as pastor of First Baptist Church, Minot, North Dakota, effective Oct. 31, 1986, to accept the pastorate of a non-N.A.B. Conference church. He served this Church since 1982.

Mr. Robert Weiss is the Associate Pastor at Corona Heights Baptist Church, Corona, California, as of October 1, 1986.

The Rev. John Wilfong is the interim pastor of Willow Rancho Baptist

Church, Sacramento, California.

Two part-time pastors were installed at Central Baptist Church, Edmonton, Alberta, on September 7. Howard Lawrence is Pastor of Single Life and Discipleship, and Lyle Buyer is the Pastor of Family Life and Worship. They attend North American Baptist College and Divinity School respectively. Jeannie Buyer has responsibilities in music leadership.

Mr. Philip Lee Kirsch was ordained by Evergreen Baptist Church, Renton, Washington. He is pastor of this Church.

Mark Hailstone became youth pastor at Magnolia Baptist Church, Anaheim, California, on October 1.

The Rev. and Mrs. John Schweitzer of Boca Raton, Florida, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on May 20, 1986. Rev. Schweitzer was the first Conference evangelist, serving from 1945-47 and the first Conference church extension worker from 1953-54. After their retirement and "as laypersons in the Evangel Baptist Church, Boca Raton, Florida, John and Anna literally sacrificed financially to make possible the building of this Church," says the pastor at that time, the Rev. Norman Vernon. Rev. Schweitzer graduated from the North American Baptist Seminary in 1926, and was ordained by Carbon (Alberta) Baptist Church in 1926. He pastored N.A.B. Churches in West Ebenezer and Lemberg, Saskatchewan; Cathay, North Dakota; Medicine Hat, Alberta; Vancouver (Ebenezer and Bethany), British Columbia; Portland (Bethany), Oregon; Bismarck, North Dakota; and Manitowoc (First), Wisconsin.

Mr. Fred Sudfeld is Director of Christian Education and Youth at Ebenezer Baptist Church, Vancouver, British Columbia.

The Rev. Victor Jungkurth is the new pastor at Southside Baptist Church, Monclova, Ohio.

Correction: The Rev. Rod Poppinga was installed as pastor of Anamoose Baptist church, North Dakota, on May 11. Mr. Poppinga is a 1980 graduate of North American Baptist Seminary. He served as pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church at Shattuck, Oklahoma, 1980-1983. While serving as interim pastor of First Baptist Church, Chancellor, South Dakota, he furthered his studies at the North American Baptist Seminary.

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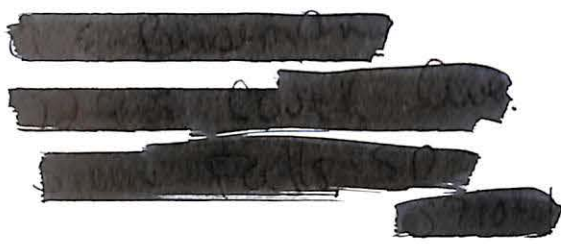
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