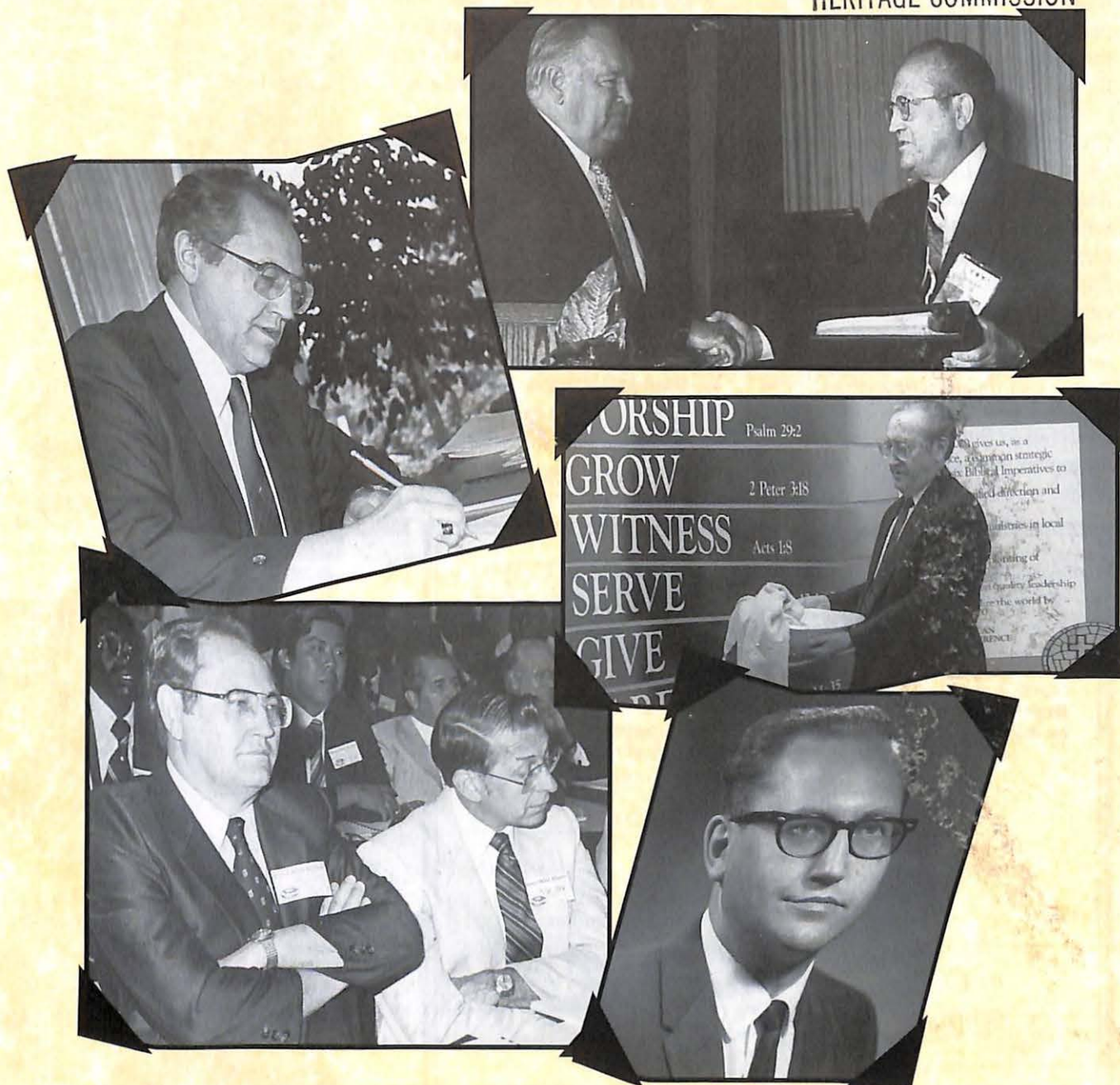


BAPTIST HERALD

OCTOBER 1994

NORTH AMERICAN BAPTIST
HERITAGE COMMISSION



*An Innovative Servant
of God*

(See page 7)

Baptist leaders meet in Uppsala

More than 500 leaders from 48 countries representing 175 Baptist conventions with ministry in more than 200 countries met in Uppsala, Sweden, July 18 to 24. It was the largest attendance of the General Council annual meeting in history.

"Baptists are one of the largest Christian communities in the world: 38 million baptized believers, but 100 million when you count all those who attend Baptist churches," said Denton Lotz, general secretary of the Baptist World Alliance. "Baptists are concerned about religious freedom, and that is why the Baptist movement has grown around the world." Because of the suffering experienced by Baptists at the hands of the state churches in Europe, Baptists are strong on giving the right of religious liberty to all faiths. The BWA contin-

ues to make defenses to the United Nations and to leaders of countries, such as Romania, Bulgaria, Russia, and the Ukraine, to defend religious freedom.

Lotz stated that for many years Nepal was closed to the Christian faith. Now it has 35 Baptist churches. The Baptist work was started by several communists who had escaped to Nagaland and were won to the Lord.

Knud Wumpelman, president of the BWA, reported that when he visited India to celebrate the 200th anniversary of William Carey's arrival, he learned that a little corner of Northeast India, Nagaland, is 80 percent Christian, of these 75 percent are Baptists. Once a country of illiteracy, now people can read; and the church there sends missionaries to Mongolia. Baptists suffer persecution due to pressures exerted by the

government of India and tribal conflicts.

Wumpelman also reported that the BWA has consultative status with the United Nations, and he was one of those who went to South Africa to observe the elections: "It was a miracle to see the change from a government that was in place for 350 years. The reason this was possible is that there were people willing to risk something. People like Nelson Mandela, imprisoned for many years, exhibited a forgiving spirit." He noted that Mandela never missed a Sunday worship service during this time and that de Clerk consulted with his brother, a theologian, as well as Christian friends for God's guidance.

Through reports given to the General Council, members learned that financial assistance provided for disaster relief, development projects, and fellowship assistance, as well as donated goods totalled \$9,971,535 by Baptist World Aid in 1993.



John Binder of the N.A.B. Conference and Mrs. Beatrice Nokuri of the Cameroon Baptist Convention were nominated for two of the twelve vice president positions for BWA 1995-2000.

(Continued on page 15)



(4)



(16)



(22)

2 Baptist World News

Baptist Leaders Meet in Uppsala

4 Remembering Our Strengths John Binder

7 John Binder: An Innovative Servant of God

10 Agonizing with God Phil Zylla

13 Community Outreach at Christmas Pearl Joachim

14 Cameroon Sunrise 1994 Jim Michals

16 The Blessings of Single Fatherhood Michael Hoberg

18 Caring for Street Children in Brazil Ken Bayer

19 Social Networks Lyle E. Schaller

20 Prayer: How Well Does It Work? Nancy Palmer

22 Youth News

23 Estate Planning

24 Biblical Imperatives in Action

28 In Memoriam

29 What's Happening

31 Slavic Church Buys Willow Rancho Building

Focus
on
Ministry

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Remembering Our Strengths

(Dr. John Binder, executive director, 1979-1994, in his speech to delegates at the Triennial Conference recalled some of his memories and then highlighted what he feels are the strengths of the N.A.B. Conference. He challenged delegates to use these strengths to make a difference for Christ in our world today. The following are excerpts of the speech.)

We live in a world where many people are hurting. This is true in rich countries as well as in poor. Everywhere, one finds people who are confused, lost, and searching for answers.

In fact, today the world is truly a more dangerous, chaotic, violent, and broken place than ever before. After the cold war ended, and communism collapsed, we celebrated the new freedoms gained. But this ended quickly as restraints were lifted, and old ethnic conflicts raised their ugly heads as people tried to get even.

But this is a world that desperately needs to be penetrated by the gospel message of reconciliation and love. People need to experience what you and I have—the transforming power of the grace of God—that is the only thing that makes a difference.

Often we feel overwhelmed. It seems as though the world is on fire, and each of us has only one bucket of water to put out the fire.

God can take that little bucket of water and accomplish great things though you or I may not see it or understand how He does it. But we need to throw that bucket of water—to do our part, and God will do His. Let us not curse the darkness, but let us light candles and be a part of the solution wherever necessary—in our homes, communities, or around the world.

We, as people of the North American Baptist Conference, can make a significant difference in this world. What characteristics or assets has God given us to really make an impact?

Our Unity in Christ

Paul's description of the Ephesian Christians applies to us, also (*Ephesians 2:12-22*). "Remember that at one time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope; and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who were far away have been brought near through the blood of Jesus Christ.

"Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the Cornerstone. In Him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple

in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit" (*Ephesians 2:19-22*).

What holds us together? Some have said it is our German heritage . . . some say international missions . . . and others *Vision 2000*. All have significance, but I believe strongly today, as never before, the real glue is Christ Jesus Himself, the Cornerstone. He is the One who shapes us, holds us together. He is our common experience. We can differ on all kinds of issues, but we must focus on Him. He is our real basis of unity.

If we have confessed faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, we have one and the same father, and we are brothers and sisters in the family of God—whether we like it or not. Whether or not we agree on a doctrinal or social issue is not the critical point. We are part of God's family, and our basis of unity is our common experience in Jesus Christ.

Also, we need to give tangible expression to our unity in Christ. That is one of the reasons for the local church and for a fellowship of churches, such as the North American Baptist Conference.

Unfortunately, however, one of the greatest destroyers of the western church today is division, conflict, and the unbiblical attitudes Christians display toward one another. It is manifested in outright war—sometimes in the pews and

sometimes in the boardrooms of congregations.

Church fights, battling egos, personal agendas, power brokers, and wounded ministries are all too common in a variety of denominations and churches. Often the ministry of the church is brought to a standstill as members battle one another instead of concentrating on the ministry and mandate entrusted to them by God. It has been painful for me to be involved in trying to unravel, mediate, and reconcile some of these situations, though that is part of our task.

Primary for pietists is a personal encounter with God through Christ. Conversion. Regeneration. New Life in Christ . . . a warm-hearted love for God and a willingness to serve Him. Propositional truth is important but of secondary order.

We need to, as Paul says in *Ephesians 4:3*: "Make every effort to keep the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace." How? *Ephesians 4:2* tells us: "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love." I've had to work on this every day, every year, and it is not finished yet.

We need to be careful not to let ideologies and current issues, secondary matters, such as Conference organizational structure or women's ordination, consume our energies and neglect the essentials of the Gospel. We need to agree to disagree as mature followers of Jesus Christ.

In *Philippians 2:3-4*, Paul says: "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others." That has been my goal and challenge.



A stone or a brick has a certain shape and presence of its own. But when a stone or a brick is part of a building, it takes on a more important role, especially if God is the architect, builder, and designer who chooses the stones and shapes them to fit. Our corporate witness as a body of believers is of utmost importance. It can open doors or close doors to the gospel. It takes time to mold and shape.

The church is a covenant people, each confessing Christ as Savior and Lord and making a covenant to walk with God and with His people . . . with each other. N.A.B.s make and keep promises—together we walk hand in hand through the struggles.

Many criticize the church, but there is no rival. Nothing can take its place . . . God has ordained to do His work primarily through the church.

A Covenant Community

Our Conference has the asset of being a covenant community, also. The church is more than a group of individuals connected to Christ. The Biblical understanding of the church, *ekklesia*, is a people called out by God.

"As you come to Him, the living stone rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him. You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (*1 Peter 2:4-5*). The word "together," I understand, is used 240 times in Scripture.

There is something important about having a sense of community, a covenant community, that has not only made covenants with God but also promises to people where we go to minister. When we open the Bible school in Russia that Herman Effa and I promised to the Baptist leadership there, we will assume the responsibility for it. The Baptists there can count on that promise. That's who we are as North American Baptists, a covenant community. In October this year, the Bible school will open.

A Cooperative Spirit

The North American Baptist Conference has affirmed cooperation with other denominations and groups in areas where our churches are located in North America and overseas. For example, N.A.B. churches cooperate in the Billy Graham Evangelistic Crusades or other events to reach their communities for Christ. That is who we are. This is a tremendous asset that needs to be cultivated more and more.

I believe collaboration is probably the last mission frontier to be conquered to reach the world. No one group alone, even the largest, can reach the world for Christ. It is of utmost importance that we stand together as followers of Jesus Christ as never before because the forces of evil are rampant everywhere.

Let us not spend our energy and

time fighting each other, but instead fighting the evil one. In that way, we will have a powerful corporate witness that Christians have not experienced to date. Networking is invaluable today.

Basic Human Rights and Justice

The North American Baptist Conference has affirmed basic human rights and justice for all. As early as its first Triennial Conference in 1851, delegates passed a resolution opposing slavery.

Concerned about freeing slaves, Abraham Lincoln went to an auction of slaves. He found himself bidding for a slave woman—and outbid all others. She asked him, "What do you want with me?" He said, "Nothing. I only want you to be free."

There continues to be a genuine commitment of the N.A.B. Conference to affirm basic human rights and justice for all people. Wherever we see injustice and inhuman treatment of people, we want to do something. We respond. It is a great and powerful asset.

The Principle of Religious Freedom

As a Conference of churches, through the Baptist Joint Committee and the Baptist World Alliance channels, we have affirmed the principle of religious freedom and been involved in assisting groups whose freedoms have been violated. The concept of religious freedom is not very well understood today. There is ample evidence that when religion gets too entangled with politics, religion is always the loser. We need to uphold a free state and a free church.

Scripture—Our Authority

We affirm the inerrancy of Scripture and Scripture as our authority, but we allow diversity of interpretation on issues such as predestination: Arminian or Calvinist; eschatology: pre-millennialism and amillenialism; and ordination of women.

Our People Are Generous

N.A.B.s are generous contributors to the Lord's work. Our record of per capita giving is near the top of all denominational groups. The audit report states that, as a Conference, we are healthy financially, in spite of flat giving over the past two years.

Change and Innovation

As a Conference, we are open to innovation and change to make a paradigm shift, if necessary.

In 1991 in Milwaukee, we adopted a resolution to embrace change and manage it for positive results. This year, some very far-reaching changes were proposed that, I believe, will position us to more effectively deal with the ministry issues confronting us as we approach the 21st century.

Our Multicultural Image

N.A.B. is rapidly becoming multicultural. We are now ministering in at least 14 different ethnic and cultural churches. This has the potential of expanding dramatically. My experience of being a part of an African-American church in Bellwood, Illinois, has helped sensitize me to other cultures and to deeply appreciate people of other cultures.

North America is ethnicizing. Faces in Canada and the U.S.A. are dramatically and rapidly changing.

The primarily English, Swedish, German, and Norwegian denominations must find ways to win, disciple, and church people in large numbers. Hispanics, Koreans, Indonesians, Chinese, East Indian, and dozens of new ethnic groups are flooding North America. A strong Conference (denomination) tomorrow demands many new ethnic churches today.

How will we make a significant difference in our world? The answer is in our hands.

I honestly believe God has positioned us to do great and wonderful things through His power and for His glory.

A story, told years ago, tells about a wise old man whose wisdom was renowned. A group of young men plotted to show that even he was not infallible.

One of them approached him with a bird in his hand. "Tell me, wise old man, is this bird in my hand dead or alive?" If the answer would be "It is dead," he would quickly open his hand and release the bird—alive. If the answer was "It is alive," he would quickly squeeze the neck of the bird, choke it, and produce a dead bird. The wise old man surveyed the youthful questioner and simply replied: "The answer is in your hand."

What kind of future does the N.A.B. Conference have? As with the bird, the answer lies in our hands. How will we respond to God's mandate to us? □

Dr. John Binder served as Executive Director of the North American Baptist Conference from 1979 to 1994. He began his Conference ministry in 1960 serving in youth work, and in 1968, he became editor of the Baptist Herald and director of the Stewardship and Communications Department.

John Binder

an Innovative Servant of God

It has been my personal privilege to serve with John Binder. He has always been open to new ideas, criticism, concerns, and advice. He has had as his primary concern the well-being of the membership, churches, and mission of the Conference.

John has worked hard to resolve problems that have arisen in relationships among Associations, churches, pastors, and members.

Through all the stresses and changes in society, our churches, and the Conference during his 15 years as Executive Director, John has managed to preserve a sense of humor and his resolve to serve to the best of his ability.

We thank him for the years of selfless service that he has given to the North American Baptist Conference. He will be remembered for his service and his concern.

—Peter E. Fehr, Conference past moderator; former Executive Committee member; N.A.B. Seminary Board chair

John Binder is *sui generis*, one of a kind: • in loyalty, friendship, tender toughness; • in understanding how to apply basic Baptist doctrines to ordinary everyday circumstances; and • in the marvelous capacity to cling to deeply held Christian commitments, profound principles, and non-negotiable beliefs yet be nice about it.

We, at the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, owe a great debt to John Binder and the

North American Baptist Conference for sharing him with us and the larger Baptist family.

He was there when we needed him to chair the BJCPA, to serve as chair of key committees, to bring his considerable diplomatic skills to a difficult time in the history of the BJCPA.

The cause of religious liberty has been set forward, the principle of church-state separation has been upheld, Baptists everywhere understand ourselves better because of John Binder.

The board, the staff, and the friends of the Baptist Joint Committee are deeply grateful to John Binder.—James M. Dunn, executive director, BJCPA

John Binder has been an exemplary leader and an encourager and supporter of Baptists serving in hard and difficult places around the world. His leadership has been exemplary as one who values high loyalty to Christ and His followers around the world. It is with joy that we send greetings from more than

100 million Baptists in 170 Baptist conventions around the world to the Binder family and to honor John by saying, "Thank you from Baptists around the world who have experienced the joy and depth of your leadership."—Denton Lotz, general secretary, BWA

The Scriptures declare that God has given us apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers to build up the church (*Ephesians 4:11,12*). I believe that God gave Dr. John Binder, with his leadership gifts, to North American Baptists.

During his extended career, the titles given to the positions that he held changed, but his dedication to excellence did not. In this, he has continued to grow in his deep faith in God as our Sovereign Lord. This is evidenced in his preaching, in the theological stands he has taken, and in his open administrative style. He has a consistent ministry in affirming others in their spiritual gifts and in encouraging their contributions. He also seeks to equip others and leaves no stone unturned to advance the mission of Christ through North American Baptists.

His absolute integrity, genuine care for people, pragmatic discussions, solid decisions, and frugal use of funds, provided for ministries, have made it a joy to work with him.

I look upon his vision and leadership in developing the Conference Imperatives as one of his great achievements.

I have been challenged with his

high energy level and dedication to serve God in the responsibilities that have been his. He has manifested a consistent ability to conceptualize a vision and then lead in the pragmatic faith decisions necessary to carry out his vision.

I am grateful for the years the Lord allowed me to serve with Brother Binder. He is respected world-wide among Baptists and many others as a Christian gentleman and wise leader.—*Willis Potratz, former area ministries director, Bismarck, ND.*

When the Rev. John Binder came to the North American Baptist International Office as General Secretary of the Commissioned Baptist Youth Fellowship in 1960, he immediately demonstrated his innovative style of leadership. Much needed changes in the organizational structure of the Department of Christian Education were developed within a year. He then became the Assistant General Secretary of the Department as well as Director of Youth Work.

When John became the Editor of English publications in 1967, including the editorship of the *Baptist Herald*, he creatively advanced the publication to include debatable subjects related to Christian ministries. This revitalized the response of the Conference membership to subscribe in greater numbers to the *Baptist Herald*.

When he became Secretary of Stewardship (1972-1979), he and I, as Executive Secretary, had major responsibilities to design ways to

meet the demands of the various departments and schools for the funds available from our donors. The raising of almost \$1,000,000 for the new Conference International Office building in Oakbrook Terrace, IL, was viewed by many, including fundraising organizations, as an impossible achievement. Careful planning and more



Les Cook Photo

has advanced the ministry of the Conference.—*Gideon Zimmerman, executive secretary, N.A.B. Conference, 1968-1979.*

In 1964-65, I was involved in the youth executive of the Saskatchewan Association and helped organize a youth retreat. (As Conference director of youth), John Binder spoke on evangelism . . . I remember a phrase from a prayer he prayed that weekend. He asked the Lord to help us 'intelligently articulate our faith.' That phrase has stayed with me as a missions and evangelism guide.—*Sam Berg, Nepean, ON*

I have always had confidence in John Binder's leadership and his desire to make N.A.B. the very best it can be. As I travel throughout the Conference churches, I see physical evidence of *Vision 2000*. This has made a difference in our churches. I will always be grateful for the breath of fresh air

Vision 2000 gave worship in our churches. His years of service on the N.A.B. Seminary Board of Trustees have been blessed by his courageous leadership and never-failing confidence in the mission of N.A.B.S. He has endured emotional arguments and creative ideas that often made him shake his head but never loose his head or his confidence in N.A.B.S. This is a great gift he has given all of us here in Sioux Falls.—*Charles Hiatt, president*

innovative approaches plus the involvement of scores of lay people and Conference leaders made this project a successful one.

The leadership John gave as head of the Stewardship Department can best be characterized as a determined spirit, faithfulness to God, and creatively influential to inspire others to help achieve the goal(s).

John helped to design and chart the course for approval of a proposed Executive Committee, which

I remember well the early 1980s when we (as a Conference) were beginning to get intentional about urban work in the N.A.B. Conference . . . as pastor of Fleischmann Baptist Church in Philadelphia, I personally was committed to a networking route. I remember meeting with the urban/ethnic director of another denomination and feeling awed and intimidated by how far they had come. . . when I asked about the commitment of the denominational leadership, he smiled sadly and said it was lip service and window dressing . . . At that point, I told him about the commitment that both John and Barbara had, not just philosophically but also in practice (in First Baptist Church, Bellwood, IL.) I have so greatly appreciated the support he has given . . . in local transition . . . in his presence on Boards, and his public reports.—*Jim Correnti, Church Ministries Board chair and pastor, Philadelphia, PA*

On my first meeting (in Seoul, Korea, with John Binder), I felt that we were re-establishing the Christian fellowship (between the German-speaking Baptists from North America and Bulgarian Baptists), that my father told me of before World War II. (It) gave an excellent foundation for the new cooperation with the N.A.B. Conference. With his personal help, we succeeded to arrange many things, which have brought many benefits for the Baptists in Bulgaria. Two young Bulgarians were sent to study in N.A.B. Conference seminaries, two delegations from the N.A.B. Conference visited Bulgaria, and a special fund for helping some Bulgarian ministers was endowed. All of this has been fruit from John's personal involvement in our relationship. I have been deeply

impressed by his warmth, love, and continual concern for God's work in our country and his sympathy for the situation of the Baptists in Bulgaria in connection with the strong opposition coming from the government and the Orthodox Church. His spiritual support has been of tremendous importance for us.—*Theo Angelov, president, Baptist Union of Bulgaria*

I have truly enjoyed working with John Binder in a variety of capacities. I was always intrigued with the way in which he dealt with a new idea often sprung upon him by one of us without a whole lot of advance notice. How shall I describe it—a kind of wariness, not negative, but critically cautious, carefully approaching the concept without quickly committing to it, kind of warming up to it gradually like a morning thermometer. I appreciated his good judgment in delicate matters, efficiency in administration, personal support, honesty, and openness. All of these have made him an outstanding Executive Director.—*Milton Hildebrandt, Conference former treasurer and associate area minister*

From the first time in meeting John Binder, I noted a high degree of sensitivity to the nuances of Canadian thinking. As Canadians, often we feel diminished by American leadership and drive. What I noted—as well as others—was his vital interest in knowing our points-of-view and a willingness to listen and understand. This characteristic greatly assisted the N.A.B. Conference in making substantial contribution to the development of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.—*Brian C. Stiller, executive director, The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada*

I appreciate these qualities, which John Binder modeled for me, as a brother in Christ, a colleague in ministry, and fellow servant of Christ: His desire to believe that God will provide, even when man's understanding is limited as to how; his ability to state his convictions, and at the same time, listen intently to others without letting any difference become a barrier; his sensitivity to believers from other religious groups and a commitment to be a part of bringing about cooperation and healing.—*Ron Norman, Conference moderator*

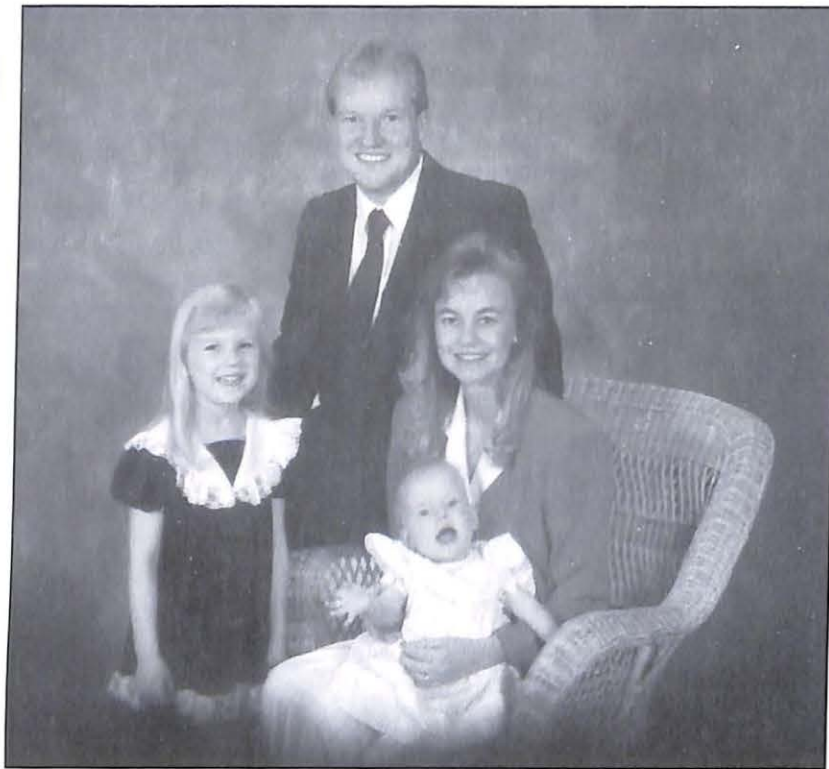
The thing that stands out the most is John Binder's relentless, untiring ability to work, meet, serve, ask, talk . . . in regard to the challenges we're facing. It seemed he was always there, always helping; he'd always done his homework; he was always representing the cause.—*Fred Jantz, pastor, Stockton, CA*

A personal "thank you" to John Binder for his help in getting the ministry in Bulgaria and Russia started. His contacts with the Baptist World Alliance were particularly helpful.—*Herman L. Effa, missions director*

I add my expression of Christian love and appreciation to all the deserved tributes John Binder has received. Our fellowship has been deep. Our relationship has been most meaningful to me. I thank God for every remembrance of you, John. I have no doubt that we will continue our friendship and fellowship in eternity.—*Richard Russell, Conference moderator, 1991-1994; Conference Executive Committee member*

With God

Agonizing



Chelsey lives in Edmonton, Alberta, with her sister, Amanda, (6) and her Mommy (Melodie) and Daddy (Phil) Zylla. Her father is the pastor of Greenfield Baptist Church in Edmonton, Alberta.

by Phil Zylla

It was a Thursday afternoon, Oct. 23, 1991. We received a phone call from Melodie's obstetrician. Something was wrong . . . could we come to his office immediately. Panic set in. Terrorized by our inner thoughts and fears, we got into the car and rushed over to Tawa Medical Center to the doctor's office. We listened in disbelief as the doctor explained: A severe malformation of the spinal column had shown up on the recent ultrasound. The prognosis: The baby will not live through the pregnancy.

To get a second opinion, we saw

a perinatologist who specializes in the interpretation of ultrasound photos. He confirmed the diagnosis: Spina Bifida¹. Our baby had a lesion in the spinal column that began at about the level of the heart and went all the way down to the base of the spine. Prognosis: The baby will live but will have no function below the waist. The damage to her spinal column is irreversible, as it occurred during the third week of pregnancy.

A week later, the perinatologist arranged for a consultation with a team of specialists from the Spina

Bifida Clinic. Each studied the ultrasound tapes and offered an opinion. Of the five doctors consulted, two recommended abortion. Three communicated explicitly the range of problems that this child would be born with and the long-term implications: paralysis of lower body, hydrocephalus, bowel and bladder dysfunction, club feet, scoliosis.

Over lunch, we considered the options and came back with a decision to continue the pregnancy. We returned with a conviction given to us by the Lord, "As fragile as this

baby's life is, we choose to embrace it. This is our baby, and she has been given to us by God. We know that our life will be difficult, but as long as there is life, we choose to embrace it."

Birth: The Agonizing Journey Begins

On Feb. 10, 1992, Chelsey Hope was born. The long and difficult period of waiting was over. A new era of agonizing with God began.

At her birth, Chelsey was immediately tested for nerve damage. I watched anxiously as the neural surgeon probed her limp lower body with pins . . . no response. The lesion in the spine was severe and spanned the entire length of the spinal column from the level of the heart to the base. All of the observations that the team of specialists had made earlier were confirmed . . . one by one.

Later that day, Chelsey underwent the first of what would be many surgeries. The opening in the spine was covered over, and a shunt was surgically placed in her head to drain excess fluid off the brain because of obvious hydrocephalus. The surgery lasted three and a half hours.

That day, time seemed to stand still. I was overwhelmed. Never had I felt such loneliness, such painful turmoil, or invasive sadness. I felt my hope being suffocated.

For me, reality was more severe than anticipation. Something died in me that day. Maybe it had been wishful thinking, "What if the doctors were wrong? Maybe it won't

be as bad as they thought?"

Seeing our baby lying there with twisted legs and a gaping lesion on her spine was one of the most horrible and agonizing moments of my life. I told God what I was feeling.



"Our little girl cannot walk and enjoy the simple activities of childhood that come naturally for other children."

"Lord, we have served you all these years. We have always trusted You for every part of our life. But this is too much for me. This burden is too heavy. I don't know how I am going to make it."

That agonizing continued for weeks and months. Every time Melodie and I would see a child skipping in a playground, or chas-

ing a soccer ball, or climbing up the stairs, the sadness and the disappointment would return.

Intensely, we questioned: "How can we carry on our ministry to others who are hurting when we are drowning in our own sorrow? How are we going to afford wheelchairs, home renovations, orthotic devices, and the other costs of raising a special needs child? Who can we talk to that will understand what we are going through?"

We agonized with God. We wrestled with theological questions. We struggled with practical problems. We agonized over the disabilities that Chelsey had. Slowly we integrated this new situation into our lives.²

Agonizing but Gaining Insights

Through the agonizing of the past two years, we gained insights.

"Obstacles and difficult challenges are a part of life in this fallen world. The enemy is not the obstacle itself. The enemy is FEAR.

Journal Entry, Dec. 30, 1991, (six weeks before Chelsey's birth):

"Having a child that is totally disabled from the waist down is a mountain. The mountain consists of the rocks of difficulties: Surgery, infection, hospitals, shunts, spinal defects, intensive care, wheelchairs, catheters, bowel dysfunction, specialists . . . Together, these rocks pile up and compress into a fortress of difficulty. An impossible mountain.

"But . . . mountains are not the enemy. They are simply a barrier to the

¹Spina Bifida is a congenital birth defect of the spinal column which disrupts and destroys nerve and muscle function. It occurs in various degrees of severity in one of every 1,000 births. Causes are still unknown although research points to a combination of environmental and genetic factors. Depending on the extent and location of the damage to the neural tube surrounding the spinal column, Spina Bifida creates a host of complications including paralysis, hydrocephalus ("water on the brain"), bowel and bladder dysfunction, scoliosis, and urinary tract problems.

²Jesus' agonizing at the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:39-46) has become a paradigm for us as we wrestle with the issue of theodicy and God's will. Gethsemane gives us permission to agonize with God. To take the unasked question, the frustration, and the pain of our life to the garden. It teaches us to count on the relationship we have with God the Father . . . to go to Him and share the agonies of our heart.

normal pathway. Mountains shadow the sun; they hide the light and beauty which dwell on the other side; but they are not the enemy. The enemy is FEAR."

The Scriptures speak much about courage as an act of confronting fear with trust in a God who is bigger than any circumstance. The Word of the Lord to Joshua is as true for us today as it was for the trembling leader of God's people, "Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9).

We can learn great lessons if we dare to embrace difficulties.

Journal Entry, July 12, 1992, (Chelsey is five months old and has undergone two further surgeries).

"Probably the most outstanding thing that has happened with Chelsey's arrival has to do with the transformation of our vantage point in life. Our whole perspective on life has changed. We have learned, for example, to embrace disappointment and, with God's grace, to take new initiatives of living a hope-filled life.

"Chelsey teaches us about how to deal with her handicaps. Her disposition is one of cheerful contentment. She sleeps well. She has a good appetite and a wonder-filled curiosity about her world. She doesn't complain about her disabilities . . . she is not even aware of them . . . Her focus is on her abilities; this is very instructive for us, as parents."

The verse that continues to help us in the times when we are overwhelmed, burdened, or challenged in some other way is 2 Corinthians 12:9, "But He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.'"

God does meet us at the point of our weakness and supplies sustaining grace: Sometimes just enough to get through the day. But we have always found His grace sufficient. Always!

God is our ultimate refuge.

There are few things in life of which we can be absolutely certain . . . fewer than we might at first think

really. But one of the things that the believer can be absolutely certain of is that God knows our struggles and that we can run to Him.

My favorite image of God is in the story of the prodigal son . . . the



Chelsey has had seven surgeries and is scheduled for two in the fall of 1994. At two years of age, Chelsey is mobile in her caster cart (a toddler form of a wheelchair) and is maximizing the function she does have.

father is running out to him. Not just to receive him back. But to take away his pain, to restore his soul, to put courage back in (encourage), to hold him in His loving arms, to embrace him as a son. It is the most common way that God is pictured in the Bible.

"The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid? . . . Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord" (Psalm 27:1,14).

Two Years Later:

Agony Gives Way to Hope

Chelsey is two and a half years old now. Her middle name, "Hope," was chosen for her when the doc-

tors first told us that she would survive. It has come to mean a lot more than that to us as we have struggled together over the past two years. We have experienced over and over again the faithfulness

of God to us in our pain and to carry us along. We still have "tough days." We still grieve for our little girl who cannot walk and enjoy the simple activities of childhood that come so naturally for other kids. We struggle with the long-term implications. But Hope continues to grow in us. We have learned much about the infinite capacity of God's grace to sustain us. We are thankful for a supportive and loving congregation who has walked with us through

some very deep waters. We are thankful to friends in the Alberta Baptist Association and in the N.A.B. Conference for prayer support and kind gestures of loving concern expressed to us. We are most of all thankful to the Lord for

His presence. I close with a final journal entry written just after Chelsey's second birthday.

Journal Entry, Feb. 22, 1994:

HIS PRESENCE

A Quietness speaks . . . it is telling me to rest;

I yield and find Peace.

His gentle movements are barely noticed . . .

He comes Near;

I feel strong. I am not afraid.

Lord, You are my Refuge . . .

A safe place . . . I am not alone.

I can walk knowing that He is with me;

I can work in the confidence of His help;

I can laugh again . . . there is no fear.

Abiding Strength;

Comforter;

Gentle Friend;

Strong Peace.

. . . Your Presence, Lord! □

The Emmanuel Baptist Church parking lot and new church building in Valleyview, AB, were transformed into a scene from long ago, as children and adults re-enacted the events from that very first Christmas almost 2,000 years ago. This idea may be one you can adapt in your church.

Community Outreach at Christmas

by Pearl Joachim

After months of preparation, the night had come when the people of Emmanuel Baptist Church tried to help the members of the community remember the true meaning of Christmas: God showing His love for all of us by giving His only Son to die for our sins.

Approximately 300 people attended the two performances which took place at 7 and 8 p.m.

The program, "The Pageant of Christ's Birth," was developed by a Lutheran minister, Theo Reiner. He began this production in Chicago more than 20 years ago. When he became pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Rocky Mountain House, AB, this Church, accepted the challenge of performing the pageant. They have done so for the past 12 years. It is with their help in the form of a professionally recorded soundtrack, script, and helpful hints, that Emmanuel accomplished such a task in a few short months.

The program, made up entirely of a narration of Bible verses, tells the Christmas story. It includes the aspects of Mary and Joseph traveling to Bethlehem; the birth of the Savior; and visits by the angels, shepherds, wise men, and the townspeople; and the story of Simeon and Anna blessing Jesus as an infant. Christmas carols, sung by



Pastor Allen Unger and Kim Orr

a professional choir, corresponded with the various aspects of the story. Heather McDevitt used her gift of sign language to "sign" two Christmas carols—"Silent Night" and "Away in a Manger."

A breathtaking stable, which involved an amazing display of weathered wood and woven straw, was designed and erected by the set committee. Old-fashioned fencing served the purpose of containing sheep, goats, a cow, and four horses. The costume committee worked many hours to clothe everyone from Baby Jesus to King Herod in authentic-looking attire.

The 35-member cast and at least the same number of people worked behind the scenes to bring the story to life. Drama

Coordinators Heather McDevitt and Nancy Shaw directed both the human and animal actors in the pageant. Various others worked on the advertising, set, lights, sound, costumes, and makeup, and many provided food for both the cast members and for those who accepted the invitation for cocoa and sampling Christmas baking after each performance.

The Sunday School Department has traditionally done an indoor Christmas pageant for the past several years, but this is the first outdoor event. It was our desire to try to put Christ back into Christmas in the town of Valleyview and the surrounding area.

Pastor Allen Unger closed the evening by inviting all those who wanted more information on how to make Jesus their Savior this Christmas to call the church office at their convenience.

The positive response from the community was tremendous. We praise God for sending us His Son and for allowing us the privilege of sharing His gospel in this manner. □

Pearl Joachim is a member of Emmanuel Baptist Church, Valleyview, AB.

A Faith-Stretching Experience

Cameroon Sonrise 1994

by Jim Michals

When the plane landed in Douala, Cameroon, fourteen Canadians and four Americans stepped out into the 95 degree heat and 100 percent humidity of a tropical African afternoon.

The project was the fourth joint venture of the N.A.B. Conference and Campus Crusade for Christ, utilizing the JESUS film to assist the outreach of Cameroon Baptist Convention churches to outlying areas of Mamfe, Nkongsumba, and Nkambe.

A JESUS film team of four or five North Americans, along with youth workers of the Nigerian Campus Crusade Ministry, joined forces with a Cameroon Baptist Convention church counselling team for each showing. The North Americans coordinated the set up of the screen and the equipment, initiated distribution of flyers and counselling literature, and operated the film projector. They also shared personal testimonies in French, English, and Pidgin English, whenever language permitted. Crowds varied in size from 300 to 4,000.

While our orientation was complete and comprehensive, nothing could have prepared us for the cultural and physical reality of Cameroon and its people. Our leaders, Ken and Eileen Priebe, former missionaries to Cameroon, told us that Cameroon was in serious economic crisis; civil servants had not been paid for eight months; and there had been frequent instances of civil conflict involving tribal groups with government-controlled army and political forces.

The country of Cameroon is a place of contradictions. It boasts of petroleum, bauxite, palm oil, and rich rubber plantations. Its ten provinces support cultivation of virtually every tropical fruit which can be named. Its people, while poor in material possessions, are rich in family and community values, char-

acter, generosity, and friendliness.

During our three and one half week trip, we were very conscious of the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit and the power of prayer.

At the outset, Daryl Martin, a short-term missionary, made it clear that a great deal of work had been done by local CBC churches, pastors, and counsellors prior to our coming—to ensure that the outreach would be successful and that new Christians would be integrated into the local evangelical churches. We were there as fellow-workers to provide encouragement, get to know the mission field, and provide help and witnessing support as needed.

One of the highlights of our mission adventure was the Helicopter Mission trip to the remote mountain village of Pondo Balue. The air was very hot and humid. Our trip over the jungle and palm plantations was fantastic... verdant green plains punctuated with small hills and the occasional "Boom-Boom" tree. As we arrived at the village in the early afternoon, more than 300 villagers crowded around the helicopter at the community soccer field to greet us. As we walked to our guesthouse, the village choir sang, "Shine the light, Jesus Christ."

We conferred with the church leadership about our visit. Then we were led to our sleeping quarters at the upper reach of the village, a long house with two partitioned rooms with freshly swept and watered dirt floor and clapboard walls. We set up our trekking beds and then went to the village center to set up our equipment and erect our bamboo suspended screen. We were told later that the place we had chosen was directly across from the witch doctor's home.

After returning to the Chief's house for a casserole of fish and

roasted plaintain in a hot curry-type sauce, we made final arrangements for the program and headed to church to pray with the elders.

We showed the JESUS film to an unusually polite crowd of 500. More than 50 people came forward to accept Christ as their personal Savior.

We slept in our sweat-drenched clothes and woke up shivering at dawn.

We left the village happy that new believers would be added to the local fellowship.

God touched lives, and He used us as instruments of His will. He stretched our faith and gave us friendships we will always treasure. For us, this was a time of testing—personally and as a team. Of the more than 50,000 who viewed the JESUS film, 2,375 made decisions. Half of this number have joined CBC churches and Bible studies. The next missions adventure is scheduled for January 1995. □

Jim Michals is a member of Summit Drive Baptist Church, Kamloops, BC.

SONRISE 1995 CAMEROON January 1-19, 1995

Over the past four years, North American Baptists have travelled to Cameroon to share the Gospel using the JESUS film in a five-year joint venture between the N.A.B. Conference and Campus Crusade for Christ, Canada.

Join us for Cameroon '95—the final leg of our five-year commitment to reach Cameroon.

Cost: \$4,950 Canadian \$
(register by November 1994)

RUSSIA May 20 - June 4, 1995

Travel to Samara, approximately 800 kilometres east of Moscow, where you'll share the message of new life in Christ. Join the students of the new Bible school in witnessing through the JESUS film.

\$3,350 Canadian \$
(register by March 20, 1995)

Cost includes air fare, accommodations, in-country travel, and materials.

For further information: Contact Ken Priebe, tour leader, P.O. Box 22040, Kelowna, BC, V1Y 9N9, Canada • Office phone: (604) 768-0848 • Home phone: (604) 763-5217 (Collect calls accepted.)

Baptist World News...

(continued from page 2)

New Members/Statistics

Six new member bodies were accepted and 10, formerly part of other umbrella type groups, were accepted in their own right as BWA members. This brings total BWA membership to 180 member bodies. It was also reported there are now 150,619 congregations representing 38,542,276 baptized believers in the BWA. This represents an increase of 2,841 congregations and 437,834 members in 1993.

The Baptist leaders pledged support from their Conventions amounting to more than 1.5 million dollars (US) in aid to help Rwandan refugees and called on the international community for "immediate peaceful intervention" to give humanitarian aid and work for a settlement between the warring Hutus and Tutsis.

The Baptist leaders celebrated the reconciliation in South Africa with their recent free elections with South African Baptist leaders, Terry Rae and Desmond Hoffmeister.

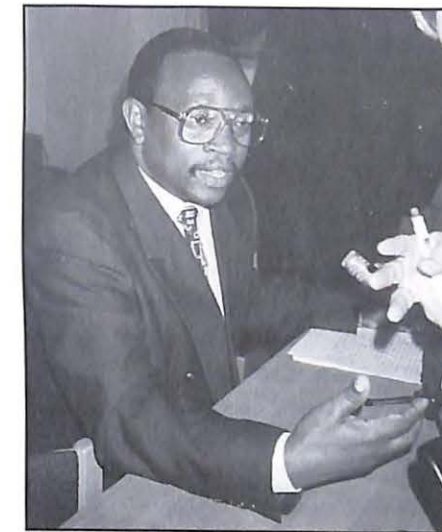
"South Africa has gone through a marvellous change, and black and white seem to have found each other," said Rae, a white South African. However, Rae said, there are still many past hurts to overcome before there is complete reconciliation.

"In Nelson Mandela, we have a demonstration of Christian reconciliation," said Hoffmeister, a black South African. But for Hoffmeister, the structures of apartheid must change before complete reconciliation can come. "The economic system that divided people along color and the economic disparities must be addressed."

The Baptists expressed great concern about the lack of religious liberty in many parts of the world, but especially in countries like Albania, Bulgaria, Iran, Ethiopia, China, the republics in Central Asia, and the Coptic Orthodox community in Egypt. They urged governments and international authorities "to guaran-

tee and safe guard full religious liberty for all," especially religious minorities.

In other actions, the Baptist leaders urged their members to make this International Year of the Family "by taking action" on behalf of women who are abused, in sexual slavery, suffer domestic violence, and other societal ills. They also asked their members to "give children first claim" on their compassion and resources and work for universal ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.



In Uppsala, Sweden, Eleazar Ziharambere, Rwandan Baptist leader and regional secretary for the BWA in Africa, pled with Baptists around the world to help his people. "I cry, 'How long, Lord, how long?'"

The meeting was hosted by the Baptist Union of Sweden and its general secretary, Birgit Karlsson.

John Binder, executive director, and Richard Russell, moderator, N.A.B. Conference, represented the North American Baptist Conference on the BWA General Council. Dr. Binder serves on the Executive, Budget and Finance, and Personnel Committees of the BWA.

Phil Zylla, Edmonton, AB, presented a paper, "The Suffering of Children," during one of the Christian Ethics Commission sessions. He stated that the most vulnerable, most needy, and the most hurting in the

world today are children.

Other N.A.B. Conference people present were David Priestley who serves on the Baptist Heritage Study Commission; Peter Fehr, Helmut Sawall, and Linda Weber, Church Leadership Study Commission; and Charles Weber, Human Rights Study Commission. Dr. Fehr also serves on the Baptist World Aid Committee. Herman Effa participated in the International Missions Secretaries meetings. Barbara Binder is a member of the Communications Division and served on the BWA Long-range Planning Committee. Doris Fehr, Edie Sawall, Pauline Russell, and Ardath Effa attended various sessions.

Rwandese Refugee situation could get worse

WASHINGTON, DC. (BWA) If Rwandese refugees do not go home, international aid agencies leave, and heavy rains fall on deforested hillsides now crammed with refugees, "We have a worse situation unfolding," says Paul Montacute, BWAid director. "More than ever, Baptists will need to stand beside their brothers and sisters in Rwanda, Zaire, and others who are helping," says Montacute. For example, hills near Bukavu had been stripped of every kind of vegetation, and tents to house the refugees had been dug in the steep slopes."

Baptist World Aid, the relief and development program of the Baptist World Alliance, has joined with other relief agencies to send more than 300,000 pounds of medical supplies to Rwandan refugees in Goma, Zaire.

Among the Baptist groups helping to provide funding for medical supplies and food for Rwandan refugees is the North American Baptist Conference, which contributed \$28,980 as of September 2.

BWAid has also sent money to Baptist leaders in neighboring Burundi for food for displaced pastors there.

The Blessings of Single Fatherhood

by Michael Hoberg

It must be funny for my neighbors to watch me, a 6'3" and 250 pound man, parade around with a cooking apron on while trying to simultaneously clean the sink, put another load into the washer, and cook dinner. From the time it used to take me to watch the highlights of a hockey game, I can now pack a lunch, help with homework, schedule a dental appointment, and call the emergency pediatric nurse to remedy a cough. Single fatherhood wasn't what I had planned, nor did I have a chance to vote on the matter, but it's starting to become a wonderful experience.

Heather is my eleven-year-old blonde daughter with a seemingly constant supply of energy, intelligence, and Band-Aids. It is important to her that I affirm her God-given qualities and talents, so we go out on a "date" once a week for our famous "Dad/Daughter Eat Out Night" on Wednesdays. We visit in a restaurant, within our budget, to discuss what's happening in her world. Our little "date" ends by going to Church later that night. And, although Hollywood would probably never glamorize the event, it really does make for a pretty good time.

Building a Spiritual Base

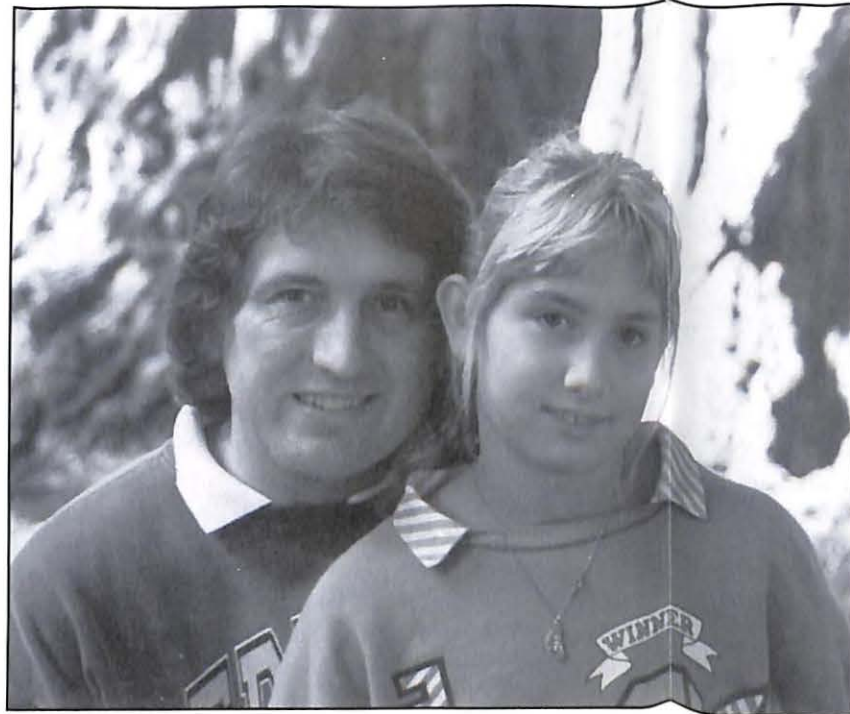
Of course, Sunday school and Church are the principal blocks for building a strong spiritual foundation for both of us. We've been fortunate to have a great Church that she enjoys going to. Often, she selects a Christian children's book from the Church library to read while the pastor speaks during the Church service. This gives her an optional activity, if she is not relating to the pastor's message. She tells me, "Dad, if you get bored listening to the pastor, you can read my book."

Establishing a routine of nightly prayers is essential. I find myself on my knees beside my daughter's bed each night thanking God for the time we get to spend together. We use devotional books, purchased at the nearest Christian bookstore, to discover practical wisdom that a young girl can relate to. I am fortunate that she trusts me, and our friendship allows her to talk about the things that she liked or bothered her during the day. This time of night gives us many opportunities to share the day's

experiences and allows me to provide Christian counseling to her. She usually extends the conversation for as long as she can, either to stay up longer, or to watch her tired dad fall asleep on the floor.

Getting Heather to sleep, after tucking her in bed, is usually a problem. She is allowed to listen to Christian radio until she nods off. At bedtime, she gets to hear some of the more popular pastors on radio. Nothing against those wonderful evangelists, but their sonorous voices are better than a sleeping pill for my young daughter.

We have made it a routine to go to the "Dads/Daughters Retreat" each year at a nearby Christian camp. We get to have some special planned time with other dads and



daughters. Here we pick up great tips for building our relationship and for polishing my fathering skills. Besides this special time, we usually visit a theme park for a day or two of fun; building memories about all the roller coasters we ride on together. It usually takes a few days for my back spasms to relax after all the rides.

Seeking Good Female Examples

Some of my daughter's most meaningful relationships are with women of all ages at Church. We have been blessed that the women of our Church have understood the special needs of a growing young lady and have spent time with Heather. It is not that they spend an inordinate amount of time with her. But, it is when they reflect God's love to my daughter that their Christian examples start to stand out in her mind. She watches and emulates them.

Older Christian girls have been instrumental to my daughter's

development. A high school girl from our Church was hired to help with homework. She has also had special times with teenage day camp, church camp, and day care "counselors." These lay ministers provide answers to a little girl's questions about what it is like to be a Christian teenager. They talk about such subjects as softball, music, television shows, clothes, and yes, boys.

I praise God for my mother who was always a wonderful Christian example. "Gramma" was always there for us, to give me a break when my energy was depleted. If you are not so blessed, you can ask if your church knows of a loving female day care provider that might occasionally watch your child in her home for a reasonable price.

The Rewards

I was called to a meeting with my daughter's fourth grade teacher. Wondering about the conference, I approached the classroom with butterflies in my stomach.

"Dr. Hoberg," she said sternly, "I have to talk to you about your daughter." I swallowed harshly.

She said, "Your daughter will be receiving straight As this semester, and I just wanted to tell you that you've done a good job of parent-

ing." The teacher added, "She is a well-adjusted young lady."

I smiled and calmly thanked her.

That night, the teacher's words began to replay in my head, and I started feeling pretty good. I guess that among all the busyness of life, you forget just how much you have been blessed. God has given you the wonderful opportunity to raise one of His children, and you only get one chance at it. The importance of this is eternal, and I am learning much from parenting my daughter.

Though Heather is only eleven, I was recently daydreaming about her high school graduation ceremonies. In my dream, my future valedictorian daughter stood on the graduation platform. She was speaking to her classmates saying, "If it weren't for my Dad, I wouldn't be here today." "Dad, thanks for all that you did for me."

Well, I'm not planning on the dream occurring, but it is nice to think about. Now, anyone for paying her future college bills in the dream I had of her acceptance to Harvard? □

Dr. Michael Hoberg is a member of Quail Lakes Baptist Church, Stockton, CA.



Social Networks

by Lyle E. Schaller

The words, *social network*, constitute an umbrella term to identify a group of people who choose to socialize with each other. *Peer group* is a common synonym when talking about teenagers. A gang is a social network. The adult Sunday school class that meets informally on eight to fifteen Saturdays every year for a social gathering is a social network. The half dozen teachers who eat together or go to the ball game as a group become a social network that may arouse the envy of a few other teachers. Perhaps the most common definition is simply "the crowd I hang out with."

Six big changes

A couple of generations ago, social networks were largely geographically based: For example the "threshing ring" composed of seven to twelve farmers; the small congregation that worshiped in a building located out in the open country; neighbors who lived in the same block in the city; students who lived on the same floor in a college or university dormitory; or young mothers who lived as close neighbors in the same married students' housing area back in 1946-1950. Today, most social networks do not display a pronounced geographical identity.

A second change is that except for recent immigrants, today's social networks do not display the strong nationality or language identity so many did in 1910 or



even as recently as the 1930s.

Third, one product of the growing number of college graduates in the population is that kinship ties are less influential in creating social networks than they were in the pre-1960 era.

Fourth, younger generations are far less likely to inherit a relationship with a long-established social network than was the pattern as recently as the 1950s.

Fifth, contemporary social networks are far less likely to display a specific religious orientation than was the pattern a few decades ago. One illustration is student ministries in state universities. Another is the erosion of loyalties to the men's fellowships and the women's

organizations in various denominations.

Finally, marital status is less influential in defining social networks today than it was as recently as the 1970s. Age, education, employment, and the presence or absence of children are now more important lines of demarcation than marital status in building social networks of adults born after 1955.

What are the implications?

The concept of social networks can provide a useful perspective for examining the life of your congregation.

Perhaps the most widely discussed example of this is the disappearance of many teenagers from church. Many of these are the children of parents who are among the pillars of that congregation. One explanation

may be these teenagers do not feel a strong allegiance to the social networks that mean so much to their parents.

Some churches attempt to promote children and youth (and in a few traditions also adults) from one Sunday school class to another according to age. That can work in very high commitment congregations, but when people are forced to leave what they have found to be a meaningful social network, it may be easier simply to drop out altogether rather than seek a place in an already established social network.

Second, in most congregations that average more than 35 at worship, newcomers usually find it

easier to gain a sense of belonging in a smaller social network than to seek to be assimilated into that larger fellowship. The basic generalization is the larger the number of worshipers, the greater the need for creating additional social networks as a major component of the strategy for the assimilation of new members. This can be accomplished most easily by inviting new members to help pioneer the creation of a new class, group, choir, cell, circle, organization, task force, or team.

A third generalization is that approximately one-half of all adult new members will prefer helping to pioneer the creation of a new social network over trying to become accepted into a long-established network, class, group, or organization. The big exception to that generalization is the social network organized around music. A vocal choir or an orchestra or a handbell choir often welcomes newcomers who earn their acceptance by contributing to the fulfillment of that group's primary task.

A fourth generalization is that women are more likely to feel comfortable in and quickly gain a sense of belonging in a social network organized initially around study, learning, relationships, or spiritual growth. By contrast, men are more likely to gain a sense of belonging if that initial organizing principle is accomplishment of a task such as remodeling a room or building a Habitat for Humanity house for a homeless family or solving a problem or playing on a baseball team or building a float to represent that church in the local Memorial Day parade.

A common example of that difference is the recently created New Mother's Club that serves as a valuable mutual support group for first-time mothers. The equivalent for new fathers is the church softball team.

Why don't small churches grow?

One example of social networks is the new mission organized by an attractive pastor who finds it easy to enlist two or three dozen adults to help organize a new church. Within a few months, what began as a collection of strangers evolves into a closely knit group of self-identified pioneers. One of the strongest cohesive ties is that everyone likes this pastor. A second is the challenge of pioneering a new church. A third is the spiritual nurture enjoyed by being in this group. A fourth is the bonds of friendship these adults form with one another. A fifth is the growing array of shared experiences that have helped to reinforce the members' ties to this group.

Five years later, this new congregation is averaging between 40 and 50 at worship. It consists of two sets of people. At the center are the two dozen pioneers who are still here and who enjoy being part of that social network. Scattered around the periphery are two or three dozen newcomers who feel excluded from that inner circle and who frequently are reminded they arrived after a significant milestone had been passed. The pastor relates professionally to these newcomers as a pastor relates to members, while continuing to be at the hub of that social network established earlier.

If the goal is to create a large self-governing, self-propagating, self-expressing, and self-supporting congregation, it would be wiser to create at least three or four self-sustaining social networks during the first few months and add one or two a month thereafter.

A second example of the exclusionary power of social networks is the small congregation that is organized around one family tree. Nearly every influential leader is related by blood, marriage, or close friend-

ship ties to that central family tree. Ministers come and go, but the size of the congregation remains the same decade after decade.

The most effective, and also the most difficult way for that congregation to reach, serve, and include more people is for the new pastor to come and (a) earn the trust and confidence of the members related to that one family tree and (b) spend the next 20 years building an overlapping network of seven to thirty new social networks, none of which rely on kinship ties as a central cohesive factor.

Questions to discuss

- How many closely knit social networks can you identify in your congregation?
- Which ones are increasing in numbers?
- Which ones are shrinking in size?
- How many were created during the past five years?
- What are the two or three most influential cohesive forces in each of the existing social networks? Kinship ties? Music? A common task? A key leader? Growing old together? Learning? Mutual support? Shared experiences from the past? Missions? Opposition to a common enemy? A shared heritage? Age? Marital status? Employment or vocation? Hobby? A common stage in one's religious pilgrimage? Gender? Education? Social class? Children? Death of a family member?
- As you contemplate creating new social networks to help attract and assimilate future new members, what do you expect will be the most valuable cohesive ties? □

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PRAYER:

How Well Does It Work?

by Nancy Palmer
Kansas City, MO

As Christians, we say we believe that "prayer changes things." Most of us can give examples of specific answers to our prayers and to others' prayers on our behalf. Although these instances help to assure us that God does intervene in our lives, they may not be enough evidence for non-Christians, or for new Christians who have not yet experienced God's answer to prayer. I'd like to tell you about three specific instances when *your* prayers made a difference in my life when I was a missionary in Cameroon and a recently answered prayer.

Many times during the years my husband, Dennis, and I were N.A.B. Conference missionaries in Cameroon, I experienced God's response to people's prayers. As you would expect, the first few weeks and months in a new country hold many adjustments and things to learn. But even after adapting to many things, discouragement periodically attacked us. When this happened, we relied on our assurance that God had called us to be



there and that many friends at home were upholding us in prayer (as some of you wrote and told us you were doing).

In addition, during that first term, two instances of specifically answered prayers on our behalf stand out in my mind today. After I had home-schooled our son, Ted, during our first year in Cameroon,

the time arrived for him to go to boarding school in Jos, Nigeria. God had prepared us for this major transition in many ways, including that Don and Anne Goltz, house parents at Woyke House, had been our neighbors at Mbingo our first six months in Cameroon. Although we knew that boarding school was the correct step for Ted at this time, we anticipated that it would be very difficult. Surprisingly, it was not, and even the good-byes went easily. We were amazed!

Two weeks later, we received our "N.A.B. Missions Update" and realized that our family had been Missionary of the Week the very time that Ted had left for Jos! Your prayers for us had certainly been answered.

In our third year in Cameroon, Pat Meinerts and I produced several filmstrips for the churches. As with most projects, many things took longer than expected, and the photography sessions never went as planned. One week, things were different. Everything went more smoothly. A light meter I inadver-

tently left near a busy water tap one evening was still there the next morning!

During the next two weeks, I began receiving birthday cards from friends and N.A.B. WMF groups. Most told of their prayers for me. Again, God was faithful to answer your prayers.

Recently, I was considering a job working with international students in Kansas City. Because I was having some doubts about the job, I asked some of my Christian friends to pray that God would guide me through the response I got from presenting the ministry to a group of people. Several people at that meeting encouraged me in the work, and God answered our prayers for guidance.

Answers to prayers like these, and like the ones you have experienced, confirm God's promises to us. Non-Christians, however, have no reason to understand that God answers prayers. A common Western world view says that religion and science are totally separate realms, that they are not compatible, and that they cannot be used to explain each other. Religion, after all, deals with supernatural and spiritual matters utilizing faith, while science deals with the physical and social aspects, using replicable research methods including observations, experiments, double-blind studies, and/or random samples.

Although studies have compared health or longevity between religious and non-religious people, a study at San Francisco General Medical Center on the therapeutic effects of intercessory prayer is different, because it looks at the effects of the prayers of a third

party, not the prayers or lack of prayers of the ill individual.

In this ten-month study, nearly 400 coronary care unit patients were randomized in a double-blind study to receive intercessory prayer from a group of "born again" Christians, or to a control group which received no (more than normal) prayers.

The intercessors were asked to pray for rapid healing and for prevention of complications and death, in addition to other areas of prayer which they thought would be beneficial. Neither the patients, staff, physicians, nor researcher knew which patients were in which group, and there was no difference between the groups upon admission.

At the end of the hospital stay, the patients receiving the prayers had a significantly overall better outcome. In addition, they had less heart failure (4% vs. 10%); pneumonia (2% vs. 7%); cardiac arrest (2% vs. 7%); need for antibiotics (2% vs. 9%); diuretics (3% vs. 8%); and intubation/ventilation (0 vs. 6%). The physician/researcher concluded that the results suggest the additional intercessory prayer to God had a beneficial effect for these heart patients.

This result may not surprise those of you who have experienced God's intervention in your lives, but it may be one step in convincing a non-Christian or new Christian of God's power. Our faith and use of prayer does not depend upon the results of scientific studies, but it is nice to know that someone has studied the benefits of prayer and the results agree with our experiences. □

(*Randolph C. Byrd, "Positive Therapeutic Effects of Intercessory Prayer in a Coronary Care Unit Population," *Southern Medical Journal*, 81:826-829, 1988.

BAPTIST WOMEN'S DAY OF PRAYER

November 7, 1994

Around the world, Baptist women from six continents and 160 Baptist groups will be praying for one another. Their prayers will be for specific needs, concerns, and victories in Christ.

After this Day of Prayer, please keep on praying. Please pray every day for a moment at 9 a.m. for the needs of women and children worldwide.

125th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OAK STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

1303 Oak Street
Burlington, IA 52601

THURSDAY, November 10, 1994
7 p.m. Old-Fashioned Prayer Meeting

SATURDAY, November 12, 1994
7 p.m. Men's Chorus and Historical Program Reception following

SUNDAY, November 13, 1994
10:30 a.m. Old-Fashioned Worship Service

12 Noon Catered Dinner
(Dinner reservations by November 7)

Call (319) 752-3681

NOTICE

The Baptist Home, Inc., and Baptist Apartments, Inc., Annual Meeting will be held October 18, 1994, at 10 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. respectively at the Baptist Home, 1100 East Boulevard Avenue, Bismarck, North Dakota.

Youth News

Canaan youth and Central volunteers host party to celebrate Jesus



WACO, TX. Central Baptist Church volunteers were joined by a youth team from Canaan Baptist Church, Crawford, TX, for a special all day Vacation Bible School. Highlights for the 51 attendees were the home-made "train" from Canaan which shuttled the children around the property.

Using electronic keyboards and rhythm makers, the theme song, "Rejoice in the Lord," was arranged in Japanese, Mexican rhumba, Scottish bagpipe, Texan cowboy, and international rock-n-roll.

"Central is becoming an inter-cultural church due to the large number of Hispanics moving into the neighborhood," says Steve Reilly, associate pastor.

Youth appreciate more after Mexico trip

PAUL, ID. The youth (pictured at right) of First Baptist Church travelled to Mexico in July to experience another culture. "We wanted to get a different perspective on why we live the way we do, and other people live the way they do," Joel Stark said. "We also wanted to give them an opportunity to be involved in ministry."

Prior to the trip, the youth were required to take training to prepare

them for the trip as well as to make clear the standards of morality. Discussions included what kind of clothing to wear so as not to offend the people they were visiting. The students studied basic Spanish, also.

Each student was interviewed to be sure he or she was serious about Christ and not just going for a vacation. Each one raised \$100 for the trip. The rest of the money was raised by fund-raisers—a car wash and a jail and bail, which was one of the biggest fund-raisers. Anonymous donations and a portion of the mission budget helped provide the funds needed.

The youth organized the vacation Bible school part of the trip which consisted of games, Bible stories, and crafts.

Three adults, including Joel and Ellen Stark, and seven students traveled in a 1979 Dodge van to a medical clinic 15 miles south of San Quintin. There they worked with children from ages three to seven or eight. These children live with their parents in labor camps at Baja. The parents work from dark in the morning to dark at night for seven dollars a day. When the children reach about ten years of age, they go into the fields to work with their parents. They live in long metal

shacks divided into many homes.

"They are kept in poverty; it is very sad," said Stark. "Starved for attention, the children run up to you to grab your hand to walk with you, or climb up on your lap to hug you."

The Paul, ID, youth learned that they themselves have much in regard to material goods compared to the people they worked with in the Baja area. "Kids in the States are so into fashion, even nagging their parents for certain things; these people are just glad to have something on their backs," said Stark. "Even though the youth felt helpless to change the conditions for the people, they were able to show them God's love and give them hope that a relationship with Christ will help," Stark said. "The trip gave the youth an opportunity to reach out, serve, and touch someone else's life".

While there, the group spent their week in two different camps. At one camp, they showed a film about Jesus Christ in Spanish to about 500 to 700 people. About 50 came forward after the local pastor preached. They were happy to receive a Bible. In the other camp, which houses 300 to 500 people, the youth led Vacation Bible School.



Jamestown youth raise funds for trip to Texas

JAMESTOWN, ND. The youth made and served knepfla soup to 105 people, went Christmas caroling, sold 355 pizzas on a day that started out at -20 degrees, delivered 65 singing telegrams, ministered through two evening youth services, served breakfast, weeded gardens, raked and mowed lawns, washed windows, cleaned at Crystal Springs Bible Camp, scraped paint, cleaned garages, washed walls and cars, sold flowers, potpourri, and 400 root beer floats, had a garage sale, served lunch at auction sales, had a bake sale, tupperware party, and a Pampered Chef party.

"We were exhausted, but we reached our goal," said the youth. "We could not have done it without our Church, Temple Baptist."

The youth did 567 hours of work and earned \$2,450.42 toward the trip to the Youth Triennial Conference in Denton, TX; Bible Camp; and Sonshine.

"Doris Giedt is the 'wheel' that turns up all the ideas and works side by side with the youth. She took four young women to the youth Conference in Texas," says Leona Meisch.

Saskatchewan youth serve in Texas

SASKATCHEWAN. Six young people of Heritage Baptist Church, Yorkton, SK, along with Youth Pastor Kim Martens and his wife, Tonia, ministered to youth through Central Valley Baptist Church, Donna, TX, before attending the Youth Triennial Conference in Denton, TX. — Art Fritzsche

Just prior to leaving for Donna, TX, and the Triennial Conference, Ebenezer Baptist Church commissioned eight young people to serve in teaching ministry in VBS in Donna, TX. Their sponsor, Kevin Fandrey, and the Rev. and Mrs. Wayne Fandrey accompanied them. —Martha Dreger

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WITNESS

Praise God for people receiving Christ as Savior and for His growing church

■ BURLINGTON, ON. In order to help our members understand the purpose and mission of Pineland Baptist Church, the Church rewrote its Mission Statement as follows: "Our mission is to reach our world through a Christ-centered, Bible-based ministry, with a passion for God and compassion for others."

Pastor Harv Wilkie baptized six believers recently. One of the persons baptized sent out many invitations to family, friends, co-workers, and members of the families of two baseball teams, which he coaches, to witness his baptism. Thirty to forty persons came to hear his dynamic testimony. That evening nine new members were welcomed into the Church following the Lord's Supper. —Dorothy Trost

■ WINNIPEG, MB. In the spring, McDermot Avenue Baptist Church joined with 33 other Winnipeg churches to distribute the *Jesus* video to approximately one third of the homes in Winnipeg. Twenty-six people from McDermot visited 1,222 homes and left 217 videos to be viewed. A few weeks later, they returned to those 217 homes to complete a survey. Ten first-time decisions for Christ were recorded. Follow-up is continuing with many of those contacted. The Rev. Werner Dietrich is Associate Pastor. —S. Mueller

■ PORTLAND, OR. Pastor Randy Kinnison welcomed eight new members into the Bethany Baptist Church family.

The Church honored Pastor Kinnison with a graduation party. He was granted the Doctor Ministry degree by the Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary in Denver.

The 17-member Bethany Kid's Choir presented a musical program, "Shortstops." "It teaches about God's willingness to give guid-

ance for our lives and to help us make decisions according to His will," said Herbert Halstead.

■ MADISON, SD. West Center Street Baptist Church recently celebrated the baptism of two youth and three adults in an outdoor service held at Lake Madison. Pastor Steve Vetter welcomed these five as well as three adults received by testimony into the Church membership. —P. Frerichs

■ EBENEZER, SK. The Rev. Wayne Jorstad, pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church, baptized three adults recently and welcomed them into the fellowship of the Church. —Martha Dreger

■ YORKTON, SK. Pastor Robert Sandford baptized six believers at Heritage Baptist Church recently. Two are parents of a young family. Ten members were welcomed into membership. —Art Fritzsche

■ CARRINGTON, ND. Pastor Loren Franchuk baptized three youth who recently received Christ as Savior.

■ RICHMOND, BC. Twenty-one persons were baptized by Pastor Helmut Strauss of Rose of Sharon Baptist Church recently. Fifteen of these were from Rose of Sharon Church and seven from the Abundant Life Chinese Church in Richmond.

■ ALPENA, MI. Word of Life Baptist Church held a baptismal service at which six persons were baptized. Each person was given a word of encouragement or a Scripture verse was read and a candle lit by a relative or Christian friend as he or she was baptized.

"Since we have moved into our new facilities eight months ago, 20 persons have been baptized, and the Church has welcomed 38 new members on confession of faith or transfer of letter—a total of 58 members.

Buddy Green provided a musical concert to which the community was invited. The occasion was

especially dedicated to fathers.

Word of Life Baptist Church sponsored a primitive summer camping experience for 60 children in grades 3 to 7 under the leadership of Russ and Carol Lewis. Twenty-five volunteer workers assisted the Lewis couple. Nine campers made decisions for the Lord, and others experienced spiritual growth.

The camp site, located 18 miles from Alpena, Sunken Lake Park, has no electricity or running water. Campers sleep in tents and cook outdoors. Since the Church provides this experience, the cost is only \$15 for each camper.

—Helen Ehman

Spokane church uses softball as outreach ministry

■ SPOKANE, WA. One of the summer ministries of Terrace Heights Baptist Church reflecting the light of Jesus has been the Church softball team. One of the reasons for starting this team was as an avenue of outreach.

"I am very proud of this team and how it has performed on and off the field," says Bruce Fields, pastor. "We were injudiciously placed in the best church league in Spokane; yet we managed to win a couple of games. But more importantly, we were able to win two new souls for Jesus."

Fields notes that a "a key to church growth and evangelism has been illustrated to us by this team and God's sovereignty. Because we were a small church and did not have enough men and women to field a team from the church itself, we looked to others we knew. Neither church membership nor a person's spirituality was an issue to being on the team. Those who were already Christians let the light of Jesus shine in their lives. Their love for one another and others became clearly visible and was a major influence for Christ." —Gilbert Gordon



Volunteers build for South Hill church

■ PUYALLUP, WA. Construction continues on the 13,000-square-foot structure that will be Christ Community Baptist Church on 176th Street. The congregation has been meeting in various locations for the past seven years, including holding services at Brouillet Elementary School. The Church, with a congregation of about 200, is a church planting project of Calvary Baptist Church in Tacoma and the N.A.B. Conference.

Helping to construct the Church was a group of 12 retirees, members of Mobile Missionary Assistance, a non-denominational Christian organization. Members of this organization are Christians, who

GROW

Burlington Church initiates small group ministry

■ BURLINGTON, ON. Pineland Baptist Church initiated small group ministries on alternate Sunday evenings of the month, in order to try to reach more people in an informal and non-threatening atmosphere.

"In a trial run of ten weeks at an earlier time, we found that significantly more people attended the small groups than traditional evening services," says Dorothy Trost.

SERVE

are retired and who own self-contained RVs. The church provided sewer and electrical hook-ups for the vehicles. The retirees worked for three weeks, four days a week, and spent their weekends checking local attractions. Following this, they moved on to another project or to their homes.

Gladwin Church breaks ground for new building

■ GLADWIN, MI. About 120 people attended the Ground Breaking Service for Round Lake Baptist Church on Sunday afternoon, June 26, at its new location. Former land-owners, Henry and Ruth Klassen, attended as well as the architect, and the Rev. Jacob Ehman, area minister. Each of the more than half of those present, from the oldest to the youngest, turned over a shovel of dirt. The Rev. Robert Brown is pastor. —Jean Jurgensen

Priebe speaks at Ebenezer Church

■ EBENEZER, SK. Guest speaker, the Rev. Ken Priebe of Kelowna, BC, challenged the congregation of Ebenezer Baptist Church by saying, "Some can go; some can give; but all can pray." Both Ken and his wife Eileen shared concerning their ministry with the *Jesus* film.



Willis and Ruth Potratz

Bismarck Church honors Potratzes

■ BISMARCK, ND. Century Baptist Church honored Dr. Willis and Mrs. Ruth Potratz in recognition of their 40 years of ministry. They are known for their loyal, humble service in many areas.

Dr. Potratz was ordained by First Baptist Church, Sumner, IA, June 7, 1954. In the past 40 years, he and his wife, Ruth, have ministered at Plum Creek Baptist Church, Emery, SD; Grace Baptist Church, Grand Forks, ND; First Baptist Church, Lodi, CA; and Century Baptist Church, Bismarck, ND, where he presently serves as Care and Visitation Pastor. He has served as Great Lakes Area Minister and as Area Ministries Director for the N.A.B. Conference. —Lou Schwindt

GIVE

God's family is growing on Grand Island

■ GRAND ISLAND, NY. The family of believers who worship at Whitehaven Road Baptist Church praises God for His generosity. Located on beautiful Grand Island in the Niagara River in upstate New York and bordering Ontario, and in a town of 17,000 residents, the Church is part of God's exciting, life-changing work.

In 1915, the Church began as the

48-member Austin Street Baptist Church across the River in the Black Rock section of Buffalo, NY. By 1974, most of the members were living on Grand Island. It was then decided to purchase land on Whitehaven Road. For ten long years, the Lord did not open the door to construct a new church building on that site.

In 1984, the Church started a building fund. The membership stepped out in faith and trusted the Lord for His provision. The

Church celebrated its first regular service in the new building on June 14, 1985.

Since December 1993, the Lord increased the membership rolls to about 200, while drawing an average of 300 people to the Sunday morning services.

After much prayer, the Church leadership began a second Sunday morning service, started another building fund, hired an architect, and planned the next expansion of the Church.

As the Church works toward its financial goals, the Lord continues to work toward saving more souls and expanding His family on Grand Island. From January through April 1994, the Lord added 35 new members to the Church, 22 by baptism. The Lord is using the powerful testi-

monies of the new members to challenge and change the lives of all who attend. —*Martha Preckler*

Hamilton Church raises money for missions

■ HAMILTON, ON. Mission Baptist Church purchased a house next to the Church property to provide parking spots for cars, since all who attend the Church must park on the street, and that parking space is limited. Some time in the future, the Church will pave the garden area of the new property for parking.

For now, many helping hands cleaned and equipped the house to rent to Christian students attending MacMaster University.

Good fellowship, some competition, and all proceeds going to missions marked the annual Golf

Tournament of Mission Baptist Church held in July.

Some of the ladies of the Church created craft items, which they sold at a shopping plaza to raise money for missions.

The WMF presented a cheque to Missionary Ken Bayer for the Chain of Love Ministry in Brazil. Mr. Bayer served as guest speaker for the missions conference held at the Church.

The Church held its annual Family Camp at Miller Lake. "This time creates a feeling as if all ages belong to the same family," says Irene Noack. "Bible work and recreation is geared to different age groups, but enough time is spent as a large family. Soon after registrations started, all cabins were sold out, and only tenting spaces were left for late registrants."

CARE



Eastern Association men gathered under the theme, "Commanded to Care."

Eastern Association men meet for retreat

■ CANANDAIGUA LAKE, NY. The annual men's retreat of the Eastern Association was held in June at Le Tourneau Christian Conference Center. Dr. Lewis Petrie served as retreat speaker on the theme of caring. Men from churches in Pennsylvania, New York, and Ontario gathered under the theme, "Commanded to Care," for a period of reflection, instruction, fellowship, and renewal. —*Harry Zuch*

Sunshine Seniors adopt missions project

■ SURREY, BC. Each year the Sunshine Seniors of Sunshine Ridge Baptist Church participate in ministry partnership with N.A.B. missions by adopting a financial commitment for a missions project.

During one of their day outings at Cedar Springs Retreat, "Exercise Is for the Birds," they had a special prayer session for the concerns of some of the seniors and the church ministries. Forty attended. —*Twyla Gerbrandt*

Carrington church hosts Association

■ CARRINGTON, ND. Calvary Baptist Church hosted the annual Northern Dakota Association meeting. One hundred eighty children, youth, and adults representing 16 N.A.B. Conference churches took part in the various programs. It was a great time of inspiration and fellowship," says Vi Pepple. The Rev. Loren Franchuk is pastor.



Paul women make robes

■ PAUL, ID. The Women's Missionary Fellowship of the Paul First Baptist Church donated bibs and lap robes to the Extended Care Unit of the Manidoka Memorial Hospital.

(MCN Photo above by Terri McAfee)

ANNIVERSARIES

Springside Church celebrates 60th anniversary

■ SPRINGSIDE, SK. An old fashioned picnic and barbeque started off the weekend of June 15 to celebrate the 60th anniversary of Springside Baptist Church. Guests included former pastors and lay persons who have gone into the ministry from the Church. Speakers addressing the theme: "Great Is Thy Faithfulness," were Rev. Wm. Effa, Pastor Bill Keith,



Charter members honored during Springside Baptist Church's 60th anniversary were (front row): Mrs. Lydia Pullman, Mrs. Minnie Nehring, Mr. Gus Breitkreuz, Mrs. Emma Breitkreuz, and Mrs. Hannah Besler; (back row): Mr. Dan Arndt, Mr. Bert Breitkreuz, Mrs. Enga Berg, Mr. Irma Arndt, Mrs. Tillie Kriger, Mrs. Bertha Gabert, Mrs. Wilamina Strauss, Mr. Ed Gabert, Mr. Martin Arndt, and Mrs. Edith Hoffman.

Chancellor Wm. Eichhorst, Rev. Bob Hoffman, Providence College Professor Gus Konkel, Dr. Herman Effa, Rev. Richard Grabke, Rev. George Breitkreuz, Rev. Fred Pahl, and Rev. Ervin Strauss.

The Mayor of Springside, Martin Arndt; Member of Parliament, Garry Breitkreuz; Area Minister, Jake Leverette; and current pastor, Brian Kirsch, brought greetings.

Dennis Schulz, program chair, presided at the morning service. The congregation enjoyed many musical selections and greetings from former pastors and sons of the church. The Rev. Robert Hoffman gave a brief message on the theme, "Pressing toward the Mark."

Mr. Larry Moser, master of ceremonies, led the afternoon program which featured a message by the Rev. Henry Lang, "Carry on the Work—Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow."

Additional pastors who participated were the Rev. Herb Schauer, area minister; the Rev. Mervin Kramer; the Rev. Edwin Walters; the Rev. A. J. Fischer; the Rev. Walter Sukut; Dr. Rodney Zimmerman, Cameroon missionary; and host pastor, the Rev. Edward Kopf.

Napoleon Baptist has a membership of 28, but more than 150 former members and friends came for this memorable day in the life of our church. —*Adeline Kopf*

Sumner Church celebrates 50 years

■ SUMNER, IA. On July 24, First Baptist Church celebrated its 50th anniversary. Don Messerer, missionary and former member, spoke to the adults during Sunday School.

The Rev. Fred Mashner, a former pastor, spoke on Hebrews 11:38, "The Roster of Heavenly Heroes," during the Sunday worship service. During the afternoon celebration, the Rev. Harry Haas, a former pastor, spoke on "Losing the Bible." Other former pastors attending and participating in the services were the Rev. Ralph Chandler, the Rev. Dan Payne, and the Rev. Arnie Kirschner.

Past members and friends joined First Baptist for the celebration.

—*Retha Menke*

Moosehorn church celebrates 75th anniversary

■ MOOSEHORN MB. Moosehorn Baptist Church celebrated its 75th anniversary August 21-22, 1994. Former pastors, the Rev. Bert Milner and the Rev. Bruno Voss, served as keynote speakers.

The weekend began with a barbeque, followed by a time of reminiscing. Sunday concluded with a morning worship service, dinner, and an afternoon celebration. The Rev. Steven Brown is pastor.

—*Vera Loewen*

Napoleon Baptist celebrates 75th anniversary

■ NAPOLEON, ND. Napoleon Baptist Church participated in a full day of special activities for its 75th anniversary on June 12. Mr.

Wedding Anniversaries

Congratulations to the following who celebrated 50 or more years of marriage: **Curt and Edith Bork**, Moosehorn (MB) Baptist Church, July 2, 1944, (50 years); **Curt and Herta Gunther**, Moosehorn (MB) Baptist Church, Feb. 1, 1943, (51 years); **Edward and Alma Fierbach**, Moosehorn (MB) Baptist Church, May 1, 1941, (53 years); **Albert and Irene Semler**, Moosehorn (MB) Baptist Church, June 30, 1939, (55 years); **the Rev. Edwin and Helen Walter**, First Baptist Church, Emery, SD, Aug. 19, 1934, (60 years); and **the Rev. William and Elsie Jeschke**, Trinity Baptist Church, Portland, OR, Oct. 11, 1944, (50 years).

■ **BERG, HELENE** (90), Milwaukee, WI, born Sept. 10, 1903, Emilschien, Pommern, Germany; died June 10, 1994; immigrated to U.S.A. in 1951; member of former Zion Baptist now Ridgewood Baptist Church, Brookfield, WI; retired in Bellevue, FL, with her husband; survived by her husband, Henry; two daughters: Ruth (Walter) Gronlund and Elfriede (Harry) Rebig; seven grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren; Pastor Elvin Schuelke and Pastor John Worley, funeral service.

■ **DACHTLER, EMMA** (94); Lansing, MI; born Dec. 5, 1899, to Fred and Eva Hildebrand in Lehr, ND; died May 31, 1994; married Emil Dachtler, December 1920; member, Colonial Village Baptist Church, Lansing, MI; survived by her son, the Rev. Wil Dachtler, Dickinson, ND; four daughters: Ann Dachtler, Lansing, MI; Ruby Hoff, Estero, FL; Ernice Friesen, Grand Rapids, MI; and Jeanette Wuebben, Dayton, OH; ten grandchildren; twelve great-grandchildren; one brother; two sisters; preceded in death by her husband, Emil; the Reverends Daryl E. Dachtler and Donald Kirkland, funeral service.

■ **DEWERFF, CHESTER** (93), Ellinwood, KS; born May 30, 1901, to John and Emma DeWerff at Ellinwood; died June 30, 1994; married Clara Scheufler on Aug. 23, 1923; member, served as Sunday school superintendent, trustee, First Baptist Church, survivors include three sons: Kenneth and Vernon of Ellinwood, and Neil of Hays, KS; two daughters: Edith Meyer of Alva, OK, and Virginia Smith of Phoenix, AZ; brother, Jack, of Ellinwood; two sisters: Lucille Hildebrand and Ruby Schrader of Stafford; 15 grandchildren; and 28 great-grandchildren; the Rev. George Redington, funeral service.

■ **FRIEZ, ARNOLD MARVIN** (63), Lehr, ND; born Feb. 13, 1931, to Andrew and

Emma Friez in Bentley, ND; died May 21, 1994; married Grace Sprenger, Aug. 9, 1953; received a BTh degree from N.A.B. Seminary in 1958; ordained May 30, 1958, in New Leipzig, ND; served and ministered in Rosenfeld Baptist Church, Drake, ND, 1958-1961; First Baptist Church, Sidney, MT, 1961-1964; Temple Baptist Church, Lemmon, SD, 1964-1966; and Grace Baptist Church, Bison, SD, 1966-1970; First Baptist Church, Appleton, MN, 1970-1973; First Baptist Church, Leola, SD, 1973-1989; Ebenezer Baptist Church, Lehr, ND, 1989-1994; survived by his wife, Grace; one son, Myron, and one daughter, Arlette Friez, both of Fargo, ND; and his mother, Emma Friez; preceded in death by his father, Andrew J. Friez; and an infant daughter; the Reverends Herbert Schauer and Harvey Motis, funeral service.

■ **GINTER, ALICE** (90); Vancouver, BC; born Jan. 30, 1904, to Rev. Bernard and Bertha Herb in Lodz, Poland; died May 8, 1994; immigrated to Canada in 1928; married Ewald Ginter in 1942; member, McDermot Ave. Baptist Church, Winnipeg, MB; Ebenezer Baptist Church, Vancouver, BC; survived by her son, Ralph (Judy), Surrey, BC; daughter, Irma (Heini) Bublitz, Richmond, BC; step-daughter, Eleanor (Harold) Johnson; eleven grandchildren; the Rev. Allan Strohschein, pastor, funeral service.

■ **HANIK, WENZEL** (80), Kelowna, BC; born Sept. 6, 1913, in Redkoduby, Poland; died June 5, 1994; married Maria Kobluk, May 15, 1938; immigrated to Vernon, BC, in 1956; member, Grace Baptist Church; survived by his wife, Maria; two daughters: Irene (David) Salzman, Kankakee, IL; Rose (Dan) Johnson, White Rock, BC; four sons: Walter (Joyce), Prince George, BC; Gary (Charlotte), Clearbrook, BC; Rev. Wenzel (Maria),

Atlanta, GA; Manfred, Chetwynd, BC; eleven grandchildren, and three sisters; the Rev. Siegfried Hoppe, pastor, funeral service.

■ **HELWIG, HAZEL VIOLET**, (66), Lodi, CA; born April 13, 1927, to William and Martha Falkenberg at Menaik, AB; died Oct. 31, 1993; married Calvin Helwig, Sept. 27, 1947; member, East Olds Baptist Church, AB, and First Baptist Church, Lodi, CA; where she served as church historian, in choir; and in V.B.S. and Women's Missionary Society; predeceased by a son, Jerry Wayne; survived by husband, Calvin; one son, Larry; one daughter-in-law, Kathy; three granddaughters; two sisters: Irma Dusdal and Ivy Weiss; Rev. Dr. David Mitchell, Rev. Merle Brenner, and Rev. Aaron Buhler, funeral service.

■ **HUBER, PHILLIP G.** (87); Spokane, WA; born Dec. 8, 1906, in Artas, SD; died May 24, 1994; active member, deacon, Sunday school superintendent, Terrace Heights Baptist Church, Spokane, WA; survived by his wife, Louise; two daughters: Meraleen Kern, Edmonton, AB; and Ruth Baxter, Quito, Ecuador; one son, Reuben Huber, Henderson, NV; three sisters; nine grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; the Rev. Bruce Fields, pastor, funeral service.

■ **LEHMANN, WILLIAM** (64); Talbot, TN; born April 9, 1930, to the Rev. John and Regina Lehmann in Egyhazaskozar, Hungary; died July 16, 1994; immigrated to Buffalo, NY, in 1956 from Germany; married Monika Molnar, June 21, 1959; faithful member, deacon, moderator, Sunday school teacher, music director, and friend; survived by his wife, Monika, and son, Frederick, both of Talbot; daughter and son-in-law, Christine and Byron Davidson of Knoxville; sister, Elisabeth Trautmann; the Reverends Steve Turner, Allen Jewett, and William Swafford, pastors, funeral service.

■ **MENKE, JOHN** (82); Tripoli, IA; born June 4, 1911, to William and Hulda Albers Menke near Platte Center, NE; died May 28, 1994; married Alma Kohrs on April 6, 1938; charter member, Sunday school treasurer, secretary, trustee, First Baptist Church, Sumner, IA; survived by his wife, Alma; three daughters: Ruby (Jim) Greenless; Retha Menke; and Marjorie (Oliver) Peerman; seven grandchildren; one great-grandson; one brother; three sisters; predeceased by his parents, one brother, and one sister; the Rev. Arnie Kirschner, pastor, funeral service.

■ **SCHMIDTKE, JULIUS** (89); of Tacoma, WA; born in Stepan, Russia, Dec. 25, 1904; died June 28, 1994; immigrated to Winnipeg, MB, in 1911, and to Tacoma, WA, in 1920; member, deacon, and life-time honorary deacon, Calvary Baptist Church, Tacoma, WA, since 1920; survived by his wife of 65 years, Caroline; three sons: Raymond, Sr. (JoAnn), Julian (Leslie), and Ronald (Sharon); daughter-in-law, Mrs. Palmer (Kathy) Schmidtke; and a brother, George Schmidtke (Grace); 11 grandchildren; and 14 great-grandchildren; preceded in death by sons, Palmer and Carrol; Rev. Don Burnett, pastor, funeral service.

■ **STEIN, JEANETTE** (78); Surrey, BC; born March 9, 1916, to John and Rose Reiman in Ebenezer, SK; died May 30, 1994; married the Rev. Walter Stein on July 8, 1941; served alongside him in ministry faithfully for 34 years, teaching Sunday school and leading the women's ministry; served two terms as president of the Women's Missionary Fellowship, N.A.B. Conference, 1970 to 1976; member, Ebenezer Baptist Church, Richmond, BC; survived by her son, Murray (Jan), Chicago, IL; daughter, Lois (Doug) Scott, Delta, BC; five grandchildren; one brother; preceded in death by her husband, Walter; the Rev. Allan Strohschein, pastor, funeral service.

Ministerial Changes

■ **Dr. Kent McKinnon** from pastor, Grace Baptist Church, West Fargo, ND.

■ **The Rev. Steve Howe** to youth pastor, First Baptist Church, Steamboat Rock, IA, effective August 1.

■ **The Rev. Doug Bittle** from pastor, Parkland Baptist, Spruce Grove, AB, to pastor, Oakbank Baptist Church, Oakbank, MB, effective September 1.

■ **Mr. Michael Miller** to minister of youth, Fellowship Baptist Chapel, Sterling Heights, MI.

■ **Dr. John Binder** to interim pastor, Ridgewood Baptist Church, Brookfield, WI, effective September 25.

■ **The Rev. Rick Weber** from pastor, First Baptist Church, Auburn, MI, to pastor, Oak Hills Baptist Church, Sioux Falls, SD, effective September 1.

■ **The Rev. Richard Curtis** to pastor, First Baptist Church, Durham, KS, effective August 14.

■ **The Rev. Harald Gruber** from pastor, Immanuel Baptist Church, St. Catharines, ON, to pastor, First Baptist Church, Chancellor, SD.

■ **The Rev. Mark Brandel** from pastor, Forest Baptist Church, Winburne, PA, to pastor, North Freedom Baptist, North Freedom, WI, effective September.

■ **The Rev. Jerry Edinger** from pastor, Southdale Community Church, Winnipeg, MB, to an Evangelical Free Church in Minneapolis, MN, area, effective September.

■ **Mr. James Regehr** from pastor, Elim Baptist Church, Beausejour, MB, to attend N.A.B. Seminary in Sioux Falls, SD.

■ **The Rev. Doug Timm** from pastor, First Baptist Church, Minot, ND, effective September.

■ **The Rev. Steve Bowyer** from minister of families, First Baptist Church, Minot, ND.

■ **The Rev. Elmer Strauss** to interim pastor, First Baptist Church,

Ellinwood, KS.

■ **The Rev. Grayson Paschke** from pastor, Wiesenthal Baptist Church, Millet, AB, effective July 1994. — *Anne Hoffmann*

■ **Mr. Herbert Radke**, 1994 graduate of Edmonton Baptist Seminary, to pastor, Wiesenthal Baptist Church, Millet, AB, effective August 28. — *Anne Hoffmann*

■ **The Rev. Reinhold Wilde** to pastor of German ministries, Humbervale Baptist Church, Toronto, ON, effective September 1.

■ **Mr. Chris Wright** to associate pastor, West Center Street Baptist Church, Madison, SD, effective September 1. — *Phyllis Frerichs*

■ **The Rev. Rod Poppinga** from Anamoose Baptist Church, Anamoose, ND, and Rosenfeld Baptist Church, Drake, ND, effective September 1994.

■ On August 14, First Baptist Church of Sumner, IA, welcomed its new pastor, **the Rev. Doug Sathern**, and his wife and son, Joshua.

■ **The Rev. Tom Anderst** from associate pastor, Greenfield Baptist Church, Edmonton, AB, to pastor, Nepean Baptist Church, Nepean, ON, effective October 1.



■ **The Rev. Stephen Anderson** assumed the position of Director of Annual Fund and Alumni at N.A.B. Seminary, Sioux Falls, SD, on July

18. He is a graduate of the Seminary with a Master of Divinity degree. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Mankato State University.

For the past two and one half years, Steve has served on the pastoral staff at Grace Church in Sioux Falls. He has 12 years of experience in the business world as an owner and operator of convenience stores in Minnesota. He and his wife, Sharon, have two children.

■ **Miss Laura Walther** from director of family ministries, Northgate

Baptist Church, Edmonton, AB, to student, N.A.B. Seminary, Sioux Falls, SD. "We have been blessed to witness her immediate and complete obedience to God's call in her life and thank her for her encouragement and excellent guidance and leadership in our ministries," says Lori Reiter.

■ **Miss Lara Frey** of Bismarck, ND, to short-term missionary to Japan, effective August 31, to teach English as a Second Language replacing Debbie Kern who completed four years of short-term service and returned to Canada.

■ **Dr. and Mrs. Dieter Lemke** of Edmonton, AB, to Cameroon to serve for a year as volunteers in medical work effective July 4.

■ Volunteers in Missions who began service in September in Cameroon are • **Dr. and Mrs. Jerry Fluth** of Crystal, MN, to serve at Mbingo Baptist Hospital from September to December to serve in medical ministry and to train a Cameroonian doctor for leprosy work; • **Dr. Leanne Kroeker** of Edmonton, AB, to serve in medical ministry in Cameroon; and • **Miss Trudy Schatz** of Edmonton, AB, to train nurses in Banso (replaces Kathy Kroll while she is on furlough); and • **Dr. and Mrs. Glen Kirsch** of Renton, WA, to teach English as a Second Language at the Tsu Christian Education Center in Japan, replacing Bill and Luci Lengefeld.

THANK YOU

I have moved to Elgin, ND, following an auction sale on July 23. On Sunday, July 24, the Lehr Ebenezer Church and First Baptist Church of Ashley (both churches Arnold pastored) sponsored a potluck dinner and program for me and my family.

The support and cooperation of both churches was tremendous. May God bless and thank you to all who remembered my late husband Arnold and me with prayers and cards.

—*Grace Friez*

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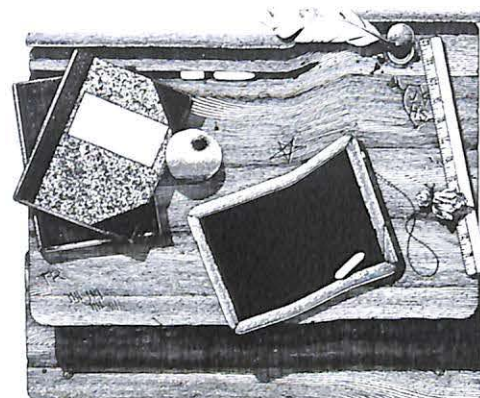
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BUILDING CHURCHES INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

Slavic Church Buys Willow Rancho Building

When Dr. Ken Fischer, California Area Minister and member of the Church Extension Investors Fund board of directors, visited the Soviet Union in 1979 as N.A.B. Conference moderator, he did not know that God would use his visit to bring the First Slavic Evangelical Baptist Church of Sacramento, CA, into the North American Baptist Conference. He also did not know that the Church would be helped on its way by Church Extension Investors Fund.

First Slavic began in 1964 when a few Russian immigrant families in Sacramento met for worship under Rev. Teodor (Ted) Karpien. By 1990, the Church had grown to 225. Then the Wall came down between East and West. Immigration increased, and First Slavic membership mushroomed to 950 by September 1994.

Up to 50,000 Russians are allowed into the United States each year, and the Russian government has stated that any citizens who can prove religious persecution in their ancestral background can apply for immigration to the U.S.

The Church currently meets in a facility that seats approximately 150 and holds four services to accommodate its members. Five choirs averaging 30 members each, and 15 choir directors provide music for the services. The pastors all earn their living outside the Church. Karpien, who still serves as senior pastor, has never received income from the Church and worked as a weighmaster until his retirement five years ago.

Fischer's relationship with First Slavic began when he returned from his Soviet Union trip and spoke in a number of Russian churches in California, including



(LES COOK PHOTO)

The Rev. Ted Karpien
pastors First Slavic
Evangelical Baptist
Church of
Sacramento, CA.

First Slavic. The Church invited him back several times. In 1994, it expressed interest in joining the North American Baptist Conference. The NorCal Association Credentials Committee and Executive Committee approved the application of the First Slavic Church and recommended they be received into the N.A.B. Conference.

After several attempts to buy larger facilities, First Slavic heard about the facilities of the N.A.B. Willow Rancho Baptist Church in Sacramento, which is planning to purchase land about eight miles away for a fresh start in a new community. The Church made an offer for the Willow Rancho buildings, and applied for a loan with Church Extension Investors Fund to help make the purchase. The move will enable the Church to double its meeting space and pursue its goal of starting a Bible school for an anticipated 100 young men and women of the congregation. The loan was approved in August.

Fischer said of the church, "People are accepting the Lord right and left. Good things are happening." —Melissa Krupense □

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