

A PEOPLE

IN MISSION: 1894-1994

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A. Grace Wenger



"Flowing toward the future"

*The story of missions by Mennonites
of Lancaster Conference and its partners*



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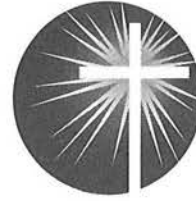
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IN MISSION: 1894-1994

The following stories and photos were published to commemorate the One Hundredth Anniversary of organized mission work by Mennonites of Lancaster, Atlantic Coast, Franklin, and New York State Conferences of the Mennonite Church.

Since 1914 the work has been administered by Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities (now Eastern Mennonite Missions), Salunga, Pa.





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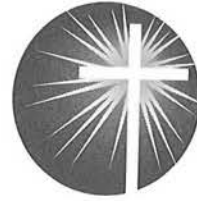
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Foreword

How does one measure and celebrate the mission vitality of a people as diverse as Lancaster area Mennonites?

Six of us faced this question in 1991 as we began to prepare for a 100-year anniversary of organized mission work by Mennonites of Lancaster Conference and its partner conferences.

As we celebrate during 1994, we want to note some of the milestones of organized mission work since the Home Mission Advocates first met September 15, 1894 in the home of John H. Mellinger.

Since that meeting, the work expanded into 15 states and to six continents.

But how can one adequately celebrate such a rich heritage? The events and materials prepared for this anniversary barely touch the surface of this pilgrimage. We pray that they will show God at work among us, blessing the Word as it was lived and proclaimed.

We chose A. Grace Wenger to pull together the story line for this book, a centerpiece in the celebration. She accepted this challenge and developed the stories for this collection.

The photos, illustrations, and vignettes that follow will show you some of the unfolding drama of God's work among us.

The brevity of the book means that many other workers and their stories could not be included. A more detailed history compiled by A. Grace Wenger is available in the archives of Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society and at Eastern Mennonite Missions in Salunga, Pennsylvania.

Early in this 100-year history other conferences near Lancaster joined in the work of EMBMC, and today the Board serves as a servant to the churches of these conferences, enabling a wide range of ministries.

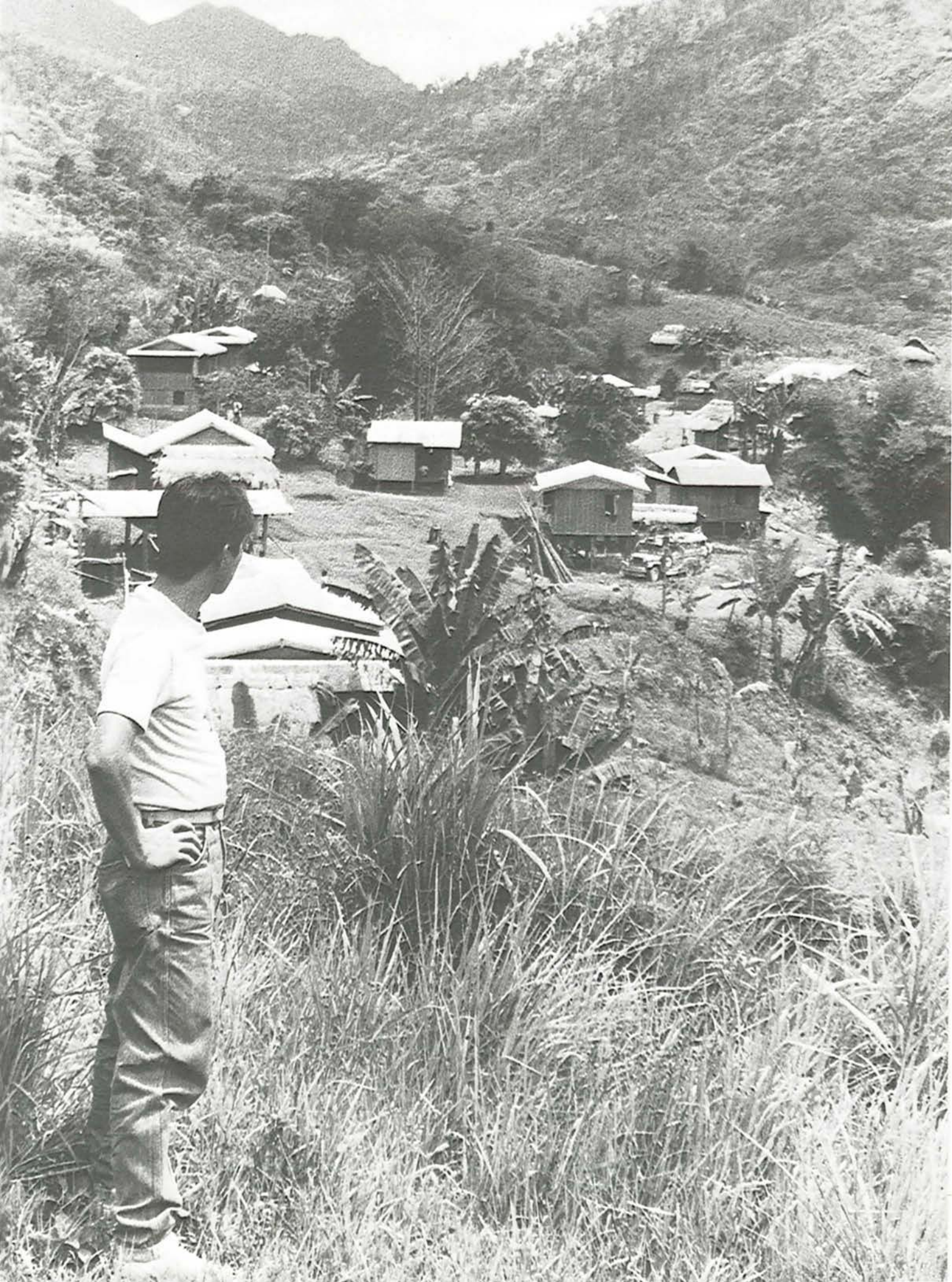
These include the proclamation of the good news, the formation of churches, the equipping of leaders, and ministries of compassion, such as relief, development, medical, educational, and literacy work.

The stories and illustrations in this book reflect some of the vitality of the mission vision that took root in 1894 and continues today. Enjoy your journey through the book.

A video, skits and dramas, and music especially recommended for the year-long celebration are available from EMBMC.

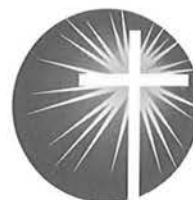
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Lancaster Mennonite Conference Beginnings in Mission

by David W. Shenk



A century ago, missions became a passion for Lancaster Conference Mennonites because of a mighty work of the Holy Spirit. The fire of God burned slowly at first; only after the turn of the century did the bishops officially approve "protracted" revival meetings. But even before official approval, itinerate evangelists like John S. Coffman, anointed with the fire of God, proclaimed the gospel in our churches.

Great Commission Scriptures had been the favorite preaching texts for Anabaptist preachers nearly four centuries earlier; in the same way, as Lancaster Mennonites entered the 20th century, anointed preachers proclaimed with conviction Christ's mandate to every Christian to be involved in making disciples. "Evangelistic meetings extended two weeks and even four weeks, with meetinghouses packed; hundreds of young people were convicted." These Mennonites in whom the fire of God was burning acted upon their convictions.

However, a century ago Lancaster County Mennonites were a small group of not more than 5,000 members. They worshipped in 40 meetinghouses, often alternating worship from Sunday to Sunday. On any given Sunday there may have been 20 congregations gathered for worship.

Their insignificance did not discourage these born again evangelists. Leaders pioneered new directions. During the last third of the 19th century, leadership such as Bishop Jacob N. Brubacher of Mount Joy urged the formation of Sunday schools. Brubacher also encouraged preaching in English rather than German so as to reach Mennonite neighbors with the gospel.

Then John H. Mellinger helped inspire the formation of the Home Mission Advocates in 1894. This vision was the beginning of Eastern Mennonite Missions. Within a year, the Paradise Mennonites had already begun an outreach on Linville Hill. During the next two decades, this generation of Mennonites had initiated almost one new church planting every year; they called them Sunday schools.

One of John H. Mellinger's first acts in mission in regions beyond Lancaster County was in New York City. He arranged for a train car of inner



David Shenk directs Overseas Ministries for EMM.

city children to come to Lancaster County to be hosted by Mennonite families. Five years after the formation of the Home Mission Advocates when Lancaster area Mennonites began church planting in Philadelphia, families across our Conference had already bonded with city people through the city children they had hosted.

While Mennonites in the Lancaster area were sending their first missionaries to nearby cities, an unnoticed event in far-off Kansas contributed to transforming Lancaster Mennonite Conference into a church also committed to overseas missions. That event happened within the soul of 12-year-old Phebe Yoder. In her devotions one day in 1915, she heard the Holy Spirit speak with clarity, "Phebe, I'm calling you to proclaim the gospel in Africa."

Phebe prepared, eventually acquiring credentials for nursing and a degree in biblical studies. She also sent her tithes to Mennonite Board of Missions, Elkhart, earmarked for mission in Africa.

The church could never forget these tithes for Africa. They contributed to the discussion by Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities in the early 1930s about outreach in Africa.

Yet the deep shadow of the economic depression indicated that a venture into Africa would be foolish. However, it was the bishops who counseled otherwise. They were convinced that resources would follow obedient vision; Phebe's tithes were transferred to EMBMC of Lancaster Conference as seed funds for mission in Africa.

It was a leap of faith when our mission board commissioned farmers Elam and Elizabeth Stauffer from Erisman Mennonite Church in 1933 to be our first overseas missionaries; they also commissioned John and Ruth Mosemann. On February 21, 1934, some 475 Lancaster area Mennonites took a special ten-coach train to New York City to send off their first overseas missionaries.

In January 1993 I shared in an eastern African church consultation at Shirati on Katuru Hill only a few steps from the tree where our first four overseas missionaries pitched their tents. The leaders present for the consultation represented Mennonite churches and mission in Tanzania, Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Djibouti where EMM missionaries have served. We discovered that only 60 years after our first missionaries made friends on Katuru Hill, there are now 90,000 baptized members in eastern Africa Mennonite churches.

Home Ministries outreach also scattered our people. They went to cities and communities sometimes more than a thousand miles from home; the Hawaii partnership is 6,000 miles away! In one century of home mission, these missionaries began 271 fellowships, Sunday schools, or churches. They helped form new conferences: Southeast and New York Mennonite Conferences. They helped plant clusters of churches in Birmingham, Miami, Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston. Today Home Ministries serves among 10 language groups and in over two dozen cities and towns; newly planted churches are experiencing about 500 conversions each year.

For these 100 years compassion for the poor and hungry has always been a core commitment. Within only four years of the 1894 formation of the Advocates, these Mennonites began a community development ministry among an impoverished African American community in the Welsh Mountains; they taught technical skills. From those beginnings, the breadth of compassion ministries has been astonishing. Examples are the deaf in Lancaster, the blind in Addis Ababa, lepers in Shirati, AIDS prevention education in Philadelphia, literacy in Alta Verapaz, home crafts in Laguna, a library in Hong Kong, low credit housing in Johns Island, victim-offender

reconciliation efforts, hospitality for international students, or conciliation efforts in Somalia. Our compassion ministries are sometimes done in concert with Mennonite Central Committee, such as providing corn for Ethiopia.

During our first century in overseas mission, 995 missionaries have served in 51 countries; when we include Discipleship Ministries teams, our people have served in 61 countries. The 582 who have served in Home Missions have helped to plant churches in 15 states, including the District of Columbia. Discipleship Ministries (formerly Voluntary Service) which began in Homestead, Florida, in 1952 has commissioned 3,965 volunteers. They have served in 32 overseas countries and in 21 states. During our first century, 5,434 people have served with EMM.

Many have shared their finances sacrificially; in 80 years we have contributed \$113,541,000 for these efforts in missions. Calculated on the value of 1993 dollars, we have given a quarter of a billion dollars!

Sixty years after we commissioned the first overseas missionaries, the churches which the worldwide EMM team has helped to plant are now present in at least two dozen overseas countries. They speak some 60 languages. They comprise some 120,000 members, and our estimates are that every year they are now baptizing as many members as there are in Lancaster Mennonite Conference.

These churches have also become Great Commission communities who are reaching out to their neighbors and into regions beyond with the gospel.

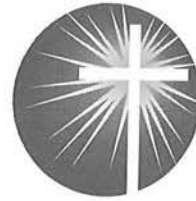
For example, in harmony with the 16th century Anabaptists, the favorite preaching text among the K'ekchi' of Guatemala is the Great Commission. These people who are the poorest of the poor walk the mountains and valleys of central Guatemala taking the gospel from village to village. They are now praying and planning to commission their first international missionary to share the gospel with an unreached people in Belize.

It was harvest time in Jesus' day. He commanded his disciples to pray for laborers for the harvest.

It was also harvest time when the Home Mission Advocates met in Paradise 100 years ago and when our first overseas missionaries sailed from New York in 1933.

And it is harvest time today. Surely, the Spirit of God calls every congregation in Lancaster Mennonite Conference to commission people for mission in the Jerusalems, the Judeas, the Samarias, and the uttermost parts of our world.





A Mission to Six Continents

Triumph and Suffering in Africa

The Meserete Kristos Church in Ethiopia, which grew from five thousand to fifty thousand during a decade of persecution, rejoices in its new freedom to worship.

Between Lake Victoria and the Indian Ocean more than twenty thousand members of the Tanzania Mennonite Church witness joyfully to Christ's power to transform lives. Some four thousand more in the Kenya Mennonite Church reach out in a ministry to Muslims.

In Djibouti, a little country stretching along a gulf of the Indian Ocean, missionaries teach English to Muslims in a government school.

A Christian woman builds bridges between white suburban church-goers and native Africans who live in a squatter camp on the outskirts of

Community halls once used by the Marxist government for communist gatherings are now used by the Meserete Kristos Church for worship.
Photo by D. Michael Hostetter.





Guatemalan mother and child.
Photo by Dale D. Gehman.

Johannesburg in South Africa. In Swaziland and Mozambique American missionaries work and worship with indigenous churches.

From a country devastated by inter-clan warfare, a Somali Mennonite pastor writes, "I am separated from my wife and children. We are hungry and tired. Send help if you can."

Hope for Central and South America

A vigorous Mennonite Church in Honduras will celebrate its fiftieth anniversary in 2000 A.D. In a remote mountain area, the playing fields of the Guatemalan civil war, missionaries share Christ with K'ekchi' Indians. A Youth Evangelism Service team helps Garifuna Christians in Belize carve a communal farm out of the forest. In politically violent El Salvador, Mennonite congregations try to demonstrate a better way of living together.

The international flavor of oil-rich Venezuela is reflected in the Mennonite churches in Caracas. Since becoming Christians, Quechuas in Peru, who once worked their high Andean fields alone because they feared neighbors would steal their potatoes, now enjoy planting and harvesting together.

In spite of danger, EMM co-missioners return to a medical ministry to suffering Haitians. Throughout the islands, Choice Books Caribbean places Christian literature in bookracks in public places.

Central and North American Mennonites partner to plant churches in Mexico City, the world's most populous urban area.

Excitement in Europe

Ten miles above the Arctic Circle in Sweden, Mennonite youth find opportunities to share the good news of Christ as they assist in conversational English classes in a high school.

The pastor of a Mennonite congregation in northeastern France reports the conversion of a hard-rock musician, whose friends asked to know more about Christ when they saw the change in his life.

EMM workers, in partnership with the Mennonite Church in Berlin, have planted a church in Halle, a city of 300,000 in former East Germany.

A German-American couple commissioned by EMM builds friendships with neighbors as they relate to the Augsburg Mennonite Church and minister to Mennonite youth in Bavaria.

Discipleship Ministries sends a Youth Evangelism Service team to Romania to teach in the University, deliver books in the schools, and lead Bible studies.

In the summer of 1992 thirty people met in Zagreb to consider the power of non-violence as a response to the conflict in former Yugoslavia.

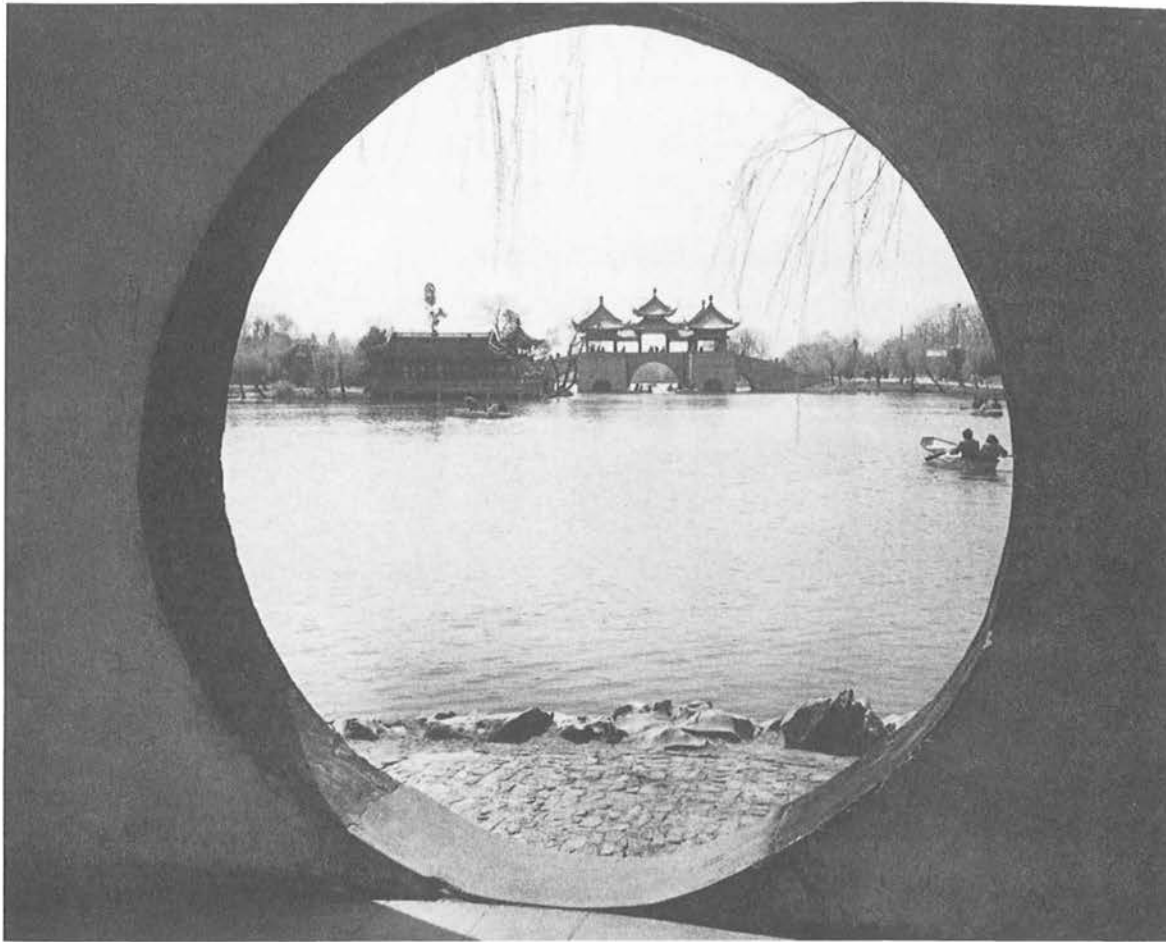
Harvest Time in Southeast Asia

"Whenever the Lord opens the door, we are opening our arms awaiting your return to help us bring the gospel to the sixty million Vietnamese in this beloved land." A Vietnamese Evangelical Church leader sent this message to MCC and EMM and other mission agencies that worked in Vietnam before 1975.

Recently, the Integrated Mennonite Church of the Philippines commissioned a couple to minister to Filipino maids (some of

Overlooking Sarajevo, Yugoslavia.
Photo by Don Jacobs.





*A window into China.
Photo by Don Jacobs.*

them Mennonite) who work in Hong Kong. Meanwhile, three Mennonite congregations in that crowded British crown colony place their trust in God as they await 1997 when Hong Kong will be returned to the People's Republic of China.

Teachers sent by the China Educational Exchange program witness by their presence in Chinese universities. Four Mennonites with expertise in publishing help Amity Press in Nanjing to produce and distribute Scriptures.

The Muria Synod of the Mennonite Church in Indonesia partners with EMM in church planting in Singapore. An Indonesian couple has already gathered a small congregation, a potential base from which to evangelize the unreached people of Southeast Asia.

Anabaptism in Australia

"We Aussies think Jesus was a good bloke. It's the church we can't stand," an Australian told a Mennonite missionary. In that island continent where, in the past, established churches have been oppressive, missionaries witness to the Jesus way of life.

In July 1988, the first Mennonite church building was dedicated in Fennel Bay on the East Coast. A missionary commissioned by that congregation works with inmates in a prison in Sydney.

On the West Coast, the Perth Mennonite Fellowship was born when seven adults and five children signed a covenant to work together in worship, mission, and community. This congregation relates to a small group of Christians in a mining town an eight-hour drive north of Perth.

Anabaptist-type fellowships have sprung up in Canberra and Melbourne

in the Southeast and across the Tasman Sea in New Zealand. In Papua, New Guinea, across the Torres Strait to the North, a couple sent by EMM assists Wycliffe Bible Translators by maintaining electronic equipment.

The Hope Mennonite Church in Fennel Bay hosts retreats for Anabaptist leaders from Australia and New Zealand. One leader has a vision to establish a house fellowship in the capital city of every Australian province.

Mission Field, North America

The 73-year-old pastor of the Boston Chinese Church of Saving Grace looks for a young Chinese church planter to begin work in another part of the city.

In the mountains of Kentucky a Voluntary Service worker insulates an old woman's house so that winter winds no longer blow through it.

Sponsored by local churches, three hundred refugees from the former Soviet Union worship each Sunday afternoon in the Weaverland Mennonite Church.

At Beth Shalom in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Christian counselors provide housing, emotional support, and spiritual direction to help single mothers to a secure future.

The Mennonite Church in Homestead, Florida, serves as headquarters for volunteers helping the victims of Hurricane Andrew to rebuild their homes and lives.

An intentional interracial Christian community in New York City seeks to make kingdom living relevant to urban life through service, hospitality, and declaration of the good news.

Young people from Hispanic Mennonite churches in eastern Pennsylvania give a summer of service in northwestern Mexico.

By December 1993 twenty-two hundred persons were regularly attending young churches planted by workers commissioned by the Home Ministries Department of EMM.



Marie Ho, wife of Kenson Ho who pastors the Boston Chinese Church of Saving Grace, chats with a nursing home resident. 1990 photo.

How the Mission Began



Mission Vision by David W. Shenk

Faithfulness in mission is just this: cooperating with the movement of the Holy Spirit among us and around the world.

That always stretches us! In fact, during our centennial celebration we are being stretched into commissioning missionaries to serve in three new frontiers of mission for us: Lithuania, Mongolia, and Albania.

How do we know the Holy Spirit is saying go? Let me explain.

Four years ago a young man serving in a Summer Training Action Team confided, "The Lord is calling me to go to Mongolia!"

We responded, "That is most unlikely. Mongolia is ruled by an atheistic communist government."

Two years later the communist government in Mongolia cracked. The government called for church mission and service agencies to help in the moral and spiritual reconstruction of the country.

In partnership with Mennonite Board of Missions, Eastern Mennonite Missions decided to enter Mongolia with the first missionary, Laura Schlabach, beginning assignment December 1993.

The day after I prepared the memo to our Executive Committee requesting this faith commitment, we received a check from California earmarked for mission in Mongolia. We expect that this generous gift will provide for all EMM expenses in Mongolia for 1994.

The accounts of the way the Holy Spirit has led us into Lithuania and Albania, also formerly communist countries, are equally dramatic.

For a number of years Dennis and Sheri Brooks have been preparing for a teaching ministry in Eastern Europe. With the Mount Vernon congregation taking full responsibility for their financial support, Dennis and Sheri will be teaching in Lithuania in the first Christian college in the former Soviet Union.

For at least a decade Paul Kropf had been preparing himself for missions among Muslims. After their marriage June walked with the same commitment.

Just as Albania opened for Mennonite mission involvement, Paul and June were ready. EMM is partnering with Virginia Board of Missions. The Buffalo congregation is taking responsibility for the finances. The Kropfs left for Albania on October 19, 1993. Ray and Nancy Reitz from the Mountville Mennonite congregation accompanied them.

Ray had visited Albania several months earlier. He bonded with the people. Some Albanians pled for missionaries. The Reitzes accompanied Paul and June

David Shenk directs Overseas Ministries for EMM.



1st Meeting

Sept. 15, 1894.

By invitation of brother John H. Mellinger a number of the brethren met at his house to consider means of aiding home mission work in the Mennonite church. Bro. John H. Mellinger was chosen as temporary chairman, and bro. Isaac E. Hershey as temporary secretary.

After considerable discussion it was decided to form an organization to aid home mission work as far as practicable, and the brethren J. A. Ressler, Isaac E. Hershey, and Jacob H. Mellinger were chosen as a committee to draw up a Constitution, and a Declaration of Principles to be presented at the next meeting.

It was also decided to speak to Bishop Isaac Eby, and bro. John R. Buckwalter, and bro. Isaac E. Hershey were elected for that purpose, and were instructed to see Bishop Eby the next morning.

The meeting then adjourned to meet Sept. 29.

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—Minutes of the first meeting of the Home Mission Advocates.

to introduce them to Albanians who want to know Christ.

The Holy Spirit is our leader in global missions. Our calling is to cooperate.

Home Mission Advocates—Mustard Seed of Mission

The mission that touches six continents with 147 overseas workers and 123 more at home began in a farmhouse at Harristown, three miles east of Paradise, Pennsylvania. On September 15, 1894, twelve men, at the invitation of John H. Mellinger and Isaac Hershey, met in Mellinger's home to pray and talk about their convictions for missions.

New ideas were stirring in Lancaster Conference. Leaders approved Sunday School in 1871. Although revival meetings were forbidden until 1903, news of revival elsewhere in the Mennonite Church spread to Lancaster County. Mission meetings in other Protestant churches attracted Mennonite visitors.

John Mellinger was superintendent and Isaac Hershey was a teacher in the mission-oriented Paradise Sunday School, out of which came two of the earliest Mennonite city missionaries—Hershey Leaman and Mary Denlinger, workers at the Chicago Home Mission. Another teacher, J. A. Ressler, who four years later volunteered for service in India, accepted the invitation to the meeting in Mellinger's home.

The twelve men, all lay members, decided to form an organization "to aid home mission work as far as practicable." They called themselves the "Home Mission Advocates."

John H. Mellinger: Man With A Vision

Zeal for missions was the driving force of John H. Mellinger's long life. After leading the movement that began in 1894, he served as president of the Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities from 1914 to 1934 and continued as a member of the board until his death in 1952. At EMM's fiftieth anniversary celebration, the ninety-year-old Mellinger said, "I cannot project details, but I believe the man who stands in my place at the one-hundredth anniversary will report great expansion."

John recalled an experience as a boy of eleven. At Strasburg Church one Sunday morning he heard a sermon on Matthew 28:19-20. "I remember that I sat beside my father in church," he said. "On the way home I asked him why the preacher did not mention the first part of his text. He spoke only about 'teaching all things' and passed over 'going into all the world and baptizing.' Father replied that he did not know why the preacher did so. That experience stuck to me, and it was that which prodded me to action when Home Mission Advocates was started."

What made an eleven-year-old ask such a question when no one in Lancaster Conference had begun to speak openly about mission work? Who planted the seed that bore fruit in more than half a century of active promotion of home and foreign missions?

Response—Positive and Negative

"What We Are Doing and Why," was the title of John Mellinger's address at the first public meeting of the Home Mission Advocates in January 1895. About 150 people came to that meeting and more than sixty of them accepted the invitation to join the organization.

Activity like this was bound to attract attention, not all favorable. Some people objected to raising money for missions: "After a while you won't be able to go to church without taking your pocket book along." The cautious thought the group was moving too fast. The concerned expressed fears that



Hershey Leaman of the
Chicago Mission

John H. Mellinger, as a boy in 1880.



The Regular Quarterly Meeting

OF THE

MENNONITE S. S. MISSION

WILL BE HELD AT

Kinzer, Lancaster County, Pa.,

SATURDAY, JANUARY 27, 1900.

PROGRAMME.

9:30 A. M.

Devotional Exercises. Organization.

Opening Sermon.

Address: "Education in Charitable Giving,"

Samuel Hess, Shiremanstown, Pa.

Report of Welsh Mountain Industrial Mission.

Miscellaneous.

Noon Recess.

1:00 P. M.

Song Service.

1:30 P. M.

Devotional Service.

Letter from J. A. Ressler, Dhamtari, India.

Address: "Elements of Good Government,"

Benj. Weaver, Churchtown, Pa.

Address: "Bondage of Insubordination,"

M. G. Weaver, Spring Grove, Pa.

Miscellaneous.

Adjournment, 3:45 p. m.

Singing from "Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs."

Lunch provided.

All are invited.

Handbill of a mission meeting in 1900.

the movement would split the church. A few said the Advocates wanted to make a name for themselves and overthrow the authority of the church. "You'll soon want preaching in every fence corner," complained one preacher, "and the Mennonite Church will become poor."

Except for Bishop Isaac Eby, in whose district the movement grew, the bishops were cautious about the new direction. In the spring of 1895 they asked the newly formed Advocates to discontinue their activities.

The Mennonite Sunday School Mission

At their second public meeting the Advocates heard that the bishops "respectfully requested" them to disband. The minutes, after mentioning a period of discussion, state tersely, "A motion to continue the organization was unanimously carried." In a less defiant mood the group appointed a committee to try to work out an agreement with the bishops.

A half year later at the third public meeting, the committee reported that Sunday school work would be acceptable. That afternoon the Home Mission Advocates officially disbanded, and before adjourning, organized as a Sunday School Mission. After making cosmetic changes in the constitution, they continued their activities.

More than fifty years afterward someone asked John Mellinger, "Just how did the Sunday School Mission differ from the Home Mission Advocates?"

The ninety-year-old eyes twinkled. John chuckled as he said, "They were the same." Then he added seriously, "With this difference. Formerly we advocated, but now we acted."

Early Mission Sunday Schools

In 1895 Isaac Hershey started a Sunday school in an empty union church building at Linville Hill, south of Paradise. Once prosperous because of a nickel mining industry, the neighborhood became depressed when the mines closed. Children coming to Sunday school were so poor that Hershey's sons went barefoot to avoid embarrassing the shoeless boys. Clothing for inadequately clad children came from the store which Hershey owned. Enrollment reached nearly two hundred before families began leaving Linville Hill to find jobs elsewhere. Difficulty with permission to use the building closed the work near the end of its second decade.

A second Sunday school, opened in a little stone schoolhouse on a southern spur of the Welsh Mountain, grew into the Red Well congregation. However, after some thirty years, when membership declined as older members died and young ones moved out of the community, the services discontinued.

A third Sunday school in the village of Ronks had an even shorter life.

The Vine Street Mission

A fourth mission Sunday school began on North Street in South Lancaster in 1897. As it grew it moved first to Rockland Street, then to East Vine Street. The "sister workers" who lived in the building gave full time to the outreach. Besides teaching Sunday school classes, conducting sewing schools, helping in children's meetings and cottage prayer meetings, and sponsoring girls' meetings, they handed out tracts, visited in homes, and

John H. Mellinger, a founder of the Lancaster Conference mission movement, with his wife Barbara and daughter Anna, 19.



took gifts of food, clothing, and coal to needy families.

The Great Depression magnified opportunities to feed the hungry. By the early 1930s more than sixty families were receiving weekly food baskets. In one year some four thousand meals were served to homeless men. Older congregations sent money and food. Many Mennonite women met in the basement of the East Chestnut Street meetinghouse to can fruit and vegetables. Others got empty jars at the mission to fill with produce from gardens and orchards.

Vigorous witness and tireless nurture led to a growing mission-minded congregation. Today it is the Charlotte Street Mennonite Church.



The Red Well Schoolhouse was used by Mennonites for religious purposes prior to 1899.

A Plea From the Mountain

One hot July day in 1897 the Reverend Melford Hagler, the pastor of the Mount Hope Chapel, a Presbyterian church in the Welsh Mountains, walked from his home to Paradise to attend the quarterly meeting of the Mennonite Sunday School Mission. The people he served were descendants of slaves who had worked in iron forges along the Conestoga River in Caernarvon Township. The ironmasters had given their freed slaves plots of ground on the deforested mountain. The freed men moved into shacks abandoned by woodcutters and charcoal burners as woodlands were depleted. Unable to make a living on little patches of poor soil, most of the mountain people lived in extreme poverty.

When invited to speak, Mr. Hagler told the Mennonites about the needs of his community. One member described his speech, "He pled for financial, moral, and Christian support in such ringing eloquence as to carry the large congregation with him to laughter, to tears, and to final action."

The Welsh Mountain Industrial Mission

A self-help venture, unlike anything Mennonites had ever tried, began on the Welsh Mountain. In March 1898 twenty-two men and boys were employed to clear chestnut sprouts from ten acres, the beginning of a farm where corn, strawberries, potatoes, and other vegetables grew. For a year, Samuel Musselman, chairman of the Welsh Mountain Industrial Mission Board, drove from Blue Ball to direct the work. Then Noah and Elizabeth Mack became resident superintendents. Before long, in addition to mountain people employed on the farm, women were sewing in a shirt factory and men were weaving carpets and making brooms. A store, where customers paid in cash or in credit slips for work done at the mission, sold

MANUFACTURERS OF
CARPETS, BROOMS, ETC.

GROWERS OF
CABBAGE AND STRAWBERRIES.

Welsh Mountain Industrial Mission,

NOAH H. MACK, Superintendent.

Shipping Point, East Earl, Pa.

New Holland, Pa., R. F. D. No. 4, *Aug. 24* 1903

Welsh Mountain Industrial
Mission manufactured
carpets and brooms.

nearly a quarter of a century the day-by-day mission was carried on by the two devoted women.

In 1908, when the growing work moved to Norris Square, concern to pay for the new building led the Lancaster Conference Bishop Board to its first official support of the work of the Mennonite Sunday School Mission.

New Directions in Philadelphia

"Some time when you want to give groceries to a poor family, let me know. I'll fill a basket for you," said a storekeeper who appreciated the literature distributed by the mission. J. Paul Graybill accepted his offer the very next day.

In 1922 the Bishop Board had sent Graybill and his wife Phebe to take charge of the ministerial work in Philadelphia. Within a few years after arriving he developed new methods of outreach. Hoping to reach youth and adults as well as children, he introduced outdoor tent meetings, summer Bible school, young people's meetings, and classes in singing and Bible doctrine. He put converts to work in the church.

Contributions of food for the hungry made possible semi-weekly food distributions during Depression years. Trucks came twice a week loaded with food from Mennonites and Amish in Eastern Pennsylvania. After the city opened soup kitchens, the need for private relief diminished, and the workers were able to concentrate again on evangelism and church building.

A New Beginning: The Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities

A breakthrough came in the spring of 1909. Jacob N. Brubacher, moderator of Lancaster Conference, preached at a quarterly meeting of the Mennonite Sunday School Mission.

Brubacher, energetic pioneer in Sunday school work, had been cautious about the lay mission movement. Fifteen years of observation convinced him the group was not "breaking up the dear old church." Before his change of heart, only a handful of bishops had supported the mission. Four years after Brubacher showed his approval, the Bishop Board said yes to a petition to organize a board "to take care of such funds as may be donated or bequeathed for charitable and missionary purposes," a decision which gave birth to the Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities. The request came from the Mennonite Sunday School Mission, whose leaders felt their projects needed the direction and support of an official church organization.

On June 8, 1914, the Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities was organized, with John H. Mellinger as its first president.



J. Paul Graybill began as a mission worker in Philadelphia in 1922.



Emma Rudy (1982) worked in Philadelphia from 1926 to 1964.

Photo by David Fretz.

CERTIFICATE OF INCORPORATION CHARTER

OF THE

Lancaster County Mennonite Sunday School Mission.

To the Honorable, the Judges of the Court of Common Pleas, in and for the County of Lancaster, Pennsylvania

WHEREAS, We, the undersigned, citizens of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, being members of the Mennonite Church, known as the "Old Mennonite Church," whose names are subscribed to this Charter or Certificate of Incorporation, have associated ourselves together for the purposes and upon the terms and by the name herein stated, under the provisions of the Act of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, entitled "An Act to provide for the Incorporation and Regulation of certain Corporations," approved the twenty-ninth day of April, in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and seventy-four, and the several supplements thereto, we do therefore set forth and declare that:

I. The name of the Corporation shall be "The Lancaster County Mennonite Sunday School Mission."
II. The purposes for which this Corporation is formed is for the worshipping of Almighty God, and the support, extension and dissemination of the knowledge of the Holy Gospel, according to the faith, doctrines, creed, discipline and usages of the Old Mennonite Church; the establishing and supporting Sunday Schools in neglected districts, and the imparting of religious instruction therein, in conformity to and in accordance with the faith, doctrines and ritual of the Old Mennonite Church; to stimulate missionary activity and to encourage works of mercy in the congregations of the Old Mennonite Church; to endeavor to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the ministrations of Christian love to those not now reached by the churches; to co-operate with such institutions and agencies of the Old Mennonite Church as are already engaged in Inner Mission work, and to undertake new Inner Mission activities as circumstances may suggest and demand; and to bring into closer union of effort the institutions, agencies and persons of the congregations of the Old Mennonite Church aforesaid, engaged, or to become engaged, in Inner Mission work.

III. The location of the said Corporation and the place wherein its business is to be transacted is at Lancaster City, Pennsylvania.

IV. The Corporation is to have perpetual existence.

V. The Corporation has no Capital Stock. The membership thereof shall be composed of the subscribers and their associates, and of such other persons as may from time to time be admitted to membership in such manner and upon such requirements as may be prescribed by the By-Laws.

VI. The oversight and management of said Corporation shall be vested in a Board of Trustees, the number of which is fixed at six, a majority of whom shall be lay members of the "Old Mennonite Church," and the names and residences of those who are chosen Trustees for the first year and until an election is lay had under this Charter, are as follows, viz: John H. Mellinger, East Lampeter Township; Amos A. Rosler, Strasburg Township; Christian Neff, Paradise Township; Henry Hershey, Lancaster Township; Landis Hershey, Salisbury Township; Isaac E. Hershey, Paradise Township, all in the said County of Lancaster, in the State of Pennsylvania.

VII. Such other officers as the Corporation shall see fit to create and elect by the By-Laws shall be elected at such time, in such manner, by such persons, for such terms and at such places as the By-Laws shall prescribe and regulate, and be subject to removal as therein set forth. The names of those chosen for President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer, until an election is lay had under this Charter, are as follows, viz: President, John H. Mellinger; Vice-President, Amos A. Rosler; Secretary, Henry Hershey; Treasurer, Christian Neff.

VIII. The Corporation shall have power to hold, purchase and transfer such real estate and personal property as its purposes may require, not exceeding the amount limited by law, and all the property of said Corporation, real or personal which shall hereafter be bequeathed, devised or conveyed to it shall be taken and held to ensure to it, subject to the control and disposition of the lay members thereof, or such constituted officers or representatives thereof as shall be composed of a majority of lay members.

IX. The By-Laws of this Corporation shall be deemed and taken to be its law, subordinate to the Statute aforesaid, this Charter and the Constitution and the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the Constitution of the United States. They shall be altered and amended as provided for by the By-Laws themselves, and shall prescribe the powers and functions of the Trustees and other officers therein mentioned, and those to be hereafter created and elected; the times and places of their meetings and of the meetings of this Corporation, the number of members who shall constitute a quorum at the meetings of the Corporation and of the other officers thereof; the qualification of the members, the manner of selecting officers, and the powers and duties of such officials, and such other matters as may be pertinent and necessary for the business to be transacted and the internal management of the Corporation.

WITNESS our hands and seals, this 24th day of June, Anno Domini, one thousand nine hundred and eleven.

John H. Mellinger
Amos A. Rosler
Christian Neff

Henry Hershey
Landis Hershey
Isaac E. Hershey

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, ss.
COUNTY OF LANCASTER,

Before me, the subscriber, a Justice of the Peace in and for said County of Lancaster, personally appeared John H. Mellinger, Amos A. Rosler, Christian Neff, Henry Hershey, Landis Hershey, Isaac E. Hershey, six of the subscribers to the foregoing certificate of incorporation, and in due form of law acknowledged the same to be their act and deed.

WITNESS my hand and official seal this 24th day of June, A. D. 1911.

P. C. LeFevre
Justice of the Peace.

Lancaster County, ss.

Charter filed in the office of the Prothonotary of the Court of Common Pleas in and for said county this 27th day of June, 1911.

Samuel F. Holtz
Prothonotary.

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF LANCASTER COUNTY, PENNA.

And now, this 18th day of December, 1911, the within Charter and Certificate of Incorporation having been presented to me, *Charles J. Lous*, one of the Justices of said County, accompanied by due proof of publication of the notice of this application as required by the Act of Assembly and rule of this Court in such cases made and provided, I certify that I have examined and perused the said charter and have found the same to be in proper form, and within the purposes named in the first class specified in section second of the Act of Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, entitled, "An Act to provide for the Incorporation and Regulation of certain Corporations," approved April 29th, 1874, and the supplements thereto, and the same appearing to be lawful and not injurious to the community, I do hereby on motion of N. Franklin Hall, Esq., on behalf of the petitioners, order and direct that the said Charter of The Lancaster County Mennonite Sunday School Mission aforesaid, be and the same is hereby approved, and that upon recording of the same and of this order, the subscribers thereto and their associates and their successors shall be a Corporation by the name of The Lancaster County Mennonite Sunday School Mission, for the purpose and upon the terms therein stated.

Attest

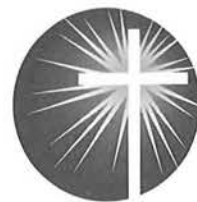
Samuel F. Holtz

Recorded in the office of Recording of Deeds, etc., in and for Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, in

Charter Book 3 Volume 18 Page 28

Witness my hand and seal of office this 18th day of December, A. D. 1911.

Memo Corpew
Deputy Recorder.



How Mission Happens

Mission Begins with Commitment to Jesus by Mahlon M. Hess

John H. Mellinger's 1894 prayer meeting provided the vision and the structures for my response to God's call to me. About 1929 (age 10-11) I sensed that I would serve in Africa. God showed me that response must begin with personal repentance and restitution. I experienced assurance of salvation and growth in a small group; I was invited to help in Sunday school, young people's Bible meeting, and summer Bible school. During four years of Bible study I shared in the Eastern Mennonite College itinerant evangelism effort in the mountains of Kentucky. In 1940 the congregations in our Manor district ordained me to serve on the circuit with three senior pastors.

Howard Charles asked me to assist him with "Missionary Messenger," and in 1942 Mellinger nominated me to the EMBMC board of directors. At the same time J. Paul Graybill nudged Lancaster Conference to undertake itinerant evangelism. I was appointed to the committee; my part was to research needy areas, to lead a 1943 exploratory trip to the South and to oversee the first team of Bible teachers sent to Florida and Alabama. After I taught Bible and missions for a year at Lancaster Mennonite High School, Mabel Eshleman and I were married and spent our honeymoon leading the second Bible school team to Florida and Alabama.

Just at the point when we were hoping to serve Africa from a North American base by writing, teaching, and recruiting missionaries, we were invited to serve in Tanganyika (now Tanzania). Our primary support groups counseled us to accept the appointment. Beginning in 1945 we served overseas twenty years and then eighteen years at Salunga in missions education and publicity. After retirement in 1982 I taught Bible three additional years in Africa, serving with my second wife, Mary.

For me, mission began with commitment to Jesus. As I helped with the task at hand, the church called to additional ministries. I never had to choose my role or campaign for one; my involvements grew out of guidance provided by the church.

I had the blessing of serving for four years with John Mellinger. In the fiftieth anniversary meeting at Paradise in 1945 he said, "Doors opened beyond our expectations, and I believe that the person who will stand here fifty years hence will report much greater expansion."

Mahlon and Mary Hess live at Landis Homes Retirement Community, Lititz, Pa. They completed an assignment with EMM in Tanzania in 1992. Photo by Dale D. Gehman.



Charter of the Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities



We, the undersigned, do hereby certify that the following is a true and correct copy of the Charter of the Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, as adopted by the General Conference of the Eastern Mennonite Church, held at Lancaster, Pa., on the 20th day of November, A.D. 1914.

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Witness my hand and seal this Twentieth day of November, A.D. 1914.

NAME	RESIDENCE	NAME	RESIDENCE
Wm. H. Hollings	York, Pa.	H. F. Vandyke	Hillside, East Lancaster, Pa.
John J. Lantz	York, Pa.	John B. Kuehner	York, Pa.
Wm. J. Lantz	York, Pa.	Wm. B. Kuehner	York, Pa.
John J. Lantz	York, Pa.	Wm. B. Kuehner	York, Pa.
John J. Lantz	York, Pa.	Wm. B. Kuehner	York, Pa.
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Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities was organized in 1914.



Columbia Mennonite Church began from the witness of Charles Byer in 1906.

Individual Initiative Spurs Mission

In January 1906 Charles Byer, "being called of God to launch away from home and kindred in Adams County," moved to Columbia, a town along the Susquehanna River. From a little house in an alley he witnessed in the neighborhood, using a baby coach to distribute literature and helping the poor who came to his door. After his marriage, his wife shared his concern for the physical and spiritual poverty around them. Sunday school met in their home, where benches (some improvised from boards on chairs) filled the front room, and the kitchen held the overflow.

Years later a Sunday school pupil expressed her appreciation: "Brother Byer would go out and gather the children in and tell them how much God loved them all. Then he moved away and I often thought about the little mission and all the good I learned there."

In time workers from neighboring churches in the country came to help, the Mennonite Sunday School Mission lent support, and the church grew in Columbia.

Mission Begins With Personal Concern

While hauling milk to the creamery, David High often gave rides to school children. When he learned that they did not go to Sunday school, he shared his concern with friends. They rented an old dance hall in a poor settlement just outside Lancaster city. The mission in Sunnyside had begun.

"People in Steelton would buy these good potatoes," a hired man told Frank Hertzler, who had trouble making ends meet after he quit farming tobacco. Frank began peddling potatoes and eventually had a regular market route. One day a customer asked him to speak to an unsaved neighbor. Frank did so, and the woman accepted Christ. The church had entered Steelton.

During a Child Study class at Eastern Mennonite School, Esther Mellinger became concerned for children in her village. The next summer she told them Bible stories in her brother-in-law's shop. A flourishing Bible school



David High started a Sunday school in Sunnyside in Lancaster, Pa., in 1930.



Jacob A. Ressler, first Lancaster foreign missionary.

developed, followed by Sunday school and worship services in an abandoned union church. A congregation grew in Hinkletown because one person cared.

A Congregation Hears the Call to Mission

J. A. Ressler, enroute to India, preached at the Weaverland Meetinghouse in 1899. The following May, Amanda Musselman, after a winter of service at the Chicago Home Mission before going to Philadelphia, "delivered an impressive address to the [Sunday] school on mission work." Six years later at Weaverland counsel meeting someone recommended that "more effort be made to reach outside places." As a result, the Weaverland Mission Committee was formed.

Besides conducting Sunday school and preaching services at several nearby places, the committee took the initiative to open an abandoned Mennonite meetinghouse in the Chester Valley. Services every two weeks began at Diamond Rock, where three Mennonite families formed the nucleus of the reorganized congregation. After several years the work moved to an unused schoolhouse at Frazer, along the Lincoln Highway near the main line of the Pennsylvania Railroad. As community interest grew, Frazer became an active congregation with many first-generation Mennonites as members. Outreach through literature distribution and summer Bible school reached far into neighboring communities.

Congregational Outposts Multiply

"Our mission field is right here in Reading," said a brother at the Gehman Church, where a group met in 1919 to study an Eastern Mennonite School correspondence course. Lessons on the book of Acts aroused conviction for witness in the nearby city where many members sold farm produce. That concern resulted in the Twelfth and Windsor Street Mission, which grew into four congregations scattered throughout the city.

Sunday school began in a room of the Lukens Steel Company building when the Millwood and Maple Grove congregations saw the need in the industrial town of Coatesville. The work grew so steadily that a meetinghouse was built in 1932. Within a few years the membership roll of the young mission church included names like Baldwin, Bolden, Cox, Mendenhall, Townsley, and Zemachi.

The East Chestnut Street congregation in Lancaster, after assisting the Vine Street Mission, began street meetings and tent evangelism in other needy parts of their city. Churches grew in Dillerville, Rossmere, and Laurel Street.

Through the 1930s and 1940s many other established congregations opened outposts which developed into healthy congregations.

The Church Spreads as People Move

"Missions by Colonization" became a watchword in the 1940s. However, before colonization became a deliberate mission strategy, churches grew in new places because Mennonites moved for personal reasons.

In 1922 several families from Maryland and Virginia moved to Washington, D.C., where the men, mostly carpenters, could find work. After a few years they organized a congregation, the Cottage City Mennonite

Hinkletown Mennonite Church began in an abandoned union church because Esther Mellinger told Bible stories to community children.





Church. At the request of Virginia Conference, Lancaster Conference accepted responsibility for the new group and its mission outreach.

All aboard for Frazer summer Bible school! 1950s photo.

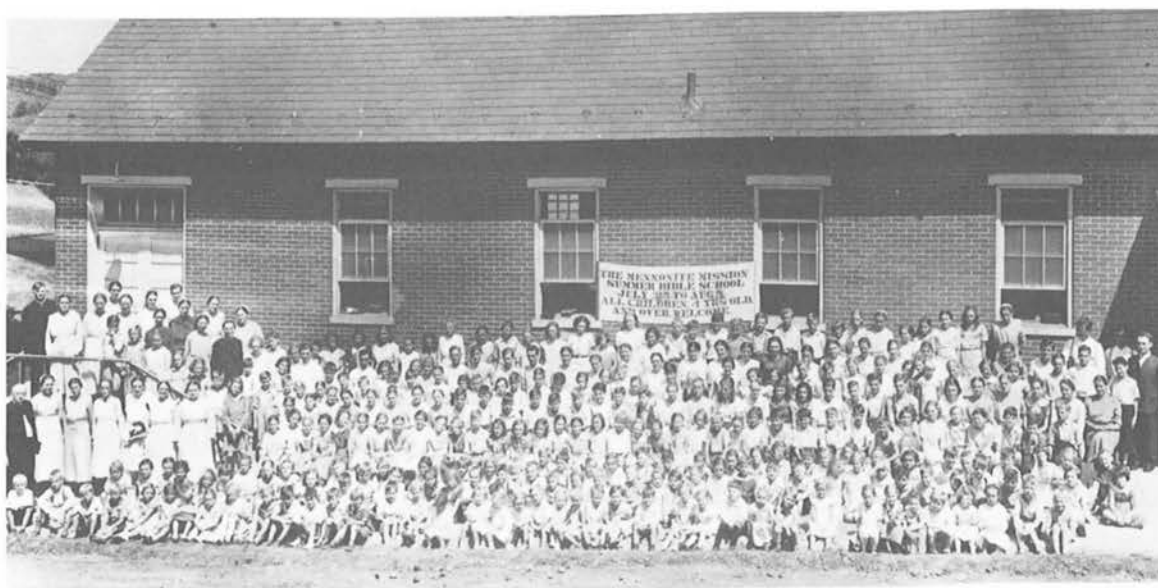
Another strong congregation began at Meckville when Mennonite families from Virginia and West Virginia moved to a community near the foot of the Blue Mountains in Lebanon County. One of the men, after hearing John S. Hess preach at revival meetings in a church near Lebanon, invited him to hold meetings in a schoolhouse near Meckville. John accepted, and regular services began in the schoolhouse in 1931. After the school burned down, a meetinghouse was built. One member sold a tract of land for one dollar, a contractor from Lititz donated his service, some eighty men volunteered labor, and others gave materials.

New Believers Take the Church with Them

Families from the Mennonite mission who moved into Southeast Reading continued to attend Sunday school at Twelfth and Windsor, inviting new neighbors to go with them. Mission workers provided transportation until the commuters numbered about fifty people. In 1933 a building was secured on Fairview Street and a new church was born.

Coatesville summer Bible school, 1938.

A young couple from Norris Square Mission moved into a housing





(l. to r.) Raymond Charles, Lois Garber (Kauffman), Margaret Horst (Breneman), Anna Lois Charles, a team of four young people who visited and distributed literature, taught summer Bible school, held children's meetings, and preached in northern Florida in the summer of 1943.



Clara and Bryant Robin, early members of Creek Indian Mission in 1958.

Summer Bible school at St. Ann Ave. Mennonite Church, New York City, July, 1952.

development in Northeast Philadelphia. They began Bible classes for neighborhood children. Summer Bible school and Sunday school followed until their little house overflowed. In 1949 the first converts were baptized. The Oxford Circle congregation grew from this work.

Permanent work began in New York City in the 1940s after a family from the Ybor City Mission in Tampa moved to the Bronx and asked the Eastern Board to start a mission there. When a store front chapel was rented, workers from Lancaster County, many of them self-supporting, moved into the city. From this small beginning came the Burnside Mennonite Fellowship which ministers to an interracial community in West Bronx.

Itinerant Evangelism Directs Colonists South

Four people lived in a house trailer in northern Florida, cooked on a charcoal burner, and chased cows, pigs, and chickens away from their outdoor table. For five weeks in the summer of 1943 they visited and distributed literature in the morning, taught summer Bible school classes in the afternoon, and in the evening conducted children's meetings and preaching services. Three communities welcomed them to use empty churches and urged them to return next summer. The good response encouraged the Eastern Board to continue sending teams to southeastern United States.

The vision for the South had begun the preceding year when Mahlon Hess, after an exciting experience in a student itinerant evangelism program at Eastern Mennonite School, stirred the imagination of the Eastern Board.

In 1944 John and Elsie Lehman were ordained for itinerant evangelism in northern Florida and southern Alabama, and Lancaster County families were urged to move south as self-supporting workers. Within ten years eleven families had moved to southern Alabama, seven churches held regular services, and fifty-one local persons had become members.

Colonization and Itinerant Evangelism Bear Fruit

Brewton, Atmore, Byrnesville, Cobbtown, Crestview, and Straight Mountain became familiar names to mission-minded Lancaster County Mennonites as new



Bethel, Alabama, congregation which began in 1945.



Poarch Community Church, Alabama



Clarence Stallworth and family on day of his ordination at Oak Drive in 1982.



churches grew in southern Alabama and across the border in northwest Florida. Early groups worshipped in garages, community centers, or rented church buildings. A member at the Bethel Church remembered Paul Shelly putting wood on the fire in a stove near the pulpit in the old church while he kept on preaching. Community people helped freely when new churches were built. The dedication of the Calvary Church in 1948 climaxed the first Mennonite all-day meeting in the area. The program included reporting from twenty-five summer Bible schools which 1,100 people had attended that year.

As early as 1956, although neighbors complained to the sheriff, an integrated church developed in Freemanville, Alabama. Witness to Creek Indians grew into a responsible fellowship at Poarch Creek, which today is affiliated with the Gulf States Mennonite Fellowship.

A resident bishop was ordained in 1961. After several local men were called to the ministry in the next decades, the churches in the Southeast "came of age."



Luke Eby and Milton Brackbill at new building for Calvary congregation in 1948.

Vacationers Open Doors Northward

"Would you like to have a summer Bible school here?" asked a visitor at a tiny church in a coal-mining town in Tioga County, Pennsylvania.

"We've been praying for that!" said one of the women.

Lancaster County families vacationing in mountain cabins or hunting camps in northern Pennsylvania spurred outreach that extended to southern New York State. Several struggling rural congregations of other denominations offered their churches to the Mennonites.

Itinerant evangelism and summer Bible school opened new doors. Through the 1950s many Lancaster County congregations sponsored outpost summer Bible schools and Sunday schools. A number of mission-minded families bought farms in the area.

The first permanent work began at York's Corners in New York State, an outgoing congregation which reached out to neighboring communities. The small churches which grew in southern New York became part of the New York Mennonite Conference. Those in northern and central Pennsylvania related

The car and trailer the Itinerant Evangelism team used in 1943.





The Palo Alto congregation with Lester and Lena Hoover in right foreground 1964 photo.



York's Corners Mennonite Church in New York State. 1960 photo.

Flood of 1972. East side of Elmira, N.Y. Photo by the Chemung County Historical Society.



to Lancaster Conference. Six growing congregations in the city of Williamsport and environs resulted from the witness of the new rural churches around them.

Voluntary Service Builds Relationships

Each summer migrant workers, many from Appalachia, crowded into Redland Labor Camp to harvest vegetables in the fields near Homestead in Dade County, Florida. Young children had to shift for themselves during the day, since child labor laws forbade parents to take them to the fields.

In the early 1950s Eastern Mennonite Missions opened its first long-term Voluntary Service Unit at Redland. A year later the second unit began work in a migrant camp at Immokalee near the Everglades. Volunteers provided day care for pre-schoolers, led craft clubs and directed games for school children and teens, and reached adults through women's clubs, men's fellowships, mothers' meetings, family nights, and home visitation.

Churches grew in both places. As a result of the witness at Homestead, several congregations were established in northern Alabama, where families lived during the winter.

After small beginnings in migrant labor camps, VS units multiplied in urban areas. Volunteers helped to build new churches or assisted older congregations in more than a dozen East Coast cities from Florida to Maine.

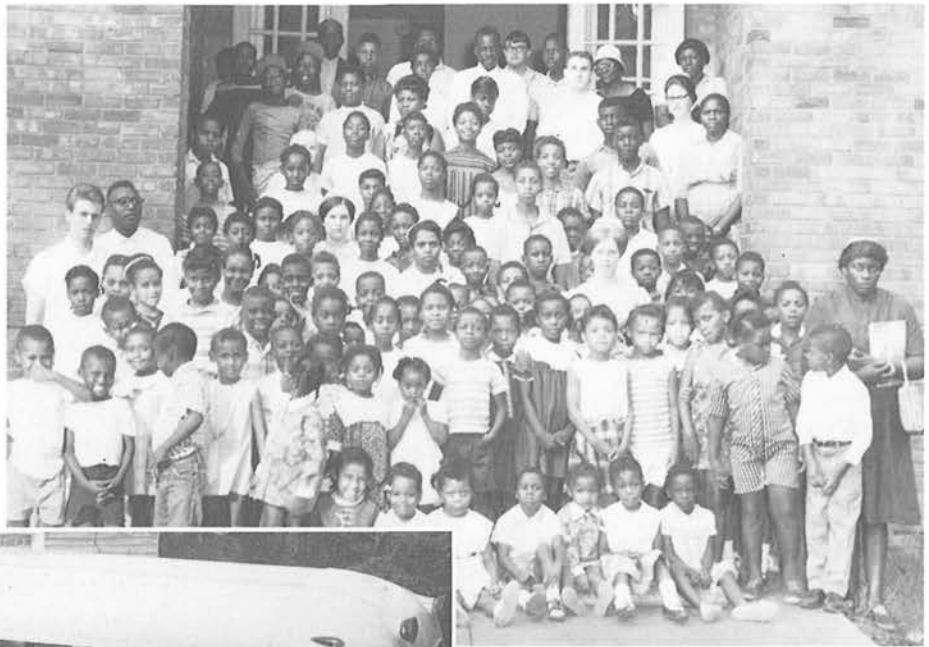
Mennonite Disaster Service Prepares the Way

Hurricane Agnes raged through the mid-Atlantic states in June 1972. Flooding of the Chemung River in southern New York devastated the region around Corning and Elmira. Mennonite Disaster Service rushed to help. In a twenty-two month period some twelve hundred men and women, both Mennonites and Amish, donated their time to clean away mud, reconstruct foundations, and repair or rebuild houses.

The warm feelings generated by this work of compassion encouraged Eastern Mennonite Missions and the New York State Fellowship of Churches to establish a follow-up ministry. The pastor of the Pleasant Valley congregation, well-known coordinator of the MDS work, became leader of the new outreach. Voluntary Service workers continued the work begun by MDS, showing special concern for persons bypassed by other agencies.

Two years after the disaster, twenty-two believers were bap-

Summer Bible school in Anderson, S.C., in 1968. Photos by Lewis D. Moorhead.



tized. Three months later fifteen more persons gathered at the river for baptism. The river which had brought disaster became the holy place where believers sealed their covenant with the people of God.

Church Planting Replaces Colonization

In Anderson, South Carolina, a few believers worshipped on the second floor of an old schoolhouse, where bare bulbs furnished light and a pot-bellied stove alternately heated and froze the worshippers. Leading the group was James Harris. He and his wife Mattie, active workers in a young Mennonite church in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, had returned to their home community as Eastern Board missionaries.

Racial tension was high in the 1960s. James demonstrated non-resistant love toward black brothers who suspected his motives and toward white racists who resisted his efforts. A small but vibrant Mennonite congregation grew in Anderson, the first integrated church in the city.

In the 1970s church planting like that of the Harrises replaced colonization as a strategy for evangelizing new places. In the past, Mennonite colonists had sometimes succeeded only in transplanting a Lancaster Conference church in a different environment. By sending one family, or at most two or three, as church planters, the Eastern Board hoped to establish new churches growing out of local soil.



Richard Landis (left) baptizing members into Word Fellowship, Stratford, New Jersey. 1981 photo by Nate Showalter.



Charles and Donna Arnold, church planters in Atlantic City, N.J., converse with a church member.

Heartsease Home for Girls in New York City. 1977 photo by J. D. Stahl.



Planted Churches Multiply

Church planting in eastern cities and towns flourished in the 1970s and 1980s. By the end of 1991 Eastern Mennonite Missions had more than a hundred adult church planters in fifty-four locations. Word Fellowship in Stratford, New Jersey, illustrates what happens when one charismatic family enters a new place.

In 1977 Richard and Lois Landis, former missionaries to Guatemala, were sent to plant a church in Clementon, New Jersey, a rapidly growing community southeast of Philadelphia. Except for the owner of their house and the principal of their sons' school, they knew nobody in town. Witnessing from door to door, talking to shoppers in malls, and eating out as a means of making contacts, they found people eager for friendly conversation.

Before long a group was meeting in their home for Sunday evening Bible study. Sunday morning worship and an informal Sunday school hour followed. In 1980 they began renovating a building purchased in nearby Stratford. Leadership training was important in the nurturing program of the young church.

"Dick's teaching was like that of the Apostle Paul," said a church elder. "He never asked us to do something he didn't demonstrate in his own life."

Planted Churches Call Out Planters

"You'll never guess what the Lord told me today," said Donna Arnold to her husband one day when he came home for lunch. "We are going to Atlantic City, and you are going to be pastoring."

Charles Arnold was an elder at Word Fellowship Church in Stratford, New Jersey. He didn't mind washing the coffee pot after a men's meeting, but he shrank from public speaking.

"If God wants me to pastor, he'll have to do a lot of work to prepare me," was his response to his wife's vision.

Several years later the elders of Word Fellowship were led to the conviction that the Arnolds should plant a church in Atlantic City. Charles and Donna confessed that the Lord had already spoken to them.

A vision of a tree with beautiful apples on the branches and bruised fruit on the ground called the Arnolds to reach out to people with broken and bruised lives. The newly-planted church ministers to city youth, to latchkey children, to young people from broken homes, and to boys and girls whose parents have been in prison. Into a community of low-income apartment complexes the New Life Covenant Church brings the light and life of Jesus.

Community Service Witnesses to Christ's Love

Especially in large cities Christ's love is shared as Christians work together to meet community needs. Beginning with crafts, clubs, and athletics for children and teenagers, projects in places like New York City, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C., soon broadened to include coffee houses, sandwich shops, Headstart and Daycare programs, lending libraries, and tutorial and remedial reading programs. Voluntary Service workers helped effectively in this social outreach.

A New York City church organized a food club to enable people to buy vegetables at wholesale prices, another formed a community association to work for better housing, and Heartsease Home for girls opened its doors to runaways and drug users. A church in Washington, D.C., got a van to take elderly people on shopping trips. The Diamond Street Mennonite Church in North Philadelphia renovated an empty four-story building as headquarters for a wide range of neighborhood services. A pastor in New Haven, Connecticut, became an advocate for the poor when gas or electricity was cut off.

Today, as church planters move into new places, they continue to develop

innovative ways of meeting the physical and social needs of their communities.

Older Churches Meet Neighbors' Needs

Mennonites in small towns and rural places supported the social programs in cities, contributing food and crafts to fund-raising sales, sending volunteers to help in special projects, and welcoming children to their homes for summer vacations.

Nearer home, they saw opportunities to meet social and emotional needs of their neighbors. In the 1980s several congregations pioneered a service to stay-at-home mothers, and the idea spread rapidly. Today about sixty Lancaster Conference churches have programs such as LIFT, SMILE, TIME OUT, and MOM (Morning Out for Mothers). Each week more than a thousand community women enjoy crafts, demonstrations, and book or Bible studies, while volunteers care for babies in nurseries and lead older children in games, music, crafts, and story hours. Other congregations started pre-school nurseries to reach out to their communities.

Several churches offer a special service in addition to the mothers' program and day care. The Mellinger Church, for example, conducts a tuition-based, state-approved program for pre-school children. Ninety three-to-five-year-olds are enrolled in Tuesday and Thursday morning or afternoon classes, with more on a waiting list.

Many members who feel timid about knocking on doors to invite people to church gladly help to share God's love in more relaxed situations. These programs have proved effective in reaching families for Christ.

Reaching Out to Community Youth

"Some of the teens at your place were out on the sidewalk smoking cigarettes last evening," a concerned neighbor told the director of a community youth center.

"Good!" was the quick reply. "Those are the ones we want here. We didn't come to minister to Christians."

Teenagers hanging around street corners in towns and villages because they had no place to go for wholesome fun became a concern for members of nearby congregations. Mennonite young adults and youth, in cooperation with representatives from neighborhood churches, opened centers where junior and senior high school pupils played basketball, Ping-Pong, pool, and table games or just relaxed over snacks.

At the *Rainbow's End* in Mount Joy, *Close Encounter* in Lititz, *Open Door* in Leola, and other centers, teens who enjoyed good times with volunteers began to share their problems—school troubles, broken homes, drugs, and alcohol. As Christians listened sympathetically, youngsters who would never venture into a church learned to enjoy discussing values. At that point Bible study no longer seemed like a threat.

Outreach Through Choice Books

In 1962 Iowa Mennonite Eugene Garber placed bookracks containing Christian literature for sale in two stores, one in Cedar Rapids and another in Iowa City. His vision of a witness to shoppers who do not patronize religious bookstores caught the imagination of Mennonites from Calgary, Alberta, to the Caribbean. Today Mennonite Board of Mission Choice Books, located in Harrisonburg, Virginia, coordinates and services programs in eighteen districts.

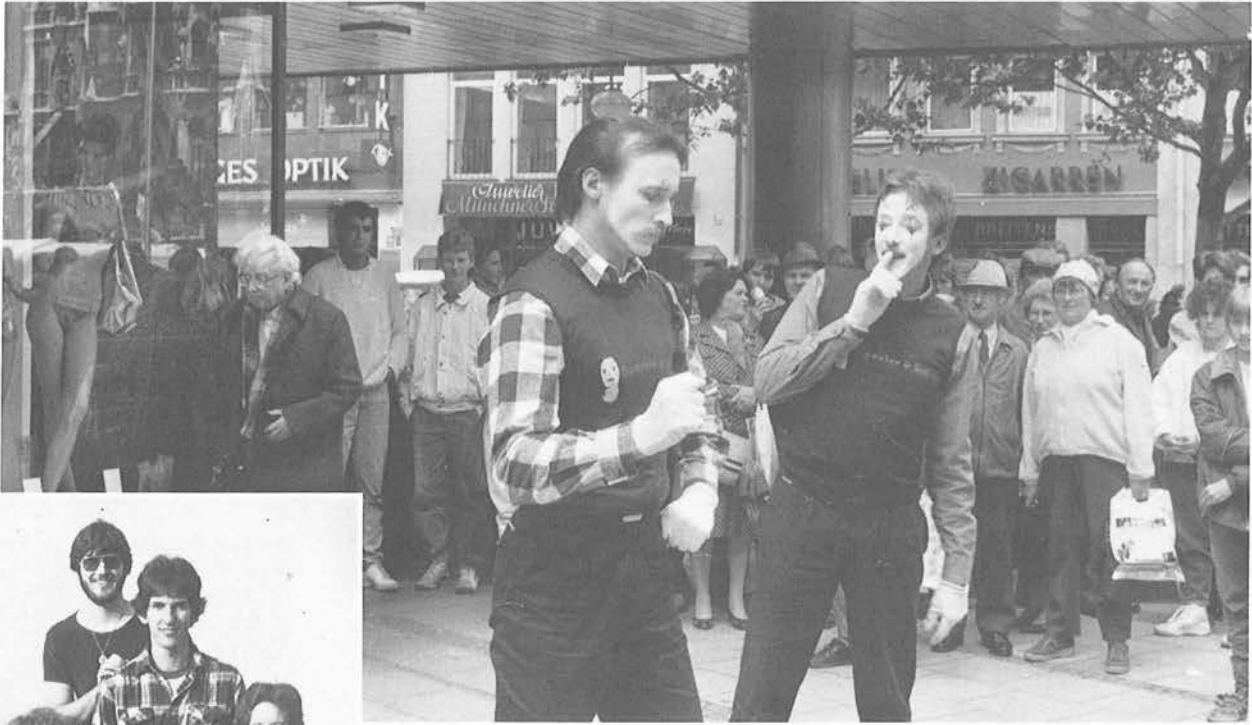
Eastern Mennonite Missions became involved in the program in 1967, after a worker at a mission outpost in New York State placed a bookrack in a



Charlene Schildt, teacher, and helper Lisa Nolt hold the attention of children at the LIFT Program at Erisman Mennonite Church. Photo by Alma Wenger.



Children at LIFT Program (Erisman) give a program to their mothers. Photo by Alma Wenger.



Germany YES team performing drama in a city plaza. 1986 photo.



1981 YES team.

France YES team. 1987 photo by David Harnish.



local drug store. In 1971 Lester and Lena Hoover were asked to coordinate the work in the Lancaster Conference area. Until 1980, when the inventory was moved to a warehouse at Salunga, the books were kept in the Hoover home, and volunteers serviced the racks in stores in their own localities.

Besides sponsoring bookrack evangelism in its own region, Eastern Mennonite Missions provides workers to assist Choice Books Caribbean, which from its base in Puerto Rico supplies 140 stores on twenty-eight island nations. In 1990 Choice Books Caribbean sold 66,000 books; Choice Books Lancaster, 96,000.

Youth Work and Witness

"To encourage youth to give a definite amount of time in serving the cause of Christ in the work of the Church," was the aim of the Voluntary Service Committee created in 1948. Already the Civilian Public Service program developed by the peace churches during World War II had instilled in youth a conviction for service and mission. Under Raymond Charles' vigorous leadership, VS began with short-term assignments in summer Bible school and builders' units. In the early 1950s long-term households were opened, the beginning of a program which placed thousands of young people, and older ones too, in significant projects at home and overseas.

Youth service took a new direction in 1980 when YES (Youth Evangelism Service) teams, modeled on Youth With A Mission, served in Belize, Germany, and Staten Island. Two years later STAT (Summer Training Action Team) gave short-term assignments to high school students.

In 1981 YES and STAT were added to the VS program under Discipleship Ministries, a new department of Eastern Mennonite Missions. Centers in Philadelphia and Baltimore offer intensive training in spiritual disciplines, cultural awareness, and evangelism.

In 1993 twenty-two YES teams witnessed and served in sixteen countries, as far away as Hong Kong; five STAT teams went to Europe, Latin America, and the United States; one new VS households was added to the ten scattered along the east coast of the United States; and an average of 115 prayer groups met weekly to support the work.



Lester Hoover checking a Choice Books bookrack. 1972 photo by David Fretz.



Galen Burkholder directs Discipleship Ministries for EMM.

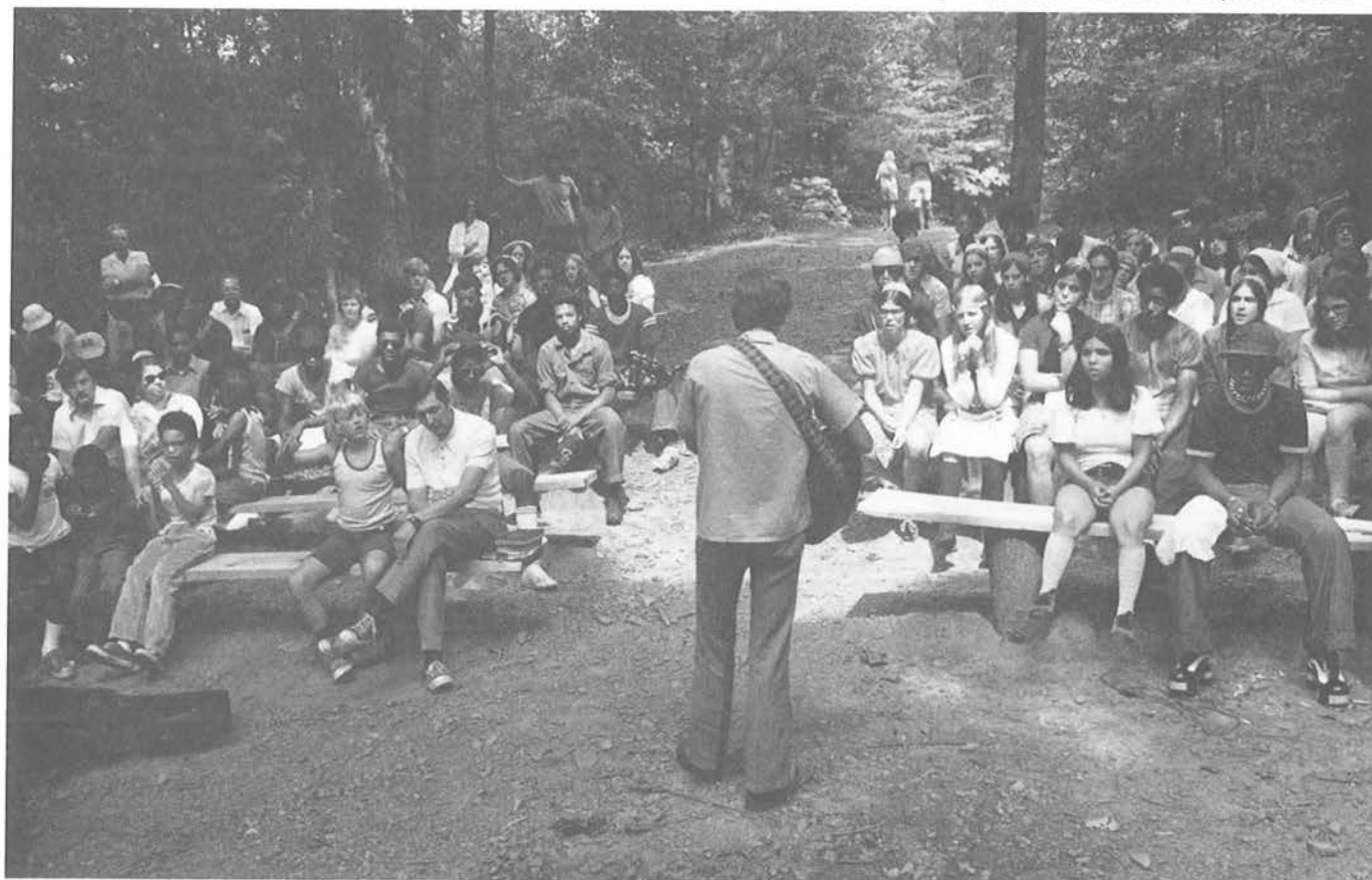
This I Celebrate by Galen Burkholder

Few things invigorate me more than seeing youth and young adults joining the movement of those investing their lives in the global assignment Jesus left for us to do. It happens in a variety of ways. But without exception, vision for this kind of involvement seems to grow out of an active pursuit of a closer relationship with the Lord. Renewal of this life-transforming relationship frees people to begin to see others as God does and to respond as Jesus would.

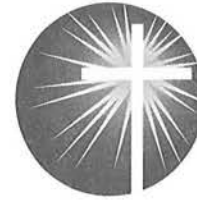
A world Christian vision shakes things around for all of us. I celebrate that young people are giving their lives to Christ's mission in Christ's way, but it always means dying to some deeply rooted patterns and priorities. That's a challenge. As our staff tries to walk closely with those serving through Discipleship Ministries in sorting out what they've heard and seen and experienced, we too are stretched.

We can't talk and pray with a volunteer through their bondage to self-centeredness and self-sufficient attitudes without some serious personal examination. We can't grapple with the astounding realities of poverty, spiritual darkness, and suffering which volunteers encounter without considering our own lifestyle responses. Yet the energy we glean from being on a common journey to faithfulness in the global mission of Christ and the power breathed into our lives by the Spirit keeps us going. And the disciple-making movement keeps building.

Camp Hebron in 1970. Photo by Blair Seitz.



Beyond Cultural Boundaries



Mission Transcends Racial Barriers

Today black and white Mennonites worship and work together joyfully in integrated congregations begun by EMM workers. Unfortunately, this was not always true. In the early twentieth century, most mission churches did not question the policy of segregation. There were faithful black members at the Welsh Mountain Mission, and the Parkesburg congregation welcomed a Negro family to worship with them. However, except for a few groups like these, reluctance to accept black members led to "missions for the colored" in such places as Lancaster, Reading, Philadelphia, and Steelton.

In Steelton the movement toward integration began when black and white teenagers together enjoyed youth weeks at Camp Hebron. After youth clubs and summer Bible school became integrated, the two congregations which had met separately for more than a decade voted to worship together in one building and use the other for community activities.

Either by such deliberate decision or by gradual transition, other segregated churches became integrated. Now the church faces the challenge of training black leaders for black and integrated congregations.



Sunday morning service at Steelton Mennonite Church. 1969 photo by Roy Martin.

Jews and Gentiles Find Unity in Christ

"We want to make a statement to the world that Jews and Gentiles can find unity in Christ. We can work together without compromising our individual uniqueness," said Rich Nichol, pastor of Ruach Israel, a Messianic Jewish congregation. Ruach Israel and the Good Shepherd Christian Fellowship, a Mennonite congregation, cooperated in building the Greendale Avenue Worship Center in Needham, Massachusetts. Dedicated in the spring of 1992, the building is used for worship by Jewish believers on Saturday and by Gentile believers on Sunday.

Early in the twentieth century Martin Z. Miller, after reading the testimony of a Hebrew Christian, initiated a witness to Jews. For fifteen years he evangelized without official support or recognition. In 1933 the Eastern Board appointed him to assist various mission stations in reaching Jewish people in their communities. In 1942 a Jewish Evangelism committee was organized, and in the decades that followed Jewish workers actively witnessed in Lancaster, Harrisburg, Pottsville, Philadelphia, New York City, and Washington, D.C.

Martin Z. Miller began witnessing to Jews during World War I. He was appointed by EMBMC for Jewish evangelism in 1933.



Art McPhee, (left) former pastor of Good Shepherd Christian Fellowship, chats with members of the congregation.



Today the Shofar Committee, which replaced the Jewish Evangelism Committee, uses a low-key approach, hoping to present the gospel with sensitivity. Dialogue between Eastern Mennonite Missions and Jewish leaders represents an effort to build mutual understanding.

Hispanics Become Good Mennonites

Around mid-century an influx of migrant workers from Puerto Rico presented new opportunities for witness. T. K. Hershey, a retired worker from Argentina, was the first to begin relating to Spanish-speaking people east of Lancaster. In the summer of 1951 the Voluntary Service Committee began an outreach to migrants north and west of Lancaster. Besides regular Spanish services in three churches in Lancaster County and occasional meetings in Reading, West Chester, and Coatesville, there were evangelistic tent meetings each summer and at the end of the season a fellowship program.



Mt. Tabor Church, New Holland, Pa., after the first annual meeting of the Spanish Mennonite Council, May 29, 1971. Persons are members of local Spanish Mennonite Churches; George Miller is at the door. Photo by Charles S. Rice.

As migrants got year-round jobs and settled permanently, Spanish-speaking congregations grew in Lancaster and New Holland. Enthusiastic new believers witnessed to family and friends. Before long, churches began in Reading, Lebanon, and Philadelphia. Church planters moved to other cities in Pennsylvania, to New York City, and to New Jersey and Florida.

The Spanish District of Lancaster Conference, organized in 1975, has a Bible Institute to train leaders and works with Hispanic churches in Franconia Conference and the Eastern District of the General Conference Mennonite Church to produce Spanish literature with an Anabaptist emphasis. Congregations of Spanish-speaking Mennonites are among the most rapidly growing Lancaster Conference churches.

Sharing the Good News with Tourists

"The Mission Board should do something to witness to all these people," said Blanche Hoover, a guide at the Amish Farm and House, when she saw how tourism was mushrooming in the 1950s. Nelson Kauffman expressed the same conviction at the Worldwide Missionary Conference in June 1958. Spurred by his suggestions, the Eastern Board opened an experimental Mennonite Information Center later that year.

The Center, located at the First Mennonite Church for the Deaf, just off Lincoln Highway's "Tourist Strip," attracted so many visitors that six years later it moved to the Lancaster Mennonite Conference Historical Library. Outgrowing the new quarters in less than a decade, the Mennonite Information Center constructed a new building on land purchased from the Lancaster Mennonite School Board.

With a reception center for displays, a basement auditorium for showing films on Amish and Mennonite life and faith, a replica of the Hebrew Tabernacle next door, and a tour guide service for buses and cars, the Center witnesses to a steadily growing number of persons from many states and foreign countries. In 1990 it hosted some 75,000 visitors and provided guides for 273 buses and 14,000 cars or vans. Also, many Mennonite families who entertain tourists share Christ's love on a one-to-one basis.

This I Believe by Glen J. Yoder

For 20 years I have been involved in a variety of ministries in urban contexts. These included prison ministry, pastoring urban churches, planting new congregations, evangelism, new believer discipling, compassion ministries, and leadership training. Out of these experiences has grown a deep conviction: we must make our first priority the equipping and mobilizing of workers for effective discipling, bringing people into the kingdom, and apprenticing them into effective kingdom workers. Along the eastern seaboard are many opportunities to reach people for Christ. These include numerous urban contexts and reaching into other cultural groups.

Church planting continues to be one of the most effective ways to reach people for Christ in a more rapid fashion and to provide more friendly environments for these persons to grow into mature workers for the kingdom. The Lancaster Conference is a growing conference primarily because of the church planting activity of the past 20 years.

The Home Ministries department is committed to a vision which sees a growing movement of congregations that:



Lloyd Eby at Mennonite Information Center assisting tourists in Lancaster County. 1973 photo by Marian Landis (Funk).



Tour guide Marian Shenk explains the function of the laver to tourists outside the reproduction of the Hebrew Tabernacle. 1985 photo.



Glen Yoder directs Home Ministries for EMM. Photo by Dale D. Gehman.

1. Evangelize their communities with love and compassion.
2. Produce followers of Jesus in the context of small group life.
3. Develop leaders who equip others for ministry.
4. Birth new congregations among unchurched people.
5. Send workers into the world harvest.

Today between 2,000 and 3,000 people attend the churches which have been started within the past ten years. Currently, among the 35-40 new churches directly linked to Home Ministries, approximately 500 persons are being added per year or an average of 10 per week. Many of these persons become involved in the life of the congregation through cell groups and discipleship training, becoming active members in the congregation. Some will become leaders of new congregations.

The cultural diversity, fresh vision, and breadth of experience and wisdom that these new churches bring to us is deeply enriching us and bringing new vitality to the life of the church.

International Students Find A Welcome

"We listen to the news much more closely because we know people in many different countries. When we hear about a bombing or a natural disaster in another country, we think of the friends we have there," wrote a mother whose family opens their home each Christmas season to overseas students.

The Christmas International Homes program began in 1972. Twenty years later eighty-three students from nineteen countries, who otherwise would have spent the holidays in deserted dormitories, enjoyed Christmas with Lancaster County families. For a number this experience is their first close contact with Christianity. Each year the visitors enjoy planned activities for the group, including a retreat. But their most profuse thanks are for the privilege of sharing the warmth of family life.

A long-term ministry to overseas students began in 1987, when Millersville International House opened in buildings which once housed the Millersville Children's Home and later the Millersville Youth Village. Besides housing, tutorial services, and assistance in adjusting to American life, the staff provides a relaxed friendly atmosphere where honest dialogue takes place freely.



Elvin and Mary Jane Landis with Christmas International Home guests. 1982 photo by David Fretz.



Richard and Becky Landis and children, Audrey and Jason, host international students Joy Khoo and Mut Sumi McKee in 1992. Photo by Dale D. Gehman.

Home Missions Become Multi-National

Church planting took a new direction in the 1970s when established churches began an outreach to internationals in their neighborhoods. After refugees from Vietnam began to come to eastern Pennsylvania, Tran Xuan Quang, a Mennonite pastor from Vietnam, started the Vietnamese Mennonite Fellowship in Philadelphia. Ted Yao, a refugee sponsored by the Paradise Mennonite Church, planted a Chinese church in Lancaster and three more in Philadelphia. The Chinese congregation in Upper Darby, a Philadelphia suburb, moved to South Philadelphia and became a thriving Cambodian church led by Sarin Lay. Kenson and Marie Ho, Christians from the People's Republic of China, established a church in Boston's Chinatown. A new fellowship in Hartford, Connecticut, grew to be the Hartford Laotian Mennonite Church.

Christians who left Ethiopia in the 1980s planted a church among their fellow countrymen in the Bronx. Others are witnessing in Philadelphia, Lancaster, York, Harrisburg, and Reading. The Evangelical Garifuna Church in New York City is growing, members of the Honduran Mennonite Church have been commissioned to work near Allentown, Pennsylvania, and a witness has begun among Haitians in Irvington, New Jersey.

By December 1993, ten different language and cultural groups were represented among the forty-seven developing churches under the Home Ministries division of Eastern Mennonite Missions.

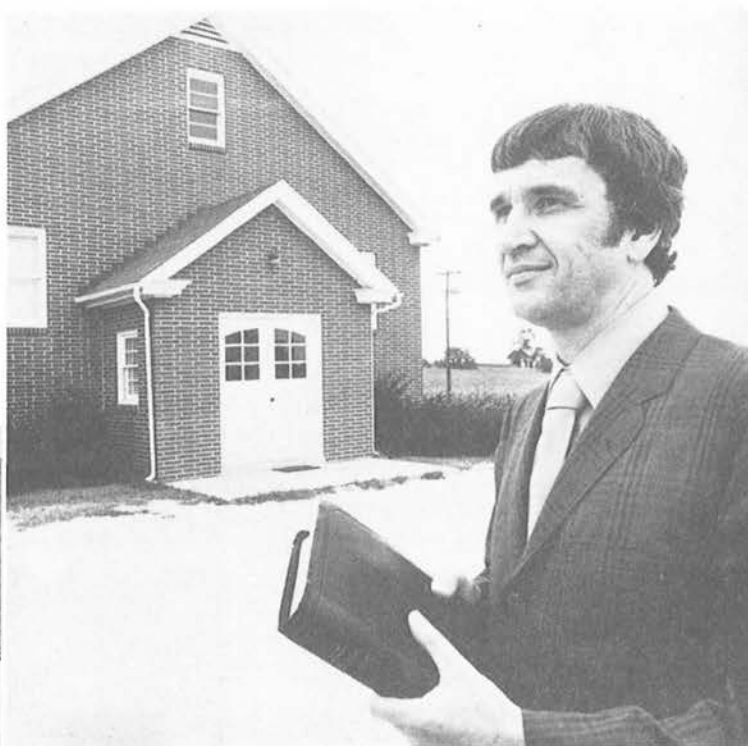
The Deaf Hear the Gospel

"Deaf people should be viewed as a cultural group rather than as handicapped persons," says Nancy Marshall, who is a curriculum developer for a Christian Leadership Program for the deaf.

In the 1940s parents concerned for the spiritual



A choir singing in the Easter Sunday worship service at Boston Chinese Church of Saving Grace, March, 1986.



Raymond Rohrer outside the First Mennonite Church for the Deaf. 1970s photos by Larry Nixdorf.



Raymond Rohrer, pastor of First Mennonite Church for the Deaf.



Lancaster County Prison. 1977 photo by Jim Bowman.

welfare of deaf children requested special services for their benefit. On a Sunday afternoon in December 1946, the first church service for the deaf met at the Rossmere Church in Lancaster. Aaron Weaver, a minister skilled in sign language because he had deaf siblings, preached the sermon. Israel Rohrer, who was ordained pastor three years later, preached in both sign and spoken language so that families as well as deaf persons could understand.

In May 1957 the First Mennonite Church for the Deaf was dedicated, built on land donated by Mrs. Mabel Clymer, a widow who had two deaf children. Today deaf and hearing groups worship in a larger building, formerly the Witmer Heights Elementary School, using auditorium and classrooms alternately. Through the years the church has reached many deaf people in the United States and Canada through a summer camp, a Deaf Youth for Christ, and a monthly paper, *The Silent Messenger*.

Christians Belong In Jail

Behind the bars in Lebanon County Prison, Mennonite women play basketball with women inmates, share in Bible study, and teach quilting and other crafts. Other volunteers assist the full-time staff of Jubilee Ministries to counsel prisoners, find jobs and housing for parolees, and make personal contacts with inmates' families. This comprehensive ministry, begun by Lebanon County youth in 1974, is supported by seven area churches, a successful thrift shop, and gifts from concerned Christians.

In half a dozen other county prisons and several federal correctional institutions in eastern Pennsylvania, caring persons minister to prisoners and their families in programs sponsored by local Mennonite congregations or districts.

Martin Z. Miller would rejoice in this activity. In the early 1950s, after he realized that formal prison meetings failed to meet real needs, he began personal visitation in the Dauphin County Prison. Others caught the vision, and in 1960 a halfway house for released prisoners opened on a farm near Middletown. The out-of-town location became a key factor in closing the home after seven years because residents could not find transportation to jobs and shopping centers.

Eastern Mennonite Missions also helped to start the Hope Way Prison Ministry in Lancaster City in 1986, which was turned over to Rivers of Living Water Ministries in 1992.

Today rehabilitation has become a major emphasis among Mennonite prison workers. Eastern Mennonite Missions partners with Virginia Conference and D.C. Mennonite churches to support work with ex-offenders in Washington.

Jubilee Ministries program carried on by Lebanon District Ministry Board. 1980 photo by Paul Jacobs.

JUBILEE MINISTRIES INC. 21 S. 7TH ST. LEBANON, PA.

A mission organization of the Lebanon District Ministry Board of the Mennonite Church. Our objective is to provide the resources of Christians to Lebanon County prisoners and their families. Our hope is to restore these persons to useful and virtuous lives by introducing them to the love of God thru Jesus Christ, Savior and Lord of all.

PROGRAM ELEMENTS

1 FELLOWSHIP

- A. Bible Study (weekly Tues. 7:30)
- B. Special Music (monthly)
- C. Church Service (monthly)
- D. Spiritual Guidance
- E. Correspondence Bible Courses
- F. Prayer partners
- G. Special holiday services
- H. Discussion & tape sessions

2 MATERIALS

- A. Films
 - 1. Nature
 - 2. Religious
 - 3. Educational
- B. Books and Magazines
 - 1. Bibles
 - 2. Paperbacks

3 RECREATION

- A. Softball
- B. Volleyball
- C. Basketball

4 WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

- A. To inform inmates of activities
- B. Serves as a care letter
- C. Provides spiritual help





Behind the Scenes

Administering the Program

When the Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities was organized in 1914, all work was administered by the officers. In 1933 Ira Buckwalter became part-time assistant to the treasurer. At that time division of labor was simple: President Henry Garber administered home missions, Secretary Orie Miller directed overseas work, and the treasurer was responsible for institutions. Buckwalter, who became fulltime treasurer in 1948, was the first paid employee.

In 1966 executive responsibilities were delegated to employed staff officers, who were not members of the Board. Raymond Charles, who had been Board chairman, became executive president of the Mission Board. His successor, Paul Landis, who became full-time president in 1980, headed a staff of sixty full-time or part-time employees in executive and service positions. The president is responsible to implement the decisions of the fifty-member Board.

Mission business was conducted from the treasurer's home until 1947, when the office moved to rented rooms in Intercourse. In 1956 a new office building on the grounds of the unused Salunga meetinghouse became Eastern Mennonite Missions headquarters. An Open House in 1981 commemorated the twenty-fifth anniversary of that move.

Orientation of Workers

Practical training for prospective missionaries began in 1947 at the request of the Jewish Evangelism Committee. A one-week Missionary Training Institute at the Norris Square Church in Philadelphia provided on-the-field learning and experience in city mission work.

Today, newly appointed and reappointed overseas personnel receive preparation for their assignments in a week of Overseas Orientation, a program which began in 1956. Since 1982 an annual School for Apostles has offered a week-long workshop for pastors, church planters, and potential leaders in evangelism. EMM has also helped develop and sponsor the annual Philadelphia Islamic Institute and the World Mission Institute. Several Discernment and Orientation weekends each year help persons who sense a call to church planting to pray, discern, and prepare for mission/church assignments.

Discipleship Ministries training centers in Philadel-



Ira J. Buckwalter, 1908-1992. Ira served as treasurer of EMBMC from 1948 to 1970 and as assistant treasurer until 1981.

Ira Buckwalter (right) with Paul N. Kraybill, secretary, and H. Raymond Charles, president, of EMBMC.





EMBMC office staff at Salunga, 1958.

The first issue of *Missionary Messenger* was published in April 1924.

MISSIONARY MESSENGER

Look up your eyes and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest.—John 4:28.
Pray to the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest.—Matt. 9:38.

Vol. 1

APRIL 15, 1924

No. 1

EDITORIALS

FOREWORD

It was the wise man Solomon who said that of "making of books there is no end" and were he alive at the present time his opinion of papers and periodicals would likely be the same, as apparently every board or organization must have a publication to further its objects.

About ten years ago bishops and some others actively engaged in church work concluded that the Mission and charitable work of the Church would be better taken care of by the organization of a Mission Board. Steps were taken to form a Board with this object in view. The formation of the "Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities" was the result.

As a natural sequence the Mission work as well as some phases of charitable work has been greatly enlarged and our people more fully awakened to the possibilities as well as the necessity of such work.

We have no apology to make for coming before our people with this modest little publication. For a considerable time we have felt the necessity for something of this order, to make our people better acquainted with the work of the Board, and create an avenue of approach to our people when special needs should manifest themselves, as well as to keep them fully posted as to the progress of the work of the Board and to be a means of bringing to them the news of the Mission work of the church in general.

In addition to the Mission work of the Church, the Board has also been requested by the authorities of the church to take up any relief work that they might conclude to be necessary. In consequence of this decision the work and responsibilities of the Board have been greatly enlarged. A reference to the reports of the Board of the last few years will be a surprise to many.

We also wish to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the many brethren and sisters who have so nobly stood by the work and have shared with us the heat and burden of the day. We hope that they may continue to do so, and that we may be able to awaken an interest in many who have so far manifested an indifferent attitude to the work, oftentimes caused no doubt by a lack of knowledge of the activities of the Church along these lines.

Our work can be greatly enlarged as well as simplified by the hearty cooperation of bishops and ministers and other church officers if they themselves keep in close touch with the work and keep their people fully informed as to its status and progress.

To this end we crave the blessing of Almighty God and pray that our feeble efforts to serve Him may meet

Divine approval. We send forth this modest messenger with the hope and prayer that it may prove a blessing and a help to the work that we have so much at heart.

Jno. H. Mellinger.

"Foreword," the heading of Brother Mellinger's message, summarizes in one word what we take to be the purpose and aim of the "Messenger." We want this to be a definite move forward in the cause of Missions in this conference district. We believe that we will need to "lift up our eyes and look" in order to see the "white harvest fields," and be moved to take a larger share in the reaping. We believe it is a step forward if all of us can regularly get a little clearer glimpse of the Harvest Field thru the pages of the Messenger. To this end this work is dedicated.

Our Treasurer's report will no doubt interest many. It is gratifying to note the healthy increase in the total contributions over the previous year. Our workers' reports show some of the ways in which these contributions are being used. The scope of the work and the variety of ways in which the Board and its workers are endeavoring to serve will be a revelation to many. And still a total contribution of \$80,000.00 from 10,000 members is only an average of \$8.00 per member. Surely we can do better next year. Can we really say we believe in Missions unless we do?

In the July number of the Messenger we hope to give a full report of various details connected with the Canadian Immigration loan. The latest report from the Treasurer advises that up to April 1 the fund had received about \$43,000.00 in loans and donations. The response to the Board's appeal has been splendid. Much good has been done and many hearts made glad with this fund. No doubt those who gave have already been richly blessed thru it. The Board has decided to keep this fund open for several more months for further loans and donations.

Let all who have not yet had part in this effort take the appeal to heart. Appeal after appeal comes from our Russian brethren for our help to aid them in finding a new home in a new land. How can we sit idly by and ignore that appeal. The Lord's hand seems to be in the movement. Let us not become weary in well doing. The Treasurer will be glad to furnish details of the plan to anyone inquiring.

The Committee on Immigration appointed by our Board reports that places have been found for four of the ten families at Leichfield, Germany, who have applied to come to the United States this summer. Two of these

phia and Baltimore give YES volunteers three months of intensive Bible study and practice in evangelism before they leave for cross-cultural outreach. Preparation for STAT volunteers includes a week of supervised service in an inner city followed by three weeks of study at a camp setting. VSers receive three weeks of orientation.

The most recent training program, the School of Witness in Baltimore, was started in 1991 to develop the leadership skills of young adults who have already served in YES, VS, or similar programs.

Informing the Membership

"The Mission Board should produce a paper," John W. Weaver told Orie Miller. "We need a more systematic way of informing the membership about mission activities and needs."

"If you can use me in this, let me know," Orie replied.

That was the beginning of the *Missionary Messenger*, which appeared as a quarterly paper in 1924, with Orie as editor. In its second year it was published every month. Today's *Messenger* is a well-illustrated periodical with human-interest feature stories as well as reports from various mission locations.

Through the years Eastern Mennonite Missions has encouraged congregational mission study classes and cooperated with the church-wide Mennonite Board of Missions in preparing study materials. Audio-visuals are provided for use by congregations or interested groups. A recent video-cassette, filmed in Ethiopia, tells the story of the Meserete Kristos Church from its beginning, through the persecution of the 1980s, to its rapid growth today.

In addition, *Focus*, a five-minute weekly newscast, gives up-to-date information; news releases are mailed to congregational leaders; and *Mission Intercessor*, a prayer calendar listing daily requests, is sent each month to all who desire it.

Keeping Alive the Vision

In 1921 the Eastern Board passed a resolution to remind church leaders of "their privileges and responsibility in developing an active Gospel Christian missionary spirit among our members and children through preaching, teaching, and Sunday School work." Leaders carried out this mandate by inviting missionary speakers to church services, suggesting mission projects for Sun-

day schools and summer Bible schools, and encouraging youth in evangelism and service, as well as by preaching and teaching about mission. Public meetings of the Board helped to keep alive the vision.

Each March the celebration of missions held during the annual meeting of Lancaster Conference provides workshops, seminars, exhibits, and activities for all age groups. In July a World Mission Conference combines a program of worship, testimonies, and inspirational sermons with reunions



Janet Kreider, editorial assistant and editor of *Missionary Messenger*, 1958-1994.



In 1969 Nathan Hege began FOCUS, a five-minute newscast aired weekly on three stations.



Annual mission meeting, Lancaster Mennonite High School, 1981. Photo by David Fretz.



Family Festival of Missions held at Lancaster Mennonite High School. Kim Garrett, a feature of the Guatemala display, 1982. Photo by Susie Shenk.

for overseas missionaries. The Sunday evening commissioning of workers is the climax of the conference. Auditoriums are crowded for these meetings as well as for commissioning services for youth leaving for Discipleship Ministries assignments.

Not the least of the influences which spur members to mission are the vibrant testimonies of fraternal visitors from overseas churches.

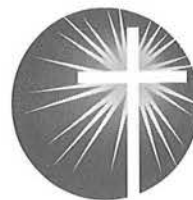


Phebe Yoder, a young teacher in Kansas, sent a contribution designated "for mission work in Africa" when she heard that the Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities was considering work there. That small gift of money played an important role in the decision to begin an overseas mission.

Later, Phebe herself answered the call to serve in Tanzania from 1937-1969. A woman of many talents, Phebe cared for people; the Africans called her "Mai" (Mother) Yoder. She was a nurse and a woman of prayer, who helped establish the public school system, providing primers and teachers so that adults might learn to read. She tried to get the Scriptures and Bible study materials into every home; she helped train church leaders for a growing young church. Here Phebe arranges Bible study materials outside "Baraka," her compact apartment built on a Chevrolet chassis.

Photograph by the HARTFORD COURANT.

To the Ends of the Earth



At the Savior's Feet by Catharine Leatherman

John and I went to Tanzania in 1936 with confidence that things would go well. The first year we worked to learn Swahili language and then to start a school for training leaders. This later became the Bible school.

In those early years 15 to 20 persons would gather every morning at my back door with the same request: "I want medicine." I have not been a nurse, but I could dispense aspirin and medicine for burns, malaria, ulcers, diarrhea and intestinal parasites. Always I would try to point these people to Jesus. But where do you begin when you want to explain salvation to people who have never heard of the Bible or its message! Since they knew that "Mungu" (God) had created the earth, that made a good starting place.

As a missionary I thought I knew most of the answers, but it took a few years for the Lord to break down that self-confidence. He taught me to know myself (pretty self-centered) as I hadn't known myself before. When I finally knelt at the Saviour's feet, I began to understand in my inmost being that a forgiven missionary and forgiven Africans were all on exactly the same level, and coming to Jesus together made for great harmony and peace and fellowship.

Another thing we learned was that Lancaster Conference rules and regulations weren't at all well adapted to African culture or to relationships with other mission groups who were seeking to establish churches nearby. One time while on safari we attended a church of another mission. When leaders sent a messenger to ask us to kindly wait in the other building while they had communion, I experienced how it feels to be on the outside of "close communion."

All the years we were in Africa I taught the Bible, mainly to women's groups, and sewing classes. They learned to mend garments and sew children's clothes. Up to that time it was thought only men could sew.

In a cooking class one woman said, "Mama, we are so tired of sweet potatoes every day." I promised to teach them five different ways to prepare sweet potatoes.

We baked corn bread, banana muffins, even bread, in home-made ovens.

In classes on child care, we learned that newborns should not be given adult food the first week of life. Also we prepared various foods suitable for toddlers.

We had craft classes, too, such as knitting, crocheting, and embroidery.

I have felt that the most significant part of my work had been with these women,

Catherine Leatherman and her husband, John, served in Tanzania from 1936 to 1965.





Special train takes 475 Mennonites to New York City for farewell to missionaries. 1934 photo.



Henry Garber, Chairman of Eastern Board from 1934-1956.

many of them wives of church leaders. We also held classes in the community with women gathered under a shade tree.

Sharing together with my African brothers and sisters my own faith, the repentings I have had to do, and life's joys and problems have meant very much to me.

It fills me with awe and worship to see that the Church of Jesus Christ has been established in Tanzania, even though we who took the message there were "earthen vessels." God sent the fresh wind of the Spirit into missionary and African alike, and built his church.

Adventure in Faith

During the first quarter century of home missions, Lancaster Conference Mennonites supported the overseas work of the Mennonite Board of Missions. One of the first three missionaries to enter India in 1899 was J. A. Ressler, a "Home Mission Advocate." Another Lancaster County native, T. K. Hershey, helped to open the mission in Argentina in 1917. Concern for Africa grew during the 1920s. In 1930 the Lancaster Conference Board of Bishops instructed the Eastern Board to open its own mission in Africa.

After several years of discussion by the both boards, some members felt hesitant about this untried venture. At one meeting a board member asked, "How much money do we have in the fund for Africa?"

"Nine dollars and sixty-two cents," replied Treasurer Sem Eby.

"Wouldn't it be wise to wait until we have more money on hand?" suggested the cautious brother.

At once Henry Garber stood up, smiled, and said, "We have a large stock of faith on hand!"

When Chairman John Mellinger asked those who favored beginning the work in Africa to raise their hands, every hand went up.

The decision met an enthusiastic response from Lancaster Conference members. People crowded the annual Mission Board meetings so that many had to be turned away. They gave generously. One family borrowed money because their steers were not sold in time for a contribution to the annual mission offering. A woman took in washing so she would have money to

Mennonites from Lancaster boarded the S.S. Deutschland to say farewell to the first missionaries leaving for Africa on that ship in 1934.



give. Many became prayer warriors. David Thomas remembered his mother watching the clock and praying for the missionaries as they sailed from New York.

The Hill God Chose

Early one morning in December 1933, Orie Miller and Elam Stauffer sailed from New York to locate a mission field in Africa. At an emotional farewell the preceding weekend, with fifteen hundred mission-minded Mennonites crowded into the Weaverland meetinghouse, Bishop Noah Mack had prayed, "Lord, Master, you have selected and know the spot, and now lead these Thy called ones to it."

Less than ten weeks later, Elam stood on Katuru Hill near Shirati, a little trading village near Lake Victoria in Tanganyika, looking over the land where he would spend the next thirty years. With him was Chief Nyatega, who said, "Here is where you ought to build."

Emil Sywulka, an African Inland missionary who helped Elam survey the area, agreed. Pointing to a scattering of villages, he told Elam, "That's your field."

But Elam, looking at the empty hilltop and the cluster of houses two miles away by the lake, asked, "To whom shall I preach? The trees? The people are down there."

"Those who want your message will build around you," was Sywulka's reply.

Beginning in Shirati

Before building permanent houses, the first missionaries erected a simple building for worship, a pole house with a grass roof and three open sides, one side closed with grass to keep out the rain. Until it was finished, they held outdoor services. More than a dozen people gathered on the first Sunday to sing hymns in Swahili and Luo. As weeks went on, the number grew.

Zedekia Kisare, a young Luo Christian, became the interpreter for the Sunday services after Elam Stauffer learned that the Luo people did not understand his Swahili. A visit to Zedekia's village one Sunday afternoon was the beginning of village evangelism.

Zedekia was one of the workers in the mission building program. He had been employed one day when missionary John Mosemann noticed on the edge of the pushing, eager crowd of would-be employees an alert-looking man who waited quietly. When John pointed him out, Elam Stauffer hired him.

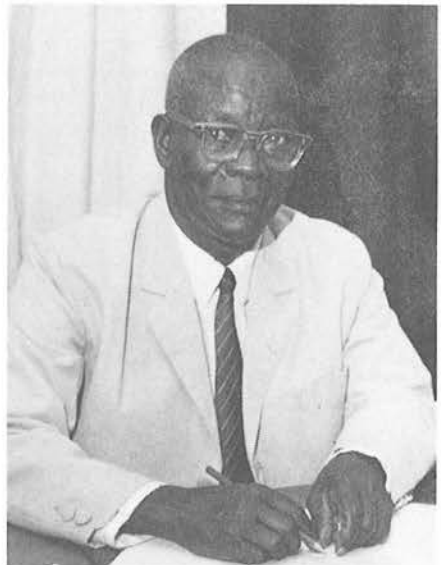
Many years later, Zedekia, the first Tanzania Mennonite bishop, said, "From that day to this, I was a Mennonite and an evangelist."

Ministry to Body and Mind

In the early months of the mission sick people began to come to Ruth Mosemann's kitchen door after she treated a working man injured in the building program. As the numbers grew, she opened a dispensary in the timber shed. Soon Chief Nyatega, at the missionaries' request, sent men to build two huts to house the critically ill. That was the beginning of the medical program from which developed a hospital, leprosarium, and nurses' training school at Shirati, as well as clinics at other



Elam Stauffer, one of the first Eastern Board missionaries to Tanzania, served from 1934-1964. 1968 photo.



Zedekia Kisare was ordained bishop of Tanzania Mennonite Church in 1967. 1972 photo by Paul Kaufman.

On this occasion five persons were baptized at Bukiroba. Here John Mosemann has just baptized James Wambura. Photo by C. M. Ferster.





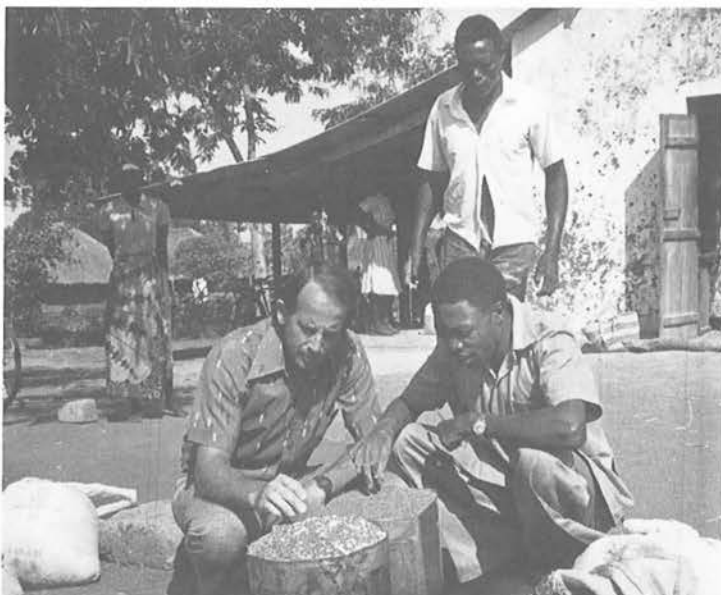
Dr. Richard Weaver examining the first artificial leg (above the knee) made by Mary Harnish (Hess), nurse at Shirati, Tanzania, and applied to a leprosy patient.



Clyde Shenk greeting Pastor Nashon Nyambok at Shirati.

Former leprosy patients, assisted by missionary Glen Brubaker, operate a hammer mill for the Shirati community.

1961 photo by Nate Showalter.



mission stations.

Likewise, the educational program, which began when working men asked to learn to read, rapidly outgrew the original concept of opening schools only for the purpose of contacting lost souls. At independence in 1960 the Tanganyika Mennonite Church had twenty-six primary schools, three middle schools, and the Bukiroba Bible school, which trained nearly all the leaders of the young church.

Missionaries who had been instructed not to build institutions but to save souls could not ignore the needs of the bodies which housed those souls.

Old and New Wineskins

From such small beginnings on the hill overlooking Lake Victoria grew the Tanzania Mennonite Church, which today has more than twenty thousand members in nearly two hundred congregations. New life came to the fellowship in 1942 through God's work in a revival that transformed missionaries as well as African believers.

The sending church in America welcomed news of confession and cleansing, but leaders were disturbed when missionaries began to discard the cultural wrappings of the gospel message. Several deputation teams were sent to find out exactly what was happening. Differences seemed too great to settle until Orie Miller said that he could see only three choices: send all the missionaries home and start again, let them work out their own mission policies, or accept their suggestions and try to work with them.

Compelled to accept the hard truth that overseas Christians cannot be pressured into Lancaster Conference patterns, the sending church had taken its first step toward granting independence to the church in Tanganyika.

Partners in Obedience

"You are now a church. You have freedom to make your decisions. We are giving you property, schools, clinics, and hospitals as your responsibility," announced Eastern Board secretary Paul N. Kraybill at a conference of the Tanganyika Mennonite Church on August 25, 1960.

By 1961 the Tanganyika Mennonite Church was directing the total witness in the country. Since then, missionaries are called by the national church, and are subject to its discipline. Nationals and missionaries share work in the institutions, and Eastern Mennonite Missions continues to support the missionaries.

Reaching an agreement on partnership had not been easy. "Take little by little," some missionaries advised.

"No! Next year we are getting political independence. This year the church must be free," insisted Tanganyika leaders.

The heated dialogue ended when Pastor Zedekia Kisare, reminding the group of what had happened in 1942, led Africans and Americans together to turn to God in repentance. As people asked one another for forgiveness, love and reconciliation came. Partnership had become real.

Across the Border to Kenya

From Tanganyika the gospel moved to Kenya. The political boundary between the two countries meant little to families of the Luo tribe, who moved back

and forth freely within the tribal area. A cluster of churches grew in Kenya in the settlements near Lake Victoria and farther inland to the South. Emerging congregations asked the Mennonite mission for help, but not until 1964 did the Kenyan government give permission to enter officially.

In 1968 at the request of the Kenyan Mennonites, Clyde and Alta Shenk, veteran Tanganyikan missionaries, moved to Kenya to lead young churches there. Living in a trailer, they cooked meals over an open fire in a cooking pot wedged between three stones. They traveled to outlying regions, shepherding thirty-three small congregations. Clyde directed the building of twelve churches, using bricks made from sun-dried clay. More importantly, he built good relationships as he worked with the Kenyan builders.

Today the Kenya Mennonite Church, which until 1977 was part of the Tanzania Mennonite Church, has 4,500 members in seventy-six congregations.

The Gospel of Peace for Maasai Warriors

Southeast of the Luo tribal land lived two hundred thousand Maasai, cattle-keeping nomads whose way of life was threatened as developing agriculture infringed on their grazing lands. While leaders of both tribes worked to reduce border tensions, Kenya Mennonite Church leaders took the gospel to the Maasai. At first an evangelist traveled fifty miles one way each week to share God's love with a people who were already aware of a Creator.

Eastern Mennonite Missions supplied missionaries to help the Maasai adjust to a settled agricultural life. They taught farming skills: using oxen to plow and cultivate, storing grain safely, collecting rainwater, enclosing fields with fences. The Maasai, reputed to be proud, war-like, and resistant



Nurse Mary Harnish (Hess) assisting a patient at the leprosarium in Shirati, Tanzania, to use his new artificial limbs. 1972 photo by Paul Kaufman.



(Left) A Luo elder in South Nyanza. The Luo, second largest tribe in Kenya, live on the shores of Lake Victoria. 1960s photo by Department of Information, Nairobi, Kenya.

(Right) Bishop Kisare ordained Joshua Okello, one of four pastors at Migori, Kenya, on February 20, 1983. Photo by Leon Ressler.



Nurse Velma Eshleman Nzesi with villagers in Garissa, Northeastern Province of Kenya. 1975 photo by I. Augspurger.





Leon Ressler helping Maasai people adjust to a settled agricultural life. 1981 photo.

to change, proved to be a friendly, generous people.

Women and children were the first to respond to the gospel. Within a decade men became interested in Bible study. The test of a Maasai's Christianity comes when cattle are stolen. Neighbors who are not Christian scorn him when he does not pick up his spear, pursue the thief, and take back his wealth.

Introducing the Messiah to Muslims

In a remote part of northeast Kenya, EMM missionaries partner with the Kenya Mennonite Church in work with semi-nomadic people. Destitute because of guerrilla warfare and extended drought, Somali herdsman often cross the border into Kenya. A ministry in health, education, and agriculture helps them in resettlement and opens doors for a gospel witness to these Islamic people.

Another outreach to Muslims has developed in Nairobi. At the Eastleigh Fellowship Center in a crowded, multi-cultural district of this modern city, a library and reading room attracts hundreds of students, many of whom have no study facilities at home. Young people come to play basketball and volleyball, adults attend classes in English or homemaking, and Muslim teachers have friendly dialogue with Christian leaders.

The gospel goes far beyond the city, and to other countries with Muslim communities, through "The People of God" correspondence course, which missionaries developed in consultation with Islamic scholars, former Muslims, and Christian theologians. Currently, some two thousand students enrolled in this program are learning about Jesus the Messiah.

An Open Door in Ethiopia

"I'm afraid you won't get a permit," were discouraging words to Daniel Sensenig, who had arrived in Ethiopia on Christmas Eve in 1947 to open a Mennonite mission. The Ethiopian government, after the bitter experience of Italian rule, was suspicious of foreigners. Only those missions that had worked in the country before the war would be allowed to enter. That was the official position, which veteran missionaries explained to the Mennonites.

Eastern Board Secretary Orie Miller refused to be discouraged. "Write a formal application for mission status, send it home to Salunga for official approval, and then present it as the Lord directs," he instructed calmly.

The Mennonite Church already had a foothold in the country. A year earlier, as part of post-World War II relief work, the Mennonite Relief Committee and MCC had opened a hospital in a converted cotton mill in Nazareth, a growing market town about sixty miles east of the capital, Addis Ababa.

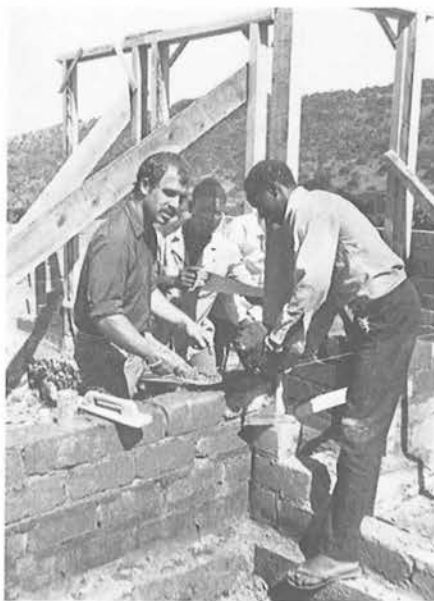
Just four days after Sensenig received EMBMC's official application, the Emperor and Empress made a surprise visit to the hospital. Ten days later Emperor Haile Selassie granted the Mennonites permission to expand into a permanent mission.

Beginning in Deder

In March 1949, children watched curiously as two foreigners set up a tent near a big spring within sight of the government elementary school at Deder. One noon two brave boys walked to the tent to see what was going on. Although their limited knowledge of English made conversation difficult, they got a non-verbal message of welcome and kindness.

One of the two boys was Million Belete, who in a little more than a decade

Clair Good and Maasai friends building the house the Goods would live in. 1990 photo by Beth Good.



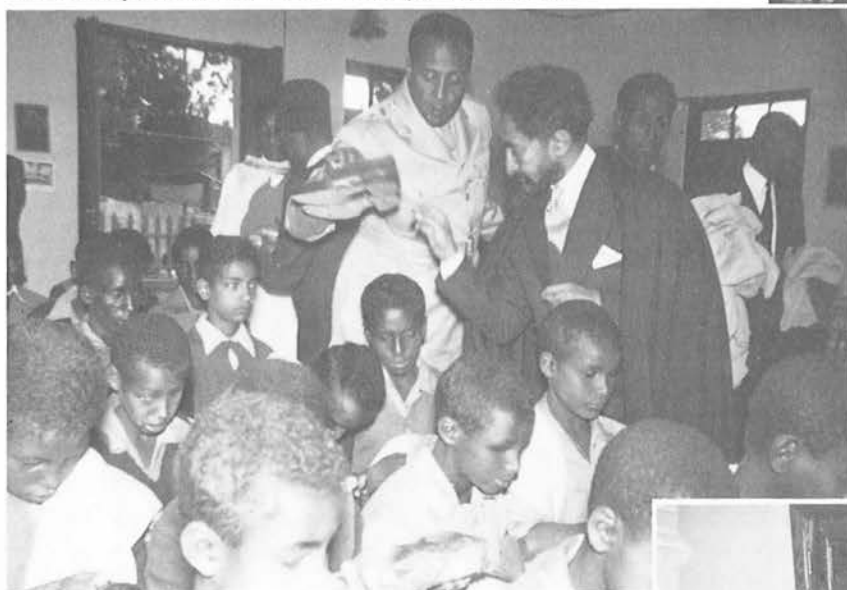
(Right) Dr. Paul T. Yoder and his helper outside the Nazareth, Ethiopia, hospital are ready for a motorcycle trip to visit people who are ill. 1958 photo by D. Rohrer Eshleman.



(Below) "Mama" Martha Keener assists a student in the School for the Blind in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. 1950s photo.



His Majesty Haile Selassie I visited the School for the Blind and presented shoes to the boys. 1950s photo.



Million Belete

(Right) Chester Wenger and Shemsudin Abdo give the pastoral charge to Nathan Hege and Million Belete at their appointment for the Nazareth Church, December 1965.





Fellowship meals are an important part of church life in Ethiopia. 1991 photo by Michael Hostetler.



Peg Groff (Engle) and one of her Ethiopian friends at Goba refugee camp. 1981 photo.

became a teacher and evangelist in the Ethiopian Mennonite Church, *Meserete Kristos* (the church whose foundation is Christ).

The two men were Daniel Sensenig and Clinton Ferster, a missionary builder from Tanganyika. Their tent was pitched on land owned by the Empress of Ethiopia, who had leased forty acres to the Mennonite Mission.

Within two weeks Daniel and Clinton had built a temporary house, molded sun-dried bricks for a permanent dwelling and made passable a drive from the public road to the mission site. Twenty-nine people came to the first open-air Sunday service. The mission in Ethiopia had begun.

Spontaneous Growth of a Church

Million Belete, after earning a degree in electronics in an American university, was sent by the Ethiopian government to teach in a new high school five hundred miles north of the capital. There was no evangelical witness there. The first Sunday he and his wife had prayer in their home. The second Sunday they invited a few friends. Soon they rented a building because their house was too small for the group.

In many other places far from the five stations of the Mennonite Mission, churches grew spontaneously as believers witnessed wherever their occupations took them. Nazareth Bible Academy supplied well-trained leaders willing to serve in isolated regions. Missionaries directed active programs in medicine, community development, and education, including a school for the blind in Addis Ababa. But their work was limited because open evangelism threatened the ancient traditions of the Orthodox state church.

What seemed like a problem for missionaries was an advantage for the Ethiopian church because it led Lancaster Conference leaders more quickly to grant freedom to the young church. After ten years of gradually being given responsibility, *Meserete Kristos* Church became completely independent in 1969.

Meeting Human Needs

Danakil women proudly wore tokens showing how many men their husbands had killed. Other Ethiopians feared these desert nomads who lived in a semi-arid valley east of Addis Ababa. In the 1960s *Meserete Kristos* evangelists began witnessing to the Danakils. Missionary Doctor Paul T. Yoder started a mobile health unit, flying into remote areas on Missionary Aviation Fellowship planes. Christians moving into the region to work on sugar plantations became the nucleus of church groups which worshipped in mud-and-wattle shelters.

In many such isolated places Eastern Mennonite Missions worked together with the *Meserete Kristos* Church on long-term programs in health, agriculture, literacy, and evangelism. However, drought and war kept most Ethiopians in poverty. A severe emergency developed in the Southeast, where war with Somalia displaced many people. EMM workers sent to direct a mobile relief and health team found nearly three hundred thousand people crowded into shelters of plastic sheets thrown over thorn trees. There were no schools, no markets, no medical service.

American workers, it seemed, would be needed many more years for long-term development.

A Decade of Persecution

In January 1982 all Meserete Kristos Church services were forbidden, its institutions taken over by the government, and its bank accounts frozen. Church properties were seized for political use, and six Ethiopian church leaders were thrown into prison.

At first the Socialist Revolutionary government which had deposed Haile Selassie in 1974 seemed to tolerate Protestant groups which did not meddle in politics. As the situation worsened, the Meserete Kristos Church suffered less than others because the government recognized its contributions in education, relief, and community development. However, local authorities punished young people who resisted political indoctrination, and some Nazareth Bible Academy students went to prison rather than chant revolutionary slogans.

The uncertainties of the 1970s stimulated a spiritual awakening which had begun even before the Revolution. Every Sunday, churches were crowded, often overflowing. During the week people met to fast, pray, and praise. Miracles of healing authenticated the witness. Meserete Kristos Church grew from sixteen hundred members in 1974 to five thousand in 1980. The totalitarian government regarded such power over people as a threat that had to be curbed.

"God Gave Us Life"

A time of rejoicing for Ethiopian Mennonites began in the 1990s. The new government which deposed the Marxist regime in May 1991 moved toward democratic freedom. In September some two thousand people gathered at Nazareth to celebrate the return of their church building. The following January the government officially recognized the Meserete Kristos Church. In Addis Ababa six congregations began to meet in halls which had been used for political indoctrination. At Easter time more than 2,500 people met in a tent in Dire Dawa to celebrate their new freedom. Some congregations secured land from the government to build new churches.

During the years the churches were closed, hundreds of house fellowships developed. Eastern Board teachers, nurses, and community development workers, whom the government continued to welcome, related to the underground church. The five thousand members in 1982 grew to more than fifty thousand in 1992. Leaders of the Meserete Kristos Church praise God for this modern-day miracle.

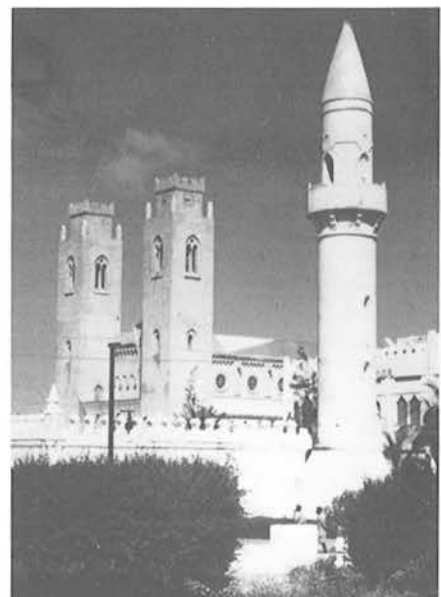
Recalling the decade of persecution, an Ethiopian evangelist commented, "Our church buildings, our bank accounts, and our freedom were taken away, but in exchange God gave us LIFE."

Entering Somalia

Wilbert and Rhoda Lind with their little son Daniel were hoisted from a steamship in a large collapsible bag and, clinging to the ropes, were lowered into a little boat bobbing on the waves. In this precarious way the first Mennonite missionaries to Somalia entered Mogadishu in January 1953. They moved into an Italian hotel in the ancient city, where the great stone houses of the rich towered above the mud-and-wattle homes of the poor. Until they found a house they worshipped on the seashore each Saturday afternoon. There they were joined by a Somali Christian who had met Christ in Ethiopia through the work of the Sudan Interior Mission.

Conviction for a mission to Somalia began on one of Orie Miller's many deputation trips. Several years earlier, as he traveled by plane from Ethiopia to Tanganyika, he was catching up on world news. He read that Somalia

Muslim mosque in Mogadishu.



Eastern Board workers in Somalia in the 1950s with deputation guests Amos Horst (left) and Orie Miller (right).

Missionaries (l. to r.): Ruby Wesselhoeft, held by Amos Horst; Marvin Musser; Chester Kurtz; Rhoda and Wilbert Lind with children, Joyce (in Wilbert's arms), Miriam, and Daniel; Fay Miller; Roy and Edna Shirk; Leota and Carl Wesselhoeft with children Paul and John.



was to become a United Nations trusteeship for ten years before receiving independence. Somewhere below him, he knew, was the land from which all missionaries were driven in 1935. Knowing that United Nations trusteeships had religious freedom, Orie became excited about a potential new field. His vision was accomplished in 1953.

Trust and Suspicion

"English has no cultural value in Somalia," an Italian government official told Wilbert Lind. Young Somali men seemed to disagree, for more than a hundred applied to enter the first English classes, which could accommodate only thirty. Students eager to read English wore out little Daniel's Bible story books.

Schools and clinics grew as missionary nurses, doctors, and teachers arrived. When Somalia became independent in 1960, in addition to schools and clinics at three places, there was a boarding school at Mahaddei Uen, a town north of the capital city. A year later a mission hospital opened at Margherita (Jamama) in the South.

Although the Constitution adopted in 1961 guaranteed religious freedom, problems developed when Muslims became Christians. New believers were sometimes threatened and harassed by neighbors or local police. When zealous young Christians distributed Arabic Scriptures on the streets of Mogadishu, the atmosphere became tense. On March 23, 1962, the government ordered the Mennonite mission to stop all activities.

A deputation from Tanganyika who visited Somalia in 1959 with five Somali believers who were taken into fellowship.



Witness by Death

"There is but a step between me and death." These words were underlined in Merlin Grove's Bible. On July 16, 1962, while registering students for adult evening classes in Mogadishu, Merlin was stabbed to death. Just four days earlier he had suggested in prayer meeting that God might see fit to send suffering to their group. After his death the

mission family found the marker in his Bible at I Samuel 20, where the above nine words were underlined.

While mission schools were closed, parents had pressured local officials and Merlin had contacted members of the central government. After nearly four months schools were allowed to re-open with some restrictions on non-Muslim teaching. Apparently Merlin's attacker resented this permission.

Dorothy Grove, who ran to assist her husband, was critically wounded, but recovered. Many Somalis sent messages of sympathy. The Prime Minister personally expressed his regrets and his hope that the mission would continue in Somalia. Missionary Harold Stauffer, called to testify at the assassin's trial, took the opportunity to give a witness of love and forgiveness.



The Merlin Grove family in 1960: David, Merlin, Bruce, Dorothy, and Pauline. On July 16, 1962, Merlin was stabbed to death while registering students for adult evening classes in Mogadishu.

"We Are Not Afraid"

As the re-opened schools grew and new ones started, the Mennonites built a reputation for excellent instruction. Like the schools, medical work increased after the clinics and hospital were permitted to open again. People brought the sick on donkeys, wheelbarrows, and improvised stretchers. After drought in the Northeast, the mission sent a medical team to treat famine victims. Meanwhile, the young church grew slowly.

A double crisis developed in 1963: a new law forbidding propagation of any religion except Islam, and enforcement of an old law requiring Islam to be taught in all accredited private schools. Encouraged by Somali Christians, the mission schools decided to comply rather than close completely.

In spite of the restrictions on evangelism, students showed increased interest in Bible study. Community people became less suspicious of the schools. A father who four years earlier had disowned his son for believing now permitted a younger son to read the Bible to the family.

As Orie Miller had commented when the Eastern Board was wrestling with the problem of Islamic instruction in Mennonite schools, "We are not afraid that Christ will be overcome by Mohammed."

A Bloodless Revolution

Tanks, soldiers, and joyful demonstrations filled Mogadishu streets on October 21, 1969, while missionaries watched and wondered about their future. At first, although both Muslim sects and Somali Christians were warned against disrupting national unity, the Revolutionary government welcomed the missionaries' contributions in education, medical work and community development. As the new emphasis on secularization decreased Muslim influence, Christians in Mogadishu experienced some increased freedoms.

On the third anniversary of the Revolution, the government announced that all private schools and medical programs would be nationalized. A few months later doctors and nurses were dismissed, but teachers were invited to stay. The next year the government ordered all non-teaching personnel to leave Somalia. Only eight Mennonite teachers in government schools remained.



Crypts where Eastern Board missionaries Merlin Grove, V. David Miller and Evelyn Wesselhoeft are buried. 1982 photo by Ken Nissley.



Mary Gehman teaching an English class at Johar Middle School. 1970
photo by Omar Eby.

Suddenly the end came. After a nine-day notice, all teacher contracts were terminated on May 7, 1976. At 6:30 on the morning of May 20, in a pouring rain, the last Mennonite missionaries flew out of Mogadishu.

"Will you come back?" asked an airport official.

"If God wills," was the answer.

Missionaries Return, to Leave Again

Five years after they were ordered out of the country, two teachers returned to Somalia at the invitation of the government. During the next decade about a dozen teachers and medical workers assisted in health and educational projects. They enjoyed good fellowship with the little group of believers.

The 1990s brought new difficulties. Clan warfare erupted after rebels drove the President out of the country. Violence devastated the economy, reduced millions to starvation, and forced missionaries to leave.

Working from Nairobi, Kenya, Mennonite workers continue a relationship with Christians in Somalia. Mennonite Central Committee workers assist in rebuilding in the North, where the Somaliland Republic has seceded from Somalia. Food is being sent to United Nations camps in Kenya which shelter hundreds of thousands of Somali refugees. Continued fighting has delayed relief shipments directly to Somalia.

Meanwhile Somali Mennonites, in the country or in exile, work with clan elders, the United Nations, and Christian organizations, in an effort to facilitate grass-roots dialogue, which all hope will bring peace to the war-weary land.

Reconciliation in Southern Africa

"This is something that has never happened before," said a member of a Zionist church in Swaziland when white Christians came to worship with them. The black independent churches which had grown spontaneously felt that they were considered inferior by Western-oriented churches established by white missionaries.

Into this situation Eastern Mennonite Missions workers came in 1971, not to evangelize, but to reconcile—to build relationships, not only between independent churches and mission churches, but also among the fragmented groups of independents. Their ministry centered on leadership training, Bible teaching, and participation in Zionist church life.

Contacts in Swaziland opened a door to Mozambique, where drought, epidemics, and a resistance movement supported by the South African government have created hunger and homelessness for millions. A missionary couple assists local churches in food production and public health.

From Swaziland American missionaries are able to accompany Zionist leaders on fellowship visits to black churches in South Africa. By such small steps in peacemaking, they hope to bring reconciling love to that racially tense region. Meanwhile in Cape Town, Dorcas Horst Cyster from Reading, Pennsylvania, and her husband, Graham Cyster from Cape Town, are giving leadership to the emerging Anabaptist Mennonite Grace Community churches.

To Honduras with the Gospel

A Lancaster preacher's curiosity about banana boats led to a mission in Central America. Jacob E. Brubaker, senior pastor of the East Chestnut Street congregation, worked as a pattern maker for Hubley toys. When business took him to New York City in the late 1940s, he enjoyed walking to the

Bonnie Bergey, Eastern Mennonite Missions and Mennonite Central Committee Somalia Representative since 1991, is resident in Nairobi.





(Above) Darrel Hostetter visits with Rev. Alfred J. Msibi and his wife Emelina in their home in Makayane, Swaziland. 1986 photo by Nathan Hege.

(Left) A young man in Swaziland throwing his charms and medicines into the fire after leaving his old life of witchcraft and turning to Jesus. 1991 photo by Darrel Hostetter.

(Below) Zionist worshipers in Swaziland interpret Scripture in a very literal manner. Here they march in procession and carry staffs as Moses and Aaron did in Old Testament times. 1982 photo by J. Carl Sensenig.





Missionaries traveled by boat to evangelize Moreno villages along the coast of Honduras. 1950s photo.



George Miller explains the Scripture to a young Honduran seeker. 1950s photo.

A railroad station near Sava, Honduras, affectionately known by volunteers as the Sava "Howard Johnson," provided shade, refreshments, and persons to talk with while awaiting the daily banana freight and passenger train to LaCeiba. 1967 photo.



wharf to watch the big ships. Fascinated by the large cargoes of bananas being unloaded, he asked where the banana boats came from.

The answer "Guatemala" set his imagination working. Why couldn't his congregation, which had already spread a network of little missions through Lancaster city, start an outpost in Guatemala? One could travel inexpensively on a banana boat to investigate the field, he told his brother ministers.

The East Chestnut Street congregation caught the vision. The north coast of Honduras, rather than Guatemala, became the focus of the new venture. On May 12, 1950, George and Grace Miller moved into a rented house in Trujillo, a little town nestled between forested mountains and the sea. Jacob Brubaker's dream had become reality.

Seed-Sowing and Harvest

by James and Beatrice Hess

The work in Honduras began in 1950, and early on the gospel was taken to the areas surrounding Trujillo, the town where the Mennonite missionaries first settled. One of the towns six miles away was Santa Fe. It is a Garifuna village, and it was reached by walking the beach and later going in a dugout canoe, and still later in an outboard boat. I still remember the first night I slept in a home in Santa Fe. I was on a hammock, and about two o'clock in the morning the rooster on the floor under me decided it was time to welcome the dawn, still hours away!

But there are other memories more important. I do not begrudge that rooster his instinctive rights, but like to think that he was also heralding a new day for Santa Fe and the Garifuna people. The work at first was slow, and few souls accepted Christ as their Saviour. When we left Trujillo to live in Tegucigalpa in 1964, there were perhaps a dozen Christians in Santa Fe. During the following years others ministered there, planting the seed of the gospel, and the Holy Spirit watering.

Today there is a strong congregation in Santa Fe with Garifuna leadership. A young man whose mother told me he ran crying into his house as a child when he saw us for the first time—the first white persons he had seen—came to the Lord when we were in Tegucigalpa and was a member of the church there. He later studied medicine in Mexico and is now pastor of the Evangelical Garifuna congregation in the Bronx. The gospel was sown with many tears, but now there is a joyful reaping.



Forty Years of Growth

From Trujillo, the early missionaries to Honduras walked or traveled in a sail-propelled dugout canoe to hold clinics and share the gospel in little Carib villages along the coast. Through jungles so dense that branches scraped the top and sides of the truck, they went to inland villages, crossing rivers on narrow bridges or home-made ferries. They rode horseback over mountains where motor vehicles could not travel, crossing streams so deep that they had to hold their feet high to keep them dry.

A cooperative agreement between the Eastern Board and the Pacific Coast Conference, which supplied and supported a missionary couple, made it possible to open a second station. As the surrounding area was evangelized, village by village, the missionaries focused on larger towns and cities, including the capital city, Tegucigalpa.

New believers, both Spanish and Indian, become active evangelists and responsible leaders. After forty years, the three-thousand-member Honduran Mennonite Church was carrying on an active program of evangelism, health, literacy, agriculture, and disaster relief.

Crossing the river at Sava. 1967 photo.



The Mennonite church at Trujillo. 1950s photo.

Voluntary Service in Honduras

Beautiful mountains, palm trees, and brilliant birds gave an exotic setting to human poverty in northern Honduras. People once employed on banana plantations had no work after the United Fruit Company left the region. To help in health, nutrition, and sanitation, Voluntary Service men were sent in 1959. They moved into a house of bamboo and vines plastered with mud and slept on beds made of cowhide strips tied to a wooden frame.

After clearing jungle land and old banana groves, they plowed the fields with oxen. They planted experimental plots of vegetables, showed school children how to care for gardens, and sold seeds and insecticides. They dug wells and taught people to build wash machines, stoves, and outdoor toilets. VS units opened in other places laid the groundwork for new congregations.

In time the Honduras Mennonite Church accepted responsibility for the service program begun by North Americans. Organized in 1968, COSEC (the Committee of Christian Service) coordinated projects as varied as well drilling and youth ministries.

"Living Love" In Tegucigalpa

"Amor Viviente" was the sign above a small bookstore along a narrow street in Tegucigalpa. Near the high school a drop-in center serving coffee and rolls issued an unspoken invitation to teenagers who had nothing to do. On street corners, at bars, and in pool halls, trained counselors listened to young people talk about their problems. This new work began in 1973, after Ed and Gloria King, EMM literacy workers in the city, heard God's call to minister to alienated youth.



The Amor Viviente congregation in Tegucigalpa in celebrative worship. 1991 photo by Dale D. Gehman.

Within a few years seekers and new believers were meeting throughout the city in cell groups pastored by "disciples," whom Ed trained in a closely disciplined program. To meet the needs of drug addicts, alcoholics, and dropouts of any kind, a rehabilitation center opened, where God changed lives dramatically through a program of hard physical work, intense Bible study, and "tough love." As Amor Viviente grew, it began a social ministry to needy people.

In less than two decades Amor Viviente membership reached nearly five thousand. A strong moving of the Holy Spirit permeates every Amor Viviente congregation. In 1980 the group sent a missionary to Spain. In 1985

it began to share "living love" with transplanted Latin Americans in New Orleans. More recently Amor Viviente planted churches in New York City, Miami, and Costa Rica.

Converted to Love of Neighbor

In the decade of the 1980s Honduran Mennonites, although they suffered poverty and economic crises due to soaring prices and high unemployment, became involved in the greater suffering of their neighbors. Near the southwestern border the churches related to displaced persons from El Salvador. Refugees reported massacres in churches and described their government's persecution of those who tried to help the poor. The wife of a gospel preacher told how she and her children fled through the hills across the border after soldiers, in an effort to silence her husband, threatened to kill them.

Congregations in the southeast risked welcoming to membership Nicaraguans who had fled fighting in their own country. On Palm Sunday in 1986 contra soldiers crossed the border into Honduras, raided homes of Honduran Christians, seized the Moriah Mennonite Church to use as a military base, and arrested eight Nicaraguan Mennonite men.

Recently the Honduran Mennonite Church took a public stand against human rights violations by the government of Honduras.

One of the Mennonite leaders gave his testimony: "I've been converted twice. Maybe my conversion to the love of neighbor was really my first real conversion. I used to think that salvation was something just for me."

Mennonites in El Salvador

Three Mennonite congregations in El Salvador try to give a clear Christian witness amid political conflict. An outgrowth of the church in Honduras, this group has related to Eastern Mennonite Missions since 1982.

Many El Salvadorans moved to Honduras during the 1960s after their land was seized for sugar plantations. Among those who returned in the 1970s, because of hostilities between the two countries, were Christians who had been converted through the evangelism of the Honduran Mennonite Church.

In 1977 Adelso and Grigida Landaverde, members of the church in Tocoa, Honduras, went back to their native land. They began a house fellowship in their son's home. The growing group pooled their resources to build a church, doing most of the work themselves.

Norman Hockman served as instructor at Trujillo Bible Institute. Norman died in Honduras in 1984. 1967 photo by Paul Kaufman.



When Norman Hockman, a missionary in Honduras, visited the Metapan Church in 1981, they asked for leadership training. After several years of visits to teach and share literature, Norman wrote:

"The congregation is Anabaptist-Mennonite, yet they have never had a resident missionary in Metapan. This is beautiful—an indigenous group of Salvadoran Christians seeking to be a part of the Mennonite Church!"

Shopkeepers in Belize

In 1959 German-speaking Mennonite groups who had migrated from Russia in the 1870s, first to Canada, then to Mexico, moved to uncleared jungles in British Honduras. There they hoped to preserve their culture and beliefs. Isolated by language and geography, the colonists had no way of marketing their products. Mennonite Central Committee, which helped them get started in farming, invited the Eastern Board to send workers to Belize to develop a trading service for the settlers.

Hurricane Hattie welcomed Chester and Vivian Denlinger to Belize in October 1960. By January they had opened a combination store and hostel. The Mennonite Center sold beef, cheese, chickens, eggs, and vegetables which the farmers brought in each week. Since colonists traveled nearly a hundred miles by local truck, they usually stayed overnight. The hostel provided supper, lodging, and breakfast. There were many extras: a room where families could rest while fathers did business in the city, cold drinking water, warm water for heating babies' bottles, letter-writing materials, and books to borrow or buy.

Besides families from the Mennonite colonies, many others came in—salesmen and beggars, neighbors and foreigners, a thief who stole the soap and the policemen who guarded the street. Workers had many opportunities to share their faith.

A New Life and a New Outreach

One day Victor passed the Mennonite Center in Belize City and went in to hear what Mennonites teach. He had often seen Mennonites from the colonies on the street, but the German immigrants did not discuss their beliefs with the people of Belize. Interested in what he heard, he returned to learn more. After several meetings, Victor became a believer.

The night he was saved, Voluntary Service worker Henry Buckwalter walked home with him. They went to a place new to Henry. Where the street ended, narrow planks bridged a swamp.

"Many nights I walked here drunk," said Victor, "and sometimes I fell into the mud and water. Now I have a new life."



Norman and Grace Hockman.



VSer Henry Buckwalter with a customer at the Mennonite Center Store in Belize City. 1967 photo.



Paul Martin conversing with men from Spanish Lookout colony. 1969 photo by Paul Kaufman.



Dora Taylor (2nd from left) with the Macario Chi family and Otho Horst at San Felipe church. 1967 photo by Paul Kaufman.



A Sunday school class at Pine Ridge. 1973 photo.

They entered a clearing fringed by palm trees silhouetted against a full moon. Several homes surrounded a small roof-and-pole shelter. To Henry the beauty of the scene seemed to reflect the new birth of Victor and suggested the possibility of a new outreach.

"This would be a good place for a Sunday school," he suggested. Victor agreed. As a result, the second witness point opened in Belize.

Growth in the North

"How did you make a living before you were Christian?" asked missionary Paul Martin.

"It was easy. If things got tight, we stole, made rum, or added extra hours to our time if we had a job. Now we don't want to do that because we are Christian. But our children suffer and it is hard."

The speaker was a believer from San Felipe, an Indian village some sixty miles north of Belize City. In this region of northern Belize, where there are many Spanish-speaking people of Maya Indian descent, medical clinics and VS units had opened doors to the gospel, beginning in the town of Orange Walk.

As missionaries and VS workers saw believers struggle against poverty, they worked to help them to economic self-sufficiency. With loans from MEDA and equipment donated by North American churches, local men cleared jungle land made available by the government. Soon fields of growing corn and rice gave promise of a better future.

The gospel seed planted in the spiritual fields of the North grew out to reach neighboring places. The first missionaries commissioned by the Belize Mennonite Church were sent by the San Felipe congregation.

South to the Garifunas

The *Way to Life* program, released on prime time on the only radio station in Belize, was so well known that sometimes the missionaries were called the "Way to Life" people. The broadcast reached places where no missionary had ever been. In the late 1970s a group of believers who had come to faith through the radio program asked for a Bible teacher to come to Georgetown, a Garifuna village in southeastern Belize. Descendants of island Carib Indians and African slaves, the Garifunas live in coastal villages throughout Central America.

Until permanent workers were found, missionaries from Belize City traveled 130 miles one way, sometimes through deep mud, to hold services in Georgetown. They found eager listeners. Men, women, and children crowded into a tiny building for evening services by lantern light with an overflow group listening outside, often in rain. In the early years at Georgetown, Sunday morning worshipers sat on benches under a house on stilts.

Witnessing churches which grew in Georgetown and in the neighboring village of Hopkins shared the good news of the gospel with Garifunas in other villages. In 1988 the Hopkins congregation chose one of its members as pastor, an important step in establishing an authentic Garifuna congregation.

The Bridge-Building Gospel

As they related to both German Mennonite farmers and citizens of Belize, North American workers rejoiced to see cultural barriers slowly break down. In time the settlers began to sell directly to the nationals. Some colonists who stayed overnight at the Mennonite Center attended the

mid-week service of the local congregation. One man said that sharing in worship led by a Belizean Christian helped him to understand and accept his neighbors. Eventually the colonists, who had come to British Honduras as isolationists, welcomed visits from national Christians as well as from North American Mennonites.

One colony assisted MEDA and VS workers in an agricultural project to benefit farmers in a neighboring village. Later the colonists worked with an Indian village to organize a farmers' cooperative. When Hurricane Fifi struck Honduras, the German settlers were the first to volunteer help, sending food and supplies as well as workers. In the 1980s they responded to a request from the new independent government to help in refugee resettlement near the new capital, Belmopan.

Today the New Jerusalem Evangelical Church at Spanish Lookout is an example of the new brotherhood. There Old Colony Mennonites, Belizeans, and immigrants from Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador worship together.

Guatemala, the "Land of Eternal Springtime"

Ruins of Maya Indian temples remain in Guatemala, silent reminders of an ancient, highly developed civilization. Some 250,000 K'ekchi's scattered throughout the central highlands are descendants of the Mayas. The gospel witness has hardly penetrated this mountain region, partly because of geographical isolation, partly because of the difficulty of twenty-two Indian languages.

Mennonite missionaries sent in 1967 by the Washington-Franklin County Mission Board in cooperation with the Eastern Board found the K'ekchi's, after centuries of exploitation by white people, shy and suspicious of strangers. Reading classes in homes, flannelgraph Bible stories in a school, contacts in markets to sell calendars with a Scripture text in K'ekchi—these were early efforts to open doors to the gospel. Voluntary Service men made friends through agricultural projects. As K'ekchi' farmers were persuaded to try fertilizers, the darker green of the corn growing in enriched soil was visible far away.

Gradually, as the North Americans walked the mountain trails, they met smiles and greetings from people who at first had looked the other way or stepped behind the undergrowth until the strangers had passed.

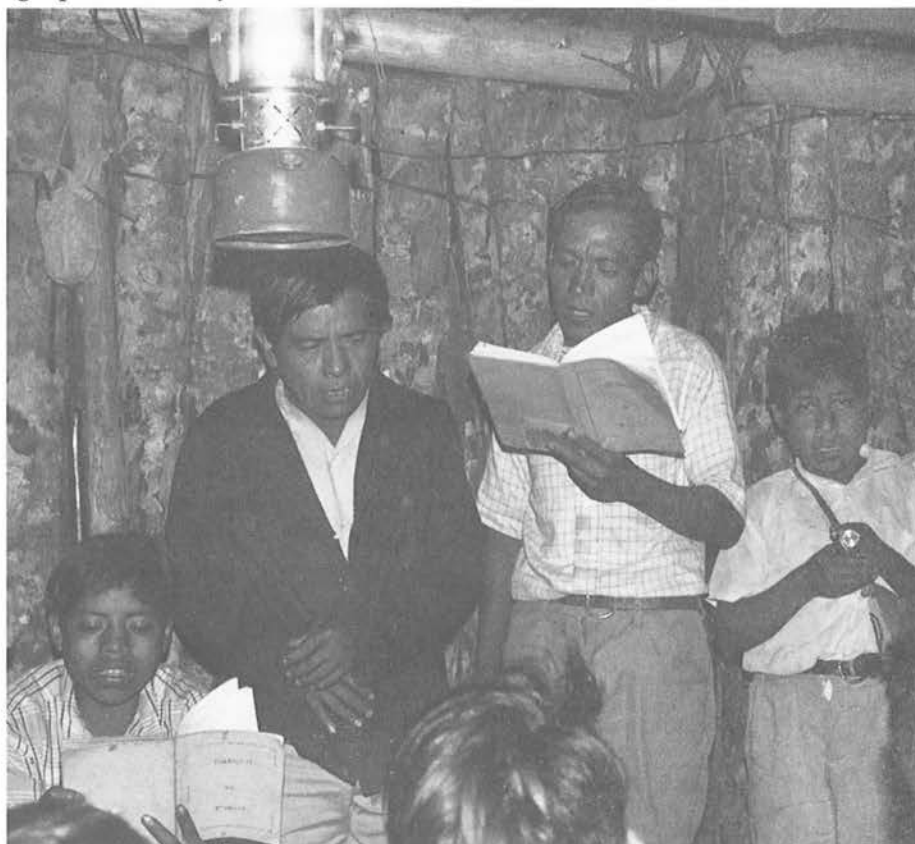
A Harvest of Souls

"This year the animals destroyed most of my corn, but the Lord is giving us a harvest of souls," said Sebastian. A fierce-looking chicle-gatherer with a reputation for unusual strength and cunning, Sebastian was converted through the witness of a K'ekchi' Christian who came to his house. Soon afterward his cow, pig, and dog died mysteriously as if poisoned. People threat-



On the trail to Semesche. 1974 photo by Larry Lehman.

A service in Semesche. 1974 photo by Larry Lehman.





Scenic Guatemalan countryside. 1983 photo by Douglas Miller.

ened his family. For a year, at his invitation, Christians from a young church in San Pedro Carcha held services in his house, but no one came.

Sebastian continued to witness and pray. Finally one family of neighbors came to faith. Others followed. Then he built a chapel in a nearby village and invited people to come. At the first meeting in the unfinished building, thirty-five K'ekchi's sat on logs and heard the gospel. Twenty-five decided to follow Christ.

While the missionaries reached out through programs in literacy, sanitation, nutrition, and medicine, they assisted new believers in vigorous evangelism. Much of the growth of the K'ekchi' church came because of the informal witness of those who lost no opportunities to share the joy of faith. Also the young congregation sent groups to preach in other areas without "one little push from the missionaries." As a result, the gospel reached many new villages, some accessible only by walking.

Today fifty-four congregations in rural Guatemala have 3,500 members, men and women whom the Holy Spirit has freed from fear of the capricious gods of nature through faith in the God of love.

Witness in Guatemala City

Juan Vega, a Spanish-speaking Mennonite who lived in Lancaster, felt that life was too easy and that God was asking more of him. In October 1973, while attending a Christian workers' retreat in Texas, he received a strong conviction that God wanted him for a special work. Before he left



Guatemalan children singing praises at church dedication. 1990 photo by Allen Eshleman.



Praise God with the marimba and stringed instruments! 1991 photo by Dale D. Gehman.



Ruth Ann Carter teaching Dominga de Cuc to read K'ekchi'. 1991 photo by Dale D. Gehman.

for home, his wife telephoned him to say, "José Santiago called me and said the Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions would like to send you to Guatemala."

"Praise the Lord!" exclaimed Juan. "I've had Guatemala on my heart for the past three months."

In his interview at Salunga he learned that the staff of the overseas office had been praying for three months for a couple to send to Guatemala City. Juan became the first Hispanic missionary sent overseas by the Eastern Board.

A small congregation had grown in Brigada, a community on the edge of Guatemala City, where Richard Landis won the confidence of people by helping them get a water supply after all their wells went dry. From small beginnings in the capital city, the Spanish-speaking Mennonite churches in Guatemala grew to five hundred members in seven congregations.

Following Christ in Times of Terror

Violence is no stranger in Guatemala, where the gap between the rich and the poor continually widens. During the late 1970s terrorism increased, the outbreak of extremism bred by centuries of oppression. Left-wing guerrillas, resentful of injustice, terrorized the countryside, burning buildings and killing officials. Right-wing death squads secretly disposed of anyone suspected of opposing the military dictatorship.

Faced in the 1980s with a requirement to join armed civil guard patrols, Mennonite believers prayed about their dilemma. One K'ekchi' Christian told his story:

"I was convicted not to serve in the civil patrol. I preached what the Scriptures say about fighting and killing others.

"Many people were angry with me. They threw me in jail for three days. I spent the nights in jail, but during the day I had to dig holes and stack rocks.

"About a hundred people in the community came to watch me work. I took the opportunity to preach to them. Some in the crowd had leather whips and intended to whip me. But instead of that they sent me home at 10 p.m. Again I sensed God's power."

SEMILLA, Seminary without Walls

"I wish Mennonites would make up their mind about leadership training," said a Baptist missionary in Honduras.

Not only in Honduras, but also in Belize and Guatemala, young churches had experimented with different ways to train leaders for emerging groups. Bible schools at central locations demanded hard travel and long absences from home, which created hardship for students and their families. Mobile Bible schools, a practical alternative, failed to provide long-term training.

SEMILLA, an extension program sponsored by ten Mennonite and Brethren in Christ national church organizations in eight Central American countries, began in 1982. Participants receive Anabaptist-oriented theological materials, with reading and writing assignments for home study, and then meet in their own geographical region for seminars taught by visiting teachers. Students come from many walks of life. Besides pastors, there are business men and women, bankers, lawyers, teachers, doctors, nurses, farmers, and homemakers.

"Why haven't we been doing this long ago?" asked one student. Another commented, "The social situations we face today and those confronted by the sixteenth-century Anabaptists are incredibly similar."

To the Island of Santo Domingo

At a Spanish evangelistic meeting in New York City in the early 1970s, Jose Santiago, a Spanish minister from Lancaster, met Hilario de Jesus, pastor of the Faro Divino (Divine Lighthouse) Church in the Dominican Republic. After several exchange visits between leaders of the churches in Lancaster and the Dominican Republic, the Council of Spanish Mennonite Churches of Lancaster Conference decided to accept the Faro Divino congregations as affiliates. In 1976 Eastern Mennonite Missions workers, responding to a request for help in leadership training, began to hold Bible institutes in the Dominican Republic.

In Haiti, also, Eastern Mennonite Missions has contributed significantly to theological education. The Mennonite Central Committee, which entered that impoverished island country in the 1950s, suggested there should be a direct mission witness to supplement the witness of service in the name of Christ. However, with strong Protestant missions already there, in addition to several hundred independent churches, EMM decided its best witness was to assist evangelical groups through a Bible teaching ministry.

One outgrowth of the work in Haiti was the opportunity to minister to Haitian refugees in southern Florida.



José Santiago teaching a Bible study in Dominican Republic. 1992 photo by Samuel Lopez.

Open Doors in Venezuela

"The Lord is showing us one miracle after another," rejoiced José Santiago, a year and a half after coming to Caracas, Venezuela. "To begin with, he provided a fine meetingplace. I know of fellowships that have rented for years without finding a building to purchase. We prayed and the Lord provided."

Natives of Puerto Rico converted through the Mennonite witness there, José and Agdelia Santiago had been active in the Spanish churches in the Lancaster area and had helped in the outreach to the churches in the Dominican Republic. When José heard that the Eastern Board planned a mission in Venezuela, "something clicked in his mind," and he told Overseas Secretary Don Jacobs, "Please keep us in mind for Venezuela."

It took faith for the Board to open a mission in a city where living expenses were two or three times as high as those at home. It took faith for missionaries to witness for Christ in an oil-rich, materialistic society.

That faith was rewarded. The witness begun in Caracas in 1979 spread through several sections of the city and outward to an industrial town about an hour's drive away.

Servants of Love to Peru

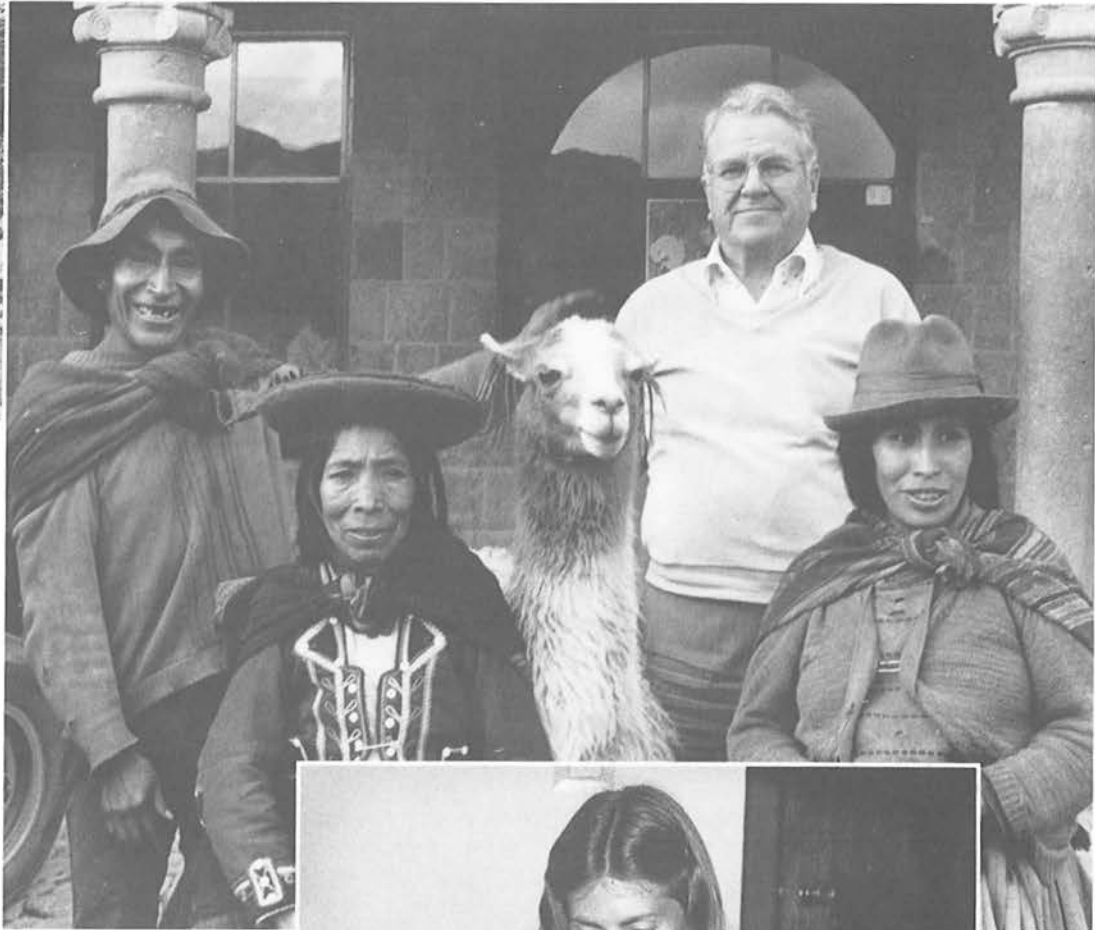
Some thirty miles south of Cusco, once the center of the ancient Inca empire, Quechua Christians in Lucre pray for their brothers and sisters in North America. The church is very young, but the people have learned to pray. At prayer meetings two or three hours long, many fall on their faces

Ken Holderman (left) and Ruben Garcia baptizing Yadira Abad in Venezuela. 1988 photo by Eduardo





Jean Shenk, Louise and Howard Yoder visiting Indian ruins 45 kilometers northeast of Cusco, Peru. 1987 photo by Norman Shenk.



James Hess (back row, right) on a deputation visit poses with a Peruvian family and their friendly llama.



Louise Eshleman Yoder reading to two little friends, Margot and Ana Maria, who came almost every day for a visit. 1988 photo by Howard Yoder.

with foreheads against the cold earthen floor—and it is cold in the Andes Mountains, twelve thousand feet above sea level.

Eastern Mennonite Missions entered Peru at the urging of Servants of Love, a mission task force from Lancaster Conference churches planted since 1980, who offered to support a witness in a new overseas area. In 1987 work began among the Quechua Indians, a people unreached by the gospel.

Beginning with Bible study with the house helper in a missionary's home, the church spread to neighboring villages. Evangelists sent by the new congregations receive Bible instruction and on-the-job training as they walk with missionaries over high mountain passes proclaiming the gospel. Lives dramatically changed by the Holy Spirit bear strong witness to the power of God. Neighbors wondering at the mutual trust and harmony in the young church came to ask, "What must we pay to join your group?"



Omar Stahl leading Wednesday Bible study in Esch, Luxembourg. 1960 photo.

Walking with the Church in France

by Glen and Elizabeth Good

From our childhood days, the Lord had laid his hand on us. Little did we realize that one day we would be called to be his witnesses in France. Then in 1954 the call came—clear and unquestionable.

On October 19, 1954, we set sail for the land that was to become "our home" for 39 years.

During those years the French society changed from a rural-oriented society into an industrial community and has now entered the technological era. But the greatest shift has been political, with the development of the European Community as a new world power.

Another "revolution," the silent penetration of the gospel, is also changing the society. For instance, when we arrived in the Lorraine area, the evangelical community was hardly visible. Today there are over twenty evangelical churches.

As for the Mennonite Church, there were only six congregations in this area when we arrived, and one of these was in the last stage of dying. Today there are eight congregations with whom we had the privilege of working. The one that was dying is now rising from the ashes into new life. During this time five new churches, plus another one in Brittany, have been planted. Unfortunately two of these had to be closed. During these years we had the privilege of working with the French Mennonite Conference and contributed to the development of the life of the church. It has been a joy to walk with our brothers and sisters as we tried to understand God's will for his church in France.

Margaret Martin reading to children on her doorstep in Neumühle, Germany. 1975 photo.



Mission and Discipleship in Western Europe

Isaac Baer's concern for European Jews who had suffered



Glen and Elizabeth Good, who served over 30 years in France, at a literature display table during a week of evangelization in Thionville. 1960s photo.

under the Nazis called the attention of the Eastern Board to Europe. Beginning in 1951 with a witness in Luxembourg, the work moved to northeastern France and western Germany. As increasing numbers of European Mennonites caught the vision for mission, the churches in Luxembourg, France, and Germany organized home mission associations. Since the early 1970s North American missionaries have served under these boards.

Sharing the concern of European Mennonites that many young people were indifferent to the church, Don Jacobs suggested in 1979 that the Eastern Board and the Lancaster Conference Youth Office should send a team to serve with German youth in summer witness.

At the end of the summer of 1980 the first YES team members knew the experience had changed their lives, but some questioned whether their three-month service had any lasting effect on Germany. Linford Stutzman, EMM missionary in Germany, disagreed: "The energy and sacrifice of the team last summer is helping to bring a movement into existence—a movement which could exceed our expectations . . . Young Mennonites in ancient churches saw an exciting new concept of discipleship."

New Fields in Eastern Europe

Each year Gerald Shenk, theology professor at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, travels to Croatia to lecture at an evangelical seminary, where windows are shattered and classrooms scarred by the bullets of civil war. Since 1971, well before the Iron Curtain fell, Eastern Mennonite Missions has had a presence in the former Yugoslavia. Harley Wagler studied at a university in Zagreb and assisted Baptist churches in outreach. Gerald and Sara Shenk succeeded him. Today Gerald's students in the Osijek seminary represent most of the nationalities in conflict in that area—an unprecedented opportunity to practice peacemaking.

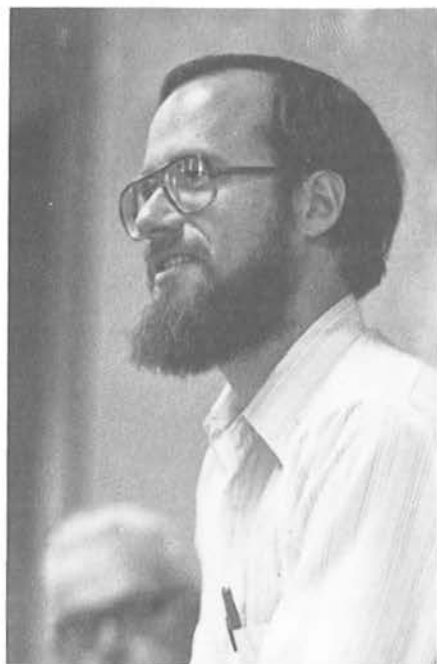
In East Germany, EMM worker Omar Stahl and representatives of the German Mennonite home mission board met a Christian couple eager for help in witness. Today EMM missionaries, Barry and Erika Kreider, partner with North German Mennonites to plant a church in Halle, a city in that former communist country.

Ernie Glick, leader of EMC's student exchange program with Nizhni Novgorod University, 250 miles northeast of Moscow, reports that Russian schools welcome ties with United States schools because they are keenly interested in recovering the values lost in the past seventy-five years. EMM, therefore, placed intern Gloria Rhodes here in 1992.

Reconciliation in the Middle East

"Witness is never a shout across a chasm, as from my supposed holiness to his sinfulness," wrote Roy Kreider, the first Mennonite missionary in Israel. The work there has been a ministry of reconciliation. Begun in 1953 by the Mennonite Board of Missions, with the assistance of the Eastern Board, it signaled the growth of mutual trust. The earliest Mennonite missionaries to enter the country helped to heal relationships among leaders of fragmented Protestant churches in Israel. Peace within the brotherhood led to efforts to reconcile Jews, Christians, and Muslims through seminars where a representative of each of the three faiths explained the place of peace in its history and theology.

Gerald Shenk travels to Croatia to lecture at an evangelical seminary.



In the 1970s Anglicans and Mennonites cooperated in opening Immanuel House in Tel Aviv, an international Christian center where Jewish and Arab Christians could learn together. A visitor called the center a place where one can see a real demonstration of how God's people ought to live.

Since 1980, Garry and Ruth Denlinger have related to a local Hebrew and Arab Christian group in Haifa, the third largest city in Israel. They report a deepening interest

in the gospel. One new believer said with joy, "Five families in my home community have asked me to come and teach them the Word of God." Currently, an EMM-sponsored couple are developing a business venture in the Middle East and helping to develop a Bible story book for children in Arabic, which will be released this year.



James Stauffer directing a Bible study in Saigon, Vietnam. 1958 photo.

Witness for Peace in Vietnam

"Call him *missionary*," the gatekeeper at a Mennonite center in Saigon rebuked children for calling Luke Martin *American*. "The missionary does not kill Vietnamese."

Mennonite missionaries entering Vietnam in 1957 wondered how to communicate Christ's message of peace in a country where in the past Christianity had accompanied Western military conquest. Mennonite Central Committee paved the way by helping refugees from the North, after the country was divided in 1954, and continued to relieve suffering as the war intensified.

A few understood the witness of love. The first woman baptized, falsely accused by a fellow-worker of being communist, was arrested, interrogated, and tortured before being released. When the Diem government fell and a new dictator assumed power, her persecutors faced political trouble. She demonstrated her faith by praying for them.

After the fall of Saigon in 1975, the little Mennonite congregation united with other small groups to register as the United Evangelical Church. Three years later a pastor told former missionary James Stauffer, "God has a purpose in it all. Tell our friends abroad that we are well and the Lord is with us. We are going on regardless."



MCC workers Atlee Beechy, Paul Longacre, Earl Martin, and EMM worker Don Sensenig chatting with three Vietnamese friends. 1966 MCC photo by Frank Epp.

The Vietnamese pastor's wife visits and encourages one of her Christian sisters. 1960s photo.



Margaret Metzler telling the story of the Samaritan woman to children gathered in Saigon center for Bible Story Hour. 1964 photo by Everett Metzler.

A Time of War —Reflection on an Experience in Vietnam by Don Sensenig

For most of the 10-year period our family served in Vietnam we were relatively unaffected by the guerrilla war raging mostly in the countryside. However, during the "Tet offensive" of 1968, guerrilla forces infiltrated many areas of Saigon, and fighting forced people to flee to churches, schools, and orphanages, seeking safety. The need for water and firewood at these sites became acute.

Restrictions were placed on movement around the city, to try to pin down the guerrillas. As Westerners, we were obviously not guerrillas, and were at times allowed to pass through roadblocks. I managed to reach downtown one afternoon and noticed a water tank truck parked at the Ministry of Social Welfare. I learned that the driver's whereabouts were unknown, and persuaded an official to give me the keys so I could haul water to refugee sites. For a number of days I was able to do this. Several of us also used an MCC flatbed truck to haul discarded 2 x 4s from a riverside dock to these sites for firewood.

A school and church operated by the mission on the outskirts of the city also became a distribution point for bread during this crisis. An unsigned letter, with the seal of the local branch of the National Liberation Front, was stuffed into the mailbox one day. In it, the NLF expressed appreciation to the church for assisting all persons in need, without regard for political or religious affiliation.

An ongoing debate among us as missionaries in Vietnam was whether our identity as Americans, whose country was prosecuting the war, overwhelmed the message of the gospel we preached, a message of peace, open to all, East or West, civilian or soldier.

I believe this response to need during a crisis helped incarnate the gospel message. Only God knows what fruit resulted from this modest witness.



Don Sensenig served with Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions in Vietnam from 1963 to 1975.

The Way to the Philippines

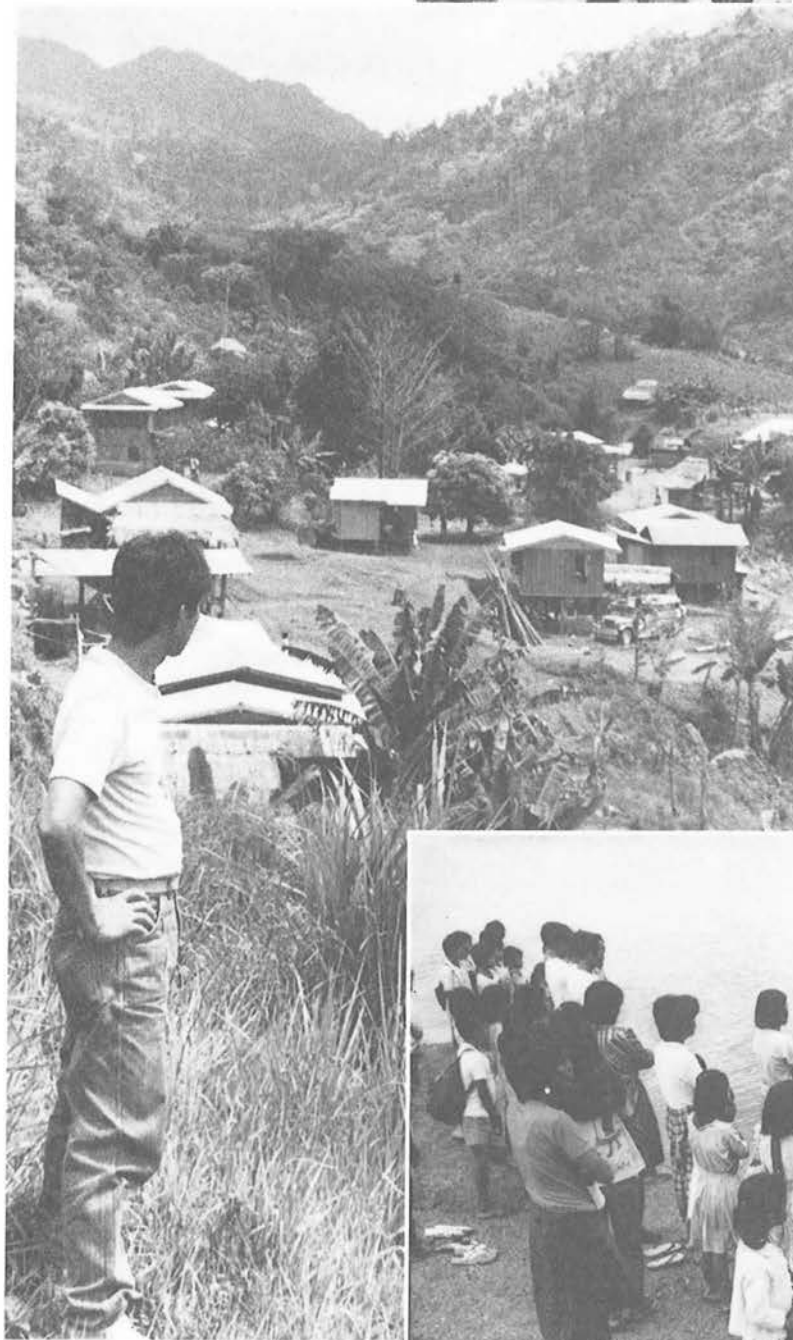
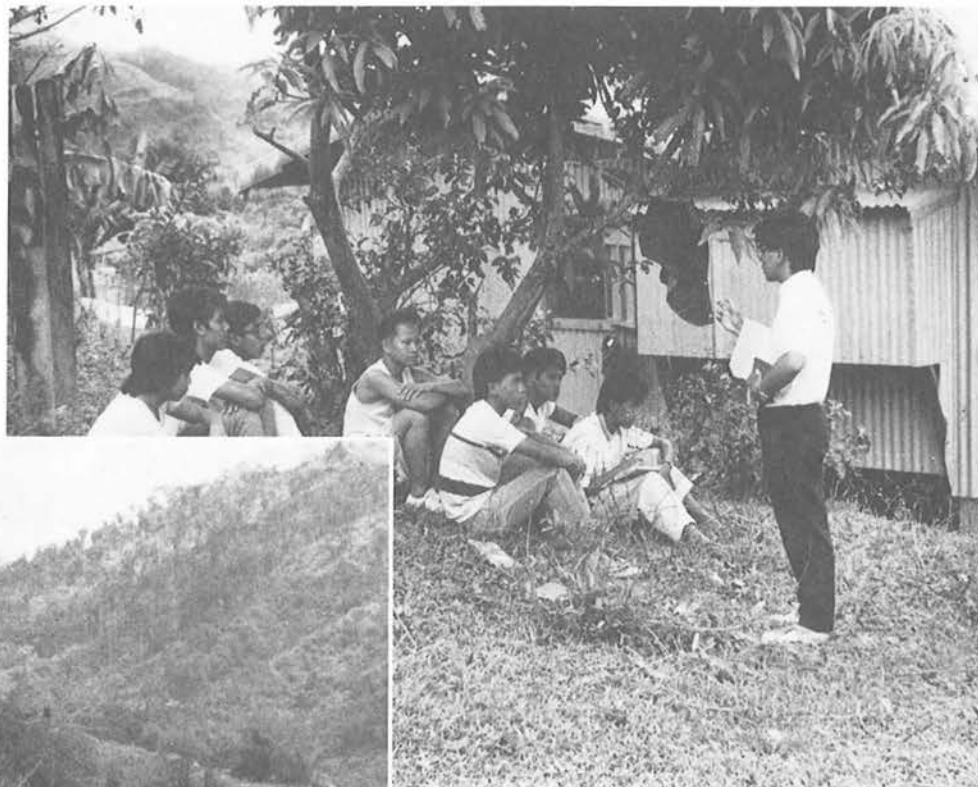
One day in 1957 a boy in the Philippines returned from market with his purchase wrapped in a copy of *The Way*. That little evangelistic paper was distributed door-to-door in the mid-century by many Lancaster Conference youth groups. On the paper was stamped the name of Harry Lefever, pastor of the Mellinger Mennonite Church. The boy's father, a seeker for fellowship with a Bible-believing church, wrote to Pastor Lefever. Their correspondence set in motion events which led the Eastern Board to appoint workers for the Philippines in 1970.

Mennonite missionaries related first to Missions Now, an association of rural independent congregations active in evangelism among the mountain tribes of Luzon Island. EMM activity concentrated on fellowship, Bible teaching, pastoral training, and producing Anabaptist theological materials in Tagalog. Important to

Piles of ash and sand in the streets of Olongapo City in the wake of the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo. 1991 photo by Art Lopez.



Bible study under a tree, Mennonite Missions Now Conference, in the Philippines. 1988 photo by Earl Zimmerman.



(Left) Manila church planter Rex Baladjay looking across a rural village in the Philippines. 1988 photo by Earl Zimmerman.

First baptismal service for a church planted in the Philippines by a pastor who became a Christian in prison, attended Bible school, and became an evangelist. 1986 photo by Paul Landis.



people whose lives are often disrupted by typhoons, floods, earthquakes, and political strife are the projects of Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite Economic Development Associates in agriculture, health and nutrition, and cottage industries.

By 1990 the newly named Integrated Mennonite Church of the Philippines had some twenty established congregations, including one in Manila, and as many house fellowships. Outreach extended as far as four hundred miles from the capital city. Because of capable leadership by the young church, EMM phased out its missionary presence in 1993.

Inter-Mennonite Cooperation in "Fragrant Harbor"

"Between now and 1997 our goal is to plant as many Mennonite congregations as possible in Hong Kong. We would like to see a thriving church in each of the seven new cities which have been recently built in Hong Kong." That was the testimony of Paul Wong, a delegate to Mennonite World Conference in Winnipeg in 1990.

Presently three Mennonite congregations, planted jointly by Eastern Mennonite Missions and the Commission on Overseas Mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church, face the uncertainties of 1997, when the British-ruled territory will be returned to the People's Republic of China.

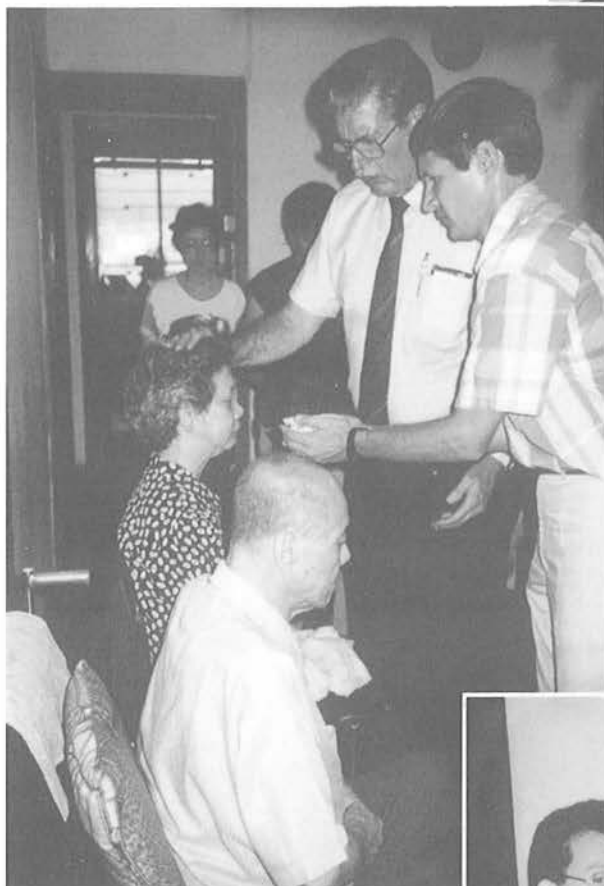
Mennonite Central Committee pioneered the work in Hong Kong with a relief program that included hot meals for three thousand needy children in makeshift rooftop schools. At MCC's invitation, EMM missionaries entered in 1965. In 1980 Hugh and Janet Sprunger, who had served in Taiwan for twenty-five years under the General Conference Mennonite Church, joined Ira and Evelyn Kurtz.

Friendship with neighbors in crowded high-rise building blocks, English classes, and study facilities for students led to Bible study, worship services, and establishment of three churches—Agape, Hope, and Grace.

Overlooking Wall Street and Victoria Harbor, Hong Kong, Kowloon City is in the background. 1993 photo by Dale Gehman.

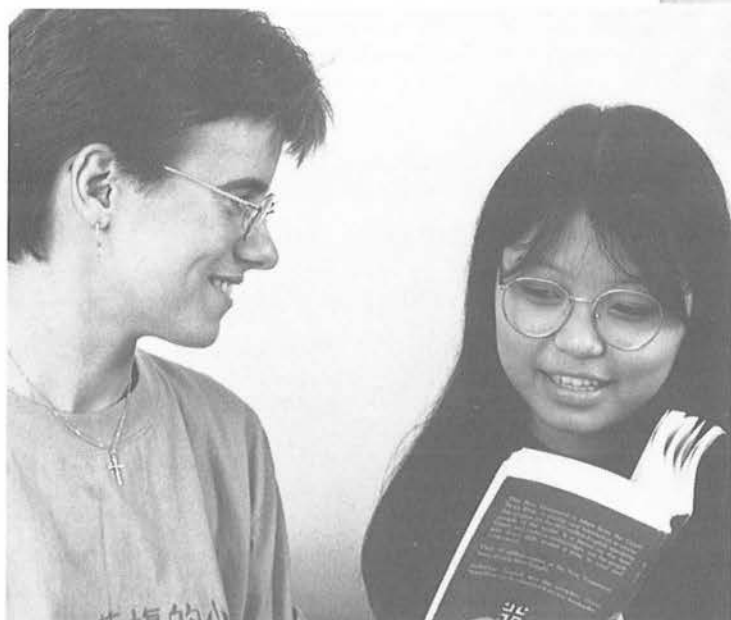


Ira and Evelyn Kurtz learning to write Chinese characters. 1969 photo by Paul Kaufman.



Hugh Sprunger and Tim Sprunger baptizing Mr. and Mrs. Chan in Hong Kong. 1990 photo.

Paul Wong (left) receiving the official registration certificate for the Hong Kong Mennonite Church from the lawyer on July 15, 1991. 1991 photo by Hugh Sprunger.



Claudia Heidebrecht, in Hong Kong, YES participant, and Karen Chan, a new believer, study the Bible together. 1993 photo by Dale Gehman.



River boat is a vital mode of transportation for the people of Kalimantan. 1978 photo by Luke Beidler.

Luke Beidler and Pak Yakub, members of the missionary team in West Kalimantan, starting out for the weekend of teaching in the village of Jelemuk. Over 100 persons attended Bible classes and worship services. 1978 photo by Dorothy Beidler.



Worshippers at Melapi, West Kalimantan. 1978 photo by Luke Beidler.



Magdalena and Abednego, young Indonesian Christians from Kalimantan, answered God's call to take the gospel upriver to their own Kantu people.

During the singing of "I gave my life for you; what have you given for me?" Abed realized that "the Lord had given all for me and I had given nothing for him." As he considered what to do, the answer came as he read John 15:16. "I knew it was God's word for me," Abed said. "I was to Go."

After studying in a Bible school and later marrying Magdalena, Abed became ill with tuberculosis. But in answer to many prayers he improved, and the couple was able to move to Melapi to build a self-supporting congregation. They enjoyed a Paul-Timothy relationship with Luke and Dorothy Beidler in the 1980s. 1984 photo by Luke Beidler.

Wilbur and Lois Erb, Harrisonburg, Va., served in Australia 1980-1983.



Partnership with PIPKA

Church planters Luke and Dorothy Beidler lived in houses on stilts or rooms in long houses in Kantu villages in the tropical rain forests of West Kalimantan. They ate what the Kantus ate, washed clothing in the river, and read by the light of kerosene lanterns.

Paul and Esther Bucher lived in a houseboat on the Kapuas River and its tributaries, taking help in agriculture, health and nutrition to villages along the river.

The North Americans were part of a team led by an Indonesian evangelist sent to the island of Borneo in 1977. The outreach was a joint effort of the Eastern Board and

PIPKA, the mission board of the Muria Synod of the Mennonite Church in Java. To partner with a Mennonite Church that had not grown from the work of an American Mennonite mission was a creative venture for the Eastern Board.

Within two years five villages along the Kapuas River had become Christian and seven more requested a teacher to live among them. The PIPKA team worked hard at training local leaders. In 1984, when the American workers left, Kantu pastors and evangelists were able to help the Indonesian team in nurturing the new churches and evangelizing unreached villages.

Australia

by Wilbur and Lois Erb

We look back upon our three years in Australia (1980-83) as a rich learning experience. It was not all easy; it was not all pleasant, but it was all good.

There was much to enjoy in the beauty of the country, the charm of the unusual animals and birds, the challenge of understanding Ozzie English as opposed to American English—new words, new meanings, new spellings and new inflections—a totally different culture where tea is not only a beverage drunk from bone china, but also your evening meal or your dinner; where sports are not a diversion but an obsession, with the accompanying gambling and drinking an accepted foregone conclusion; where the Melbourne Cup for horse racing receives the hold-your-breath awe we reserve for Easter; and where the diversity of school uniforms identifies at a glance the various halls of learning.

The heart of our time there was the sweet fellowship we found with Christians from many denominations, and the opportunities we found in our community to share Jesus. We didn't drop teaspoons of our processed faith into their empty cups, add boiling prayer to the brim, stir well and end up with a tray full of Instant Mennonites, but we found many listening ears who wanted to know our reason for the hope that is in us, and a few ready hearts who said, "Thy God shall be my God."

Mennonite Voices Speak to Australia

An Australian engineer in England for graduate study was converted at a Billy Graham Crusade in London. Afterward, he worked for the General Electric Company in Waynesboro, Virginia. There Ian and Ann Duckham

met Mennonites. While studying at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Ian became a committed Anabaptist. When the Duckhams returned to Australia in 1977, they began to witness to their neighbors near Perth on the West Coast. Ten years later, in response to Ian's request for help, the Eastern Board sent workers to assist in church-building. Australian Mennonites are committed to establishing an Anabaptist community firmly rooted in Australian culture.

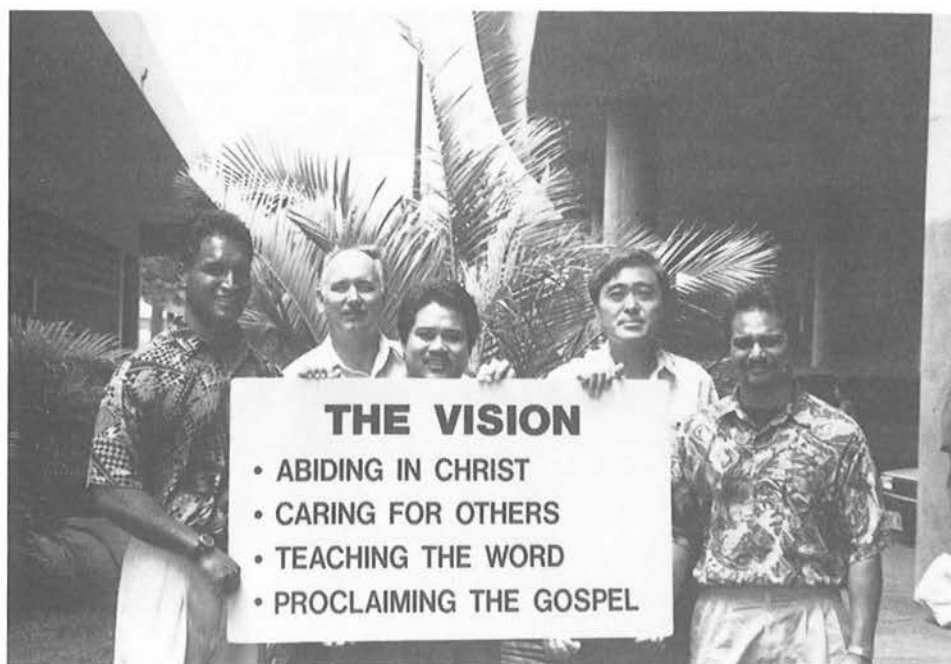
Another Anabaptist fellowship is growing on the East Coast of Australia about two hundred and fifty miles north of Sydney. In the 1960s, after meeting Orie Miller, Foppe and Alice Brouwer, Holland Mennonites living in Australia, caught a vision for mission. Commissioned by the European Mennonite Mission Board in 1978, they made contacts with neighbors by starting a cooperative to buy fruits and vegetables wholesale. The first Mennonite baptism in Australia took place on the Brouwers' lawn.

New Life in Hawaii

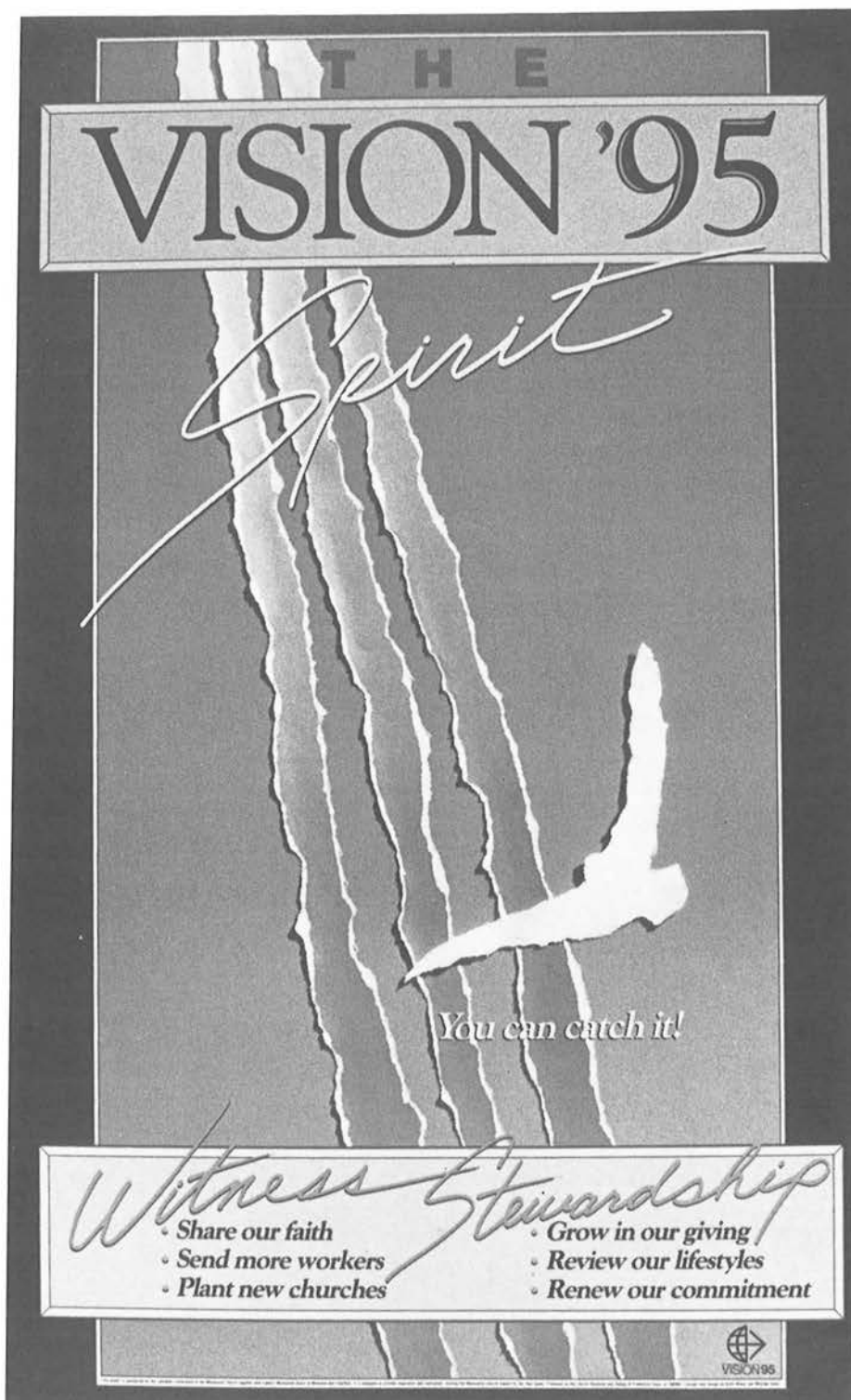
At a luau in Honolulu five people prayed to be delivered from drugs and alcohol. This was a traditional Hawaiian feast with a difference. A local TV singer who had found Jesus after being arrested on drug charges provided the entertainment and shared his testimony with the 250 guests who enjoyed the evening.

The luau was an evangelistic outreach of the New Life Christian Fellowship in Honolulu, a church-planting effort of Gary and Judy Morris, who went to Hawaii in 1987. Sponsored by the Mennonite Board of Missions, the Franconia Mennonite Conference, and Eastern Mennonite Missions, they began work in a place strongly influenced by Asian religious philosophies and Western secularism.

Within a year a small congregation of enthusiastic believers had gathered. One family's witness resulted in the conversion of the wife's mother and sister, five members of the husband's family, and two friends. By 1991 three pastors had been licensed and the group moved to plant a second church fifteen miles north of Honolulu in an area known for crime and drugs. The new witness is centered in the home of a man who was converted at the luau in Honolulu.



New Life Christian Fellowship leadership team: (l to r.), Peter Louis, Gary Morris, Ronald Godoy, Paul Horiuchi, and Junior Godoy.



The Vision '95 poster was distributed to Lancaster Conference churches to promote mission vision.



“The Flow of the Spirit”

The final page of this picture-story book must acknowledge that no pictures can illustrate the most important part of the story—the power of God. Not by human effort has a worldwide movement grown from the small beginning a century ago, when twelve men in a farmhouse set the modest goal, “to assist home missions wherever practicable.” Even the most visionary of that group could hardly have foreseen today’s global outreach.

Neither can the church of today predict where or how the Holy Spirit will move in the next hundred years. Signs point in new directions: fraternal visitors from overseas share their vision, youth witness together in cross-cultural teams, and brothers and sisters from Africa, Asia, and Latin America are planting churches in North American cities. Already the spiritual vigor of young churches at home and abroad has stimulated older congregations to new faithfulness.

As Paul Landis, president of Eastern Mennonite Missions from 1980-1993, said, “It is a thrilling thing to be caught in the flow of the Spirit around the world.”

The Gospel Is Worth Believing by Alfredo Siquiq

I became a believer about thirteen years ago. Before I believed, my life was a mess. I drank a lot and I fought a lot, and I spent a lot of time in jail.

One time after I had become drunk and fought with somebody, I was in jail, thinking about my life. My cousin came to see me and brought me a soda pop. She said, “Don’t you know it would be better if you believed in Jesus? Only he can help you stop drinking.”

After I got out of jail, I went to work on a plantation. While I was there I became very sick. My co-worker was a believer, and I said to him, “I know it would be better if I believed in Jesus, because then if I died I would be saved.”

My co-worker prayed for me, but I still did not accept Jesus. Later after I returned to my home I accepted Jesus as my Saviour.

I became a faithful attendee at church. Some years later I was installed as a deacon. I have been faithful to God and his work for the past thirteen years.

A lot of people knew how I was before I believed. There are a lot of people I cut with a machete. There are a lot of people that I hit,

Alfredo Siquiq with his wife and children. Alfredo pastors the K’ekchi’ Mennonite congregation at Campat, Guatemala. Photo by Keith Maust.



insulted, or cursed at. But after I believed I no longer did those terrible things. And a lot of people say, "The gospel is worth believing because that man's life is changed."

Living in the Movement of God's Spirit by Richard and Jewel Showalter

Richard Showalter, president-elect, and his wife, Jewel, will lead Eastern Mennonite Missions into the future.



Yes, we are living in a powerful movement of the Spirit of God around the world—more widespread than any other since Pentecost. Already before the end of this millennium the quantitative center of the Christian movement has shifted from the western churches to those of the "two-thirds world," just as it had shifted from the Middle East toward northern Europe at the end of the first millennium. Many harvest laborers sent through Eastern Mennonite Missions have contributed to that enormous, significant shift.

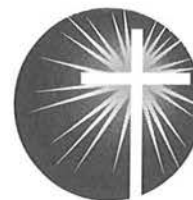
What of the future? It is too early to tell what we may expect in the twenty-first century. It is certain, however, that everywhere around the world new, grass-roots missions structures are emerging—many of them from local congregations and small clusters of Christians. EMM will connect with many of these in new configurations, not least with those in the Lancaster Mennonite Conference.

It is certain, too, that the focus of pioneer missions is changing. Time was when nearly the whole world outside of Western Europe needed pioneer cross-cultural evangelism. Today we link arms with brothers and sisters from Asia, Africa, and South America in a global partnership to reach the unreached—a mind-boggling dance of heaven choreographed by the Spirit of God. The two-century-old assumption that missions are born only in the West to be fulfilled in other, darker parts of the world must be stripped away. Not that pioneer missions are finished; billions are yet without viable churches. But more than ever the missionary points of origin are multi-national and often non-Western.

Furthermore, the shape of the sending church itself is changing, whether that church is in Asia, Africa, or North America. Many of the largest congregations in the world are now cell-based (functioning as groups of hundreds of basic Christian communities—each "community" consisting of fewer than two dozen people). In parts of the world such as China and Ethiopia the stimulus for this has been government oppression, driving the church underground. In other places such as Korea and South America the impetus came from the desire to evangelize and disciple effectively. North American congregations, too, will be re-shaped on one of the anvils of God.

With such changes, can an institution of 100 years, encased in twentieth-century missionary forms, experience a metamorphosis to serve in the twenty-first century? The answer, we believe, is yes. God is the God of resurrection, of transformation, of surprise. In that faith we press on.

Chronology



- 1894 *Home Mission Advocates* organized
- 1895 First mission Sunday school (Linville Hill)
Home Mission Advocates disbanded
Mennonite Sunday School Mission organized
- 1896 John H. Mellinger elected superintendent of *MSSM*
- 1897 First permanent *MSSM* opened at Vine Street, Lancaster
- 1898 Welsh Mountain Industrial Mission begun
- 1899 Philadelphia Mission opened
- 1908 Diamond Rock near Frazer re-opened by Weaverland
Mission Committee
- 1914 Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities organized
John H. Mellinger elected president of EMBMC
- 1919 Witness in Coatesville begun by Millwood and Maple Grove
- 1922 Reading work initiated at request of Gehman congregation
- 1924 First issue of *Missionary Messenger*
Arthur Moyer shot at Welsh Mountain
- 1925 First tracts printed by press at Vine Street Mission, Lancaster
- 1927 First summer Bible school and tent meetings (in
Philadelphia)
Cottage City Mission in Maryland transferred to Lancaster
Conference
- 1928 Summer Bible schools officially approved
Street meetings permitted for mission outreach
Responsibility for Tampa, Florida, mission accepted by EMBMC

- 1930 Tent meetings authorized for Reading and Lancaster
- 1933 First missionaries appointed for Africa
Mission for African-Americans opened in Lancaster, Pa.
- 1934 Henry Garber becomes president of EMBMC
Arrival of Mosemanns and Stauffers in Tanganyika
- 1938 First deputation visit to East Africa
- 1942 Jewish Evangelism Committee and Itinerant Evangelism
Committee organized
- 1943 Outreach begun in Southeastern United States
- 1945 Death of Ray Wenger in Tanganyika
- 1946 First preaching service for deaf persons at Rosemere
- 1947 Missionary Training Institute begun in Philadelphia
Ethiopia entered by EMBMC workers
- 1948 Official permission for mission work in Ethiopia given by
emperor
Voluntary Service Committee organized
- 1949 First witness point opened in New York City
Work begun in Northern Pennsylvania and Southern New
York
- 1950 Honduras entered
Urban children's visitation program initiated
- 1951 First services for Spanish-speaking migrants
Luxembourg entered
- 1952 Jewish evangelism workers commissioned for Washington,
D.C.
Witness point opened in Baltimore
First long-term VS unit sent to Redland Labor Camp,
Homestead, Florida
- 1953 Somalia, Israel, and France entered
- 1955 Mission Youth Summer Camp program begun
- 1956 EMBMC headquarters moved to Salunga
H. Raymond Charles becomes president of EMBMC
Overseas Orientation program begun at Salunga

- 1957 Vietnam entered
- 1958 Mennonite Information Center opened
Germany entered
- 1960 Independence of Tanganyika Mennonite Church
- 1961 Women's work in Lancaster Conference coordinated
- 1962 Merlin Grove killed in Somalia
- 1963 Islamic instruction in mission schools ordered by Somali
government
- 1964 Tanzania Mennonite Church granted permission for mission
in Kenya
- 1965 Hong Kong entered
- 1967 First EMBMC involvement in bookrack evangelism
Guatemala entered by EMBMC and Franklin County
Conference
Leadership training for churches in Haiti begun
- 1969 Alta Shenk killed in plane crash in West Africa
Ben Stoltzfus shot in British Honduras
- 1970 Shofar Committee organized
- 1971 Yugoslavia, Swaziland, and Philippines entered
- 1972 Christmas International Homes program initiated
- 1974 Jubilee prison work begun in Lebanon
- 1975 End of EMBMC mission in Vietnam
- 1976 Church planting in Dominican Republic authorized by
EMBMC
EMBMC work in Somalia terminated
- 1977 Partnership in West Kalimantan with Indonesian Mennonite
Mission
- 1979 Venezuela entered
- 1980 Australia entered by
First YES team sent
Paul Landis becomes president of EMBMC

- 1981 EMBMC teachers invited to return to Somalia
- 1982 Mozambique entered
China Educational Exchange teachers sent by EMBMC
School for Apostles initiated
Meserete Kristos Church closed and six leaders imprisoned
- 1985 YES Discipleship Center opened in Philadelphia
- 1987 YES Discipleship Center in Baltimore purchased by Atlantic
Coast Conference
Evangelical Garifuna Fellowship begun in New York City
Mission to Quechua Indians in Peru begun
Hawaii church-planting sponsored by MBM, EMBMC, and
Franconia Conference
Millersville International House opened
- 1989 Financial assistance begun for Indonesian missionary
endeavor in Singapore
Botswana entered
- 1990 Djibouti entered
South Africa and Greece entered
Thailand entered
Outreach in Mexico initiated by Spanish churches of
Lancaster Conference
- 1991 School of Witness initiated in Baltimore
- 1992 Meserete Kristos Church officially recognized in Ethiopia
Teaching assignment in Russia begun by intern in missions
Dedication of worship center for Jewish and Gentile
believers in Needham, Massachusetts
Former East Germany entered
- 1993 Albania entered
Name changed to Eastern Mennonite Missions
Richard Showalter appointed EMM president
Mongolia entered
- 1994 Mission Centennial Celebration
Lithuania entered

The Author

A. Grace Wenger, a member of the Groffdale congregation of Lancaster Conference for more than sixty years, has been a teacher for thirty-nine years, beginning with fifty pupils in eight grades in a one-room country schoolhouse and ending in a college classroom. More than half of those years were in Eastern Mennonite and Lancaster Mennonite High Schools. While teaching at Millersville University, she developed a special interest in students with language difficulties due to diverse cultural backgrounds.

During the 1950s and 1960s she wrote Sunday school curriculum and mission study materials for Herald Press. Her book, *God Builds the Church Through Congregational Witness*, has been revised by Dave and Neta Jackson and published in 1989 under the title *Witness: Empowering the Church*. Also, she served on the Mennonite Board of Education and the Board of Trustees of Eastern Mennonite College.

Her education began at the age of five in a one-room school and continued in a small local high school where discipline was rigorous and academic requirements were demanding. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from Elizabethtown College and a Master of Arts from the University of Pennsylvania. Postgraduate work at other institutions focused on teaching English as a second language and a second dialect.

Since retiring, she has taught Vietnamese refugees, spent a summer teaching English in the People's Republic of China, and authored *Frontiers of Faithfulness*, the history of the 275-year-old Groffdale congregation. Presently she lives at Landis Homes Retirement Community, Lititz, Pa.



