BRETHREN IN CHRIST
HISTORY & LIFE

Volume XL Number I April 2017

BRETHREN IN CHRIST
HISTORY & LIFE

Published by the Brethren in Christ Historical Society. Membership and subscription: one year, $25; contributing members, $50; supporting members, $100; patron members, $200; student membership, $10; lifetime members, a minimum one-time contribution of $1,000. Single issues of the journal, $5.00. Address articles and communications to Harriet Sider Bicksler, Editor, *Brethren in Christ History and Life*, 127 Holly Drive, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055 (e-mail: bickhouse@aol.com). Membership fees should be sent to Brethren in Christ Historical Society, Messiah College, One College Avenue, Suite 3002, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055. Articles appearing in this journal are indexed in *Christian Periodical Index* and in *Religion Index One: Periodicals, Index to Book Reviews in Religion*, *ATLA Religion Database*. An index of articles and reviews before 2012 is carried on the Historical Society's website (www.bic-history.org).

Cover Photo: Clockwise from left: Myron Taylor Memorial Bell, Sikalongo Mission, Zambia; Sikalongo Mission Church; Anna Eyster with group of Sikalongo Boys School students. Photos courtesy of Anna Eyster Photograph Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.

Printed by Mennonite Press, Newton, Kansas

CONTENTS

VOL. XL NUMBER 1 APRIL 2017

FROM THE EDITOR

In the second part of Dwight Thomas' history of Sikalongo Mission in Zambia (the first part was in the December 2016 edition), Dwight picks up the story following the death of Myron Taylor in 1931 and describes the development of the mission, particularly the expansion of educational and medical endeavors, from 1931 to 1947. He highlights both the North American missionaries and the African leaders who led the mission during these years.

While this history focuses on one mission station, and a relatively small one at that, it is an important window into the broader story of missions in general, and Brethren in Christ missions in particular. In Part 2 of the story of Sikalongo Mission, the white missionaries are still in charge, but African leaders are being mentored, trained, and encouraged, pointing toward indigenization and the time when the leadership of the Brethren in Christ Church in Zambia would be transferred to Zambians. The third and fourth parts of the history, to be published in subsequent editions of the journal, will tell the story of how that significant transition happened within the context of national independence, and how Sikalongo Mission continues to thrive today. The photographs (some admittedly not particularly high quality) that accompany the article are a testament to the importance of individuals and families passing on well-labeled photographs to the Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.

The second major feature of this edition is a memoir. In 2015, at the time of the death of Harriet Bohen Bert, my mother's last remaining sibling, I learned that my aunt (and namesake) had written her memoirs. Naturally I was curious, so I borrowed a copy from one of her sons. Harriet's story was most interesting to me because of the family connections, but I also thought that her story was one worth sharing with a wider audience. Even though she was fairly well-known in some circles and her husband served on denominational boards, Harriet represents many Brethren in Christ people who never expected to achieve prominence, but quietly served God in their homes and churches. Many of them were women who, as Harriet claimed for herself, were "called to be homemakers." Harriet probably never intended for her memoirs to be read by anyone other than her immediate family, and I am grateful that her family recognizes the significance of her

story and is willing to share it with a wider audience. I especially want to thank Karin Bisbee, Historical Society board member, for her significant preliminary work editing the original manuscript.

In the third section, we feature the presentations from the November 2016 study conference sponsored by the Sider Institute for Anabaptist, Pietist, and Wesleyan Studies at Messiah College especially for Brethren in Christ pastors and laypeople. The conference was on the theme of "Not Conformed: The Church, the World, and Christian Discipleship in the 21st Century." The keynote speaker was Dr. Mark Labberton, president of Fuller Theological Seminary, with three other major presentations by Dr. David Weaver-Zercher, professor of American religious history at Messiah College; Dr. Gerald Mast, professor of communication at Bluffton University; and Dr. Drew Hart, assistant professor of theology at Messiah College. Their presentations are all reprinted in this edition.

Finally, four reviews and a letter. The reviews cover two books about politics in the Bible; one about the history of Mennonites in Ontario, Canada; and one about tourism among the Amish. The letter to the editor is in response to the article about Janice Holt Giles in the December 2016 edition.

Harriet Sider Bicksler, editor

A History of Sikalongo Mission
Part 2: The Late Colonial Years, 1931-1947[1]

By Dwight W. Thomas*

Introduction

The context in 1931

Sikalongo Mission Station in 1931 after Myron Taylor's death was an established institution with a variety of programs. Although small by comparison to other Brethren in Christ stations, the Sikalongo congregation was solid and growing. Membership in 1931 was 22, with 32 in the Enquirers Class.[2] Similarly, the boarding school was said to be thriving with an enrollment nearly twice the size of the Macha boarding school.[3] Additionally, a regular non-boarding day school for elementary students had an enrollment of thirty students. The Taylors had laid a strong foundation during the 1920s, but the time was ripe for enhancement and expansion of the existing facilities and programs.

The broader context of 1931, which influenced mission work at Sikalongo, included the stock market crash of 1929 and the Great Depression which followed. While funding was somewhat more difficult, the 1931 financial report noted:

---

*Dwight W. Thomas is a retired Messiah College music professor and former minister of music and congregational life at Elizabethtown Brethren in Christ Church. He and his wife have spent two to three months every year for nearly two decades at Sikalongo Mission. His research interests include music, history, biography and the cultural expressions of global Christians. Part 1 of this history appeared in the December 2016 edition of the journal. Parts 3 and 4 will appear in subsequent editions.

[1] I want to acknowledge a number of people for help with this essay. Rev. Dennis Mweetwa's feedback gave an especially helpful Zambian perspective. Dr. Daryl Climenhaga's feedback was equally useful in areas related to general mission history. The Cullen, Mann and Hershey families provided valuable materials and personal anecdotes which have enriched the story immensely.

[2] "Africa Statistical Report 1931," *Handbook of Missions Home and Foreign of the Brethren in Christ Church*, 1932, 41. Hereafter referred to as *Handbook of Missions.*

[3] Ibid.

> We rejoice and thank God for the way the needs have been supplied through the year, while it was necessary to reduce Africa's maintenance to $2,000.00. However, the English Pound has dropped considerable so that the actual deduction would not be $1,000.00.
>
> While the cry of depression is heard everywhere and while all of us are feeling the effects, we still did not need to go into debt, nor did we have to tell those who were ready to go to the field, "We have no money to send you."[4]

Missionaries not only had to pay for their own supplies; they also had to have money to pay teachers and workers. Sikalongo missionaries undoubtedly had to tighten their financial belts as a result of economic stress in the United States.

Significant governance changes had previously occurred in Northern Rhodesia in 1924 with the transfer of the territory from the control of BSAC (British South Africa Company) to the British Colonial Office.[5] A brief account of these decisions appeared in a 1924-25 government report:

> The outstanding administrative event was the change of Government. Previous to 1st April, 1924, the Territory had been under the administration of the British South Africa Company, but coincident with the grant of responsible Government to Southern Rhodesia in October, 1923, a settlement of various claims in connection with Northern Rhodesia was arrived at between the Crown and the Company with a view to the assumption by the Crown of full authority over that Territory. By the Northern Rhodesia Order in Council, 1924, the office of Governor was created, an Executive Council constituted, and provision made for a Legislative Council. Mr. H. J. Stanley, C.M.G. (now Sir Herbert Stanley, K.C.M.G.) took the oath as the first Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Northern Rhodesia

---

[4] Graybill Wolgemuth, "Annual Financial Report of the Treasurer," in *Handbook of Missions,* 1932), 48-50.

[5] For information on the history of missions and mission education in Northern Rhodesia, see the following: Andrew Roberts, A History of Zambia (New York: Africana Pub. Co., 1976); Robert I. Rotberg, Christian Missionaries and the Creation of Northern Rhodesia, 1880-1924 (Princeton,N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1965); John P. Ragsdale, Protestant Mission Education in Zambia, 1880-1954 (Selinsgrove [Pa.] Susquehanna University Press, 1986); Peter Desmond Snelson, Educational Development in Northern Rhodesia, 1883-1945 (Lusaka: National Educational Co. of Zambia, 1974); Brendan Patrick Carmody, Religion and Education in Zambia (Ndola, Zambia: Mission Press, 2004).

on 1st April, 1924. The first meeting of the Legislative Council took place on 23rd May.[6]

The consequences of this change were several-fold. First, educational reforms accompanied the shift, bringing new requirements for mission schools and expectations for higher educational standards. British authorities appointed regional and national education inspectors to monitor these changes and Brethren in Christ mission schools found themselves under greater scrutiny than before. At the same time, the new British Colonial Office was more responsive to local social needs than the BSAC had been, and they were more willing to spend money to provide aid where needed. The government response to the 1931 famine which led Myron Taylor to go to the Zambezi Valley illustrates their commitment to meeting the social needs of the people. The new government road to the valley not only provided aid in 1931, but it also opened up new evangelistic opportunities for Sikalongo missionaries.

The missionary conference held in Sikalongo in July 1931 should have signaled the happy beginning of a new phase of work at Sikalongo. The schools were on firm footing, the church was doing well, and an expanded staff set the stage for serious outreach into neighboring communities. Unfortunately, Myron Taylor's unexpected death in September 1931 put things in turmoil and forced a sudden realignment of responsibilities. His death came just at the time when Sikalongo Mission needed a new infusion of energy and the efforts of an expanded staff. The Taylors had laid a solid foundation during the 1920s and Sikalongo Mission was ripe for enhancement and expansion.

The late colonial period of Sikalongo's history begins after Myron Taylor's death in 1931 and continues up to the decade prior to independence in 1964. Each phase within this timeframe posed different challenges and enjoyed unique opportunities:

a. *Enhancing a Worthy Cause:* Anna Eyster and Cecil and Jane Cullen (1931-1938)
b. *Consolidating an Established Ministry:* Anna Eyster and Roy and Esther Mann (1938-1945) and Anna Eyster and Elwood and Dorothy Hershey (1945-1947)

---

[6] Beginning in 1924, the Colonial Office issued annual reports that describe the policies and activities of each year. See: British Colonial Office, "Northern Rhodeisa - Report for 1924-25," (London, 1924).

c. *Adjusting to Changing Currents: 1947-1954:* David and Dorcas Climenhaga and others (1947-1954)
d. *Preparing for Independence:* Graybill and Ethel Brubaker (1955-1957), Robert and Aggie Lehman (1957), Lewis and Gladys Sider (1958-1959), George and Rachel Kibler (1959-1961), Keith and Lucille Ulery (1962-1966)

This essay covers only the first two of these phases, encompassing the tenures of Anna Eyster, Cecil and Janie Cullen, Esther and Roy Mann, and Dorothy and Elwood Hershey. Their work falls undeniably within the colonial era. By contrast, the Climenhaga years and the decade that followed bear the marks of pre-independence. The winds of political change were unmistakable during the 1950s. The latter two phases will be covered in Part 3 of the Sikalongo History.

Enhancing a Worthy Cause: Anna Eyster and the Cullens (1931-1938)

New workers facing fresh challenges

After the death of her husband, Adda Taylor and her daughter, Anna, remained at Sikalongo until July 1932. She and Anna busied themselves with the work of the mission. Adda wrote about trips to the outstation schools.[7] Letters by others noted that Adda provided valuable information to the new missionaries about local issues. Nevertheless, she and Anna left the field in June of 1932 and returned to the United States, where Adda took up residence at Messiah Home in Harrisburg. In Cullen's words:

> Sister Taylor felt that it was the will of the Lord that she return to America, so in June she and Anna bid farewell to the land where she had spent so many years in useful service. Her departure has left a vacancy which none other can fill both among the missionaries and among the native Christians.[8]

---

[7] "Adda E. Taylor, "From Sikalongo Mission, S. A. - March 17th," *Evangelical Visitor,* May 23, 1932, 175.

[8] Cecil I. Cullen, "Sikalongo Mission Report 1932," *Handbook of Missions*, 1933), 22-23; Irvin W. Musser, "Secretary's Report," *Handbook of Missions,* 1933, 5-6.

With the departure of the Taylors, the resulting mission staff in 1931 consisted of inexperienced missionaries who were relatively new to Africa, several seasoned African workers, the recently-arrived Arthur Kutywayo, and two local evangelists. Jesse Chikaile continued to play a critical role in the schools while Peter Munsaka carried the responsibility of mission manager, overseeing local workers. Arthur Kutywayo held an increasingly important role as a teacher and spiritual leader, and the evangelists carried on the work of village visitation and preaching.

Biographical sketch of Cecil I. and Janie Cullen

Cecil and Janie Cullen, along with their son, Roy, arrived in Africa in early 1931. The Cullen family came from Ontario, Canada. Cecil was the son of Henry and Almeda Cullen, and Janie was the daughter of Albert and Cylinda Baer. They married in Welland, Ontario in 1923. Their wedding certificate indicates that both Janie and Cecil were affiliated with the Canadian Brethren in Christ at the time of their marriage. The wedding was announced in the *Evangelical Visitor*.[9] The Cullens had their first son, Roy, in 1924.

After a brief period of deputation, they sailed for Africa, arriving at Matopo in December 1929.[10] The Cullens served briefly at Mtshabezi, and were then transferred to Sikalongo after the missionary conference of July 1931.[11] The primary reason for Cullens' transfer to Sikalongo was to help the Taylors manage the Mission, thus freeing Myron to do evangelistic work beyond the immediate area of Sikalongo.

Cecil and Janie Cullen and son. Photo courtesy of Anna Eyster Photograph Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.

[9] "Marriages," *Evangelical Visitor*, November 26, 1923, 8.
[10] Charles F. Eshleman, "Enroute to Africa," *Evangelical Visitor,* December 9, 1929, 7.
[11] H. H. Brubaker, "Sikalongo Report 1931," *Handbook of Missions*, 1932, 19-21.

Sikalongo Mission staff. From left to right: Anna Eyster, Elizabeth Engle, the Cecil Cullen family. Photo courtesy of Cullen Photograph Collection.

Biographical sketch of Anna M. Eyster

Anna Eyster also arrived at Sikalongo in late July 1931. She came to replace Anna Engle as the headmistress for the Sikalongo Boys School, releasing Engle to be transferred to Macha to "reopen the girls school."[12] Anna was born in Kansas in 1900 to Jesse and Malinda Eyster.[13] When she was two, Anna and her parents left Kansas and headed to Africa. Stopping at Chicago Mission and Harrisburg along the way, they departed from New York in April 1902.[14] Eysters continued in missions in Africa until July 1913, working most of the time among the miners in the Johannesburg mines. Jesse and Malinda Eyster, along with Isaac and Alice Lehman and Jacob and Mary Lehman, were part of a collaborative mission effort in the Johannesburg area aimed at evangelizing mine workers. They were associated with an organization called the South Africa Compounds'

---

[12] Brubaker, "Sikalongo Report 1931", *Handbook of Missions,* 1932.

[13] "Anna M. Eyster - 1900-1976," *Evangelical Visitor*, September 10, 1976, 15.

[14] Jesse R. and Malinda Eyster, "As He Leads We Follow," *Evangelical Visitor*, March 1, 1902, 99; Jesse R. and Malinda Eyster, "Sailing for Africa," *Evangelical Visitor*, April 15, 1902, 150; Jesse R. and Malinda Eyster, "Arrived Safe," *Evangelical Visitor*, June 1, 1902, 218-219.

Mission. It was started by a number of interested Christians in Transvaal, led by by A. W. Baker. The Eysters were in charge of a school for African evangelists in Fordsburg.[15] Consequently, Anna spent most of her formative childhood years surrounded by the missionaries and the mission work of Johannesburg. It undoubtedly felt like home to her.

After the Eysters returned to the United States in 1913, they moved to Navarre, Kansas.[16] However, Jesse Eyster made frequent missions appearances around the country during the next four years on behalf of Brethren in Christ Foreign Mission Board and they continued to be listed as missionaries on furlough. Increasingly, he was engaged as a revivalist and involved in so-called "Tabernacle Meetings" (revivals in tents). In 1918, he and the family held tent meetings along the Pacific Coast. Ultimately, the Eysters bought a house in Upland, California in 1919, and Jesse continued his tent evangelism.[17] He later became the pastor of the Chino Brethren in Christ church.

The Eyster family's move to the west coast put them in Upland just prior to the start of Beulah College.[18] Anna graduated from Pasadena High School in 1919 and became one of the first students at the newly-established Brethren in Christ school, graduating in 1922.[19] That she was an eager scholar is evident in her later attendance at UCLA and Claremont College and her acquisition of Practical Nursing credentials. Her parents obviously valued education and encouraged her educational pursuits.[20] Anna spent the next several years at Beulah helping as a teacher.

Anna Eyster's arrival at Sikalongo in 1931 marked a new beginning both for the boys school at Sikalongo and for Macha Girls School. While Anna Engle worked to improve the quality at Macha, Anna Eyster did the same at Sikalongo. Eyster remained at Sikalongo Mission longer than

---

[15] Jacob N. Engle and John M. Sheets, "From Africa to India," *Evangelical Visitor*, Februrary 21, 1910, 12-13; General Missionary Conference, "Report of the Proceedings of the First General Missionary Conference: Held at Johannesburg, July 13-20, 1904" (Johannesburg, 1905), 212.

[16] Jesse R. and Malinda Eyster, "From Africa - Our Home Coming," *Evangelical Visitor*, August 11, 1913, 21-22.

[17] Hannah Eyer, "Tulare, California," *Evangelical Visitor*, November 4, 1918, 28-29; Hirman Alderfer, "Upland, California," *Evangelical Visitor,* October 20, 1919, 15.

[18] E. Morris Sider, *A Vision for Service: A History of Upland College* (Nappanee, IN: Evangel Press, 1976).

[19] 1921 Beulah College Yearbook, (Upland, CA: [Beulah College], 1921).

[20] Her father, Jesse, was president of Beulah College for a period of time.

any other American missionary, serving there from 1931 until 1949, and it is difficult to overstate her impact on Sikalongo schools. She trained a generation of Brethren in Christ educators, many of whom became educators or church leaders.

In addition to the newly-arrived American missionaries, the 1931 Sikalongo staff included the two loyal standbys, Jesse Chikaile and Peter Munsaka, whose biographies appeared in Part 1 of this history. Both men had been at Sikalongo Mission since the early 1920s and played critical roles in both educational and practical spheres. Prior to Taylor's death, Arthur Kutywayo, a Zimbabwean convert, came to Sikalongo to help. All three of these African men went with Taylor to the Zambezi Valley prior to his death.

Anna Eyster, 1922. Photo from 1922 Beulah College Echo.

Biographical sketch of Arthur Kutywayo[21]

Arthur Kutywayo was born in eastern Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia at the time), somewhere near Melsetter. A detailed biography of his life is yet to be written, but fortunately we know some details about his life. According to Graybill Brubaker, Kutywayo was converted in 1914 and began school at "Situ Mission which was about eight miles from his home."[22] This undoubtedly refers to "Rusitu Mission Station," which was founded in the late nineteenth-century, stills exists, and is located near the border of Mozambique.[23] After completing Standard V in 1922, Kutywayo taught for several years. He resumed his education at Mt. Selinda Mission School, where he completed

[21] Choosing a spelling for Kutywayo's name is extremely complicated. The name is not uncommon in Zimababwe and I found five different spellings of the family name in the course of my research: Kutywayo, Kuchwayo, Khuzwayo, Kuzwayo, Ndliwayo. I use "Kutywayo" because this was the spelling he used.

[22] Kutywayo is frequently mentioned in the *Evangelical Visitor*. This biographical information comes primarily from A. Graybill Brubaker, "Knight in Armour: Arthur of Sikalongo Mission," *Evangelical Visitor*, May 21, 1956.

[23] Mark M. Loomis, South Africa General Mission: Rusitu Mission Station (November 16, 2016 2016), retrieved February 1 2017 from http://www.rhodesianstudycircle.org.uk/south-africa-general-mission-rusitu-mission-station/.

Anna Eyster and bicycle in front of Sikalongo Boys School. Photo courtesy of Anna Eyster Photograph Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.

Arthur Kutwayo. Photo from Evangelical Visitor, *May 21, 1956.*

his Standard VI (grade 8) with an Industrial and Teacher Training Certificate. Brethren in Christ mission leaders in Southern Rhodesia somehow learned about him and his training and asked him to go to Northern Rhodesia to help in Brethren in Christ mission schools. He arrived at Sikalongo in 1931 and remained there until his death in 1977.[24]

During his early years, Kutywayo taught all subjects in the lower grades and industrial arts to all of the students. He was chosen as deacon in the local congregation and served on denominational boards. Kutywayo regularly preached in services, but he was especially known for his powerful prayers. He reportedly moved unpredictably between his native Sindebele, Tonga, and English in the middle of his prayers. He continued to work up to the end of his life, delivering a message at the hospital on the day he died.[25] Although the date of his birth is uncertain, he probably lived to be about 80 years old.

---

[24] "Arthur Kutywayo," *Evangelical Visitor*, February 25, 1977, 15.

[25] Ibid.

Biographical sketches of two Pilgrim Holiness women

Interestingly, the Sikalongo staff in 1931 included two visiting missionary women: Ethel Jordan and Mary Loew. Jordan and Loew were Pilgrim Holiness missionaries who arrived at Sikalongo Mission in 1931.[26] Their circumstances were unique. The Pilgrim Holiness began missionary work in Northern Rhodesia in 1930, when Ray Miller and his wife came to Northern Rhodesia in 1930 to establish work at Jembo Mission Station east of present-day Pemba. Loew and Jordan were stationed with them. Unfortunately, Ray Miller fell ill with Malta fever very soon after their arrival, and the Millers had to return to the U.S. Pilgrim Holiness mission policy would not allow two female missionaries to operate a mission station without a man in charge, so Ethel Jordan and Mary Loew came temporarily to Sikalongo Mission.[27] While at Sikalongo, these two women assisted Brethren in Christ missionaries in their work, notably helping Ruth and Adda Taylor in evangelistic work in Siazwela and the valley just south of Sikalongo. The date of their arrival at Sikalongo is uncertain, but Mary Loew is mentioned as early as November 1930.[28]

The presence of Loew and Jordan at Sikalongo Mission is interesting. Relationships between various missionary societies in Africa were generally quite good. However, a peculiar set of circumstances complicated the relationship between the Pilgrim Holiness and the Brethren in Christ. Lila Coon, a Brethren in Christ missionary from southern Ohio, had been at Macha from 1921-1926. A series of unhappy events led her to leave Africa. She eventually left the Brethren in Christ Church under a cloud and attended

---

[26] The story of Pilgrim Holiness efforts in Africa can be found in several books: Paul Westphal Thomas, *Regions Beyond: A Brief Survey of the Foreign Missionary Enterprise of the Pilgrim Holiness Church* (Indianapolis, IN: Foreign Missionary Office of the Pilgrim Holiness Church, 1935); Norman Neal Bonner, *This Is South Africa: A Consideration of the Pilgrim Holiness Missionary Work in the Union of South Africa and Swaziland, Foreign Missionary Study Course* (Indianapolis, IN: Foreign Missionary Office of the Pilgrim Holiness Church, 1954); Annie Laurie Eubanks, *These Went Forth: Biographical Sketches of Pilgrim Missionaries* (Indianapolis, IN: Pilgrim Holiness Church Foreign Missions Department, 1960); Paul Westphal Thomas, "An Historical Survey of Pilgrim World Missions" (B. Div. thesis, Asbury Theological Seminary, 1963); Paul Westphal Thomas and Paul William Thomas, *The Days of Our Pilgrimage: The History of the Pilgrim Holiness Church, Wesleyan History Series* (Marion, IN: Wesley Press, 1976).

[27] Adda E. Taylor, "Sikalongo," *Evangelical Visitor*, February 2, 1931, 46.

[28] Loew accompanied Ruth Taylor on a trip to neighboring valley in 1930. Ruth E. Taylor, "A Week End Kraal Visit," *Evangelical Visitor*, February 16, 1931, 60.

God's Bible School (GBS) in Cincinnati, a school with strong connections to the Pilgrim Holiness denomination. Lila and Ethel attended GBS together and there is strong evidence that Jordan's coming to Africa was inspired by Coon's stories about Northern Rhodesia. Although both the Brethren in Christ and the Pilgrim Holiness have continued to work side by side and have had significant points of collaboration, there has also been a long-standing undercurrent of ambivalence between the two denominations.[29]

Accomplishments of the Eyster-Cullen years

Sikalongo Mission expanded significantly during the Eyster-Cullen years, moving well beyond the immediate area of the mission station. Cecil Cullen worked tirelessly to increase the number of outschools and expand and strengthen evangelistic efforts. He was helped in this by Zambian teachers and evangelists as well as Adda Taylor and the two Pilgrim Holiness women. With help from Peter Munsaka, Cullen also mounted an aggressive campaign to improve the buildings at the mission, repairing some buildings and replacing several significant buildings. At the same time, Anna Eyster took measured steps to improve the quality of education at the Boys School, elevating its status in the eyes of the Zambians and British educational authorities alike. Arthur Kutywayo and Jesse Chikaile played important roles in helping her achieve her goals.

Perhaps no other event captures the spirit of this new period better than the trip Sikalongo missionaries took to the Zambezi Valley in July 1932. Myron Taylor's 1931 excursions had set the stage for expanding Brethren in Christ mission work into the valley, but his untimely death stalled the vision. It seems that the remaining Sikalongo missionaries were determined to honor his death by not allowing his efforts to go in vain. Anna Eyster's detailed description of the trip conveys a palpable excitement.[30]

---

[29] For a history of God's Bible School, see Larry D. Smith, *A Century on the Mount of Blessings: The Story of God's Bible School,* 1st edition. ed. (Cincinnat, OH: Revivalist Press, 2016); "Lila Coon: Lila Coon Ginter," *The Missionary: A True Story* (Minneapolis, MN: Printed by Osterhus Pub House, 1968); Claudia Peyton: Don McMellon, *From Darkness into Light: Forty-Six Years in Africa* (Chattanooga, TN: B I M I Pub, 1970); Ethel Jordan: Alberta R. Metz, *Ethel Jordan: Zambia, Wesleyan Missionary Hero Series* (Marion, IN: The Wesleyan Publishing House, 1982).

[30] Anna M. Eyster, "A Week in the Zambezi Valley," *Evangelical Visitor*, September 12-13, 1932, 300.

> The eventful time which we had been eagerly anticipating had arrived, and nineteen of our boys as they stood in line for work were chosen to be our carriers to the Zambezi Valley, the one of the many sections of this vast continent which yet lies in darkness and superstition. We watched the boys as they chose their loads, many carrying their burdens on a pole between two of them. Besides our own provisions, bedding and personal effects, the boys had their blankets and some food for themselves with salt to trade for more meal. We were thrilled as we saw them leave, with Arthur, one of our native teachers and evangelists accompanying them, for were we not going to join them the following day?[31]

As she indicated, a number of African helpers either went ahead or accompanied the missionaries into the Valley, including Arthur Kutywayo, Musa and Joshua Moono. The last two had served as Sikalongo evangelists for many years and are known to have gone to the valley on the evangelistic trips before Myron Taylor.[32]

The trip occurred sometime during June or July 1932 (the holiday months). During their stay in the Valley, they camped very near the place where Myron Taylor had been attacked by the lion. Surprisingly, they drove their Ford vehicle for part of the distance. Eyster's account occasionally reads like an adventure novel:

> Up hills and down we travelled, but the declines were in the majority; over a rustic bridge Bro. Cullen had to drive the car, while Sr. Cullen, Sr. Jordan and Sr. Loew (two visiting missionary sisters) and myself stood on the opposite bank and prayed, fearing lest the car might go through to the water below... The road, if you could call it such, was almost impassable at places, for the washouts caused by last season's rain were terrible, and it was with great ingenuity that the driver got through. The car, because of its age and the condition of the roads, needed assistance frequently; many times we pushed up hills, and through sandy river beds. After having had many difficulties, and having passed and repassed our boys many times, we were met on the road by two natives who escorted us across the half mile of veldt

[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.

> to Chimpande's Village where we expected to camp. We arrived at 5 p.m., having gone a distance of thirty five miles.[33]

Fortunately, the Cullens documented some of this trip with photographs. They photographed one of the difficult river crossings as well as "Chimpande's Village." Recent research has established a connection between this local headman (Chimpande or Siampande) and Myron Taylor's death.

One of the difficult river crossings in the Valley. Photo courtesy of Cullen Photograph Collection.

Although it might be easy to direct condescending criticisms at Eyster's quaint account, the missionaries clearly made this trip with serious intentions. They wanted to expand the ministry of Sikalongo Mission into the Zambezi Valley through active evangelism and the establishment of schools to serve the local people. Cullen continued to maintain a presence in that locale and to pursue this agenda during his entire seven years of missionary service. Eyster closed the account with a brief footnote related to Myron Taylor's death:

---

[33] Ibid.

Chimpande's Village. Photo courtesy of Cullen Photograph Collection.

> Perhaps it will be of interest to the readers to know that the lion that attacked Bro. Taylor and was the cause of his death has been killed. It was identified as the same because of the sore on its leg by Dr. Gerard of the Kanchindu Mission in the Valley. [34]

Conflicting accounts exist regarding who ultimately killed the lion, but the event was understandably still fresh in the missionaries' minds. Dr. Gerrard's name appears in other articles in the *Evangelical Visitor* as do the names of some other missionaries associated with Kanchindu Mission.[35]

Two staff changes occurred soon after the 1932 Zambezi Valley trip. David and Mabel Hall arrived in Choma on August 18 to join the Sikalongo missionaries.[36] And a year later, in July 1933, the two Pilgrim Holiness women left Sikalongo to join Rev. and Mrs. Harry Reynolds in restarting Jembo Mission Station.[37] These staffing changes do not seem to have had a negative impact on Sikalongo Mission work:

> The boarding school has increased in numbers so much so that we had to buy grain for food, making an additional expense. We are pleased to notice the marked interest in the Bible classes and the good attendance in the Inquirer's Class on Sunday. A number of boys

[34] Ibid., 301.

[35] For more on the life of Dr. Gerard, see John W. Gerrard, *Africa Calling: A Medical Missionary in Kenya and Zambia* (London, New York: Radcliffe Press, 2001).

[36] Mabel E. Hall, "Sikalongo Mission," *Evangelical Visitor*, February 13, 1933, 13.

[37] Metz, *Ethel Jordan: Zambia*, 25.

> have expressed a desire to give themselves for the work of the Lord. We regret to say that there is little response to the Gospel among the villages near the Mission.
>
> A number of villages farther afield earnestly request schools and the preaching services are well attended when the native preachers hold services. We hope to find suitable teachers to send to them in the near future if funds are available. The interest in the outschools already opened is good. This is especially true of the two schools most recently opened. A goodly number at both schools have enrolled in the Inquirer's Class.[38]

Cecil Cullen's 1933 report gives a clear sense of the mission priorities of the time: (1) equipping and growing the church; (2) expanding and enhancing the schools; and (3) replacing deteriorating buildings and beautifying the Mission.

Equipping and growing the church

Equipping the church is integral to any mission station. At Sikalongo, this meant growing the church through "Inquirers Classes" followed by regular baptisms of those deemed worthy. Inquirers Classes were evidently a common feature of Brethren in Christ Missions judging from the frequency of their mention. A similar practice occurs today in the Zambian church prior to approval for baptism. The 1933 Sikalongo report indicated that eight were ready for baptism and 14 were in the Inquirers Class. The report also noted that they had baptized the first outschool member.[39]

A noteworthy baptism occurred at Sikalongo in 1935. The Brethren in Christ mission superintendent, Henry H. Brubaker, arrived in May from Southern Rhodesia to encourage the missionaries and to participate in baptism and love feast. He and other Sikalongo missionaries continued to Ndola the following week for a missionary conference. Anna Eyster wrote the following description of the events of June 1-2, 1935:

> June 1. At the midday service our small church could not accommodate the three hundred and sixteen who were present. Quite a number of

[38] Cullen, "Sikalongo Mission Report 1932," *Handbook of Missions*, 1932, 22.

[39] David B. Hall, "Sikalongo Mission," Evangelical Visitor, March 27, 1933, 13; "Sikalongo Report 1933," *Handbook of Missions*, 1934, 70-71.

> these came from the village schools. In the late afternoon after the service, Bro. Brubaker baptized sixteen in the nearby river. Four of this number came from Fundabanyama's School, where the situation had been especially trying, but God has been answering prayer. One of these four is a leper. A young widow was also reinstated in church fellowship.
>
> June 2. Early in the morning we commemorated the death and suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ. God met with us in a very precious manner. After the midday service all the missionaries went to a village where a child had just died. Here there was a short service.[40]

The site of this baptism was no doubt the same place where Sikalongo baptisms have been held for many decades. Only in recent years has the church baptized in a man-made baptistry.

Baptismal service at Sikalongo Mission. Photo courtesy of Anna Eyster Photograph Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.

---

[40] Anna M. Eyster, "News from Sikalongo, June-July," *Evangelical Visitor*, September 30, 1935, 12.

Brethren in Christ missionaries recognized the need to indigenize the church. Although it might be true that the process was slow, progress toward indigenization occurred periodically.[41] Southern Rhodesia had African deacons in its congregations long before Northern Rhodesia, and Macha preceded Sikalongo. However, in 1933, the Sikalongo congregation chose Jesse Chikaile as their deacon. The *Evangelical Visitor* published the following information:

> A deacon has also been chosen. The lot fell on Jesse. He came here to help in the work when it was in its infancy and has been a faithful worker ever since. We beg your prayers for him as he takes up this responsibility. Will you also pray for his wife? She is not of a hardy constitution and sometimes tired because of her condition.[42]

Chikaile served as the Sikalongo deacon for nearly 10 years. Unfortunately, he was removed in 1941 after taking a second wife. The issue of second wives among Zambian church leaders deserves closer scholarly attention but is beyond the scope of this article. Despite Chikaile's eventual dismissal, it seems that he carried out his responsibilities effectively.

Growing the church required appropriate materials. Brethren in Christ missionaries translated scriptures and published booklets from the earliest years. In order to understand the gospel, people needed scriptures in their own language. In order to worship corporately, missionaries believed they also needed hymnals. Sikalongo played a role in accomplishing this goal. A longstanding need for a plateau Tonga hymnal resulted in the publication of the denomination's first edition of the Chitonga hymnal.[43] Sikalongo staff members were intimately involved in the editorial and publication process. Final preparations for the hymnal occurred at the end of 1936. A news item from the *Evangelical Visitor* simply said: "Sept. 14. Brother Cullen and Sister Eyster take Sibanda to Macha. They meet with the other members of the

---

[41] Other scholars have written about this issue extensively. See Lazarus Phiri, *The Brethren in Christ Mission in Zambia, 1906-1978: A Historical Study of Western Missionary Leadership Patterns and the Emergence of Tonga Church Leaders* (University of Edinburgh, 2003); Stan Shewmaker, *Tonga Christianity* (South Pasadena: Calif., William Carey Library, 1970); Glenn J. Schwartz, "The Brethren in Christ in Zambia" (M.A. thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1975).

[42] "Sikalongo Mission," *Evangelical Visitor*, November 20, 1933, 12.; "Sikalongo Report 1933," *Handbook of Missions*, 1934, 56, 71.

[43] See Dwight W. Thomas, *"Inyimbo Zyabakristo:* The Chitonga Hymnal of the Zambian Brethren in Christ Church," *Brethren in Christ History and Life* 28, no. 3 (December 2005), 502-566.

hymnal committee."[44] What roles Cullen and Eyster had on the committee are unknown. Interestingly, the title page of the hymnal indicates the place of publication as Sikalongo. This is surprising, given the prominence of Macha as the original site of Brethren in Christ work in Northern Rhodesia. Nevertheless, the Brethren in Christ church in Northern Rhodesia published its first hymnal in the Tonga language in 1936. Titled Inyimbo Zyabakristo, revised editions of the hymnal are still used today in the Zambian church. Subsequent Brethren in Christ publications in Northern Rhodesia continued to indicate "Sikalongo Book Room" as the publisher. The 1945 Executive Board Minutes indicate that missionaries produced a "Tonga Primer," which was handled and distributed by the Sikalongo Book Room.[45] The church needed these sorts of materials in order to pursue its work.

The work of Sikalongo evangelists

Another dimension of growing the church fell to so-called "native evangelists." American missionaries, no matter how gifted or experienced they were, could not reach every village, nor could they fully identify with or understand the local villagers. Understandably, local believers could better deal with cultural issues and relational dynamics, and Brethren in Christ missionaries understood this. Arthur Kutywayo, Jesse Chikaile, and Peter Munsaka helped with some village visitation, but their responsibilities at the mission gave them little extra time. Consequently, four paid Northern Rhodesian evangelists worked fulltime visiting villages and doing evangelistic work on behalf of Brethren in Christ missions.

Sikalongo's two paid evangelists during the Eyster-Cullen years were Joshua Moono and Musa.[46] Both men began as evangelists under the Taylors and had accompanied Myron to the valley in 1931.[47] The mission paid them a stipend with the expectation that they would make regular visits to villages and hold evangelist meetings.[48] An excerpt from Henry H. Brubaker's brief

---

[44] E. Engle, "Sikalongo Notes," *Evangelical Visitor*, February 1, 1937, 14-15.

[45] African Mission Executive Board Minutes, April 4, 1945.

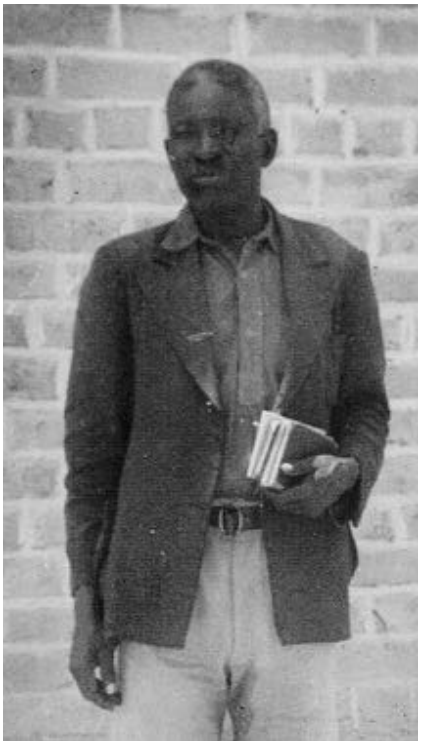
[46] Musa's name appears frequently in the historical record, but I have been unable to discover his family name.

[47] Cecil I. Cullen, "Sikalongo Mission. Particulars Concerning Brother Taylor's Death," *Evangelical Visitor,* October 26, 1931, 348-349.

[48] "Africa Financial Report - 1933," *Handbook of Missions,* 1934, 76.

biography of Joshua Moono indicates the sort of work local evangelists did:

> During the past year Joshua was engaged in evangelistic work for four and one-half months. He held meetings at all ten outschools once and went back the second time to several places. He also held meetings in two areas where we have no regular preaching appointments. As a result of his meetings eleven joined the Inquirers Class for instruction preparatory to baptism. In addition to these there were a number of others who were strengthened and helped spiritually.[49]



Evangelist Mafulo while doing evangelistic work at Sikalongo. Photo courtesy of Anna Eyster Photograph Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.

Two Macha evangelists, Mizinga and Mafulo, also helped do evangelistic work in the Sikalongo district.[50] Both men served as Brethren in Christ evangelists for many decades and made regular visits to preach at semi-annual revivals at Sikalongo or to help with evangelistic work in communities near the outschools. These men were two of the most influential Brethren in Christ workers during the mid-twentieth century.[51] Both had deep roots in the Brethren in Christ missions and both continued in ministry until their deaths. Mafulo was one of the first students to come to Macha Mission in 1908. After completing his studies at mission schools, he taught in outschools. However, it seems that evangelism was a stronger gift than teaching. He made regular visits to the Sikalongo District to help with evangelistic work. Mizinga was a skilled evangelist and a respected

---

[49] H. H. Brubaker, "Report of African Evangelistic Work, 1936," *Handbook of Missions,* 1937, 23-26.

[50] The spelling of Mafulo's name continues to present challenges. The caption under Anna Eyster's photograph spells it "Mafula." More recent orthographic practices prefer "Mahulo." I have chosen to use "Mafulo," which was the spelling most commonly used while he was alive.

[51] "Notes from a Sikalongo Diary," *Evangelical Visitor*, January 7, 1935, 14.

servant of the church. His spiritual sensitivity and his understanding of local politics served the church well.

Expanding and enhancing schools: Sikalongo Mission schools

Expanding and enhancing schools in the Sikalongo District was the second goal of the Eyster-Cullen years. From the beginning, Brethren in Christ missionaries established and operated schools. It was their belief that schools contributed to church work by influencing the minds of young people and by providing a strong Christian presence in local communities. The strategy was similar at each location: (1) establish a strong mission station with a thriving school, which would serve as an anchor; (2) extend the influence of the central mission station through smaller local "outschools" staffed by graduates of the mission; and (3) build and nurture local congregations as extensions of the school by using the head teachers as the local church leaders.

The Taylors and Steckleys accomplished the first of these objectives during the 1920s; Anna Eyster and the Cullens advanced the strategy during the 1930s. Eyster set about the task with enthusiasm from the moment she arrived. That the Sikalongo Mission staff was trying to improve the mission schools is clear from Harvey Frey's 1932 report. He noted the trend at Sikalongo Boys School: "…it is specially [sic] gratifying to see that our Boys' School at Sikalongo and Matopo have shown such a marked improvement, both as to numbers and as to the quality of the work done."[52]

Throughout most of the 1920s, the schools at Sikalongo and Macha were coeducational. According to Harvey Frey, Macha was "passing through a severe crisis" at the end of the decade.[53] This might account for the fact that the Macha school closed during the first half of 1931. It reopened after the 1931 missionary conference as a girls-only school with Anna Engle as its headmistress, and simultaneously Sikalongo became a boys-only school with Anna Eyster as headmistress. The rationale behind the division was ultimately to improve the educational results of both schools.[54] It is clear that the separation of boys and girls boarding schools was fully in place by 1931. Girls

---

[52] Harvey J. Frey, "Africa General Report 1932," *Handbook of Missions,* 1933, 12-14.

[53] Harvey J. Frey, "Annual Report, Macha Mission, 1928," *Handbook of Missions,* 1929, 26-29.

[54] Anna R. Engle, John A. Climenhaga, and Leoda A. Buckwalter, *There Is No Difference: God Works in Africa and India* (Nappanee, IN: E.V. Publishing, 1950), 123.

Boys from Macha Mission arriving at Siklaongo. Photo courtesy of Anna Eyster Photograph Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.

from Sikalongo walked to Macha in order to take the higher standards, and boys from Macha walked to Sikalongo. This pattern continued to the middle of the twentieth century. Anna Eyster documented this in a photograph from one of her two photo albums.

The 1931 statistical report shows two paid native teachers at Sikalongo Boys School (undoubtedly Chikaile and Kutywayo) and 78 students enrolled. From 1931 onward, the Sikalongo Mission staff worked diligently to strengthen and improve the mission schools. For most of the 1920s, Jesse Chikaile had served as the primary teacher at Sikalongo during the 1920s. Arthur Kutywayo's arrival provided another strong teacher to supplement the growing needs of the school. During the ensuing years, the teaching staff and enrollment at Sikalongo remained relatively flat, but the staff gradually improved their qualifications through advanced training at Matopo Teacher Training School and other places.

Since the early 1920s, two schools had existed at Sikalongo Mission: a boarding school and a day school. However, the new arrangement of upper elementary training for boys at Sikalongo and training for girls at Macha lent greater importance to Sikalongo and Macha day schools for the lower grades. This necessarily led to the need for dedicated teachers for Sikalongo Central

Day School. The first teacher mentioned by name was "Muchindu."[55] The photograph below pictures the Central Day School with Nathan Muzyamba as the teacher. In 1943, the day school moved across the stream north of the mission to its current location on the hill.[56]

Sikalongo Central Day School with Teacher Nathan. Photo courtesy of Anna Eyster Photo Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.

Expanding and enhancing schools: The teachers

Like teachers of other Brethren in Christ schools in Africa, Sikalongo teachers wanted to improve their qualifications. Missionary leadership understood the need for further training and encouraged teachers to continue their education in a variety of ways. Some were sent to training schools outside the country, and others to training institutions in Northern Rhodesia. As early as 1915, Frances Davidson sent David Moyo to South Africa for advanced study in order to increase his effectiveness at Macha.[57] At Sikalongo, the need became increasingly evident during the 1930s.

The Brethren in Christ had established a teacher training school at Matopo Mission, and Northern Rhodesian missionaries began to send people

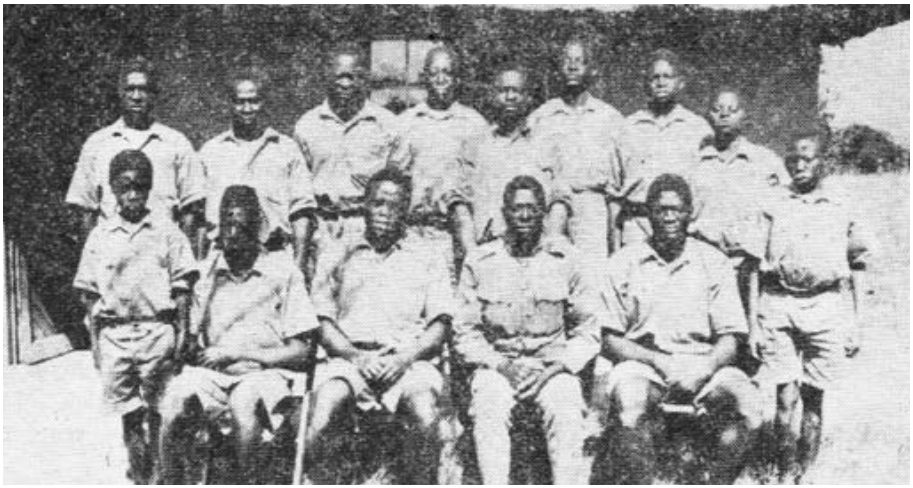
---

[55] "Sikalongo News Notes. Feb. 1, '35," *Evangelical Visitor*, April 1, 1935, 14-16.

[56] Anna M. Eyster, "August at Sikalongo," *Evangelical Visitor*, January 17, 1944, 12.

[57] Dwight W. Thomas, "A Biographical Sketch of David (Ndhlalambi) Moyo," *Brethren in Christ History and Life* 33, no. 3 (December 2010), 271-321.

there for advanced training. In 1932, David Munsaka (son of Peter), Paul Mudenda, and Muchindu Moono went to Matopo.[58] Muchindu finished in 1935 and returned to Sikalongo to teach the Central Day School: "Muchindu is enrolled as teacher in the Sikalongo Central Day School and to assist in the Boarding School. He is the first Sikalongo student to complete Teachers' Training at Matopo Mission. We have hopes of him being a spiritual asset in our school."[59] A 1932 photograph conveys Eyster and Cullen's desire to develop a new generation of teachers for Brethren in Christ schools.



Sikalongo teachers in training. Photo from Evangelical Visitor*, September 12, 1932.*

Scores of Northern Rhodesian Brethren in Christ students continued to go to Southern Rhodesia for advanced study during the 1930s, 40s and 50s. A preliminary list of Sikalongo students who studied in the south in the 1930s includes: David Munsaka, Muchindu Moono, Paul Mudenda, Joni Munsaka, Ethan Siamalambo, Harrison, Adam, Mishack, Jameson, Albert, Moses, and Wilson Muchindu.

Several Sikalongo teachers received specialized teacher training within Northern Rhodesia. Jesse Chikaile went to Mazabuka in 1935 for training as a "Jeanes teacher." Anna T. Jeanes founded the Jeanes Foundation in

---

[58] Taylor, "From Sikalongo Mission, S. A. - March 17th," *Evangelical Visitor,* May 23, 1932, 175.

[59] "Sikalongo News Notes. Feb. 1, '35," Evangelical Visitor, April 1, 1935.

the United States in 1907 for the purpose of training African-American teachers with little education or experience. The idea migrated to Northern Rhodesia several decades later. Grants from the Beit Trust and the Carnegie Corporation led to the establishment of the "Jeanes Training Institute" in Mazabuka in 1929. A veteran Methodist missionary, J.R. Fell, became its first principal. The training model emphasized teaching practices directly related to village contexts and needs. John Ragsdale characterized the program as follows: "The teacher training syllabus included methods of teaching, phonics for teaching reading, the use of arithmetic problems taken from village life, the use of plans and maps, and practical experience in teaching under close supervision."[60] Chikaile finished his Jeanes training in 1936 and began to apply his new techniques in Sikalongo outstation schools soon thereafter.[61]

Nathan Munsaka, another Sikalongo student, advanced his education through four years of study in Lusaka. Esther Mann noted that Munsaka returned to Sikalongo in 1938 to resume his teaching duties.[62] The government established a "Native Trades School" in Lusaka in the early 1930s, and this is probably where Munsaka received his training.[63] The following gives some idea of the nature of his studies:

> Nathan, one of our former school boys who was in school here from 1929 to 1935, and who has been at Lusaka Trade School the last four years, has now finished his Course and is here as an industrial teacher. He, with the help of some of the school boys who are here during holiday, are plastering the new shop and store-room, and they have also been making doors for the shop and screening the windows with a fine wire mesh.[64]

The government description noted that the Lusaka school was "for the training of carpenters, masons, and bricklayers." Munsaka is sometimes subsequently referred to as the mission "builder," a title in keeping with his new training.

At the beginning of the Eyster-Cullen years, Sikalongo had two teachers, Jesse Chikaile and Arthur Kutywayo. Capable as they were at the time,

---

[60] Ragsdale, *Protestant Mission Education*, 108.

[61] Cecil I. Cullen, "Sikalongo Outstations (1936)," *Handbook of Missions*, 1937, 40-41.

[62] "Annual Report of the Social and Economic Progress of the People of Northern Rhodesia, 1935" (London: 1936).

[63] Esther Mann, "December at Sikalongo," *Evangelical Visitor,* Feb 27, 1939, 13.

[64] "Word from Sikalongo for January," *Evangelical Visitor*, March 27, 1939, 13.

they had little formal training. By the time Cullens left, four teachers were on staff at Sikalongo Mission, several with specialized training, and nearly a dozen teachers were assigned to the various outstations. With help from others, Anna Eyster and the Cullens made significant progress during the 1930s toward enhancing the quality of Brethren in Christ education in the Sikalongo District.

Sikalongo teachers in about 1940: Muchindu Moono, Arthur Kutywayo, Laban Mudenda, and Nathan Munsaka. Photo courtesy of Anna Eyster Photograph Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.

Expanding and enhancing schools: The outschools

The 1931 statistical report indicates that two outstations were open that year, each with an African teacher.[65] Another report claims that the school at Singani was established by David [Chonga] in 1931.[66] Mboole, with its proximity to Sikalongo and its increasing importance, was probably another early outschool.[67] In 1932, the number increased to three "unordained

---

[65] "Africa Statistical Report 1931," *Handbook of Missions*, 1932, 41.

[66] Adda E. Taylor, "From Sikalongo Mission, S. A.," *Evangelical Visitor,* May 23, 1932, 175.

[67] Cecil I. Cullen, "A Sunday at Sikalongo," *Evangelical Visitor,* July 18, 1932, 237.

evangelists in charge of outschools" and Siazwela could have been the third outstation school since, according to Ruth Taylor, it was established after the missionary conference of 1931 with Shadrack as its first teacher.[68]

Whatever the exact sequence of outschool beginnings, the number of outstations increased dramatically during the Eyster-Cullen years. Annual reports show a steady increase in the number of outschools: two in 1931, four in 1932, five in 1933, eight in 1934, eight in 1935, 10 in 1936, and 10 in 1937. It appears that, in addition to improving the Mission Station schools, Cecil Cullen was determined to expand the number of outschools. His efforts at Sinazeze illustrate this desire. After a 1934 visit to Kanchindu Mission in the valley, an *Evangelical Visitor* article noted:

> In September Bro. Cullen and Bro. Hall had the opportunity of visiting Kachindu Mission of the Wesleyan Methodist Church[Kanchindu] where they received the warmest hospitality. ...They visited our only village school in the Valley where Tom is endeavoring to point the people to Christ.[69]

The itinerant work of the evangelists contributed to strengthening the outschools. During the course of the Eyster-Cullen years, the following outstation names appeared in the Evangelical Visitor: Mboole, Siazwela, Mudukula, Moyo, Singani, Fundabanyama, Sinazeze, Masopo, Munyonzo, Siabukululu, Nakeempa, Siamvula.

Mboole Outstation with teacher John Muchimba and pupils. Photo courtesy of Anna Eyster Photograph Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.

---

[68] "Africa Statistical Report 1932," Handbook of Missions, 1933), 33; Taylor, "A Week End Kraal Visit," *Evangelical Visitor*, February 16, 1931.

[69] "Notes from a Sikalongo Diary," *Evangelical Visitor*, January 7, 1935.

Most of the outschools established by the Brethren in Christ still exist today, and many continue to maintain connections to the denomination.

Expanding and enhancing schools: The students

Brethren in Christ students with leadership gifts continued to come to Sikalongo Boys School to receive training. Although most of the first generation of denominational leaders were educated at Macha, nearly every mid-twentieth century Brethren in Christ leader attended or taught at Sikalongo Boys School: Peter Munsaka, Sampson Mudenda, Ammon Mweetwa, Jonathan Muleya, Stephen Muleya, and Davidson Mushala. Moreover, a number of former Sikalongo students rose to positions of regional and national importance, notably Elijah Mudenda and Daniel Munkombwe. To some degree, each of their stories was shaped by their experience at Sikalongo Boys School.

Sikalongo Boys School exercise drills. Photo courtesy of Anna Eyster Photograph Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.

Sampson Mudenda: From eager convert to the first Macha overseer

According his testimony, written while he was in Standard IV (grade 6), Sampson Mudenda was converted in Macha under the ministry of Rev. J. Lester Meyers. Mudenda first came to Sikalongo in 1935 and was baptized there in 1936:

> In 1935 Mufundisi Winger sent me here to Sikalongo Mission. Then I was baptized in the year of 1936. My heart was happy to be one of God's children. This year I am in Standard IV (6). I hope that I

> shall be a worker of God. I am sure that Mufundisi Myers has done much for us, especially for us Macha people. We still remember about him. May God's Holy Name be worthily praised forever. Sampson M. Mudenda, Student at Sikalongo Mission.[70]

This implies that he came for Standard I (grade 3), having studied sub-A and sub-B (grades 1 and 2) near his home village. Mudenda was a determined student with a keen mind. This was evident even at Sikalongo Boys School. He participated in a student strike at the boys school in 1938, but his father sent him back to Sikalongo (see below). Of the boys who walked back to Macha, he was the only student mentioned in Anna Eyster's account: "Sampson Mudenda, one of our Standard IV boys, who stood out the first time, but was in the group of strikers the second time, was sent back by his father. He made his confession to the school and has been reinstated." It was apparent that Sampson Mudenda had both a strong character and a desire to obey, necessary qualities for leadership in the church.[71]

Sampson Mudenda and family. Photo courtesy of Anna Eyster Photograph Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.

---

[70] Sampson Mudenda, "Testimony," *Evangelical Visitor,* May 22, 1939, 15.

[71] Anna M. Eyster, "November at Sikalongo Mission," *Evangelical Visitor*, January 30, 1939, 13.

Mudenda went on to become one of the most influential leaders of the Zambian Brethren in Christ during the middle of the twentieth century. He served in a variety of capacities before being chosen as one of the first two overseers of the church in Northern Rhodesia. He, along with other Brethren in Christ from Northern Rhodesia (Peter Munsaka, Davidson Mushala, and Kalaluka Muchimba), went to Wanezi for advanced religious studies; in 1956, he and Peter Munsaka were ordained, the first African Brethren in Christ from Northern Rhodesia to receive that distinction.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Mudenda was a powerful force in the church, serving on church committees at the highest levels and representing the church at national and international events. When the time came for the North American church to transfer full authority to the Zambian church, it was Sampson Mudenda who accepted the letters of transfer. It naturally came as a surprise, then, when he was not chosen to be the first African bishop of the Zambian church in 1976.

Replacing deteriorating buildings and beautifying the station

In 1935, Cullen wrote: "We find ourselves facing a heavy building program as most of the buildings are pise (Mother Earth stamped into forms and allowed to harden by the sun) with grass roofs. These are rapidly deteriorating and must be replaced before too long. We use the school boys for making and burning bricks, but there are other expenses connected with building that make it necessary to go cautiously."[72] The need to enhance the Mission Station had been clear even in 1931. And, soon after the Halls arrived, Cecil Cullen, David Hall, and others began to repair and replace buildings at Sikalongo. Anna Engle claims that David Hall designed and built the house currently reserved for Sikalongo's pastor. Called the "cottage," it was reportedly designed and built in 1933.[73] The presence of two married couples with children, Anna Eyster, and the two Pilgrim Holiness women undoubtedly contributed to the sense of urgency for a new house.

Halls left Sikalongo in 1934 and were replaced by Elizabeth Engle.[74] This deprived Cullen of a skilled building companion. Mabel Hall seems to have

---

[72] Cecil I. Cullen et al, "Sikalongo Mission Report 1935," *Handbook of Missions*, 1936, 66-67.

[73] Engle, Climenhaga, and Buckwalter, *There Is No Difference*, 139.

[74] Cecil I. Cullen et al, "Sikalongo Mission Report 1934," *Handbook of Missions,* 1935, 39-40.

been especially sickly during her Sikalongo years, eventually forcing their return to the south.[75] Halls' departure also left Cecil as the only male missionary at the station. He and David Hall seemed to have had a good relationship; not only was Hall a good builder, but he also accompanied Cullen on several hunting expeditions. Lions were quite common at Sikalongo in the 1930s. Both men apparently enjoyed hunting and were quite proud of the lions they killed near the mission station.[76] With their transfer to the south, Cullen lost a friend who was both a hunter and a builder.

Nevertheless, Cullen realized the need to replace both the church and the boys' school and set about the task with diligence. The new school building was situated just east of the current church. Built in two stages, the first side was completed in 1937. The second side was completed in 1939, soon after the Manns arrived at Sikalongo.[77] The finished building appears in the photograph below and, although other buildings have been added since, the 1939 building still exists in 2017.

Sikalongo Boys School building. Photo courtesy of Anna Eyster Photograph Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.

The church building was equally inadequate. So, in January 1937, Cullen pleaded with American supporters to send money to build a new church. American donors responded with $250 and work began immediately.[78] By July 1937, Cullen had laid the cornerstone and by October, the building was in its final stages. The rafters were raised in October 1937, and the roof

---

[75] "Sikalongo Report 1933," *Handbook of Missions*, 1934.

[76] Cecil I. Cullen, "Sikalongo Mission," *Evangelical Visitor*, June 5, 1933, 12.

[77] H. H. Brubaker, "Sikalongo Mission Report 1939," *Handbook of Missions*, 1940, 74-78.

[78] Cecil I. Cullen, "Sikalongo Mission," E*vangelical Visitor,* March 29, 1937, 13.

The Sikalongo Church cornerstone. From left to right: Cecil Cullen, H. H. Brubaker, Elmer Eyer, Walter O. Winger. Photo courtesy of Cullen Photograph Collection.

Completed Sikalongo Church building. Photograph courtesy of Africa collection in the Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.

was thatched by the end of October, just in time to protect the congregation during the coming rainy season. Dedication for the church took place on May 1, 1938. Unfortunately, Cullens had left two months earlier so Cecil was unable to witness the dedication.

Jesse Chikaile spoke at the dedication:

> In 1915, God's Word began to be preached in the Sikalongo District. This was like a farmer plowing new land. Later services were held in the old shop. In 1920 the old church was built. Here we saw the Word of God go forward. It was like a spark which has been fanned into a flame. There is no one who began with me: some have gone; others have returned to sin; but God has chosen more workers to push forward His work.[79]

Myron Taylor Memorial Bell

Although not a building, the Myron Taylor Memorial Bell is a distinctive architectural feature of Sikalongo Mission. Erected in 1936, it has occupied its current spot for over 80 years. The following account appeared in the *Evangelical Visitor*:

> It has been thought for some time that a good bell would be very useful at Sikalongo. Some years ago a donation of ten dollars was made toward a bell by someone in the home land. After the passing of Bro. Taylor, Sr. Taylor expressed a desire to add to this amount and have a bell bought in remembrance of Bro. Taylor.
>
> During one of our African Conferences, it was suggested that any of the Missionaries who would like to assist in this way had the privilege of doing so. Several of the native Christians also assisted as they were able. Some of the friends of Bro. and Sr. Taylor who live in Choma also contributed toward the purchasing of the bell. The amount received was sufficient to buy one of real bell metal.
>
> Various ways were suggested as to how it might be erected, including the suggestion of approaching the Railway officials for a donation of four steel rails to be used as a structure. This was done and they very willingly gave the rails. We now have a bell that rings in

[79] Anna M. Eyster, "Dedication of New Sikalongo Church," *Evangelical Visitor,* August 1, 1938, 13.

> memory of our Brother whose activities in preaching the Gospel can never be forgotten. May the chimes of the bell ever be a challenge for others to take up the work where he was called to lay it down.[80]

Although seldom used anymore, the bell remains today where it was placed 80 years ago.

Myron Taylor Memorial Bell under construction. Photo courtesy of Cullen Photograph Collection.

---

[80] Sikalongo News Notes," *Evangelical Visitor*, June 22, 1936, 11-12.

The grounds surrounding the main house also received a face-lift during Cullen's tenure. Builders added decorative entrances to both the front and end of the building, and everything was freshly-painted. The photograph below is probably from about 1935. We know this because the Myron Taylor Memorial Bell is absent. Myron Taylor built this main house in the 1920s and it remained until the 1960s, when it was torn down and a new house built on the same location.

Sikalongo Mission, circa 1935. Photo courtesy of Africa collection in the Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.

Determining the chronology of some Sikalongo buildings is difficult. The superintendent's office, for example, was in use by the mid-1930s, but its exact date of construction is unclear. The photograph below includes the Myron Taylor Memorial Bell so it had to have been taken after 1936. The size of the trees suggests a possible date of 1940. Whatever its history, this building—with its unique arched entrance—has remained one of Sikalongo's landmarks for many decades.

The superintendent's office, Sikalongo; students returning to school. Courtesy of Anna Eyster Photograph Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.

Concluding observations

Cullens left Sikalongo in March of 1938. During their tenure, they significantly expanded and enhance the mission station, both materially and otherwise. They established new outstations; supported Anna Eyster's efforts to improve Sikalongo Boys School; renovated or built a number of new buildings; and encouraged advanced training for national teachers as a means of enhancing education. Along with others such as the Halls, Elizabeth Engle, and Annie Winger, the Cullens and Eyster advanced the worthy cause begun by Adda and Myron Taylor at Sikalongo Mission.

The church held a farewell for Cecil and Janie Cullen on Sunday, March 20. Chief Singani attended the farewell and Jesse Chikaile spoke on behalf of the African believers. The Sikalongo staff accompanied the Cullens to Choma on Monday and saw them off. They returned to Canada, intending to come back to Africa; however, other circumstances kept them in Canada for the rest of their lives.[81]

---

[81] Kenneth Cullen, interview with the author, Grantham, PA, February 1, 2016.

Consolidating an Established Ministry: Anna Eyster and the Manns (1938-45)

Anna Eyster and the Manns (1938-45): The 1938 context

By 1938, Sikalongo Mission was well-established. The station had relatively new buildings and an expanded network of ten outstation schools with native teachers. The Boys School had 75 boarding students with trained African teachers helping Anna Eyster. Knowledgeable African workers such as Jesse Chikaile, Peter Munsaka, Arthur Kutywayo, and Joshua Moono provided a reliable human resource infra-structure for continued ministry. Such was the state of affairs when Roy and Esther Mann arrived in March of 1938.

Biographical sketches of Roy Mann, Grace Miller Mann, and Esther Thuma Mann

Roy H. Mann met Grace Miller at Messiah Bible School and Missionary Training Home where they both studied in preparation for mission work. Grace began her studies in September 1918 and graduated in June 1922; Roy had graduated in 1921. They married in January 1922 and, after Grace's graduation, they set sail for Africa in August 1922.[82] The Manns began their African mission work in Northern Rhodesia at Macha Mission. There was some turmoil in Brethren in Christ missions at the time, making their arrival somewhat difficult. Frances Davidson departed from Macha under a cloud of miscommunication and hurt, and the Manns entered the picture right at that difficult moment.[83]

Tragically, less than two years after their arrival, Grace died of a severe form of malaria called "black water fever." The death of his wife did not

---

[82] Roy Mann's recollections of his work in Africa can be found in Roy H. Mann, *I Remember: My Life of Missionary Service*, ed. Robert T. Mann (Mechanicsburg, PA, 2002). Grace Mann's early life and her calling to mission work are briefly described in her obituary: "Obituaries: Grace Miller Mann," *Evangelical Visitor*, May 12, 1924, 8. A more complete account can be found in Jesse L. and Emma Meyers et al, "Macha Mission - March 17," *Evangelical Visitor*, May 12, 1924, 12-13.

[83] For more about the turmoil at Macha, see E. Morris Sider, "Hannah Frances Davidson," *Nine Portraits,* ed. E. Morris Sider (Nappanee, IN: Evangel Press, 1978), 159-214; Thomas, "A Biographical Sketch of David (Ndhlalambi) Moyo."

dissuade Roy from his call to mission work and he remained on the field. He continued at Macha for some time and then transferred to Matopo Mission in Southern Rhodesia. He was transferred again briefly before his furlough in 1930. Upon his return to Africa, he was again stationed at Matopo.

Roy and Esther Mann with Ruth and Robert. Photo courtesy of Roy and Esther Mann Photograph Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.

Those who knew Esther Thuma Mann all agree that she had a "strong personality," so perhaps it is not surprising that her story is unique. She arrived at Matopo Mission in February 1936 at the age of 23.[84] Esther studied nursing at Dayton, Ohio and was initially assigned to care for Harvey Frey, who was suffering from cancer. Frey died in May 1936, leaving Esther without an obvious portfolio. According to her children, her practical nature resulted in a surprisingly brief courtship and subsequent marriage to Roy Mann in June 1936.[85] Esther gave birth to their first daughter, Ruth, in May 1937, and soon thereafter Roy and Esther were assigned to replace Janie and Cecil

---

[84] H. H. Brubaker, "General Report, Africa, 1936," *Handbook of Missions*, 1937, 15-23.

[85] Ruth Zook, interview with the author, January 30, 2017; Robert Mann, interview with the author, January 28, 2017).

Cullen at Sikalongo Mission. The Manns arrived at Sikalongo on Saturday, March 12, 1938. They met with local headmen and Chief Singani on Tuesday, March 15 in order to get to know the local leaders, thus beginning the work without hesitation.[86]

"Those were the hard years"

March 1938 thus marks a new phase for Sikalongo Mission—the Eyster-Mann years. For the next seven years, developments at Sikalongo Mission resulted from the leadership of the Manns and Anna Eyster, with assistance and guidance from loyal African helpers. According to her children, their mother considered their time at Sikalongo to be "the hard years." Both Roy and Esther referred to this in later years. Roy said: "It was the most difficult period of our missionary activities for various reasons. It was during the war years, and we had famine, money was short … and we had the most malaria during that period...." Esther expressed similar feelings in letters to her family.[87]

Although they accomplished many positive things between 1938 and 1945, a review of the circumstances reveals some justification for Esther's sentiments. Sikalongo was a very remote place in 1938. It was situated at the edge of Plateau Tonga territory bordering the escarpment to Zambezi Valley, a locale which was considered one of the most "primitive" regions of Northern Rhodesia at the time. Although they were linguistically and culturally Plateau Tonga, the Sikalongo people were considered somewhat "backward" by both missionaries and other Tonga Brethren in Christ. Exacerbating the state of affairs was the fact that Roy Mann suffered serious bouts of malaria, literally standing at death's door for a time. Additionally, Roy administered both the Sikalongo and Macha mission stations for some of their time. By the early 1940s, Roy's furlough was long overdue, and World War II made it clear that there was no immediate end in sight. Moreover, the war added anxiety and financial stress to the situation. Although the missionaries were geographically removed from the war, it weighed on the minds of many.

---

[86] Anna M. Eyster, "March Breezes for Sikalongo," *Evangelical Visitor*, June 20, 1938, 13.

[87] Esther Mann, "Letters from Africa," 1938-1945.

A number of scholars have suggested that the two world wars might have undermined the confidence of local peoples such at the Tonga, leading them to question the moral authority of the British and of the white missionaries.[88]

The situation within Sikalongo Mission was also difficult at times. Their long time worker and deacon, Jesse Chikaile, was dismissed after he took a second wife, and several teachers were dismissed for various reasons. Lastly, Sikalongo students contributed to the turmoil early in the Mann's tenure by going on strike. The last of these circumstances may have set the stage for Esther's feelings about Sikalongo.

The 1939 Sikalongo Boys School strike

In the 1930s, tribal and regional loyalties in Northern Rhodesia were markedly stronger than they are today. Linguistic and cultural differences, as well as relational obligations and regional loyalties, influenced social alignments and decision-making processes. Some of these dynamics filtered into attitudes and relationships in the Brethren in Christ church. Specifically, local Brethren in Christ in Northern Rhodesia recognized a clear distinction between the "Macha people" and the "Sikalongo people." These understandings expressed themselves in 1939. In her report for October 25, Anna Eyster wrote:

> A sad scene occurred this morning. Thirty of the thirty-five boys from Macha struck and walked home. It seemed that a feeling of territorial difference had been growing, and the climax occurred last Friday evening when they, a small group of them refused to listen to the head compound boy when he rang the retiring bell. They would not listen to Bro. Mann and Peter [Munsaka] this morning when they tried to reason with them.[89]

The conflict between the Macha boys and the Sikalongo boys continued for some time, requiring active intervention by parents and church leaders. Anna Eyster's subsequent entries noted:

> Oct 27: A reply from Bro. Eyer at Macha stated that the Native

---

[88] See the following: Stephen Charles Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (Penguin Books, 1964); Paul Everett Pierson, *The Dynamics of Christian Mission: History through a Missiological Perspective* (WCIU Press, 2009).

[89] Anna M. Esyter, "Echoes from Sikalongo," *Evangelical Visitor*, January 2, 1939, 15-16.

> Council will meet tomorrow morning to heal the breach which has been made.
>
> Oct 28: Bro. Mann with five others left early for Macha. Arthur took Jesse's place and delivered an earnest appeal to those who were building on sand.
>
> Oct 29: The affair is not settled. The Council, boys and Bro. Eyer are coming down next week. Please help us pray.[90]

Eyster revisited the situation in a later communication:

> In order that we may understand a few items, let us recall one or two events in October. A large group of our boys from Macha had struck and gone home. One of the reasons was a division which had widened between the Sikalongo and Macha boys, causing bitter feelings between the leaders, who in turn influenced the others. It was decided by the Church Council that all the boys return to Sikalongo, and they with Bro. Eyer with us here try to bring about a peaceable settlement.[91]

After the Macha meetings of the previous week, the striking students, along with various church leaders, returned to Sikalongo in order to reconcile. Although the parties achieved some resolution to the conflict, the process was not smooth and one wonders whether the pivotal issues were ever fully addressed. Eyster's entries noted:

> Thursday, [November] 3rd. The boys from Macha with Bro. Eyer and the Council arrived. They had been detained by heavy rains in Choma. The meeting lasted from 3:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The Native Brethren gave much good sound advice to all. We trust that peace has been restored.
>
> Friday 4th. Prayer Day for compounds and locations. In the evening two of the group who had just returned the day before became insubordinate and refused to lock their bicycles in the bicycle room.
>
> Saturday 5th. One of the two lads was dealt with and expelled. The Macha group is on the war path again. At length about twenty left, leaving about seventeen of their group to continue school at Sikalongo.
>
> Tuesday 8th. Sampson Mudenda, one of our Standard IV boys, who

---

[90] Ibid.

[91] Eyster, "November at Sikalongo Mission," *Evangelical Visitor,* January 30, 1939, 13.

> stood out the first time, but was in the group of strikers the second time, was sent back by his father. He made his confession to the school and has been reinstated.[92]

On Saturday, November 12, the local fathers of Sikalongo students were assembled to discuss the situation. A tenuous peace seems to have taken hold by December 1939, but these feelings of regional allegiance continued to haunt the Zambian Brethren in Christ church long after this incident.

Consolidating an established ministry

In spite of difficult circumstances, the Manns and Anna Eyster made significant progress at Sikalongo between 1938 and 1945, consolidating the gains of the Eyster-Cullen years. Anna Eyster continued to improve the educational quality of the boys school, Roy Mann oversaw outschool developments and built a new dam to augment the water supply, and Esther Mann upgraded the clinic with her nursing expertise and systematic hard work. Educationally, Sikalongo benefitted from the coming of several new teachers, Joni Munsaka and Ethan Siamalambo, who had just completed their course at Matopo. Nathan Munsaka, who had helped before, returned from four years of trade school in Lusaka (see above).

However, other changes at Sikalongo may have contributed to an unsettled atmosphere between 1938 and 1941. Anna Eyster left for furlough in April 1939, interrupting the educational equilibrium.[93] By that time, Eyster had developed deep relationships with both the community and the students. Her replacement, Mary Kreider, did not have the advantage of such strong local support, undoubtedly making her job more difficult. Although the Tonga are generally very welcoming, it naturally took time for Kreider to develop close relationships. Furthermore, in 1940, Joshua Moono, long time Sikalongo evangelist, retired and was replaced by Samuel Munda.[94] And most notably, the dismissal of Jesse Chikaile in 1940 surely discouraged everyone and left a vacuum that would have been difficult to fill. Judging from Roy Mann's comments, the onset of World War II also seems to have weighed on

---

[92] Ibid.

[93] Anna M. Eyster, "Home on Furlough," *Evangelical Visitor*, June 19, 1939, 14.

[94] H. H. Brubaker, "Report of Evangelistic Work, 1940," *Handbook of Missions*, 1941, 23-24.

the minds of missionaries in Northern Rhodesia. Although the selection of Peter Munsaka as deacon in April 1941 undoubtedly eased some uncertainty, these other changes must have contributed to making these the "hard years."[95]

The arrival of Sampson Mwaanga and Isaac Munsanje in 1941 to help with teaching responsibilities probably provided additional stability to Sikalongo Boys School. Mwaanga was a gifted leader with the ability to inspire and challenge students.[96] I suspect his strong personality provided a controlling presence, but it may also have undermined missionary authority to some degree. Mwaanga came from a Brethren in Christ family in the Macha District. From all accounts, he was a capable teacher and a quick thinker. Moreover, we know that later in his life he became a strong political activist. His son, Vernon Mwaanga, played a significant role in the independence movement and later became part of Kenneth Kaunda's new government. Vernon served as deputy high commissioner, ambassador to the Soviet Union and the United Nations, and minister of foreign affairs. Despite Sampson Mwaanga's eventual political activism, the missionaries recognized his gifts and sent him for additional teacher training in 1942.[97] He returned in 1944 to teach the upper Standards at Sikalongo.[98]

Sending Sampson Mwaanga for additional teacher training was an indication of the seriousness of the missionaries' desire to upgrade the quality of education at Sikalongo Boys School. Comments from mission reports and minutes often reflect similar aspirations. For example, Executive Board minutes from December 1941 noted that Standard VI was to be added to the school in August 1942.[99] The church was helped by government inspectors, who made regular visits to assess the quality of mission school education and the capabilities of its teachers. Esther Mann wrote regarding a 1943 inspection:

> The school inspector, Dr. Winterbottom was here at Sikalongo for about a week. He inspected the Boarding school, also four outschools. We were glad for this contact with the Inspector. He seemed favorably impressed with the work carried on and with the progress of the

---

[95] Anna M. Eyster, "April Echoes from Sikalongo Mission," *Evangelical Visitor*, June 30, 1939, 13.
[96] Anna Esyter, "August at Sikalongo," *Evangelical Visitor*, November 3, 1941, 9.
[97] Anna M. Esyter, "Echoes Old and New from Sikalongo," *Evangelical Visitor*, November 23, 1942, 12-13.
[98] Esther Mann, "June at Sikalongo Mission," *Evangelical Visitor*, October 9, 1944, 12-13.
[99] Esther Mann, "March: Sikalongo," *Evangelical Visitor*, July 19, 1943, 12.

Teacher Sampson Mwaanga with Standard VI graduating class. Courtesy of Anna Eyster Photograph Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.

school. He also gave some very good constructive criticism.[100]

Sikalongo Boys School also sought to maintain quality education through rigorous examinations. Anna Eyster wrote proudly about her students in 1941: "Government Examinations for Standard IV. They [the students] surely worked hard and faithfully, and their efforts have been rewarded. All made the grade."[101]

The difficulty of some examinations is surprising by today's testing standards. The following questions were included in the Standard V (grade 7) examination:[102]

1. Tell me who or what the following were:
   a. Who was a "Watchman" to the House of Israel?
   b. Who would not defile themselves with the King's meat?
   c. Who was called the "weeping Prophet"?

---

[100] African Mission Executive Board Minutes, December 26, 1941.

[101] Anna M. Eyster, "Sikalongo Breezes – Month of May," *Evangelical Visitor,* August 25, 1941, 10.

[102] "Standard V (Grade 7) Bible Examination at Sikalongo," *Evangelical Visitor*, February 16, 1942, 11-12.

d. In which book and chapter would you find the story of the Potter?
e. Who through his pride became insane?

7. [Answer the following questions.]
a. What prophet lived through the reign of three kings?
b. What man was called to interpret three king's dreams ?
c. Why did not the lions eat Daniel when he was thrown into their den ?
d. Who laid the foundation of the second temple?
e. Who repaired and rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem?

The curriculum included a wide variety of subjects: English, Bible, mathematics, history, practical skills, and vernacular studies. Executive Board minutes from 1944 stipulated that the following vernacular books should be read: Std. I – Marko; Std. II - Makani a-Bibele lye-Ciindi; Std. Ill - Lweendo lwa Shinyenda kwa by John Bunyan (Pilgrim's Progress); and Std. IV - Lives of Eminent Africans (in Tonga). Ultimately, the goal of Sikalongo educators was clear: graduate well-trained students with both secular and religious knowledge.

However, students did more than merely study or work. Exercise, singing, games, outings, and other diversions punctuated the life of Sikalongo students. A 1942 entry noted:

> Arthur Kutywayo, the teacher of Stds. I and II, asked Sr. Eyster to bring down the little folding organ so his children could better learn the hymn, "Lord I'm Coming Home." This organ which was brought out by Sr. Musser Brechbill still functions, and brings inspiration and blessing to us. As we sang down in the class room, others gathered and helped us. How the African loves music![103]

The *Evangelical Visitor* also noted a few special moments which featured new technologies that certainly would have appealed to student curiosity:

> Sunday 6. In the evening Sr. Eyster took Bro. Mann's victrola down to school and played it for the boys. A number of village people were in. How they did enjoy it!"
>
> Monday 7. A mowing machine is actually cutting down the grass around the mission. We had to stop school for the pupils to see it work. We do thank the Lord for a special offering which made this

[103] Anna M. Esyter, "Sikalongo Echoes from a Diary," *Evangelical Visitor,* January 19, 1942, 12-13.

most needful piece of machinery possible."[104]

Other mission staff played important roles for Sikalongo students. One particular person deserves mention. Steleki Mudenda grew up near Sikalongo. His name (spelled differently) appears in 1931 describing him as "one of our herd boys."[105] He reportedly moved away for a period of time, but eventually came back to Sikalongo and became a member of the staff. He was evidently multi-talented, serving as the cook, thatching the roof of the new church and mentoring Sikalongo students. A 1941 account mentions Steleki Mudenda as the "Father to the boys."[106] That he was considered a key member of the staff is proven by the many times he is mentioned in the *Evangelical Visitor.* Until his death, Mudenda lived just north of the Mission Dam.

Diligent outstation efforts

While Anna Eyster and others continued the educational work of the mission station, Roy Mann diligently supervised the outstations. He made regular visits to nearby schools to encourage and monitor the efforts of the teachers. He also visited more distant schools such as Nakeempa. The following account describes a visit to Nakeempa, west of Sikalongo Mission:

> During July Bro. Mann visited most of the outschools. Over one week end we all went with him to Nakempa [sic], taking our tent and provisions. This school is about 50 miles from the mission by road, but is much nearer across country. Some times of the year we can take the shorter road.
>
> We were very much encouraged with the work at Nakempa [sic], as the people not only seemed to be awakened educationally but there seemed to be a good response in the church services. In one of the services six remained for prayer and in another service four remained.... We were especially thankful for the chief who we believe has had a real change of heart and no doubt would be a church member today, but he has two wives.[107]

---

[104] Anna M. Eyster, "April Echoes from Sikalongo Mission," *Evangelical Visitor,* June 30, 1941, 12-13.
[105] Mrs. Myron Taylor, "Sikalongo," *Evangelical Visitor*, February 2, 1931, 46.
[106] Esther Mann, "August at Sikalongo," *Evangelical Visitor*, November 3, 1941, 9.
[107] Esther Mann, "June and July at Sikalongo Mission," *Evangelical Visitor*, October 7, 1940, 14.

Nakeempa school continues to be under Brethren in Christ supervision in 2017, with a thriving church nearby.

Sinazeze, located in the Zambezi Valley, was the most distant outschool established during the Eyster-Cullen years. Cecil Cullen seemed to have had special affinity for this school, sending teachers to staff it and visiting whenever possible. In 1931, the trip was made easier by the construction of a relief road. However, in the ensuing years, that road had deteriorated to the extent that it was impassable for a vehicle. Despite the demanding conditions, Roy Mann and others continued to travel to the valley in order to encourage and sustain the school. Unfortunately, it became increasingly difficult to staff the school because of its remote location and the cultural differences between Plateau and Valley Tonga. This challenge eventually led Roy Mann to transfer the responsibility for the Sinazeze school to the Methodists, who had mission stations at Kanchindu and Masuku, and churches throughout the Zambezi Valley.[108]

For a period of time, Annie Winger also helped visit Sikalongo outstations. Winger spent her entire adult life in mission work, much of the time doing village visitation. She wrote fondly about one holiday period when she spent three months travelling to villages in the Sikalongo District.

> Perhaps you would be interested to know how I spent nearly eleven weeks of vacation between May 26 and August 10. Almost four weeks of it, divided into three different periods, were spent among the people in the villages surrounding Sikalongo Mission.[109]

Winger's detailed descriptions of her trips provide us with a wonderful record of Sikalongo's outstation schools and some of the teachers who were active at the time.

Christian Service League

One of the distinctive educational additions of the 1940s was the introduction of the Christian Service League (CSL). The origins of CSL are not clear. Eight Sikalongo students were involved with CSL in 1940,

---

[108] Executive Board minutes in 1942 describe a meeting at Choma Hotel and the transfer of Sinazeze to the Methodists: African Mission Executive Board Minutes, July 8, 1942.

[109] Annie E. Winger, "Village Visiting," *Evangelical Visitor*, September 26, 1938, 11.

Most of the Sikalongo teachers and some of their wives. Photo from Evangelical Visitor, *1939.*

suggesting that the league began sometime at the end of the 1930s. By 1941 the organization was in full swing with Bible study materials, outings, service projects, and a fully-developed curriculum. It was promoted both for men and women in Brethren in Christ schools in both Northern and Southern Rhodesia. The boys at Sikalongo Boys School loved it.[110] Eyster described a Christian Service League outing:

> May 10. The boys of the Christian Service League, having formerly decided to have a day out, packed their cooked sweet potatoes in a basket and they, with Sr. Eyster their leader, set out for the day. Our camp was at the Munzuma River, four miles away, where the boys fished a while. They caught several fish—no crocodiles. After a period of relaxation and lunch we enjoyed a time in devotions.... Crossing the river we came to Matimba's village... and then later met at Chibizwa's, about two miles from the Mission.[111]

---

[110] "Sikalongo Mission. March," *Evangelical Visitor,* June 17, 1940, 13.

[111] Eyster, "Sikalongo Breezes - Month of May," *Evangelical Visitor,* August 25, 1941.

The Christian Service League was obviously modeled after similar organizations in the West such as the American Boy Scouts. The 1939 *Handbook of Missions* mentions a "Young People's Christian League in California," but general reports make no mention of the organization.

The creation of CSL in Rhodesia might have been inspired by the Christian Service Brigade. Started in 1937 by a Wheaton College student, its strategies and structure are remarkably similar to those of the CSL. That the Brethren in Christ might have borrowed the basic idea but substituted "league" for "brigade" seems altogether reasonable given the denominational attitudes toward military involvement.

A 1949 account in the *Evangelical Visitor* includes the CSL camp song, and a note that students "competed in various activities: translating choruses, composing Christian words to African tunes, identifying trees and

Third year CSL group enroute to preach the gospel. Photo courtesy of Anna Eyster Photograph Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.

[111] Eyster, "Sikalongo Breezes - Month of May," *Evangelical Visitor*, August 25, 1941.

shrubs…"[112] The CSL had badges, an emblem, and a distinctive hand sign.[113] Fond memories of the Christian Service League were so strong for Stephen Muleya in 2010 that he could still vividly remember and sing the CSL theme song more than 50 years after the fact.[114]

A later 1951 account by Edna Lehman describes the activities of the Sikalongo CSL to nearby Siamvula village:

> The lunch is packed, breakfast and morning worship is over, the whistle blows and we are on our way. The group is made up of thirteen school boys, teachers Muleya and Munkombwe, Sister Graybill and the writer. We had no more than started down the path until once again my ears caught the sound of some of the boys humming the tune "Lead Me to Some Soul Today." None of these boys were present in the kitchen that morning so it became all the more impressive to me. Teacher Muleya also heard the boys humming as they walked along and soon said, "Boys, let us sing." He led them in various songs along the way but invariably when not being led in song the boys would go back to the one they started out with.[115]

That only 13 students participated in this outing suggests that membership in the CSL was limited. What criteria determined their inclusion is unclear, but Stephen Muleya's recollections testify to the organization's long term impact. By independence, the league seems to have lost popularity in the Brethren in Christ church, but for at least 20 years, it was an important feature of the educational ministry of denominational missions in the Rhodesias.

Elijah Mudenda: From brilliant Sikalongo student to Zambian Prime Minister[116]

Elijah Mudenda was probably one of the student members of Sikalongo's Christian Service League. Born June 7, 1927, at Macha, he was one of Chief Macha's sons. Elijah probably came to Sikalongo Boys School in 1936 or 1937.

---

[112] Elizabeth Engle, "Come to Camp," *Evangelical Visitor,* January 24, 1949, 10.

[113] References to CSL appear throughout the minutes of the 1940s and 1950s. See, for example: African Mission Minutes, April 3, 1945; African Mission Minutes, December 10, 1957; African Mission Minutes, August 30, 1964;

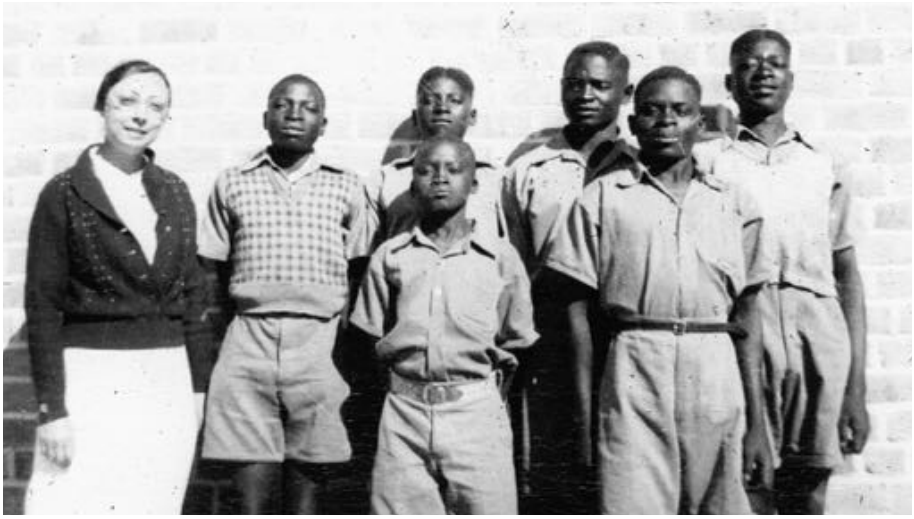
[114] Stephen Muleya, interview with the author, February 11, 2010, Sikalongo Mission, Zambia.

[115] Edna E. Lehman, "Lord Lead Me to Some Soul Today," *Evangelical Visitor*, April 2, 1951, 11.

[116] Elijah Mudenda Sources: Elijah Mudenda and Sapes Trust, *A Generation of Struggle* (Mount Pleasant, Harare, Zimbabwe: SAPES Books, 1999).

It was common at the time for Brethren in Christ boys to spend their early grades at a school near their village and, if they could afford it, transfer to Sikalongo Boys School for Standard I (grade 3). If they did well, they could remain up to Standard VI (grade 8) at Sikalongo. A 1941 photograph shows Elijah Mudenda as a Standard IV student, leading to the conclusion that he probably began at Sikalongo about 1937.[117]

That he was an outstanding student is clear from the results of a Standard VI review examination he and 13 other students took in 1943.[118] The extremely difficult examination appears in the July issue of Evangelical Visitor, and Mudenda, the youngest of the group to take it, scored 100 percent. The next highest score was 80 percent. Some of this group of 14 can be seen in a 1941 photograph from Anna Eyster's album.



Anna Eyster's Standard IV class, 1941. Elijah Mudenda is in the middle of the front row. Courtesy of Anna Eyster Photography Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.

Names on historic photographs always lead me to ask, "Who were these people? Are their relatives still alive?" More work could be done to identify the other young men in this photograph, but we know a few things about

---

[117] Elijah Mudenda's testimony can be found in Elijah Mudenda, "The Work I Wish to Do When I Leave School," *Evangelical Visitor*, August 25, 1941, 10.

[118] Anna M. Esyter, *Evangelical Visitor*, January 4, 1943, 15.

some of them. For example, David (Muleya) was the son of Peter Munsaka, one of Sikalongo's loyal workers for over five decades. David eventually taught in the Sikalongo Boys School and elsewhere in the Brethren in Christ system. Amon (Mweetwa) became a staunch member in the denomination and an important educator and leader within the church. Frank (Muleya) became a teacher in the Brethren in Christ school system.

After leaving Sikalongo Boys School, Mudenda continued his education at Munali Secondary School, Makerere University in Uganda, and the University of Fort Hare in South Africa. He later attended the University of Cambridge. Although not as visible in the independence movement as some others, Elijah Mudenda was chosen as one of the first ministers in Kenneth Kaunda's cabinet immediately after independence.

Elijah Mudenda. Photo from souvenir program for Zambian independence, October 24, 1964.

Mudenda continued to serve in the Zambian government as Minister of Finance, Foreign Minister, and eventually as Prime Minister for two years (from 1975-1977). Throughout his life, he remained a staunch member of the Brethren in Christ Church and was a regular attender at the Chilenje Church in Lusaka.

Community relationships

Despite the initial disapproval of Chief Singani to establish a mission at Sikalongo, the missionaries attempted to maintain positive relationships with each of the chiefs and headmen. Interactions with local chiefs and headman were a necessary part of ministry work. However, missionaries clearly did not fully understand the inner workings of local customs or the nature of traditional power alignments. Many of their comments betray a dismissive attitude that would have kept them from learning the nuances of local governance. Nevertheless, Brethren in Christ missionaries tried to remain on good terms with traditional leaders.

Descriptions of contact between the missionaries and Chief Singani appeared periodically in the *Evangelical Visitor.* In 1935, Singani asked Cecil Cullen to come visit because he was seriously ill, suspecting he had been poisoned by an enemy.[119] The 1938 meeting between the Manns and Chief Singani signaled the missionaries' desire to maintain good relationships. When that same chief died in 1942, Sikalongo missionaries went to his village to pay their respects. Their account of the wailing demonstrates the cultural misunderstandings Brethren in Christ missionaries had regarding local traditions.

Sikalongo missionaries encountered mourners covered with white clay, wailing and shouting, and exotic music when they arrived at Singani's village. The *Evangelical Visitor* account describes a group of 70 who came from a village south of Sikalongo:

> These people were from Siabunkulu's district or from down in the hills. As they approached they looked very barbarous as many of the men were carrying a spear or two and a shield; their half-naked bodies were smeared with white clay and ashes, while others wore a special headgear. The women in appearance were quite natural to that of wailing. The group came dancing into the village, keeping in step to the beating of their several drums and the blowing of their whistles, and above all of this was their gruesome wailing—truly a picture of raw heathendom.
>
> These people carried on with their performances at intervals during the rest of the day.
>
> All of the time the little clay pot was carried back and forth among the mourners; the smoke descending and hovering over the people—to keep peace among them.[120]

Accounts like this highlight the gap between Brethren in Christ missionary understandings and local culture. The "several drums and the blowing of their whistles" mentioned in the account are recognizable musical features of traditional Tonga funeral practices. The drums pictured in the photograph

---

[119] "Superstition in Africa," *Evangelical Visitor,* June 24, 1935, 11-12.

[120] A Little Clay Pot," *Evangelical Visitor,* December 21, 1942, 11.

[128] Helen Dohner, interview, April 12, 1994. Plenty of fiction and non-fiction writers touch on this fascinating subject, e.g., Weller, *Yesterday's People*, 123-27 and Jesse Stuart, *Beyond Dark Hills*, 83.

below are immediately identifiable as Budima drums and the "whistles" were unquestionably Nyele. Both musical instruments were commonly used at Tonga funerals. Ethnomusicological analyses have shown that the musical structures involved were extremely complex, both rhythmically and melodically.[121]

In spite of insufficient cultural awareness, the missionaries did what they could to create bridges between themselves and traditional authorities like Chief Singani. One expression of this desire was the offer of Sikalongo Mission carpenters to craft the coffin for Chief Singani's burial as a gesture of good will.

Funeral for Chief Singani. Photo courtesy of Roy and Esther Mann Photograph Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.

Enhancing Sikalongo medical ministry

Medical work was part of Sikalongo ministry from the beginning. Taylors, Steckleys, Cullens, Halls, and Anna Eyster all did what they could to

---

[121] For an introduction to traditional Zambian music, see Arthur Morris Jones, *African Music in Northern Rhodesia and Some Other Places*, Rev. ed., *The Occasional Papers of the Rhodes-Livingstone Museum*; *New Ser., No. 4; Variation: Rhodes-Livingstone Museum; Occasional Papers; New Ser., No. 4* ([Livingstone], Northern Rhodesia: Rhodes-Livingstone Museum, 1958); Hugh Tracey, *Rhodesia (Northern) Sound Recording; Valley Tonga* (Roodepoort, Transvaal, Union of South Africa: International Library of African Music, 1957), 1 sound disc (34 min.); and Hugh Tracey, *Rhodesia (Southern) Sound Recording; Tonga* (Roodepoort, Transvaal, Union of South Africa: International Library of African Music, 1958), 1 sound disc (42 min.).

administer basic medical assistance to people in the Sikalongo area. Both Adda and Myron Taylor apparently had some knowledge of medicine, Cecil Cullen is known to have pulled teeth, and a mid-1930s account mentions a "medical assistant" name Sinzala.[122] Moreover, prior to coming to Africa, Anna Eyster had received "practical nurses training," which she used throughout her time at Sikalongo.

Despite earlier efforts, medical work gained prominence during the Eyster-Mann years. Esther Mann came to Sikalongo with more medical training than previous missionaries; consequently, she was able to upgrade the quality and quantity of medical treatments. Roy Mann's regular references to medical treatments in the annual *Handbook of Missions* reflect an increased emphasis on clinical work during the Eyster-Mann years. Roy even lent a hand from time to time. One photograph from the Mann Family Collection pictures him pulling the decayed tooth of a suffering patient.

Roy Mann pulling a tooth. Photo courtesy of Anna Eyster Photograph Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.

The 1940 *Handbook of Missions* highlighted the increase in medical services at Sikalongo:

> Quite a few people have come for medical treatment at the dispensary during the year. Many came who had very bad sores and tropical ulcers. A few remained for treatment; others came daily. Most of the people left with healed legs. Will you help pray for these patients as many of them are heathen and do not come to church[123]

Other reports noted that many Valley Tonga had moved up to the Plateau because of famine and some of them came to the mission for treatment.

---

[129] Anna M. Eyster, "News from Sikalongo, June-July," *Evangelical Visitor*, September 30, 1935, 12-13.
[123] Mann, *I Remember: My Life of Missionary Service*, 46-47.

Esther Mann treating a patient. Photo courtesy of Roy and Esther Mann Photograph Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.

Esther Mann's increased attention to the medical needs of the community set the stage for even more improvement during the Eyster-Hershey years.

Capital improvements: The mission dam and the primary school

Cecil Cullen had repaired or replaced most of the primary buildings at the Mission before the Mann's arrival. Roy Mann observed the shortage of adequate water and the difficulty of bringing it to the mission, and he did several things to solve the problem. First, he modified an existing ox cart to hold three 50-gallon drums of water in order to increase the amount of water brought in a single trip. More importantly, in 1943 he decided to build the Sikalongo Mission Dam. In his memoirs, he stated:

> We had a problem of water at the mission station during the dry season. We had to go quite a long distance in order to get water. So in consultation with the government man in the district we decided to build a dam on the sprout (small river) just as we leave Sikalongo towards Choma.[124]

The project faced several setbacks. The year after completing the dam, the rains were so strong that they washed part of the dam away. Roy made the

[124] Mann, *I Remember: My Life of Missionary Service*, 46-47.

necessary modifications and refined the design over the next several years. By 1945, the dam was stable and the road across it was wide enough to accommodate vehicles.

A metal scoop has sat in front of the main house at Sikalongo for years. I thought it might have been used to build the dam. Roy Mann's memoir confirmed my suspicions about the scoop, stating that is was "a cubic yard of the ground and you hold the scoop, lift it up to dig into the ground and then when it gets filled you lay it down and it drags on the ground and then you just dump it."[125] Apparently, Roy hitched two oxen to the scoop and used it to excavate the dam. Mann also added a pump near the dam with pipes leading up the hill to the Mission.[126]

The Manns made other capital improvements during their tenure. Executive Board minutes from 1943 stated that "permission be given to build a school house for day pupils near the gravel pits along the road to Choma."[127]

Sikalongo Mission lorry. Photo courtesy of Roy and Esther Mann Photograph Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.

---

[125] Ibid.

[126] African Mission Executive Board Minutes, December 26, 1941.

[127] African Mission Executive Board Minutes, August 2, 1943.

The location described is no doubt where Sikalongo Primary School is currently situated north of the mission station. They also purchased a lorry to ease the transport challenges posed by the cattle quarantine.[128]

Concluding observations

Sikalongo Mission benefitted from the contributions of Esther and Roy Mann, but it is also easy to understand their feeling that these were "hard years." Nearly every annual report included some note of struggle. Their 1942 report began:

> In looking back over another year's service, "we thank God and take courage," and rejoice in what has been accomplished for His glory. We have experienced times of joy and sorrow, as well as times of testing, but He himself has been our "refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."[129]

A variety of factors contributed to the times of sorrow: Manns struggled to keep Sinazeze going; frequent staff changes undermined stability; dismissals of several key workers discouraged them; and the relative isolation of the location and the cultural aspects of the Sikalongo Tonga bothered them. At the same time, they and Anna Eyster worked to upgrade the quality of the schools, they strengthened and enhanced many of the existing outstations, they accomplished some capital improvements (notably the dam), and they laid the groundwork for expanded medical work.

When they left in August 1945, they had succeeded in maintaining and consolidating the previous gains. Esther and Roy Mann returned to the United States for their long overdue furlough. They came back to Africa in 1947 and served another term in Southern Rhodesia at Mtshabezi, Wanezi and Matopo. And, although Roy and Esther "retired" for a decade in 1955, the Manns returned to Africa for yet another 10-year stint in 1966.[130]

---

[128] Ibid., Item 5a.

[129] Roy H. Mann, "Sikalongo Mission Annual Report: 1942," *Handbook of Missions*, 1943, 26-27.

[130] Mann, *I Remember: My Life of Missionary Service*.

Consolidating an Established Ministry: Anna Eyster and the Hersheys (1945-47)

Anna Eyster and the Hersheys (1945-47): The 1945 context

Esther and Roy Mann finally got their furlough in 1945. Roy had been on the field for 13 years without a furlough and both he and Esther were eager for a break. J. Elwood and Dorothy Hershey came as a replacement for the Manns in May. They came to Sikalongo as experienced missionaries, having served for seven years in Southern Rhodesia.[131] The Hersheys found a well-developed mission station with a mature school for boys, a lower primary school, a healthy mission church, and nearly 10 outstation schools. After a brief three-month furlough, Anna Eyster returned to Sikalongo and remained the rest of Hershey's short, two-year stay. Elwood Hershey reflected on the state of affairs upon their arrival:

> The conditions among the Batonga tribe are different than among the Amandebele, partly from tribal customs and partly because the work has not had the advantages of the same number of years. However, we found the work well organized and the foundations well-laid. We have thus endeavoured to continue building in the same steady manner by preaching, teaching, admonishing and guiding according to the precepts of our Lord.[132]

Hershey's comment that "conditions … are different" infers his recognition of what was perceived as the cultural backwardness of the people at Sikalongo. He reiterated a similar sentiment in his next annual report:

> The old men still carry their spears when even on a short journey to the Mission. Daily is seen the tribal customs of loin dress, ivory bracelets, copper leg bangles and anklets, copper ear rings and ornaments, hair dyed in red ochre, crowns of white shells braided into the hair or other hair ringlets, and sometimes a nose stick about six inches in length through the tip of the nose. These are in contrast to the more civilized and Christian modes of dress. Recently more than one hundred men brought their Government Identification

---

[131] Ibid.

[132] J. Elwood Hershey, "Sikalongo Mission Annual Report, 1945," *Handbook of Missions*, 1946, 103-105.

> Certificates and taxes asking to have them forwarded to the District Commissoner, for they could neither read nor write.[133]

Nevertheless, Hershey's statement that they found a well-organized mission station accurately reflected the circumstances at the time.

Biographical sketches of Dorothy Lexow Hershey and J. Elwood Hershey

Dorothy and J. Elwood Hershey came to Sikalongo with particularly useful skills. Both had strong academic backgrounds. Elwood studied at Messiah College, Taylor College, and Eastern Baptist Seminary. Dorothy studied at Beulah College, Messiah College, and Deaconess Hospital in Bethel, Kansas, where she received her nursing credentials. The Hersheys married in Southern Rhodesia in 1938, and served at Matopo and Mtshabezi before their transfer to Sikalongo in 1945.[134]

Elwood and Dorothy Hershey with Lenora and Alvera, circa 1945. Photo courtesy of Anna Eyster Photograph Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.

---

[133] J. Elwood Hershey, "Sikalongo Mission Annual Report, 1946," *Handbook of Missions*, 1947, 47-49.
[134] Alvera Hershey Stern, interview with the author, January 28, 2017.

In his first report after their arrival in May 1945, Elwood Hershey specifically mentioned the faithful service of African staff:

> We wish to record that the faithfulness of our three African leaders has been greatly appreciated, namely, Deacon Peter Munsaka, Head-teacher Sampson Mwanga [sic], and Evangelist Samuel Munda. We trust their service shall ever be steadfast in the building of the African Church.[135]

In his outstation report, he noted that nine schools and two "preaching places" existed. The two new places had apparently been opened by Tonga believers who had done teacher training in Southern Rhodesia. Additionally, Hershey acknowledged Roy Mann's capital improvements, stating that "Four new buildings were erected and one extensively repaired with a complete new roof."[136]

Although their stay at Sikalongo was not even two years, Dorothy and Elwood Hershey were more than mere caretakers. They continued to consolidate and strengthen existing work, and they expanded the work by adding outstations and upgrading the clinic. As was true for the Manns, they were assisted by the diligent efforts of Anna Eyster, Peter Munsaka, and Arthur Kutywayo, along with other African workers.

The mission church and schools

Sikalongo Mission continued as before. In his reports, Hershey noted that things continued to move ahead with two evangelistic campaigns each year, baptisms, Sunday schools, and communion services. The report for 1946 noted that Peter Munsaka was reappointed as the deacon for the Sikalongo Church.[137]

Sikalongo Mission schools were on solid ground during the Hershey tenure with six African teachers and two European teachers. Enrollment for 1945 was 106 students and 120 students in 1946. Eyster and Elwood Hershey worked together to teach the students. Hershey wrote:

---

[135] Hershey, "Sikalongo Mission Annual Report, 1945," *Handbook of Missions*, 1946.
[136] Ibid.
[137] Hershey, "Sikalongo Mission Annual Report, 1946," *Handbook of Missions*, 1947.

> Two Industrial teachers and one Instructor, assisted in the Carpentry, Building and Agriculture divisions. Twelve in Standard Six and thirty-four in Standard Four, sat for the Government Examinations with very satisfactory results and passes. The Government African Education Officer, for the Southern Province, called all Missions to one center, where we worked together for three days correcting and grading the examination papers and computing the results. A meeting followed for general discussion on African Education and for announcements on the future Educational Policy of the colony.[138]

The outschools

Roy Mann had visited all the outschools before their departure in July 1945. Elwood Hershey revisited the same schools after Manns left. Two new schools were added during 1946, bringing the total to 13 outschools. African teachers taught at all the outschools and also served as the local church pastor. Hershey continued regular visits to the outschools and noted the importance of maintaining contact in order to encourage steady improvement:

> The enrollments and service attendances are not large in numbers as the full light has not yet dawned upon these semi-backward people. And yet each center has a nucleus and is building slowly but effectively a group of witnessing Christians… They need doctrinal teaching, devotional teaching, and guidance in fervent Christian experience. They need not only a comparison of civilization and uncivilization in general terms but a keen consciousness and conscientious discrimination in Christian conduct and complete devotion to Christ and the Church in comparison to various shades of abstinence from lifelong customs and practices.[139]

A noticeable paternalistic tone emerges from this report, which was common at the time. Although Africans were steadily being groomed for leadership, the American missionary was ultimately in charge during this period in Northern Rhodesia.

---

[138] Ibid., p. 48.
[139] Ibid.

The clinic

The Hersheys' most enduring contribution to the mission was their medical work. As I indicated above, Sikalongo medical services saw a steady increase from the time of the Taylors to Dorothy Hershey's coming. Anna Eyster and the Cullens administered medicines and treated what they could, including pulling teeth. But they did not have the level of specialized training that Esther Mann did. Consequently, Esther elevated Sikalongo's clinical services during their tenure.

Dorothy Hershey brought yet another degree of experience and energy to situation. She had played a significant role at Mtshabezi Hospital in Southern Rhodesia before they came to Sikalongo, and she brought that expertise to bear at Sikalongo. Elwood managed the renovation of several buildings and supervised a building program to add outpatient wards. Dorothy wrote about the need and the opportunity in 1946:

> There is great opportunity to sow the Seed in the medical phase of the work. This past year over 4000 cases have been contacted. One class of people who journey four to seven days on foot come here to receive medical aid. They come from the Zambezi Valley. Before their treatments they are given a short service. Frequently there are those who request prayer. God alone knows the blessings received from these services.
>
> Among the Zambezi people there is no medical work. Thus they come here traveling many weary miles with their sores and sick bodies. The government has been greatly impressed by their people coming here for help. And they are encouraging the work for them to go forth.[140]

In order to improve the medical services, more and better buildings were necessary. Soon after their arrival, the Hersheys submitted a plan for a new building.[141] Foundations for a clinic were dug and the building began in 1946. Workers renovated and repaired the old dispensary to make it more functional. Dorothy Hershey concluded: "The medical work is growing considerably and the day is here for a full time nurse to take charge of this field too."[142]

---

[140] Mrs. J. Elwood Hershey, "Medical Work at Sikalongo Mission," *Evangelical Visitor,* December 16, 1946, 9.

[141] African Mission Minutes, April 3, 1945.

[142] Hershey, "Medical Work at Sikalongo Mission," *Evangelical Visitor*, December 16, 1946.

Sikalongo Mission dispensary. Photo from There is No Difference: God Works in Africa and India.

Jonathan Muleya: From humble beginnings to skilled Brethren in Christ educator

Jonathan Muleya was one of Sikalongo Boys School's outstanding graduates and an important addition to the Sikalongo staff during the period of consolidation. Muleya was born and grew up not far from Sikalongo Mission in the village of Mudukula. He, along with some of his siblings, attended Sikalongo Boys School. In 1939, his testimony appeared in the *Evangelical Visitor* along with that of Sampson Mudenda, an indication that these two students were considered promising both academically and spiritually. It is also noteworthy that these would have been written soon after the Sikalongo boys strike of 1938. Mudenda was a "Macha boy" and Muleya was a "Sikalongo boy," and one wonders to what degree they were entangled in the conflict between the two regions.

After graduating from Sikalongo Boys School, Muleya studied at Matopo Teacher Training School, finishing in 1945.[143] He taught eight years (1946-54) at Sikalongo Boys School following his teacher training.[144] He attended Chalimbana Teachers College in Lusaka, gaining the highest teaching

---

[143] Esther Mann, Evangelical Visitor, March 12, 1945, 13.

[144] Jonathan Muleya, "International Students among Us Make a Contribution to World Missions Outlook," *Evangelical Visitor Supplement*, June 18, 1956, 2.

credentials available in Northern Rhodesia at the time. Muleya joined the Sikalongo teaching staff in 1946, and by 1954, he had been appointed Headmaster.[145]

In 1956, the Brethren in Christ sent Muleya and his family to Messiah College to study. Regarding his Messiah studies, he said:

> I came to Messiah to get a balanced education in order that I may academically and religiously be fitted to serve my people efficiently. I hold the idea that academic education without Christian education is detrimental to the individual or literally groundless. My desires are to become an effective teacher and to become a true follower of Jesus Christ and be able to share with my people the healing Word of Jesus Christ the crucified, who set my people free from their treacherous tribal customs. This is the same Christ I want to instill into their spiritual minds. "Our prayer to God is, 'Use us in the way you wish.[146]

Muleya remained at Messiah for three years. By all accounts, he did well and the family endeared themselves to the North American church.

Messiah College international students, 1956. Jonathan Muleya is on the left in the second row. Photo from Evangelical Visitor, 1956.

---

[145] David E. Climenhaga, "'Feed My Lambs," *Evangelical Visitor,* February 15, 1954, 8.
[146] Muleya, "International Students, " *Evangelical Visitor Supplement*, June 18, 1956.

After his return to Northern Rhodesia in 1959, Muleya and Fannie Longenecker were posted at the newly-established David Livingstone Teacher Training College, as it was then known.[147] Ordained in 1960, he became the lead pastor of the Maramba Brethren in Christ church in Livingstone, a recently-planted effort of the denomination. Tragically, Muleya's wife, Addie, died unexpectedly in May 1963. Jonathan was heart-stricken and asked to be transferred to Choma in order to be closer to friends and relatives who could help him with his children. The church agreed and asked him to serve as the headmaster for Choma Secondary School, a coeducational boarding high school, a cooperative effort between the Brethren in Christ and the Pilgrim Wesleyan Church in Zambia.[148] Muleya's leadership helped to put Choma Secondary School on solid ground, establishing a high standard of academic excellence that remains to the present.

Concluding observations

The Hersheys contributed to the consolidation of Sikalongo Mission by maintaining the status quo, adding two outschools, and elevating the place of medical services. A team of skilled and loyal people surrounded and supported them: Sampson Mwaanga, Peter Musaka, Arthur Kutywayo, Jonathan Muleya, Steleki Mudenda, and others. David and Dorcas Climenhaga arrived at Sikalongo Mission in January of 1947, releasing the Hersheys for their furlough. They left Africa in March.

Throughout both the Mann and Hershey years, Anna Eyster's constant presence provided a needed stability at Sikalongo. She, along with Peter Munsaka and Arthur Kutywayo, knew the story of Sikalongo Mission from the time of Taylor's death to the middle of the twentieth century. They knew the people, their problems, and their potential. Eyster poured the best years of her life into the work at Sikalongo and its students had become her children. Her eventual departure must have been difficult indeed.

With the end of World War II, many things changed. Travel became easier, which led to a bevy of new recruits for the mission field. Economic conditions improved, easing the flow of goods, thus making commodities more available

---

[147] "Muleya Family Returning to Homeland," *Evangelical Visitor*, September 7, 1959, 8.
[148] "BICWM News," *Evangelical Visitor*, September 16, 1963, 9.

and bringing costs down. International relations improved, resulting in fewer distractions for the British and making communication easier. At the same time, many scholars have also noted that one of the unintended results of World War II was the spawning of independence movements around the globe. People of all ethnic backgrounds fought to preserve freedom, and returning black soldiers believed they should enjoy the same privileges as their white comrades. From this point onward, it became increasingly difficult to presume white superiority and untenable to maintain white administrative control. The handover from Hersheys to Climenhagas marked the beginning of the end for the colonial era.

Called to be a Homemaker

By Harriet Bohen Bert*

Foreword

My mother, Harriet Catherine Bohen Bert, would be amazed and probably a little embarrassed to find her memories being read by such a large audience! I seriously believe that she wrote this record for herself more than for others. It was her way of processing her life. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, she and my dad seemed to go through a period of "putting things in order." This lead to things like Dad's copious inventory of the items they had acquired on their later-in-life travels, the self-publishing of his own life story, *Walk Memory's Lane*, and this, Mom's modest journal which was tucked away in a green three-ring binder. Unlike the little volume, which we in the family referred to as "Dad's Book" and which he happily passed out to anyone who showed the slightest interest, I don't remember Mom ever suggesting that anyone beyond the immediate family read her three-ring binder.

I had not read this journal in its entirety for probably 20 years. But in Mom's last years at Messiah Village when topics of conversation became increasingly difficult, I would sometimes pick up the green binder and read a paragraph from her childhood pages just to spark her memory. We'd laugh about how much she hated canning fruit and vegetables, and how she still hated the very thought of oatmeal—she had eaten enough oatmeal in her childhood to last a lifetime! And we'd talk about the realities of life during the depression of the 1930s and World War II.

I am thankful to have been given this reason to re-read Mom's humble record and to realize anew how the experiences in her early life affected

---

* Harriet Bohen Bert lived at Messiah Lifeways at Messiah Village, Mechanicsburg (PA) for 33 years. She was a member of the Grantham Brethren in Christ Church. She died in December 2015, at the age of 98, having been pre-deceased by her husband Eldon, and all her siblings.

the home she created. We are pleased to share Mom's journal with this readership, and I'm trusting she'll eventually forgive me for being a part of it! She usually did.

Art Bert
Boiling Springs, Pennsylvania
February 2017

Kansas beginnings

My life began October 21, 1917 in the tiny town of Hope, in Dickinson County, Kansas. I was the fourth child of Walter E. and Martha M. (Book) Bohen, who were both 29 years old at the time of my arrival. I had two older sisters, Gladys and Elizabeth, and a brother, Evan, just a year and a half older than me. Later two more sisters arrived, Naomi and Mary. I understand that my father considered naming me "Frieda." How glad I am that he didn't! As a child, I remember two kindly nicknames, Topsy and Bright Eyes. My Aunt Mary started calling me Topsy during a game we were playing. I liked it because it was a gleeful name and Aunt Mary chose it especially for me. Later, at about age 7, I remember my Aunt Jane calling me Bright Eyes because she liked the way my black eyes sparkled. This name was also most welcome because it was a term of endearment. As I grew up, I forbade anyone from abbreviating my given name of Harriet to anything shorter—no nicknames!

Memories of my early years in Kansas are dim. My father was a carpenter, but we often rented a house on a farm in the country which was worked by someone other than my father. My father never owned a house until four of his children were married and in homes of their own. Most of our houses were very old and in need of a lot of repairs but my parents made homes of them. I remember best the few years we lived in the community of Moonlight, Kansas. As I recall, our Moonlight house was a white, wooden two-story with a big yard and huge trees full of singing summer locusts. Moonlight was home to a one-room schoolhouse, and the Bethel Brethren in Christ church was nearby, but I don't recall any stores.

Though store-bought toys were scarce, we children had many happy times. We were resourceful in our play and often found secret hiding spots under lilac bushes or around our various houses and barns. When we lived in Kansas, our neighbors were farmers with a house full of boys and we had

lots of good country fun between our two homes. When their bull would let out a tremendous roar from the pasture, I remember streaking for the safety of home as fast as my feet would go!

The Bohen family and friends in Kansas, circa 1921. Harriet is on the right beside her oldest sister, Gladys.

Our barn had a huge track-mounted door that could be pushed back and forth. We were often warned not to play with it, for it could easily jump the track and fall. One afternoon the neighbor boys visited and, for want of anything better to do, were moving the door to see how fast it would open and close. I was standing nearby with my baby sister, Mary, who was about two years old, enjoying all the fun. Suddenly the door came off the track. I must have run out of its way, but Mary was caught. The heavy door fell on her and she was thrown backward into an old tire. When the door was removed, we found that her leg was broken and she had a deep indentation above her eye where the door had knocked her head into the center of the tire. We feared she would not live. I was dispatched to the small school to get my two older sisters. We called the doctor and waited eagerly for his verdict. Mary recovered fully, but a mark remained above her eye. Looking back, the center hole of the tire had saved her from being crushed. Of course, my parents asked how it all happened and we told them, but with an added dimension from me. Although I was only about five years old, I

fully remember telling them that I had instructed the others "not to play with the door." In reality I hadn't opened my mouth at all—it was such fun to watch! This deceit bothered me for many, many years; I knew I had lied. I eventually told my parents the truth, and only then did I feel relieved of my guilt.

Our family never had much money, but we had good times as children. Christmas was certainly not as we know it now. My mother made some small things for us, so we did have some gifts. One year I could carry all my gifts in my two hands, which I did. And to my horror, I dropped the small porcelain doll which was my pride and joy. Of course, it broke, as did my heart. It could not be fixed and was not replaced.

Memories of my family

Before I move too far into my life's story, I should share some more descriptions of my family members. My father was generally kind and worked hard at any job he had. He loved to read and spent a lot of time in Bible study. In mid-life, after we moved to California, he felt an urge to preach and be involved in church work. Today we'd call it "church planting." He was involved in the beginnings of the church at Chino. For a few years he held a Sunday school on Sunday afternoons in North Pomona, about six miles from our home in Upland. Then for a couple of years he was involved in a small church being formed in Norco, about 30 miles southeast of our home.

Papa was a deep thinker and very conscientious but he also had a broad mind. In my pre-marriage years he gave me sound advice which would have run counter to church directives but I've always appreciated that. He laughed easily and was a real romantic at heart although I'm sure the hardships of raising a large family during depression years took their toll. Though he loved his children, he was very stern and sometimes his discipline was very harsh. In the mid 1930s he became a contractor/builder and formed a partnership with Alvin Gish, a fellow Brethren in Christ builder. He built the only home he ever owned during this period in his life. Looking back, I wish I had spent more time with him as I'm certain I carry some of his traits.

As I think of my mother, I remember a woman whose days were filled

with work and not much to relieve the grind. My mother was often unwell, maybe due to the arrival of six children spaced just one to two years apart. During one of her periods of illness, Naomi and I were sent to stay with an "Uncle Ben and Aunt Annie." I learned later that their surname was Bert. I have been told that Mother had contracted tuberculosis and was in isolation at home. She didn't expect to get well, as she later told me, but our church believed in divine healing. The elders of the church came, prayed for, and anointed Mother, and she recovered. She says she had no faith for healing but others believed in God's healing for her. The tuberculosis never returned and none of her children ever had any symptoms of the dread disease.

Mother was a wonderful seamstress. She had to be, with five girls to keep in dresses and underclothes, all of which she made, and a son and husband whose shirts, underthings, and nightshirts were also handmade. She always prepared good and satisfying meals although she rarely had a big food budget. She was a wonderful pie baker and our family often ate one or more pies at a meal. Cakes were mixed by hand for she had no mixer and no ready-mixes. I think she managed the money for the family, at least to a large degree. She was gifted at stretching a dollar, and she could also stretch a pound of hamburger or a can of ten-cent salmon to feed our family well. Large boxes of Quaker Oats were about 15 cents and provided our daily breakfasts. A loaf of bread was about 15 cents and a bunch of carrots about three cents. While food in those days didn't cost much, Mother guarded every penny. On the other hand, my father was an easy touch. If I wanted a nickel I went to Papa because I knew Mother would certainly say no!

Mother's meals were not always elegant, but she filled our hungry stomachs. I recall Mother's great black skillet, which she often filled with thin-sliced potatoes and onions. I loved that simple fried vegetable dish and still do today. She did her best to delegate chores to each of us as we grew old enough to do them. Weekly dusting and cleaning was almost always done. We didn't have a vacuum cleaner, but dust mops and brooms and dust cloths were used. With a house full of children, I'm sure there was a lot of clutter, but I never remember that Mother was slovenly about any of her housekeeping.

I think Mother really never had much of a childhood of her own. Her own mother died when she was in her early teens. She had three younger

brothers and her baby sister was about a year old. She kept house for her father and her siblings until she was married at age 22. In California, she cleaned for other people, and then she took in washing and ironing to augment our family budget. Every morning she faithfully packed seven lunches. I can imagine she enjoyed her own lunch alone, though on occasion if I happened to come home at noon, I would find her on a stool by the kitchen counter eating some leftover cold oatmeal from breakfast. Not appealing to me but she said she liked it. To this day, I can still almost taste the goodness of one of her homemade sandwich fillings—grated cheese mixed with salad dressing.

Much more could be said about both my parents. They quarreled, yes, but never once was I fearful that they would not eventually resolve their differences. We always had family worship around the table after breakfast. This involved reading a portion of the Bible and prayer, which we did on our knees. It is a practice Eldon and I continued in our home. I'm convinced that if more families would follow that practice there would be fewer family breakups and divorces.

My parents moved to Pennsylvania in the mid 1940s. Papa died at the age of 63 of a heart attack. Mother lived to be 93 when she just seemed to fade away. They were good parents who did their best to teach all of their children to always live clean, productive lives, accept Jesus as Savior, and always live by Christian principles.

My oldest sister Gladys was six years older than me. Being an older sister to five younger siblings probably contributed to what I observed as seriousness and a great sense of responsibility. In my teen years, and for much of my life, I dubbed her "the angel child." I never meant it to be an unkind nickname but she never seemed to do anything wrong. She was very sensitive, always aware of the needs of others. She was the only one of us children who finished college. She taught English and Latin for a couple of years at Beulah College and later served with her husband as a missionary to Africa. I don't remember interacting too much with Gladys, especially in my younger years.

Sister Elizabeth was also older than me but very unlike Gladys. Elizabeth was not passive, and she possessed a strong mind, one which was not easily changed. She rebelled at some of the things expected of her. While Gladys was more of a scholar, Elizabeth excelled in the more practical aspects of

The Walter and Martha Bohen family. Back row from left to right: Harriet, Elizabeth, Mary, Gladys, Naomi. Evan is seated next to his father in the front row.

learning, like math and bookkeeping. She became an excellent seamstress and a marvelous cook. She was a perfectionist. After her early days of high school she settled down and became a dedicated individual. She was a real friend to me and taught me many things.

Evan was my only brother, just a year older than me, and I always felt a special affinity for him. I felt hurt when he was punished, and that seemed to be too often. I was terrified that he'd run away from home. When we were very young he and I got into some devilment which resulted in the worst whipping I can remember ever receiving from my mother. We deserved it. He supported me in some of the disappointing things in my teen years and I know he was concerned about my spiritual welfare. He graduated from Beulah Academy, as did all of the Bohen children. He became a good carpenter, and eventually an excellent building inspector for big contractors. I could not have chosen a better brother.

Naomi was immediately younger than me. I remember her as strong and stubborn. Like Elizabeth, she had a mind of her own and clung to her own opinion against all odds. I vividly remember one time that she refused to eat something Mother had for dinner. Papa was determined she would eat it and Naomi was determined she would not. A battle ensued and while I don't remember exactly who won, I'm inclined to think Naomi did. She

hated worms, and Evan loved to taunt her with them. She could get her way with making Mary or me do or not do something. She later told me her secret: "I would get hold of both thumbs and hang on until you agreed to my way." If you ever have tried to function with both thumbs held captive, you can imagine our helplessness. Naomi had beautiful teeth and a lovely complexion, and in her early teens she spent, what seemed to me, too much time in the bathroom grooming herself. She has made a wonderful farmer's wife and was a refreshing companion to me.

My baby sister Mary is three years my junior. Early memories of her are vague, although I've already recounted the barn door incident. Mary, Naomi, and I frequently shared one bed in our full household. When she was quite small, Mary had dark curls and the few pictures I have show a cute little girl. In her teen years she developed many talents. She took piano lessons which she paid for herself. For a while, she worked in a photography shop and she was the only one of us girls who didn't work as a house maid to earn money. Mary had a ready sense of humor but was deeply spiritual as well. She was the only one of the Bohen children who moved with our parents from California to Pennsylvania.

West to California

In fall 1923, the Bohen family left Kansas for California. My father's desire was to move nearer one of our church schools, either in Pennsylvania or California. My mother needed a better climate for her health so we chose the warmth of California. Mother was not well enough to travel by car so she and the youngest three girls went by train. I remember getting raisins as treats for the journey and coloring books to occupy our time. An older couple joined us to help Mother care for us girls. My father, with Gladys, 11, Elizabeth 9, and Evan 7, drove a Model T Ford from Kansas to Colorado for a short visit with my uncle, and then through the deserts to Upland, California. Their experiences, as I have been told, could be another chapter, but since I was not part of the group, I will leave that to their telling.

The car travelers left Kansas before the train travelers, but we all arrived around the same time. The car travelers arrived at the Upland Brethren in Christ Church on Thanksgiving Day. From what I have been told, the children, especially Evan, were sadly in need of a mother's care. Of

course, we had no reservations at any place to stay so the C.C. Burkholder household took us in. Brother Burkholder was a bi-vocational carpenter/builder, pastor, and leader of the church, and his family was regarded for their hospitality.

We eventually moved to a house in an orange grove on San Antonio Avenue and 7th Street in Upland. My memories of this house are gone, but I do remember our next home on 11th Street in Upland. It was also in an orange grove. I recall strolling through the grove with my father. He would find a crate full of oranges and then peel one for me to enjoy. I can still see how carefully he peeled that orange without breaking any of the inner membrane. I think of this almost every time I peel an orange. At one time we had goats which we milked for our use. Goat milk was very healthy for all of us, but I haven't had it since those days. It was from this house that I went to the Fannie D. Noe Elementary School in Upland to begin my education.

Since her illness in Kansas my mother was not strong. When another type of illness put her to bed, we "three little girls" (as I and my sisters Naomi and Mary were called) were sent to live with kind people of the church. Naomi went to the Roy Franklin home, neighbors on 11th Street near our home, and Mary and I went to the Swartzendruber home on 21st Street. These stays were not too long, as I remember.

The six Bohen children on an outing in California. Back row, left to right: Elizabeth, Gladys, Evan; front row, left to right: Mary, Harriet, Naomi.

Around the time I was in second grade, we moved into a house in town, on 2nd Avenue just a few blocks north of the main part of Upland. I remember being so excited to be able to play on concrete sidewalks instead of dirt yards. Summer evenings were wonderful when we could return outside after supper to play until dark. It became

a game to see who could first say, "Street lights are on!" Seems silly now, but it was part of our fun. In a couple of years we moved again to a slightly larger house on 3rd Avenue, still near downtown Upland. This house was directly across the street from our church, which also was the home of Beulah College, our church school. We had a sense of permanency here for a number of years., and the church school was woven into the warp and woof of my life. We interacted in many ways with the students, even joining sometimes in their physical education classes. My father surely must have felt that his early resolve to move his family near our church school was justified. Over time, all of these houses we lived in were razed in the interest of development.

During the latter years of the 1920s and the early ones of the 1930s, our family, like so many others, felt the Great Depression keenly. My father was often without work. To feed, clothe, and pay rent to care for a family of eight took its toll in worry and hardship for both my parents. During these very lean years, my father had to borrow money from kind church folk to meet the bare necessities of his family. Some years later I remember my relief when the last payment of those debts was made. Also during the Depression my mother began to do cleaning for other families. Sometimes I would go with her to be an extra set of hands.

Mother was not strong physically, but somehow she managed this extra work while not neglecting her role as cook, seamstress, nurse, business manager, etc. at home. I have never understood how she managed on so little. She could put a meal on the table which was satisfying, though surely not elegant. Our clothes were almost always mended and she made our bed linens. Hand-me-downs and makeovers were very common, though seldom in the latest fashion. Mother also modeled hospitality. Almost every Sunday we had beef pot roast for dinner with the fluffiest of mashed potatoes and smooth brown gravy with no lumps. Very often we would invite someone from among our childhood friends to share our Sunday dinner. One time Papa brought home a homeless person whom we called "Peg-Leg" because he had only one leg.

I often wondered how Mother managed to put a satisfying meal on our table with so little money to buy what might be at the market. Most of the milk we had in our home was provided on a barter system. The Alderfer family had a dairy on the east edge of Upland. Mother went to their home

about once a week to help Mrs. Alderfer with mending or sewing for her family. In return, for at least a part of her work, we were given milk—sometimes in large quantities if there was a surplus at the dairy. Often Mother used a good portion of this to make cup cheese, a soft, spreadable, pungent cheese. Mrs. Alderfer would be given half of the finished product. Sometimes one or more of us children would go with her for the day to play with the Alderfer children.

With her full, busy, and tiring days, Mother always seemed tired and care-worn. Prone to headaches, she often rested in the rocking chair at the end of the day and we girls would brush and comb her hair. This seemed to be restful to her, and it was a pleasure for us to arrange it in different styles. All of her five girls had long hair, combed and braided every morning (well, almost every morning). No doubt, by the time Naomi, Mary, and I had to have it done, Gladys and Elizabeth were doing their own. It must have been a time-consuming morning task before sending us off to school. As I grew older I hated those pigtails and I was tempted to chop them off. I knew that if I cut my hair, I'd get a whipping, but the idea of short hair was appealing. I never did it though.

School years

We Bohen children had a lot of friends and we played with real zest. After moving to 3rd Avenue, we played with many neighborhood children using the street as our primary playground. Some of these playmates were church friends, for many Brethren in Christ families lived nearby, but some were neighbors unconnected with the church. I especially liked my girl friends at school and I got on well with all of them. I often wondered why my good school friends never invited me to parties in their homes. I suspect it was because we were Brethren in Christ and somewhat restricted in what we were allowed to do. It hurt, but it didn't stop my friendship with my schoolmates.

My best friend was Ruth Eckman, whose brother Chester later married my sister Elizabeth. We entered school together and remained bosom pals all the way through high school. Ruth's family were orange growers and lived a mile or so away on the east edge of Upland. We would often go home with each other after a Sunday morning church service and spend the whole

day together. Many years after we were both married, Ruth told me she always loved to come to our house because our family always seemed to have so much fun and laughter around the table. I treasured her insight. I loved going to her house to play with all her dolls and the things needed to play house. Irene Musser Engle was another close friend. But it was Ruth and I who spent hours with her dolls. I always loved to play house and found it fun to set up and organize the house. There were times at school when my friends and I would mark out a house with small stones outlining the rooms. We could spend a whole recess or lunch hour building and organizing our houses. As I grew, I learned to love more physical games like softball. I wasn't a fast runner but I could hit a ball.

I liked school because it broadened my knowledge of another world as I interacted with people other than my family. Every year though, we had a health class, which I sorely disliked because it seemed like the same things were repeated each year. Health class also caused me to become more conscious about my teeth. At home we were never taught or encouraged in tooth-brushing—at least during my early years. But at school we were given a tooth brush and tooth paste. I wasn't always faithful, at that age, to do it each day, but it was definitely a beginning.

A couple of other incidents along the way in these very early school years served to bolster my self-image. During the dreaded health class, the teacher stressed the importance of good posture. On one occasion, I stood before the class as the teacher pointed out my straight back. Although it felt a bit strange, I was pleased to be singled out for something positive. Another time, during music class, I was again singled out for using my voice box in the proper way. The teacher reached around my neck to my throat as I stood beside her and demonstrated the feel of the voice box. Again, it seemed really strange to me, but gratifying. Reading was one subject that was greatly stressed, and I loved to read. We often played a game where one student would stand and read a portion of a story for as long as he or she made no error in reading. When my turn came I could read for a long time without any error at all. The game was fun and it boosted my self-esteem as well.

My parents seldom gave me compliments, so my school community really encouraged me to pursue small talents. As Brethren in Christ, I believe my parents tried to avoid the sin of pride so they didn't heap praise on their children.

As I advanced into other grades some of my abilities were noticed and encouraged by my teachers. Around sixth grade, I began performing in school plays. My first roles were mostly as a comic or as a villain. It seemed I could do either quite well and I loved the stage. In junior high I was given a lead role in an operetta. I loved to sing and had sung in church and children's meetings at church as long as I could remember. My voice was strong and carried well. Miss Colton, the music teacher, took me under her wing as a sort of protege. Her influence helped me appreciate my talent for singing. She urged me to continue studying voice and music to prepare myself for a career in that field. Of course, I knew that a music and drama career was out of the question, but I continued to enjoy singing throughout my life and was able to use my talent in various ways. I studied some voice and other music-related subjects when I went on to Beulah Academy for high school.

My parents never forbade my roles in school plays as long as the role didn't include dancing. They didn't oppose my play-acting, but they didn't encourage it either. Their faith convictions did not allow dancing. I remember carrying a note to gym class asking that I be excused from dancing when that was the planned activity. This disappointed me because I loved rhythm and movement to music. They never came to any of my performances, but I didn't resent their attitude; I just accepted it.

As the economic depression of the early 1930s lessened, our family's ability to cope improved. My father got a steady carpenter job, though it took him away from home all during the week. The uptick in family income allowed me to have an allowance of five cents a week, and my parents bought a piano. My mother showed me middle C and its relation to the note in the hymnal. She had no formal training but somehow conveyed to me the function of the black and white keys. From that I learned to play hymns. My self-teaching was all the piano lessons I ever had but I learned to play reasonably in most keys. I even learned to transpose sharp keys, which were always difficult, to corresponding flat keys. Three or four of us girls learned to play the piano in this way. And similarly I learned the typewriter keyboard. My father bought a typewriter with an instruction booklet and I worked at that until I had mastered it quite well. In high school I took a year of typing to master additional typing techniques. I must have done all right because a young neighbor woman paid me to type her thesis for some sort of degree.

While we were still living on 3rd Avenue, I began to earn a little money by going to the Thomas Franklin house to wash dishes. (Thomas was the maternal grandfather of Eldon Bert who later became my husband.) Grandma Franklin gave me 15 cents an hour for helping her and I was allowed to keep for myself all that I earned. I also worked some summers as a mother's helper. One summer I lived in the Charles Hershey home where I had my own room, a real luxury. Mrs. Hershey was not well and the family needed help caring for their four children and doing other household tasks. One summer I was a helper in the Reuben Hershey (parents to Charles Hershey) Nursing Home. They cared for elderly persons, and my duties were cleaning and general assistance. Of course I didn't live in the nursing home, but I went every day or as they needed me. I never liked that job.

I enjoyed my years at Upland Junior High School for seventh, eighth, and ninth grades. After graduating junior high, I entered Beulah Academy as a sophomore. The tuition was likely only about $25.00 a semester but my parents could not afford it. Thomas Franklin (Grandpa Franklin) lent my tuition for a period of time and after I graduated from high school I worked to pay off this school debt. During my sophomore year, a job for board and room opened up for me. It seemed a good idea, for it would relieve crowded conditions in our home. Dr. Ralph Ryan, an optometrist, lived next door to Grandpa Franklin. They had a small son and needed help with babysitting. Before and immediately after school I worked at the Ryans. Their home was conveniently located directly across the street from Beulah College. During the rest of my high school days I lived with and worked for the Ryan family. It was not difficult, but I could not take part in many school activities. Upon my graduation the Ryans gave me a Kodak camera which was a most prestigious gift. [Harriet kept the camera and it is now in the hands of Jesse Bert, one of her grandchildren.]

I don't remember taking family vacations the way people do today. Instead, we enjoyed day trips with other families, often to the beach. On one outing, my father had taken my mother into the water to jump the waves. He ventured further out than was wise and Mother lost her footing. Neither one could swim and I can still see my mother so terribly frightened and struggling for footing. I don't think she ever ventured into the water again. There were trips to the mountains too, also in company with other families. We spent evenings in parks where we could have picnic suppers. In the

fall, we drove to apple country for a good supply of apples. It was another fun family excursion for the family that usually lasted all day. We picked the apples or bought a quantity at a reduced rate. As a teen, I remember one orchard outing particularly well. Our car was an open style touring car and in the evening we fastened the side curtains to keep out the cold. The apples were stored on the running board since there was no trunk and the inside was full of family. I was sleeping in the back seat but was jolted fully awake when the car was side-swiped by another vehicle. Our apples scattered everywhere. The driver of the offending car drove away, but we knew he was drunk. No one was hurt in our car, but we were shaken up and we lost our apples.

Another near accident happened on a Sunday during those very early California years. Mother's brother Cyrus Book had moved to Whittier and we drove there once or twice a year to visit him and his family. The narrow, hilly road to their home took us through Southern California's oil well district. One time on our way home we were descending one of those hills and my father sensed he needed to brake. To his horror he discovered he had no brakes. In a panic he threw the gears immediately into reverse. I don't know how he did it, nor do I know what damage it did to the gears, but we did stop!

As I grew old enough to help around the house, one thing I hated about the summers was the seemingly never-ending task of fruit-canning. Peaches, apricots, cherries, pears, and apples grew in abundance not far from our home. We could buy quantities quite reasonably and were given some. Mother had a supply of big two-quart jars, and they were almost all full by summer's end. There seemed to be hundreds of them! The job for me and my sisters was to prepare the fruit for canning. Although it was a tiresome chore, the fruit did taste awfully good in the winter months when fresh fruit was not in season.

Another duty I detested was dishwashing. There were five of us girls and we all took turns at dishwashing and drying. The dishes were often chipped because so many of us handled the dishes with not too much care. There was a prescribed order to the process: glasses, silverware, china, and finally, pots and pans. The pots and pans were so big and hard to get clean. Drying dishes was preferred to washing, and clearing the table was best of all. But all of it interfered with play, reading, or other preferred activities. I

hated that dishwashing job since we sometimes used homemade lye soap and homemade dish rags.

Our church was truly the center of our social and religious activities. We never questioned that we'd be in Sunday school and church on Sunday morning and in Junior Meeting, or Young Peoples meeting, and Sunday evening service. In addition to Wednesday night services, we attended all the revival meetings and tent meetings too. Many of the local churches had Vacation Bible School for children but our church never hosted it and we were never allowed to attend VBS elsewhere. I got the feeling that we couldn't go because our parents wanted to avoid any possibility that we might want to attend that church. After Eldon and I were married our church had dropped that fear and I helped in one such Bible school during a summer.

We were fully involved in our local church. I enjoyed the Junior Meetings held for children up to about upper junior high or high school. I especially enjoyed the singing because I had a strong voice. I was asked to be the song leader and I enjoyed that. Later, when an older group was formed to sing in the services, I led that group also. I had very little training, but loved vocal music and apparently took to it naturally.

For several years in my early teens my father was engaged in helping to establish Sunday schools in a number of different areas. Before there was a Brethren in Christ church in Chino, my father and Jesse Eyster, another minister, would go to Chino on Sunday afternoons to hold a Sunday school. Papa took me with him, maybe for the singing, or maybe to keep me out of mischief at home. But in other places, like North Pomona and at Norco, I went with him to help with the singing and play the piano.

In my upper teen years I sometimes joined tent workers as we were called for gospel work in the summer months. One year we were in the San Joaquin Valley. I taught Bible school during the day and was a part of a ladies trio that provided the special music during the evening service. Another summer we were in the Sunnymead/Moreno area for the same reason and with the same responsibilities.

I never was obsessed with boys in my early years and into my early teens. I liked them, but never singled one out—except for once! He was in my class at school and was kind, courteous, blond, and friendly. He was a son of a military family and was not Brethren in Christ. Even at that early

age I knew I would never "go with" anyone other than a Brethren in Christ boy. But I did like Robert Taylor. In fact, one day I ran away from home to go to the Taylors. On the way I fell and scratched my bare knee badly. Small rocks were embedded in the skin and I still carry the scars of that outing. (Robert Taylor was one of the first local casualties I heard about in World War II. He was a flier and lost his life in this way. I was sad for I remembered those days so long before.) I had too much fun being a girl, doing girl things, laughing and having fun with my girl friends to bother about boys. Today a girl has a steady boyfriend before she even reaches her teens. I was still interested in dolls at that age and I loved to read. Often I would shirk some task my mother gave me to sneak off to read! Then, when found out, I'd hurry to get the job done.

Boys, at least any particular ones, didn't enter my thinking until I entered Beulah Academy. Sometimes I daydreamed about boy and girl relationships, probably as a result of avid reading and a vivid imagination. But I never really imagined having an actual date! So you can imagine my surprise when Eldon Bert appeared at the Dr. Ryan door one afternoon when I was working to ask me for a date. I didn't realize that any boy, least of all Eldon, even knew I was around. I was a sophomore and he was a handsome junior with heavy, curly, dark hair, and heavy curled eye lashes over light colored eyes. He was muscular, loved sports, and very popular at school. He completely swept me off my feet and my heart was lost immediately. That was in the spring of 1934 and I never looked amorously at another boy from then on. We dated until our marriage in December 1939. Our dates were few and far between during those first years, maybe once a month or so. We did see each other almost every day at school and just a wink from him would make my day. After our graduations from high school our dating became more frequent but almost never more than once a week.

Employment and preparation for homemaking

Another chapter in my life opened upon my graduation from Beulah Academy in 1936. I needed work to pay off my school debt. I had a strong feeling that Eldon and I would marry, so I had no real urge to pursue a college education. Furthermore, I had no money for it and didn't want to incur further debt. If situations had been different, I would have chosen a music career, but there was not much chance of making a career in the kind

of music I preferred. So I chose to try to prepare to become a good wife and hopefully a good mother. Although I have been content with that choice, I often wish I could have studied more music.

After a year at home, I took a job as a live-in maid in the Brad Whitney home. ["Plain girls" like Harriet and her sisters were often sought after as housekeepers because of their housekeeping reputations.] Mr. Whitney was a wealthy citrus grower in North Upland. They had two sons, both in boarding schools. I had no cooking experience to speak of and I certainly knew nothing about how to serve a formal dinner, but I learned. I remember calling Elizabeth, who was working in another home in Upland, to get some advice on how to cook peas. I had a Boston Cooking School cookbook and referenced it often. I well remember the Thanksgiving dinner I was expected to cook and serve. I had never seen a turkey without its feathers before. The bird was delivered without feathers, but the rest of its preparation was up to me. Petrified, I called Mother, and even though I'm sure she had her own Thanksgiving preparations, Papa drove her to the house and she showed me how to clean it, make the dressing, and stuff it. Of course, all the other food had to be cooked and served on time too. I don't remember how I got through it all, but evidently it was okay, for I wasn't fired. I could write a whole chapter on experiences at the Whitneys. I certainly earned and needed the $40.00 a month pay check for those nine months, but didn't exactly enjoy the work. I cooked, served, cleaned, even turned down beds, and laid out pajamas and slippers for those big sons—one older than me. On occasion, I had to "babysit" the two dogs.

I left the Whitneys and lived at home for a second school year while I took some music courses at Beulah College. During the next couple of years I earned some money working in three other homes, including the Burns home in West Covina. They had three children, some of whom needed my supervision. This home was quite ordinary, not at all like the Whitneys. My status was more as a helper to Mrs. Burns, but I continued to learn methods of housekeeping, child care, and the like. One summer I joined the family at their summer home in Laguna Beach. Eldon came to be with me on one of my free afternoons and we spent time together on the beach. I could not swim, but went with Eldon into the surf to jump the waves. A strong one came and I lost Eldon's hand and went under. It terrified me as I didn't know if I was going out to sea or being washed toward shore. Of course, the water receded and I walked back to the beach.

Another home where I worked for a brief period was the Allard home in the Ganesha Hills of Pomona. Mr. Allard was an attorney and their lifestyle was more formal than the Burns but not as formal as the Whitneys. They also had three children—an older son, an adopted pre-teen daughter, and a young son. It was the most difficult place I ever worked. My oldest sister, Gladys, had worked there during the birth of the youngest son and she got along well and loved it. But my experience was different. I had to get up at 5:00 every morning to finish all the dusting and rug cleaning before the family aroused. I attempted to do all of this without making any noise, as I was instructed, but running a carpet sweeper over rugs does create some noise. Mrs. Allard would pop out of her upstairs bedroom and scold me for making noise. Then I had to ready their breakfast. The evening meal was another trial. Mr. Allard would arrive home about the time I had the meal ready and decide to shower before dinner. I found it challenging to keep the meal warm and appetizing. Most days I worked hard from the early morning alarm until 9:00 p.m. or after when the dinner dishes were finally put away. I was constantly tired and was more than happy to leave after about a month or so.

In 1938, I went to work in the Lawson home in North Upland. Compared to any other home I worked in, this one was surely the best. The family was Scotch and consisted of a grandmother, parents, and two pre-teen children, a girl and a boy. Mrs. Lawson often helped on cleaning day. From her I learned better methods of cleaning which I used throughout my life. I also learned how to reduce after-dinner clean-up. If she used a utensil to make something she always washed it, dried it, and put it away immediately. The children attended local public schools, but did not ride the buses. On several occasions I was given the "wee car," as they called it, and asked to fetch them from school. I enjoyed this errand and their confidence in me. I think during my time in the Lawson home I made my first apple pie—the first of what would be many apple pies. In all of these homes I ate my meals in the kitchen, either during or after the family had been served.

I call these years of domestic service "my college education." Certainly, the work helped to prepare me for managing our home. I learned how to organize my work so that I would get it all done, including a schedule of certain jobs for certain days. I learned how to set a beautiful table and how to entertain guests at dinner. I learned that an uncluttered and clean house is a restful haven. I'm thankful for those years of training.

Engagement and marriage

In the fall of 1937, Eldon proposed. I was waiting for this and I'm sure Eldon had no doubt that my answer would be a ready "yes!" However, it would be one and half years before we publicly made the announcement. Eldon was finishing his education in business at Woodbury Business College and wanted to be settled in some kind of work or business before we made an announcement or set a date for our wedding. After his graduation he set up an accounting business in Upland. His accounts were local citrus ranchers and other small businesses. He also did income tax work for individuals along with the income tax work of his clients. His monthly earnings were about $85.00. This would continue through the first couple of years of our marriage.

After Eldon's proposal my goal was to prepare as well as I could for our life together. I earned some money cooking evening dinners in the home of a banker named Harlow Wilson. I would go about 4:00 in the afternoon to cook and serve dinner and clean up the kitchen. Occasionally Mrs. Wilson would have me come at noon to cook and serve a luncheon to her guests. I was treated with respect and understanding in their home. After our marriage, I occasionally went back to help with special meals. Eldon gave me the cedar chest he had made during his junior high days. I used it to store my collection of items—clothing and household—to keep for our home. I redeemed Betty Crocker coupons to get a set of flatwear, and I embroidered feedsack dish towels, made pillow cases, and began knitting a dress to wear on our honeymoon.

We announced our engagement to family and friends early in 1939 at a party in my parents' home. No Brethren in Christ girl in those days received an engagement ring, but it was customary for the young man to give his bride-to-be an engagement watch. Rings were considered jewelry but a watch was useful and could be given with freedom. The watch Eldon gave me was a Lady Elgin, tiny, and very plain, and of a high grade of gold. I loved it. [Harriet's daughter-in-law Donna Bert now has the watch.]

We eventually set the date for our wedding for December 3, 1939. Gladys and Evan were both married in May 1939, so final preparations for yet another wedding in the same year must have been hard for my parents. Someone made the remark, "Walter Bohen is surely cleaning house fast!" Mother and Elizabeth (she had been married in 1937) made my wedding

dress. It was white satin fashioned in a simple sheath style. I didn't have a veil, but was expected to wear a covering, as did all Brethren in Christ brides who belonged to the church.

It was the custom among us that each couple would be given a home shower before the wedding. This generally was organized by some family member or close friend. And, if possible, it should be a surprise to the engaged couple. Individual invitations were not sent, but an announcement of the time and place was circulated discreetly to the church. Our shower was hosted at Eldon's parents' home following a dinner for members of the quartet Eldon had been a part of since high school. It was a complete surprise to us and the house was full to overflowing with friends and well-wishers. We appreciated a variety of useful gifts for us to begin housekeeping. The ladies of the Norco church also held a bridal shower for me. These showers brought the reality of marriage into focus and assured us that we had the goodwill of many friends and family.

Harriet and Eldon Bert on their wedding day, December 3, 1939, Upland (CA) Brethren in Christ Church

We were married at 4:00 p.m. on Sunday afternoon, December 3, 1939 in the Upland Brethren in Christ Church. The church was simply decorated with candelabra, greenery, and two large standing baskets of yellow and white pom-pom chrysanthemums. Arthur Climenhaga, a close friend since Upland College days, officiated the ceremony. [Beulah College was renamed Upland sometime in the late 1940s.] It was Arthur's first time to officiate at a wedding and he and Eldon declared that he was more nervous than the groom. It was a typically

beautiful California afternoon and the church was full with family and friends, all in all a lovely day.

The wedding reception was held in the church basement immediately following the ceremony. Eldon's parents kindly helped with the expense and preparations for a larger reception. The previous day his mother baked chocolate cupcakes to add to the wedding cake. Guests enjoyed these desserts, the wedding cake, ice cream, and fruit punch. I think there were nearly 200 guests who attended the reception.

As soon as we changed into our traveling clothes, we left for our short honeymoon. Our destination was Santa Barbara, about 100 miles north of Upland along the Pacific Coast. Eldon had bought Grandpa Franklin's Plymouth coupe when he began his accounting business. We drove to a motel in the Santa Monica area and enjoyed four days, including a good tour of the Santa Barbara Mission. I was very eager to get back to Upland to set up our home and begin life as Mr. and Mrs. Eldon Bert.

Our first home was a small furnished house in back of Eldon's family home on 3rd Avenue. Daddy Bert rented us that house for $10 or $15 a month. I know we had the usual adjustments to being a married couple. Housekeeping was no problem, and I loved everything about keeping my own house and cooking our meals. My biggest challenge was learning how to share Eldon with his parents. He was always very close to them and living on the same lot gave him the opportunity to drop in often to visit with them. It was hard for me as a new wife to have him come home from his work and say, "I think I'll go see the folks." I loved Daddy and Mother Bert, but it was hard for me to accept Eldon's twice-a-day visits to them—without me. Gradually, Eldon's visits became less frequent and I accepted them when they did occur.

We enjoyed our little home while living very frugally. I learned to cook good meals by making many meat-stretching dishes. It seems almost unbelievable, but I think I allowed 10-25 cents per person for a meat dish when I shopped. Consequently, we ate a lot of macaroni and cheese, canned pink salmon, and hamburger. We didn't eat out, except when we were invited to someone's home. On Eldon's $85.00 a month we were even able to save toward buying a bigger house. I worked occasionally getting dinners or lunches for the Wilsons and one month I clerked at a five-and-ten-cent store owned by one of Eldon's clients. I enjoyed that kind of work and the

wages allowed me to buy a small sewing machine. That sewing machine was put to good use as I made many of my own dresses, Eldon's pajamas, and eventually, most of the clothes for our sons. Eldon continued his accounting business, often working at home in the evenings, especially during tax season. His business grew and so did his income. He was appointed city clerk of Upland and this brought a small monthly check too.

In a little more than a year we moved into another unfurnished house that Daddy Bert had bought. We went to a Bekins Storage House in Los Angeles to do our shopping. Bekins was a moving company that also stored furniture for people who were moving. Many times this furniture was unclaimed and then put on sale by the company. We found a house full of second-hand furniture at a reasonable rate. We paid in cash, a practice we kept throughout our life. We didn't buy something unless there was cash on hand to pay for it. Credit cards came into vogue later, but even then we used them more as a convenience, never if there wasn't money behind them. The house had three bedrooms. One was used as an office for Eldon and we hoped the third small bedroom would become a nursery.

Eldon and I were happy and looking forward to the birth of our first child. I didn't have much knowledge of what to expect in pregnancy, so took as a matter of course the difficult days. Norman Allen was born on June 6, 1942 after a day and a half of extremely hard labor. I stayed in the hospital with him for at least 10 days and remained in bed at home for another week. We hired a lady from the church to care for both me and Norman. Of course, strength returned and our family settled down to enjoying our home and our place in the community and church.

War and army days

Our marriage came during somewhat troubled times. America had quite well recovered from the depression of the early 1930s, but then came the threat of war. Norman was nine months old when Dwight (Eldon's brother) was inducted into the army. My brother, Evan, followed soon after. Eldon was deferred because he was a father and later got deferment through the efforts of his employer, Mogle Brothers Pump Company in Chino. We assumed that Eldon wouldn't ever be called but there was unease in the entire population. When Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, the West Coast took

great precautions against the threat of invasion by the Japanese. There were nightly black-outs when every window had to be darkened. Observers were stationed at high points in the area to keep watch around the clock for any aircraft approaching. Daddy and Mother Bert took their turns at this and sometimes Eldon would accompany them. There was rigid rationing of many things: sugar, butter, meat, gasoline, even shoes. Every member of the family was issued coupons to buy these rationed items. It was not an easy time, but we managed to carry on as well as anyone.

As the war in the Pacific continued, every effort to keep Eldon out of the army failed and he eventually got his papers to report to the draft board. This created a problem for Norman and me. As it turns out, Daddy and Mother Bert had begun to remodel their 3rd Avenue house. The remodeling provided an answer as to where Norman and I would live while Eldon was in the army. As did his brother Dwight and my brother Evan, he entered the army as a conscientious objector which meant that he would serve but would not carry a weapon (non-combatant). For the first several weeks his post was at Fort MacArthur in San Pedro, a couple of hours drive from Upland. Eldon had an office job so he could often come home for a day or so each week. About six weeks after his induction Japan surrendered, bringing the war to an end. Eventually Eldon was transferred to Fort Lewis in the state of Washington. He wrote the checks and worked at the task of mustering-out the troops as they returned home.

When Eldon went to Fort Lewis, Norman and I moved into the Berts' newly finished upstairs rooms. In a short time Eldon learned of an officer who was willing to give Norman and me a room in his home on the base in exchange for work helping his wife and small daughter. This arrangement worked well, for Eldon often could come to us for the night. We thought we were quite fortunate and settled. But in a very short time Eldon received orders that he was to be moved to Camp Beale, California. The day before our sixth anniversary we packed up and drove to Camp Beale. We decided to rent a room there, if possible. When we arrived, we spent the entire day hunting a room but they were all filled. Eldon had to report to the army base at the end of that day. We were so tired and discouraged that I opted to deliver Eldon to his post and then drive home to Upland. Perhaps it was a foolish thing to do. We made a bed for Norman in the small space behind the seat of our coupe, and I began the drive of 500 miles from Camp Beale to Upland.

Night was coming on and I had a long drive ahead of me. We had already driven a long day from Washington state and then spent another day in fruitless searching for a room. I don't know if I stopped early to eat something, but I know it was brief. Norman slept most of the way. I had no radio or anything to help me keep awake and a dense fog moved in the San Joaquin Valley. At one point I almost ran into the abutment dividing the highway. I knew I had to have sleep but I couldn't bring myself to enter a strange place for the night. Sleeping on the side of the road was not safe, so in desperation I drove in to a motel and asked if I could sleep in my car for a little while. I'm sure the proprietor of the motel didn't know what to make of this distraught woman with a small child who didn't want to get a room. But I was given permission to sleep in the car in the parking space. After an hour or so I drove on and arrived at Daddy's home around 6:00 a.m. I'm sure God sent a guardian angel to be with me that night.

Mother and Daddy Bert did everything they could to make us comfortable and happy. As Christmas approached, Eldon wrote that he hoped to be able to come home for the holiday. We missed him dreadfully and prayed that the visit would happen. Our prayers were answered; early Christmas morning we saw him walking up 3rd Avenue toward home. What a reunion! He had hitchhiked from Camp Beale, as was common in those days. Soldiers were almost always given rides and he was able to ride with a family that was coming to the area. We had a wonderful time during his short furlough.

Soon after the New Year he had to report back to the camp. We decided that he would take our car. After his return he spent every available time away from his duties hunting for living quarters for us. At last he found a two-room building in a very poor section of Marysville, a small town not far from Camp Beale. It was in terrible condition, but was the only possible place. It would need a lot of heavy cleaning, but once that was done we could be together.

Aunt Mae [Eldon's mother's sister] and Uncle Guy Shore were planning to leave for their home in Oregon and offered to take Norman and me and enough basic household things to Marysville. They must have pulled a trailer, for we took quite a few things. When we arrived at the house, we were shocked at its condition. Evidently chickens had the run of the house. The only plumbing was one cold water faucet at a makeshift sink in one of

the rooms. Aunt Mae and Uncle Guy and I set to work at cleaning to make it habitable.

The first thing Eldon did was dig a hole not far from the house and cover it to be used as an outhouse. We bought a couch hide-a-bed and a few other necessities. I used a two-burner hot-plate for a stove and a primitive oven set on one of the burners for an oven. In one corner of what we would call our living/bedroom, Eldon built a frame for Norman's bed. I brought my sewing machine and made curtains and a curtained-off wardrobe. We had brought a table and chairs for the other room we called the kitchen-utility-bathroom. From this awful shack we created a home. It was not easy, but we were together and Eldon could come home every night. On Sundays we attended a Disciples of Christ Church in Yuba City where we felt accepted and supported. An older couple befriended us and became our greatest support until Eldon was released from the army. Often we would be with them for dinner on Sunday noon. We had many happy times together.

We eventually moved to a better house nearby, but in a very short time Eldon heard of a house in Grass Valley near the mountains. We went to look at it and I still remember my delight at seeing a proper bathroom with a bathtub. We rented it even though it was farther from the base. It was a lovely home for the rest of Eldon's army days.

In the summer of 1946, Eldon was discharged from the army and we returned to Upland. Norman was four years old, and I was again pregnant. We had no home of our own to return to since Daddy Bert had rented the 6th Avenue house to other tenants. So we moved into the Bert home occupying the upstairs room for sleeping, but becoming a part of Daddy's family in all other ways.

Joys and sorrows

During the last couple months of army life, Eldon had been working on plans for a house. Land was available to us in the orange grove owned by the family, on Arrow Highway very near to the Beulah College campus. Eldon had the blueprints made for a two-story house to be built in phases. We took advantage of the government GI bill which helped us when it came time for payments. The first phase of the house was to build the garage and service porch. At one end Eldon planned for a bedroom that would

eventually become his woodshop. Adjacent to that was the two-car garage which was to be the living room and dining room of this garage home. At the other side of this was our kitchen and bathroom which would become the service area of the house when we could build it. We had room in this kitchen area for a small table so that the family needn't use the larger dining room. This project was a major undertaking and Eldon spent every day, except Sundays, on construction. The area had municipal water, but no sewage system, so Eldon had to dig the cesspool which served us well until many years later a when a municipal sewage system was brought to the area. By the end of 1946, he had built a comfortable home for us. Daddy Bert had helped as much as he was able.

We really wanted another child but my doctor had told me after Norman was born that it would be dangerous for me to get pregnant again. I had had a hard time at Norman's birth, but by the time we left the Army, the doctor had told me it was okay to try again and I was pregnant. It wasn't an easy pregnancy, and one time I was threatened with miscarriage.

On January 31, 1947, Arthur Paige Bert made his debut into our lives, weighing almost seven pounds. I stayed in the hospital about 10 days as was usual for a birth in those days. When I came home from the hospital we hired a young unmarried lady, Angela Kauffman, to come in each day to help me with the housework and care of the children. She washed countless diapers (we knew nothing about Pampers in those days) and did the heavy work of housekeeping. Arthur was a happy baby, but he decided that the nights were too long and he'd waken in the early morning hours. Our bedroom quarters were so small and disturbance was easy, so we finally bought a baby carriage where we put him when he wakened and then rolled him out to the other room where he would make his baby noises and play until I got up to give him a bottle. The situation was not easy.

In those first months, my parents, who had moved to Pennsylvania, came for a visit and to attend the Brethren in Christ Church General Conference. It was a big time for reconnecting with friends from other districts and churches. They came for General Conference with the added benefit of seeing their new grandson and visiting their other children in the Upland area.

One afternoon in January 1948 I had put the boys to bed and I sat mending or knitting in the living room. Daddy and Mother Bert had left the

previous Sunday for Kansas to attend the funeral for great-aunt Sarah Bert (who had served for many years at the Chicago Mission). Daddy had a big, heavy Packard and he and mother with Uncle Jake Bert, Aunt Fannie Bert, and Aunt Sarah Hoover were looking forward to a good trip together. As I sat and thought about them and their travelling, for some reason I thought, "What if some accident would happen and Daddy would be taken?" The telephone rang. Vera (Mrs. Alvin) Burkholder was on the line and told me to come to their home immediately. I don't remember how I managed to leave the boys or if someone came to stay with them but I knew something dreadful had happened. I think Vera told me there was an accident and when I asked, "Is it Daddy?" she said, "No, it's Ada (Eldon's mother)." The awful news couldn't have been worse. There had been a horrible accident (not Daddy's fault), and Mother was gone.

They were travelling on the famous Highway 66 when they hit a freak pocket of dust blowing across the road from an adjacent plowed field. Sensing possible danger, Daddy stopped the car in the midst of the dust and urged everyone to leave the car in case they were rear-ended. Mother was in the midst of getting out of the car when they were hit from behind. When Daddy looked for everyone after the impact, he couldn't find Mother. The coroner told us later that she had been killed instantly. That was a consolation, though it didn't really lessen the loss.

Dealing with such a loss and tragedy was new to all of us. Arthur was just three days from his first birthday. Faye and Dwight moved in with Daddy, and our church family and friends did what they could to help. We needed to keep busy, but grief was always with us. The one who had been the mainstay in the family was no more. How we all missed her! I had lost not only a wonderful mother-in-law, but my best confidant and friend. I had felt almost closer to her than I did to my own mother. Her funeral was one of the biggest the church had ever known. Mother had been active in the local Red Cross and many other community activities. She was a wonderful Sunday school teacher. I know of one class member who said he accepted God as a result of her death. Our insurance adjuster claimed to have accepted Jesus because of his contact with Daddy and the family and the faith we all professed. Even Norman fondly remembered his grandma feeding him ice cream during his convalescence from a tonsillectomy. He and his Grandma Bert were great pals.

Before Norman's kindergarten year ended, he was diagnosed with rheumatic fever. He had a low grade fever all the time and so the doctor ordered complete bed rest. Eldon carried him to the bathroom and gave him his baths. I had to take his temperature three times a day. I still recall how discouraging it was when there was no change. As long as he had fever he was not allowed to get out of bed. Playmates were not allowed to visit, because his temperature would go up. He was mostly alone with only his little brother and parents. Arthur was a little over a year old and learning to walk. He was a happy child, but much more active than Norman had been at that age. During these months we didn't go out much. Someone always had to stay home with Norman. When Eldon was home on Saturday I hurried to the market for groceries while he looked after the boys at home.

We settled into a routine with Norman's care a major priority. Finally, after about six months, he was permitted limited out-of-bed activity. When school began again, the doctor advised that Norman should be taught at home. We had a visiting teacher who came in to monitor his first grade lessons once a week, but I had to be his teacher the other days. Despite my lack of training, I helped with simple lessons while still managing the household and caring for an active Arthur. Norman was eager to learn and did his lessons well. After Christmas he returned to school. We were so thankful that he went with a clean bill of health with no damage to his heart from that long bout of rheumatic fever. Perhaps the weeks when we insisted on quietness and bed rest paid off, but I know that the Lord surely helped us through that time.

Eldon and Harriet Bert and their two sons, Norman (left) and Arthur (right).

We enjoyed our garage home, but eagerly looked forward to building the rest of the house. The boys were growing and needing their own room and we needed our space too. When Arthur was about three years old we began our two-story home. Eldon drew up the plans and blue prints and hired a builder, Noah Guengerich. Mr. Guengerich was very patient with the "help" that Arthur offered. Arthur loved Noah's tools and sometimes wandered away with one that Mr. Guengerich needed. We opted to finish the downstairs completely, but leave the inside of the upstairs to be finished later. Finishing the whole house would have severely strained the budget and we could get along quite nicely for a time with just the lower floor. After cramped quarters in the garage home, it seemed spacious.

Television sets were becoming popular and we eventually bought a black and white set. That, along with the swimming pool we had installed in the backyard, was used by Upland College friends. We felt we wanted to keep up with the times and yet we wanted to be in control of what the boys watched and how much time they spent in front of it. Even though the church didn't actually prohibit it in our homes they didn't encourage it either. We still didn't go to movies but TV seemed easier for us to control. I remember when Queen Elizabeth of England was crowned we invited some Canadian students to come over and watch the ceremonies.

Called to be a homemaker

I enjoyed my role as homemaker. From the time I was a teenager I had felt that this was to be my role or "calling." Some had callings to spiritual endeavors, but I felt that being a homemaker was my life's work. And I was happy in it. Each day had its own schedule of chores. On Mondays I'd do the family wash. I had a washer but no dryer. California had lots of sunny days and I hung my clothes out to dry. Tuesday was ironing day. For a while I had a mangle iron where I'd iron the sheets and even the boys' shirts. But I got rid of that eventually and ironed everything by hand. Friday was cleaning day. I had a routine for that too. The other days were full of different duties. On Saturdays I shopped for groceries for the next week. In the early days of our marriage there was no supermarket, so I did my shopping at a local private grocery store. I learned from the produce man how to choose my vegetables and fruit.

There were seasonal jobs too, some of which I didn't particularly like. Spring cleaning was especially loathsome, but as everyone else did it, I thought I should too. I'd take each room at a time and give it a thorough cleaning from the ceiling to the floor. I always breathed a sigh of relief when that was done. Summers meant canning fruits and vegetables. From the time I was a teenager at home and helped my mother in her canning tasks I have hated that job. We could get fruit right from the orchards. We'd go pick cherries, generally in the company of other families, and gather apricots from the orchards north of Upland. Those apricots were my favorite and they were delicious. Then there were peaches, cling and freestone. Those had to be peeled. Most of my canning was done open-kettle as opposed to hot-water bath where I'd fill the jars with fruit, pour over them the sugar syrup and immerse them in hot water to boil for a period of time. I hated the whole process, but the finished product tasted mighty good in the winter months when there was not so much fresh fruit to be had.

I also froze corn. At that task my sister Elizabeth almost always helped me. She didn't do any corn freezing herself but enjoyed helping me. We'd make a family day when she'd come to our house with her two children who would have a great day playing with our boys. I doubt if I'd have done so much if she hadn't enjoyed helping me. Often at the end of the day we'd have dinner together and sometimes we'd make a freezer of ice cream. One or two times we had a picnic and went swimming at a public swimming pool. As I think back over those times, I wonder how we had all that energy. But they were fun times that cemented family ties.

Another aspect of family life that was important to us was family worship after breakfast every day. We had both grown up with this practice and began it after we were married. I have often wished that we had geared it more to young children, but we had no particular instructions at that time as to how to make this time more meaningful to a growing family. Eldon and I continued this practice for the rest of our lives. We always thought it was a very important way to begin the day.

Family vacations

In 1950, when Norman was about seven and Arthur about three, we decided to take an extended trip. We borrowed Daddy's big Packard and

built up the back seat so that it formed a good play area and bed for the boys. I had not been back to Kansas since we moved away when I was six. I didn't remember a lot from those early years, but when we got to Moonlight, the small village where I was born, a strange feeling came over me and I remembered a lot of minor things that had happened there. We had a wonderful time visiting relatives on their farm. Then we went on to Pennsylvania to visit my parents, where they had moved in 1945 to be near my mother's sister, Mary Long. At the time they were living in an apartment adjoining Aunt Mary's home.

In December 1950 not long after we had visited my parents, my father died suddenly at just 63 years of age. There was not as much known as to how to treat victims of heart trouble then as now. None of the family in California went to the funeral, but we all gathered at our home on the day of the funeral to remember him and his deep faith in God which he passed on to his children. A couple of years later, in 1953, we planned another trip, to see Mother and to extend our range of travel. Norman was 11 and Arthur was seven, so they were old enough for the trip to give them lasting memories. We planned to see the eastern United States and then go on to Nova Scotia in Canada. Eldon took a six-week leave of absence from his full-time job at the Mogul Brothers in Chino. Mr. Mogul was most generous to give him the time off and even offered us his gas card for fuel. That helped immeasurably for such a long trip. Eldon planned a trip budget, allowing $20.00 a day for food and lodging which totaled about $1,000. After we left Mother in Pennsylvania we went on to New York, Boston, and other points in the east before crossing into Canada. We visited Montreal, the Bay of Fundy with its 40-foot tide change, and other places.

We found that most restaurants served a very good and substantial breakfast for a cost within our budget so that became our practice. The rest of the day we ate simple, budget-friendly meals. And we hunted for the cheapest and cleanest motels. Of course, when we were in the states, we stayed with relatives as much as possible. In Quebec we had trouble navigating the language barrier from French to English. Ordering food from French menus was a challenge but we made our way, enjoying the feeling of being in a foreign land, although we were glad when we got into more English-speaking provinces! In some cities we'd take a tour of the city, sometimes by horse-drawn carriage. Exposing our boys to the wonder of

travel also helped them expand their taste buds. I insisted that the boys taste all kinds of foods before forming opinions.

Back home, we began to be more involved in our church. Eldon had taught Sunday school classes before we were married and had been on denominational boards and committees, but I had never been actively involved except in choir or singing duets with Eldon. We eventually were placed in the young people's department where we served for many years. We were in charge of the youth programs and often planned social activities for them. We had a good growing youth group and we enjoyed our work. Sundays turned out to be one of the busiest days of the week. We would often plan beach parties or other kinds of outings. Sunday nights were always the time for youth meetings, mostly at the church or in some home.

Norman had joined a Bible quiz team, which involved in-depth study of a portion of scripture and competition with teams from other Brethren in Christ churches. One summer he travelled with the team to compete at General Conference in Canada. After that year, I felt I should get involved in that program, so I became a quiz coach. When I began that job, I knew very little about the events in the Bible. I had memorized a lot of scripture when I was small, but had not been very interested in in-depth study. I learned fast and was the quiz coach for four years. I enjoyed it and I learned as much as my quizzers. One year our Upland Team travelled to Pennsylvania and another year to Ohio to compete at the General Conference. As was the custom for quizzers at the time, we dressed alike as much as possible—skirts for the girls, and matching shirts for the boys. The year that we went to Pennsylvania (by car, not by air) we were studying the book of Romans. We were undefeated for the whole year and won the denominational championship at General Conference too. Arthur was a part of the quiz team for most of the years I was coach. I enjoyed coaching, and I even taught the Sunday school class for a time. We had a good youth group and a couple of good singing groups which I coached as well.

I also joined several organizations that were more or less related to the church. I was part of the monthly sewing circle where a group of women would get together for the day to sew for needy causes. We also had a couple clubs for women within the church for purely social activities, such as the "Friendship Circle" of which I was a charter member. We drew names and those ladies became our "secret sisters." I was a member of that until we

moved to Pennsylvania some years later. Once a year the entire church would hold a Sunday school picnic. Families each brought a basket lunch to share with others—sort of a potluck picnic. The picnic was usually held at one of the many public parks. Sometimes it would be a park that had a swimming pool and many of the young people would go swimming. Co-ed swimming was not frowned upon at Upland like it was in other places. Often some of the families would stay on into the evening, eating the leftovers from lunch. Fun times indeed!

Being a homemaker offered a mix of activities. Maybe that's why I enjoyed it. I was somewhat of a perfectionist and wanted everything right. I hope I left a good mark as I kept house and interacted in the church and community'

Eldon and Harriet with movie camera equipment. Photo courtesy of Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.

Harriet with her two sons, Norman and Arthur, circa 2008.

Epilogue

The rest of Harriet's story details more travel, including trips to Brethren in Christ mission points in the U.S. and other countries. Having always taken photographs when they travelled, Eldon and Harriet decided to branch out into filmmaking and produced several missions-related films. In 1975, Harriet and Eldon moved to Pennsylvania to be nearer to their two sons and their families, and in 1982 they moved to a cottage at Messiah Village. They were active in the Grantham Brethren in Christ Church until their health prevented them from attending. Eldon passed away in 2004, and Harriet in 2015. They are survived by their two sons, Norman and Arthur, four grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

Remembering and Practicing Our Identity

By Mark Labberton*

It is a great honor to be here. I am thankful for this topic and challenged by it as well. I think it is an act of folly to ask someone who is a member and a pastor in the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. (PCUSA), to talk on nonconformity. I would not say that this has been my legacy or my background, neither in California nor in the PCUSA, since both places are places of intense conformity. The nature of what in many ways defines Californian life, West Coast life, and, even the PCUSA, has been the tendency to conformity, not to nonconformity. Having said that, some of the people who have influenced me most have been the people in the nonconformity tradition, and that has always been a very important part of my story and an important part of why, for example, ministry in a place like Berkeley, California for the better part of 30 years has been a very natural thing. It has felt like a setting that makes nonconformity essential to the task of being a disciple. So I am thankful for the chance to think with you a little bit about this theme tonight.

To set the stage, I want to share a bit about my own background because it informs how I read the Bible. I was raised in a home where my Dad was a scientist and an inventor, and he had one great fear in the world—that his sons would become religiously interested or involved or even devoted. His primary concern was a belief that religious people take great things and make them small. They take something like the mystery of the universe and billions upon billions of galaxies and all of the magnificence and wonder of dark matter and everything else, and they look at it under a certain lens and it all becomes a debate over a certain formula of origins. Or they take the

---

* Mark Labberton is president of Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California. Prior to joining the seminary faculty in 2009, Labberton served for over 30 years in pastoral ministry, 16 of those years as senior pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Berkeley, California. He is the author of *Called: The Crisis and Promise of Following Jesus Today* (InterVarsity Press, 2014), and other books.

mystery of what it means to be a human being—a person of extraordinary mystery and complexity and subtlety—and under a certain kind of lens, all of human experience is really nothing more than whether a person is doing right or wrong.

The case can easily be made—historically, politically, culturally, and socially—that Christian people have often taken great things and made them very small. We have become obsessed about the smallest thing, rather than concentrating on being people who, for example, gain and keep and practice a vision of God as the one who made heaven and earth, the God who holds all mysteries and wonders. Instead, our response to this God is something we call a worship service, which is the pinnacle of taking a great thing and making it small when in reality our acts of worship ought to focus on the whole created order. Worship gets reduced to this small little thing called the worship service, focused on certain finicky things like having the right lighting, the right instrumentation, the right fog machine (depending on your ecclesial tradition), and on it may go, as an expression of getting that small thing just right. The assumption is that if you get all of those small things right then that is all that you need to do. But the work of worship is actually the thing meant to cause us the greatest transformation and ultimately the greatest nonconformity.

All of this is to say that it was not a comfort to my dad when I started reading the Bible and when I actually became quite interested in it. And as I began to read the Gospels, I was struck by the fact that my dad and Jesus had so much in common. Jesus says a lot about the danger of religion and how religious people can become religiously obsessed and take great things and make them very small. I discovered that Jesus' antidote to this was not avoiding religion. It was avoiding a certain kind of religious practice, and the invitation—the antidote—to all of this was the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is the thing that is meant to enlarge our mind, to enlarge our heart and our soul and our strength. We are called into this unfolding reality of God's reclaiming and remaking the whole created order and invited to become active living participants. So the way to escape smallness, in the language of the New Testament, is to give up "the small little dungeon of your own ego," in the words of Malcolm Muggeridge. We escape smallness by giving up our own native instincts as sinful human beings and taking up the larger reality of the kingdom of God which extends and deepens and transforms us and, ultimately, the people around us.

So I became a Christian. I didn't know Christian people. I didn't hang out with Christian friends. I had no one to whom I could talk about this. I told my mother what was happening. I told my dad, and he was in despair. My mother's latent faith was quietly awakened. She started going to a church. About a year later she told the pastor that her son had some sort of religious experience. That led him to say that he would like to call on me. On an otherwise perfectly wonderful spring day, I had the first moment of my first pastoral experience, the first official religious person I had ever talked to. He came in and we had a few moments of awkward conversation. He said he came for three reasons: "First, your mother has told me that you have had a religious experience. Second, that might mean that you are going to become a pastor." This was truly beyond thinkable for me at that moment. "And the third is, if you do become a pastor, I want to be sure that you know which denomination has the best pension plan."

That night at dinner I told my dad about the visit with this pastor. My dad, who was a very kind man, saved certain neck veins for the discussion of religion. He let this sink in for a few minutes and said, "You see, this is where this is headed. You do get that this is where you are going? You think that what is happening is that you are getting to know the God of the universe. I know that you earnestly think that is what is true. But the trajectory of this will be a pension plan."

Now, if any single moment defined my life, it was the response of the pastor and then the dinner conversation with my dad. I felt a deep burning conviction that the kingdom of God was what I was seeking—the kingdom of God which was a soul, mind, heart, love, and justice- enlarging reality. It was the opposite of what would lead to the pension plan. The inclination, in entropic terms, would be the pension plan. But in kingdom terms it would be nonconformity. So the trajectory I began that day explains what I have done and what I believe, and guides the brief reflections I want to share.

I want to go to a very familiar text that I think is helpful for a nonconformist community to consider. It is from a book of the Old Testament that was written specifically about nonconformity, at a time in Israel's life when the great danger was whether or not Israel would conform. I'm talking about the book of Daniel. Daniel was written at a time when the people of God were in exile, a crisis moment when they had been stripped of every evidence of their exceptionalism. Their temple had been decimated

and their national life rent asunder. Daniel and his friends were among the cohort taken out of Israel as the best and the brightest to be instruments of conformity in Israel's life. I will reflect briefly on the first three chapters and then make some general comments.

I think that the main issues in the book of Daniel don't have to do with lion's den or the fire. Those stories are part of the Sunday school reductionism of the book of Daniel to a kind of two-dimensional biblical caricature—a cartoon—of what is an incredibly subtle and vigorous book about the way the relationship between faith and culture plays itself out, especially under the heavy and oppressive hand of Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian captivity. Let me just walk us through some of these early chapters.

"In the third year of the reign of King Jehoiakim of Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it." This is a remarkably understated one-sentence distillation of what was a heinous, violent, horrific, plundering of Israel's life. *"The Lord let King Jehoiakim of Judah fall into his power, as well as some of the vessels of the house of God. These he brought to the land of Shinar, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his gods."* All this, again, is shorthand for the deepest and most profound spiritual violations that had been perpetuated against Israel. The text says that God disciplined Israel for not conforming to his commands in the context of the nation, the life, the routine of the law, and the worshipping rhythms of Israel's life. He as much as said, "If you are not going to produce lives that look like mine and instead you are going to be conformed to the lives and people around you, then let's see what happens when I strip all those things away and place you, as a spiritual discipline, in exile. Now who do you really worship, who are you, who will you be, how will you live, how will you serve?"

"Then the king commanded his palace master Ashpenaz to bring some of the Israelites of the royal family and of the nobility, young men without physical defect and handsome, versed in every branch of wisdom, endowed with knowledge and insight, and competent to serve in the king's palace; they were to be taught the literature and language of the Chaldeans. The king assigned them a daily portion of the royal rations of food and wine. They were to be educated for three years, so that at the end of that time they could be stationed in the king's court. Among them were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael,

and Azariah, from the tribe of Judah. The palace master gave them other names: Daniel he called Belteshazzar, Hananiah he called Shadrach, Mishael he called Meshach, and Azariah he called Abednego."

Now this setup is a classic assimilationist, conformist scenario. A besieging leader decimates a nation, takes the plunder, takes the best and the brightest, seeks to conform them to the new standards, gives them new names, new literature, a new diet, a new literary imaginative outline, puts them back in after three years of training into new roles as assimilationist leaders. That is a classic pro forma vision for how you subdue a people. That is what is happening in this early chapter:

"But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the royal rations of food and wine; so he asked the palace master to allow him not to defile himself. Now God allowed Daniel to receive favor and compassion from the palace master. The palace master said to Daniel, 'I am afraid of my lord the king; he has appointed your food and your drink. If he should see you in poorer condition than the other young men of your own age, you would endanger my head with the king.' Then Daniel asked the guard whom the palace master had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: 'Please test your servants for ten days. Let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink. You can then compare our appearance with the appearance of the young men who eat the royal rations, and deal with your servants according to what you observe.' So he agreed to this proposal and tested them for ten days. At the end of ten days they were found to be even better than a comparable group."

What's so fascinating about this is that Daniel and his friends decided early on that they needed to distinguish themselves as nonconformists, even as they were Babylonian captives who had the pleasure of being in Nebuchadnezzar's house and eating his food. They chose to observe Jewish dietary laws as a way of remembering who they were. So every time they sat down at Nebuchadnezzar's table and ate their own distinctive food, they were saying to themselves and to each other, "Though we live in Nebuchadnezzar's house, we belong to Yahweh." In other words, they decided from the very beginning to remember, to practice, to rehearse endlessly their identity.

I want to argue that this is the link to the rest of what happens in the early chapters of Daniel where the capacity to remember one's identity, and

to practice it as a physical, social, public reality, is a profound expression of how to practice a kind of nonconformity that does not threaten the lives of others. Daniel and his friends agree to a test for 10 days to see if they can maintain their fitness while eating their own food. They pass the test. They are not really seeking the decimation of Nebuchadnezzar, they're not trying to be subversive, and there is nothing to suggest that this is the pathway to changing Babylon into Israel. This is not an evangelistic strategy; this is not about influencing people. No, this is just about retaining, remembering, and rehearsing their identity as distinctive people. Though they live in Nebuchadnezzar's house, they belong to Yahweh.

The test goes well and they are given greater and greater responsibility. The diet issue is not the determinative thing with regards to their social impact, but it is the thing that decides whether their impact will be distinctive and set them apart. There is no moralizing language to suggest that Babylon is eating bad (unrighteous) food and the Jews are eating good (righteous) food. Rather, they were eating faithfully, in light of an identity that had been given to them and as a way of remembering that they belonged to Yahweh. And as people who belonged to Yahweh, they were not about to let themselves think for a moment that they belonged to anyone else, and certainly not Nebuchadnezzar. This is an interesting way of thinking about what it takes to practice our identity.

Every expression of Christian community over the centuries has found ways to attempt to do this. Certainly in your tradition, through a set of practices that developed and changed over time, there was a willingness to genuinely practice nonconformity, to determine the social practices, the dress, the social cues to help you remember that you are people who belong to God and Jesus Christ and not to earthly rulers like Nebuchadnezzar. However, it's important to note that most studies about the church in America suggest that it looks very much like the culture in general. There is very little that fundamentally distinguishes our identity, our social practices, our values, our use of money, our habits, the things we do with our time or our finances from the rest of our culture. The way we live is in large part mirrored in the culture and the culture is mirrored in the church. And when sociologists have done larger studies of American Christianity in its many forms, certain subcultural groups are not found to be all that distinctive. They are just mirroring a different part of American culture rather than

anything that would be intrinsically identified as something Christian.

Of course, I can imagine that this may be far less true of you than it is of many of the people with whom I have associated in my denomination and in other contexts. I acknowledge the richness of the tradition of nonconformity that many of you inhabit; however, in the larger American church scene there is far more conformity, far more assimilation than distinction. And when there is distinction, it is often in a very moralizing way, which ends up making the people around you not aware that you are seeking to be like the character of God, but simply that you are a finicky, fussy, small-making Christian like my father was naming. Being preoccupied with whatever our way of holding on to our pension plan might be is not a way that mirrors the truth and character of God.

The most dramatic example of nonconformity in the church in recent years was the willingness of the Amish community in Lancaster County to forgive the man who killed all those young children. The culture could not figure out what to do with it. A horrible thing had happened, and everyone expected outrage, anger, cries for justice, etc. But then suddenly they said, "No, we are responding in a different way. It is wrong. It is unjust. It was a terrible and tragic evil, and we can be practitioners of genuine forgiveness in a counter-cultural, disorienting way."

There were shockwaves in the larger culture, with questions like: Who are these people? Where did they come from? They must be psychologically unstable. The only way they can forgive is if they have some sort of hidden pathology. If reporters just stick with the story, they'll discover the pathology and find it to be as rotten as everything else. But the more they stuck with the story, the more impressive it was. That Amish community had the capacity to remember and practice its identity.

Chapter one of the book of Daniel addresses the reality that nonconformity begins with a nonconforming identity. Do we understand that our identity is something God gives us, and we are supposed to rehearse and remember that identity? How do we remember in a community together that we belong to God and Jesus Christ as our first identity? Not our family of origin, our nation, our gender, our personality, our education, our money, our land, or our voting record. Our identity is about our identification with Jesus Christ. While our identity with Jesus is clearly not a theme in the book of Daniel, it is foreshadowed.

We have to ask ourselves what it means to practice and rehearse our identity, when it is more likely that we will assimilate or conform. Interestingly, Daniel doesn't suggest that they should be nonconformists in every dimension of life. Actually, there is a lot of conformity: they do their jobs, they participate and seek the welfare in Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom, they serve, they do not want to put other people's lives at risks, they are not trying do this as means of waging silent, private war. No. Their behavior is an act of recollection, identification, groundedness, and clarity.

The second chapter of Daniel moves in a slightly different direction, beginning with Nebuchadnezzar's terrifying dream. His dream is so distressing that he sets up a new test because he does not want the usual religious pablum to be offered up for his satisfaction. He wants a real, authentic, spiritual word. So he asks for someone who will tell him the dream and the interpretation of the dream. The soothsayers and the enchanters say, "No, Nebuchadnezzar, that is not the way this works. First you tell us the dream and then we will tell you the interpretation." He says twice, "No, I understand that you are trying to buy time, and bring out the same old song and dance that you have always brought out. I am not interested in that. This time I actually want an authentic spiritual word. And the only way that I will know it is authentic is if I set a test that is so difficult that it will require something that is clearly beyond you. That is why you have to tell me both the dream and the interpretation. If you do not, then off with your head."

In a very classic Nebuchadnezzar rage-a-holism, he sets this test, and what unfolds is that Daniel steps into the fray. He does not hide, even though he is not necessarily included. Daniel promises Nebuchadnezzar that he will, by God's grace, come back with some response. He goes back to his friends and they pray for something they can't imagine.

Then we read: "Daniel said, 'blessed be the name of God from age to age for wisdom and power are his. He changes times and seasons, deposes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with him. To you, O God of my ancestors, I give thanks and praise, for you have given me wisdom and power, and have now revealed to me what we asked of you, for you have revealed to us what the king ordered.'"

This prayer is Daniel's theology of nonconformity. It is Daniel's way of saying, "Okay, let us remember first things." It turns out that Nebuchadnezzar is not a first thing. He is not even a second thing. He is just a thing in a hierarchy of power and influence in the world. The primary reality is the truth and character of the God who raises up and deposes kings. Everything is held by the one who is the lord of all. And here is Nebuchadnezzar who is under the reign of God, but his desperation, panic, and rage demands an answer.

One of the things that is so interesting about this chapter is that Daniel hears and understands the depths of Nebuchadnezzar's pathos; the most powerful person in the world is terrified. Power does not protect you from fear. It often leads you into greater fear, especially when the stakes are as high as Nebuchadnezzar fears they might be based on his nightmare. He wants a power that is greater than his to help him understand the terror of the night so he can figure out how he is going to live. This is why Daniel, in his prayer, reframes reality by saying, "Okay, these are the first order things. These are what are primary. This is what is secondary. This is how we are to understand the world." He remembers God as the source of revelation. The story shows that the purpose of our nonconformity is to be able to be more attuned to God, who God is, and what he has to offer to the world he loves and to people who are in distress, like Nebuchadnezzar.

Daniel tells Nebuchadnezzar his dream and essentially says, "It really is as bad as you thought it was going to be. You were right to be terrified because it is ultimately about the decimation of your kingdom." Nebuchadnezzar receives this as good news, profusely thanking Daniel for telling the truth, and then elevates his status in the kingdom. This is such a fascinating insight into the way that nonconformity plays out. Daniel says, "I'm going to be absolutely clear about this. The answer to your dream does not come from me." Why does he remember that? Because every time he sits down to a meal, he is reinforcing that he belongs to Yahweh and not to Nebuchadnezzar. In this political moment of opportunity, he is not going to pull a sleight of hand; he is going to give it straight to Nebuchadnezzar: "This does not come from me. It does not even come from you. It comes from somebody who is so much greater than you that, in fact, that God is the one who has revealed this to me, and that is why I now deliver this to you with authority. Your kingdom is coming down." And Nebuchadnezzar says, "Thank you."

This is rich material! He says "thank you" not because he fails to understand the terror. Nebuchadnezzar identifies with someone who is bearing authentic witness to a greater power than his, which, as we will see in chapter three, is threatening to Nebuchadnezzar. But at the moment he is able to receive it as terrifyingly good news because it is actually grounding his life in reality. As people of nonconformity, our call is to be responsive to, dependent on, and aware of a God who is infinitely beyond our own capacity, and to bring all that into our own lives as aliens and strangers in the world. We bring something Nebuchadnezzar and the soothsayers and chanters simply do not have, which is part of the gift of our nonconformity. We do not have it if we forget our identity, and we do not have it if we do not trust God to demonstrate a reality that is greater than ourselves. We are not the answer, even when we are intensely practicing our nonconformity. No, the God we worship holds the answer and our nonconformity must be constantly oriented toward that God. This becomes exceptionally clear in the Gospels in how Jesus calls us to become kingdom people.

The third chapter of Daniel tells how Nebuchadnezzar builds on the nightmare of chapter two. He says, "*When you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, drum, and entire musical ensemble, you are to fall down and worship the golden statue that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. And if you do not worship the sound of the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, drum, and entire musical ensemble, then I will throw you into a fire." He repeats it four or five times, and then, "Hearing the sound of the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, drum, and entire musical ensemble, they worshipped the golden statue."* However, there were certain Chaldeans who ratted out certain Jews—namely Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and Daniel, whose lives were saved in chapter two, who were promoted over the soothsayers—for not worshipping the golden statue. Nebuchadnezzar, in his characteristic rage, comes to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and screams at them for not bowing down and worshipping the golden statue. He says, "Now, knowing that I am going to throw you into a fire that is seven times hotter than any fire that has ever been, when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, drum, and entire musical ensemble, you shall worship the golden statute that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up."

That moment is extraordinary, and it is built on the assumption of the power of mesmerizing rhythms. This is always what assimilation or conformity does: certain mesmerizing rhythms set in motion cues that tell

us exactly what to do. On many college campuses, when you hear a fight song you know exactly what you are supposed to do. At many public events in the United States, when you hear the national anthem you know what you're supposed to do. This was something Hitler knew and understood and used to demand certain results.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego hear the music but they don't take the cue. The high point is not when they are saved from the fire, but rather when Nebuchadnezzar claims that he owns them ("Who is the God who will deliver you from my hands?") and they respond: "Oh Nebuchadnezzar, you silly little man." Or, in the actual words of the text, "Oh Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to give you a defense in this matter." They are entirely unhooked from the rage, the control, the power, the fear, the dominance, and the threat of Nebuchadnezzar's fury and the fire, and they just live in freedom in his presence: *Oh Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to give you a defense in this matter. Our Lord may deliver us from the fire, or he may not deliver us from the fire, but either way we are not going to bow down and worship the golden statue that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up."* In other words, they live an unhooked life. How can they do that?

My argument is that they do this because they remember who they are. They have practiced with clarity, asking themselves such questions as who are we, what is primary, what is not, who do we worship and who do we not worship? Nebuchadnezzar believes the primary danger is the fire. But to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, the greater danger is idolatry and the thought that they would bow the knee to anyone other than God. Consequently, the fire is just a fire, death is merely death. The greater danger is that we become idolaters, not that we might lose our lives. God may save us or God may not save us, but we are going to live an unhooked life.

I believe that the first three chapters of Daniel present a picture of practicing an identity with relentless persistence. We do not bring to life in exile merely our own competency, our own abilities, our own personalities, and our own gifts. We trust in a God who is more important than any reality that may present itself. We are like Daniel and his three friends, who had the capacity to rehearse, practice, and live unhooked lives free from coercion by the assimilationist forces and powers that, in Nebuchadnezzar's case, absolutely controlled their destiny and life.

This is an image of nonconformity that I would argue continues into the New Testament in the life and ministry of Jesus, who demonstrated a capacity to live a life unhooked from the language, expectations, conformity, and assimilation of both the religious and non-religious people of the time. Jesus presents an image of nonconformity that is vibrant, servant-oriented, humble, and risk-taking. I believe it is grounded in these three chapters of Daniel in a very provocative way.

What will we choose, individually and corporately, as common practices to help us remember our identity? Are we called, either in this moment or in any other moment, to step towards the risks? How do we remember to live in this unhooked way so that we are free to be the agents of God's grace, truth, mercy, and justice in a way that is not controlled by the social circumstances? The great tyranny of the relationship between church and society has always fundamentally been an assimilationist tyranny. The polarization between the Anabaptist and the Reformed tradition has sometimes been around themes of how you handle conformity and how you handle distinction. Those are long and complicated historic debates, and I would say that there are strengths on both the Anabaptist and Reformed sides, so I am not really making an Anabaptist or Reformed argument. I am acknowledging that all of us are prey to many of the same dangers, and we need to find a way to understand and practice our peculiar identity in the peculiar time and place in which we live. The call to live as faithful exiles is at the very center of our call and our vocation.

Improvising Faithfulness: A Brief History of Brethren in Christ Nonconformity

By David Weaver-Zercher*

As I considered my assigned topic for this conference—the history of nonconformity in the Brethren in Christ Church—my mind kept returning to the idea of *improvisation*, a term that brings to mind the performing arts. Think about a jazz concert or improvisational theater, where the musicians or actors perform extemporaneously—or, as some might say, where the performers "make things up as they go along." Like it or not, that is what all of us do in the course of our lives: we are always making things up as we go along, because history is always going along. It is always moving forward.

Still, as any jazz performer can tell you, improvising is not simply doing something in the moment. Rather, it is drawing on a host of techniques and traditions that the performer has reviewed and practiced many times. The context may be new, and the words or music may be different from the night before. Still, the performer is not simply making it up as she goes along.

The same is true of churches, which is to say, throughout its history, the Brethren in Christ Church has improvised faithfulness by drawing on past practices and assumptions, all the while trying to take into account what it knows about the will of God and the context in which it operates.[1] In the end, all conceptions of Christian nonconformity are the result of negotiating the complicated demands of the present. What does it mean for us, in this place and time, to be in the world but not of it?

---

* David Weaver-Zercher is professor of American religious history at Messiah College, and author of *Martyrs Mirror: A Social History* and several books about the Amish.

[1] Throughout this article I typically use the label "Brethren in Christ" to refer to the local and national antecedents of the denomination now known as the Brethren in Christ Church. The use of this label is somewhat anachronistic, however, since the church was known as the "River Brethren" in the decades prior to the Civil War.

Anabaptism and the early Brethren in Christ

It is impossible to consider the history of Brethren in Christ nonconformity without recognizing the church's roots in Anabaptism—the sixteenth-century Reformation tradition that emphasized believers' baptism and gave birth to various expressions of the Mennonite faith.[2] Sixteenth-century Anabaptists were nonconformists in the sense that they felt the established church had lost its way. In their early confessional statements, they went out of their way to set themselves apart, not just from the larger society, but from the churches and the churchly people who followed convention and upheld social norms. The 1527 Brotherly Union, commonly called the Schleitheim Confession, is a clear case in point. The sixth of Schleitheim's seven articles condemns using sword, even in "defense of the good," something most Christians were willing to use in sixteenth-century Europe. And the seventh article, following Jesus' command in the Sermon on the Mount, condemns the swearing of oaths.[3]

In some ways, the Anabaptists' rejection of the oath and the sword was simply a more particular example of a larger principle in the Schleitheim Confession, that of "separation." Article IV of the confession reads like this:

> We have been united concerning the separation that shall take place from the evil and the wickedness which the devil has planted in the world, simply in this: that we [shall] have no fellowship with them.[4]

The confession continues with these words:

> There is nothing else in the world and all creation than good or evil, believing and unbelieving, darkness and light, the world and those who are come out of the world…and none will have part with the other.…Everything which has not been united with our God in Christ is nothing but an abomination, which we should shun.[5]

That is strong separatist language, to be sure. There is no middle ground in that rhetoric, just good and evil, darkness and light. Most contemporary

---

[2] For a brief history of Anabaptism, see J. Denny Weaver, *Becoming Anabaptist: The Origin and Significance of Sixteenth-Century Anabaptism,* 2nd ed. (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 2005).

[3] *The Schleitheim Confession*, trans. and ed. John H. Yoder (Scottdale, PA Herald Press, 1977), 14-18. Jesus condemns oath-swearing in Matthew 5:33-37.

[4] Ibid., 11.

[5] Ibid., 12.

North American Christians do not think of their world in such stark dualisms, though many historians suggest the rhetoric makes sense in view of the way early Anabaptists were persecuted. If we had death sentences hanging over our heads, we might resort to that sort of language as well.[6]

Fast forward a few hundred years to the late eighteenth century and the earliest years of the River Brethren. Most students of Brethren in Christ history believe that the early Brethren were disgruntled Lancaster County Mennonites. [7] While it is true that the early Brethren in Christ were unhappy with some aspects of Lancaster County Mennonitism, their earliest confession, written sometime in the late eighteenth century, suggests they did not wish to discard their Mennonite-informed separatism entirely. In the spirit of Schleitheim, this early Brethren in Christ confession forbids the swearing of oaths, the bearing of the sword, and the holding of civic offices.[8] On the positive side, it instructs church members to solicit community input when making important decisions ("Nobody in important affairs should do anything without brotherly advice, such as marry, or change his dwelling, [or] buy land"). [9] Drawing further from the Anabaptist tradition, the eighteenth-century confession admonishes church members to shun fellow members who had fallen into sin. [10]

Before I move to the nineteenth century, I want to make three observations about the early Brethren in Christ and nonconformity (a word that doesn't appear in the confession, by the way)

- First, the eighteenth-century confession gives the impression that the early Brethren were living in a world they considered adversarial to their faith. It was not persecution they feared, but rather worldly enticements—enticements frequently embraced by other Christians—that would erode their faith.

---

[6] For a consideration of early Anabaptist martyrdom and dualistic rhetoric, see David Weaver-Zercher, *Martyrs Mirror: A Social History* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016), 18, 74-78.

[7] For instance, Carlton O Wittlinger, *Quest for Piety and Obedience: The Story of the Brethren in Christ* (Nappanee, IN: Evangel Press, 1978), 18-19.

[8] For William M. Meikle's translation of this confession, see Wittlinger, *Quest for Piety and Obedience,* 551-54.

[9] Ibid., 553.

[10] Ibid., 553. For an early sixteenth-century Anabaptist rationale for church discipline, see *The Schleitheim Confession*, 10-11.

- Second, one of their overriding concerns was the false assumption, held by some people apparently, that Christians were equipped to make good decisions on their own. Of course, the entire notion of church discipline is rooted in the conviction that the community of believers is wiser than the individuals who make it up. In other words, the practice of church discipline assumes that individuals need the church's help when making decisions, and they need the church's help to live faithful lives.
- Third, there is nothing in the eighteenth-century confession of faith about dress. We do not know how much emphasis the early Brethren placed on distinctive dress, though most historians think that emphasis grew as the nineteenth century ran its course.

Nonconformity and nineteenth-century Brethren in Christ Life

In the middle of the nineteenth century, North American Anabaptists underwent what one historian has called a sorting out process, with some of them choosing a way that has since been called the "old order," that is, the way of radical social nonconformity.[11]

The Old Order Amish are the most renowned example of this distinctive way of life. Let me identify just a few social traits that characterize the Old Order Amish even today, the roots of which extend back to the nineteenth century and sometimes much earlier:

- the Amish worship in homes, not church buildings;
- Amish worship language is a mix of German and Pennsylvania Dutch;
- Amish ministers greet one another with a holy kiss;
- the Amish dress in plain-colored, uniform dress; the women wear head coverings;
- the Amish refuse many forms of modern technology, including cars and televisions;
- the Amish shun wayward, unrepentant church members.[12]

---

[11] Theron F. Schlabach, *Peace, Faith, Nation: Mennonites and Amish in Nineteenth-Century America* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1988), 11.

[12] For a consideration of Old Order Amish religious practices, see Donald B. Kraybill, Steven M. Nolt, and David L. Weaver-Zercher, *The Amish Way: Patient Faith in a Perilous World* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2010).

It is not inconceivable that the Brethren in Christ could have retained some of these practices, all of which were part of their early nineteenth-century experience. In fact, the church's most profound disagreement in the nineteenth century, one that led to two permanent splits, pertained to one of these things: the place of Sunday worship. In the 1850s, a Brethren in Christ bishop by the name of Matthias Brinser decided to take the radical step of building a meetinghouse for his Dauphin County congregation. His decision to do this aroused consternation, particularly among some Lancaster County churches. Lancaster County leaders met with Brinser and counseled him to stop construction on his meetinghouse; and when Brinser rejected their counsel, they excommunicated him and all of his supporters, citing Matthew 18:15-18 as support for that action. [13]

Of course, that is not the end of the story. As historian Carlton Wittlinger notes, River Brethren meetinghouses appeared in Woodbury, Pennsylvania, and Canton, Ohio, within the next decade. By the early 1870s—that is, about 15 years after Brinser was excommunicated—Franklin County Brethren in Christ congregations began to build meetinghouses, and they appeared in Lancaster County shortly thereafter. 14 By that time, the 1870s, a few of the more conservative Brethren in Christ congregations—now known as the Old Order River Brethren—had gone their own way. Today, as Wittlinger explains, the plain dress, beards, and house and barn services of the Old Order River Brethren provide glimpses of Brethren in Christ life before "late nineteenth-century innovations" transformed the Brethren in Christ into a more world-conforming denomination. [15]

And what were these late nineteenth-century innovations? They were, for the most part, innovations that other socially assimilating Anabaptist groups embraced as the nineteenth century ran its course: revivalism, missions, both in urban areas and abroad, and Sunday school. [16]

I recently gave a lecture for the bicentennial of Slate Hill Mennonite Church, which is located near Camp Hill, Pennsylvania, and is part of the Lancaster Mennonite Conference. As far as the advent of Sunday school

---

[13] For an account of this controversy, see Wittlinger, *Quest for Piety and Obedience,* 134-138.

[14] Ibid., 137-38.

[15] Ibid, 134.

[16] For this trend in other Anabaptist churches, see James C. Juhnke, *Vision, Doctrine, War: Mennonite Identity and Organization in America, 1890-1930* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1989), 106-188.

is concerned, Slate Hill's story is practically the same as the Brethren in Christ story. In 1871, the Lancaster Mennonite Conference gave its okay to local congregations to start Sunday schools, as long as a local church was unanimous in wanting it. [17] Five years later, in 1876, the Brethren in Christ General Conference gave its okay to a Brethren in Christ congregation in Ohio to begin a Sunday school. By the mid-1880s, Sunday schools were relatively common throughout the denomination. [18]

We look back on those days and laugh, or at least we wonder: what could possibly be wrong with Sunday school? Our concern today is that church members have little interest in Sunday school at all, except perhaps for their kids. Back then, however, Sunday school was suspect because it opened the airwaves to competing authorities. Who knows what might be advocated in a Sunday school setting? Moreover, Sunday school was one of those things that "worldly" churches did, those churches that added programs the New Testament church knew nothing about, churches that were happily embracing the assumptions and activities of the larger world.

In some ways, then, the latter half of the nineteenth-century appears to be a time when the Brethren in Christ rejected their nonconformist ways. Or to say it a little differently: it was a time when the Brethren in Christ began to look like other Protestant denominations in North America. Church buildings, Sunday schools, revivalism, missions—these innovations pushed the Brethren in Christ toward the mainstream of North American churches.

But there were exceptions to this, primarily in areas that, in their view, were frivolous aspects of industrial, mass-marketed America. The automobile was, by and large, not seen as frivolous, and the Brethren accepted it quickly. But other technologies and entertainments were embraced much more slowly. Radios, motion pictures, and even photography were considered suspect, as were parades, membership in civic clubs, and the buying of life insurance. [19]

Nothing, however, raised as many concerns as dress and other matters of personal appearance. Again, we do not know just how distinctive the

---

[17] John Landis Ruth, *The Earth is the Lord's: A Narrative History of the Lancaster Mennonite Conference* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 2001), 593-594.

[18] Wittlinger, *Quest for Piety and Obedience*, 207-213.

[19] For consideration of the automobile and other emerging technologies and entertainments, see Wittlinger, *Quest for Piety and Obedience,* 342-347.

Brethren in Christ looked in the early part of their history. What we do know is this: they looked increasingly peculiar as the nineteenth century gave way to the twentieth century, a bodily expression of nonconformity that produced two competing urges. On the one hand, some church members raised questions about the necessity of plain dress as it was practiced by the Brethren in Christ. Was it necessary? Or might it actually be counterproductive to the church's evangelistic efforts?[20] That impulse, among other things, compelled others to conclude that the church needed more formalized standards for dress.

One of the supporters of more formalized dress codes was O. B. Ulery, who was best known in the denomination as an advocate of entire sanctification.[21] Here we see how the denomination's perfectionist Holiness theology complemented the church's commitment to nonconformity. In 1936, one year before the denomination took up the issue of uniform dress—in other words, not just plain dress, but a specified, church-mandated plain dress—Ulery published an article in the Evangelical Visitor titled "Separation from the World (in Dress)." In it, he cited two sins that gave rise to fashionable dress. On the one hand, there was lust, which according to Ulery meant cutting off fabric until "we have the deplorable rise and spread of nudism." In addition to lust, pride was also a problem, because prideful people array themselves in order to "excite envy of others and attract admiration and flattery. [22]

Ulery and his allies felt it was too hard for individuals to draw these lines on their own, leading to the adoption of denomination-wide standards for dress. These standards, which understandably differed for men and women, were first published in the denomination's 1937 Statement of Faith and Doctrine.

For the Brethren –

1. Suits of plain material with the erect collar are considered our uniform.

---

[20] For an expression of this concern, see Morris Sider's biography of the Chicago-based missionary, Sarah Hoover Bert, in *Nine Portraits: Brethren in Christ Biographical Sketches* (Nappanee, IN: Evangel Press, 1978), 39.

[21] Ibid., 325-328.

[22] O. B. Ulery, "Separation from the World (in Dress)," *Evangelical Visitor,* January 20, 1936, 21.

2. The wearing of silver, gold, precious stones, or other forms of ornament and apparel for adornment (such as the tie) is not consistent with the principles of separation and nonconformity as taught in the Word of God.

For the Sisters –

1. Dresses of plain material which modestly cover the body and include the cape are considered our uniform.
2. The wearing of silver, gold, precious stones or other forms of ornament and apparel for adornment, or artificial efforts to beautify or bedeck the face or hair, are likewise not consistent with the principles of separation and nonconformity as taught in the Word of God."[23]

In his history of the Brethren in Christ Church, Carlton Wittlinger argues that there was some ambiguity in these prescriptions. Were they meant as worthy goals for members—akin to daily Bible reading, for instance—or were they hard-and-fast membership standards that were to be enforced at the local church level? In any case, Wittlinger says, some churches embraced them as standards that were to be strictly enforced.[24] For his part, Ulery argued that plain dress was a welcome aid to evangelism. "In all my travels," he wrote, "I have never once had its religious significance mistaken, but again and again it has opened the way for a spiritual testimony and conversation." [25]

The Brethren in Christ in the twentieth century

Again, this was 1937. The dress standards can be found in the denomination's Statement of Faith and Doctrine, which was adopted that year, as Article VIII. For our purposes, however, Article VII may be more pertinent, because Article VII was the one that spelled out the broader principle of nonconformity. Actually, the Article is titled "Separation," though the noun "nonconformity" appears in it twice. The "Separation" Article is long, nearly 800 words, 29 of which read as follows: "Nonconformity not

[23] Constitution and By-Laws, 1937, *Statement of Faith and Doctrine*, 23-24.
[24] Wittlinger, *Quest for Piety and Obedience*, 355.
[25] Ulery, "Separation from the World," 21.

only implies separation from the world, but also definite separation unto Christ. There is no merit in being different, except it be for the glory of God."[26]

Let me jump ahead 28 years, to 1965. In 1965, General Conference was held in Upland, California, and my family loaded into our station wagon to make the trip west. A few nights after General Conference concluded, my family camped in the Sierra Nevada Mountains where, even in July, nighttime temperatures can drop into the 30s. That night, my mom, who is now 91 years old, did something she had never done in her life: she wore wool slacks that she had purchased in anticipation of a cold night spent in a tent.

As luck would have it—and you can decide whether God had any role in this—she ran into a Brethren in Christ couple on the way to the shower house. And not just any Brethren in Christ couple, but one from a conservative Brethren in Christ congregation that was still committed to the denomination's 1937 dress standard. My mom recalls that all she could muster was a comment on the weather: "It's really chilly tonight, isn't it?"

"There is no merit in being different, except it be for the glory of God." I doubt that carefully phrased line was in my mom's mind that evening. She was probably thinking, "There is no merit in being different if it means your legs are chilly." Or perhaps she was thinking: "If it's okay with John that I wear slacks, I'm going to do it." John, of course, was my dad, and he was of the generation of Brethren in Christ leaders who, over the course of two or three decades, sloughed off various nonconformist practices.

As legend would have it, one catalyst for this change was a meeting of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) in Indianapolis in April 1950, and more specifically, a late night conversation among a handful of Brethren in Christ church leaders about the failings of their denomination.[27] Why was their denomination failing to grow like other evangelical churches represented at the NAE meeting? What was holding back the Brethren in Christ and, in some cases, causing its young people to turn away? In a General Conference sermon he delivered in two months later, one of those Brethren in Christ leaders, John N. Hostetter, identified the problem,

---

[26] Constitution and By-Laws, 1937, *Statement of Faith and Doctrine*, 21.

[27] For an account of this meeting, see Wittlinger, *Quest for Piety and Obedience*, 479-481.

which he identified as "legalism." Hostetter borrowed this word from a recently published book entitled *The Small Sects in America*, which placed the Brethren in Christ in a category titled "legalistic" groups.[28] Hostetter said he didn't know the author's basis for placing the Brethren in Christ in this category, but he did think it was worth considering the fact that an outsider had looked at the Brethren in Christ Church and had come to that conclusion. Moving beyond the book itself, Hostetter urged his listeners to consider this theological point: "it requires less sacrifice to be legal than to be spiritual."[29]

That is an interesting point, and rather nicely said, but it is hard to know what Hostetter meant by it. Not only did he fail to define legalism; he did not say what it meant to be spiritual, which allowed him to avoid the dilemma that, from the very beginning of the Brethren in Christ Church, being spiritual meant maintaining certain practices ("scriptural practices," in Brethren in Christ parlance) that less committed Christians deemed optional.

If nothing else, however, Hostetter set the stage for reevaluating nonconformity, a stage assumed a year later by his brother, C. N. Hostetter, Jr. In his 1951 General Conference sermon, C. N. reiterated some of his brother's concerns, substituting the word "traditionalism" for John's use of the word "legalism." Careful to avoid the sensitive issue of dress, C. N. reminded his listeners that certain traditions (e.g., the style of carriage tops) had "hindered the work of God" by spawning controversies not worth having. Like his brother John, C. N. noted that the denomination's basic problem was spiritual. The challenge of Brethren in Christ leaders, he said, was to encourage people to live in a way that (quoting Paul in Acts 20) they "count not their lives dear unto themselves." C. N. concluded his sermon by connecting deep spirituality to a freedom from covetousness, the result of which was generosity: "If we lead [our brothers and sisters] deep enough with God," he said, "they, like Paul, will not covet silver or gold, but will labor, share, and give for the Master." [30]

---

[28] Elmer T. Clark, *The Small Sects in America* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1949), 211-212.

[29] J. N. Hostetter, "General Conference Sermon," in *Minutes of the Eightieth Annual General Conference of Brethren in Christ* (Nappanee, IN: E. V. Publishing House, 1950), 12-13.

[30] C. N. Hostetter, "General Conference Sermon," in *Minutes of the Eighty-First Annual General Conference of Brethren in Christ* (Nappanee, IN: E. V. Publishing House, 1951), 12.

The Hostetter brothers' rhetoric scratched a sociological itch at the right time. Interacting more fully with other Christian groups, and increasingly leaving the farm for middle class professions, the Brethren in Christ were primed for improvising, that is, primed for thinking about the denomination's "scriptural practices" in a new way. For the next decade, the word legalism would be invoked frequently to contest or at least mollify many of the church's time-honored practices—not just plain dress, but the holy kiss, the wearing of wedding rings, the purchase of life insurance, and even participation in the military, which after 1958, was no longer considered a matter of church discipline.[31] For Ulery, these sorts of traditional practices could be justified, at least in part, on the basis of spawning spiritual conversations. For others, however, these practices seemed to stand in the way of church growth, and for that reason they were traditions to be left behind.

Conclusion

Let me fast forward, then, to the present. Here is what the current Brethren in Christ *Articles of Faith and Doctrine* say about nonconformity:

Those who follow Christ are strangers and pilgrims in the world, called to share the light of Christ. In the renewing of our minds by God's grace, we resist conformity to our fallen, broken world. Nonconformity calls us to reject the world's unrestrained materialism, its sensualism, and its self-centeredness. Rather we seek to express the values of God's kingdom by a lifestyle of modesty and simplicity. [32]

Recall once again 1937, when the church had an 800-word statement on "Separation," followed by another 600-700 words on "Christian Apparel." Not only is the current denominational statement much shorter—fewer than 75 words—I suspect that many Brethren in Christ Church members have never even read it. I could be wrong about that, but even if I am, there is not a pressing reason to read it today. The ideas are broad and open to interpretation, and whether we like it or not, individual church members

---

[31] For relaxing disciplinary procedures regarding military service, see "Report of the Peace, Relief, and Service Committee," in *Minutes of the Eighty-Eighth Annual General Conference of Brethren in Christ* (Nappanee, IN: E. V. Publishing House, 1958), 42-43.

[32] The denomination's current *Articles of Faith and Doctrine* can be found at http://www.bic-church.org/about/articlesoffaith.asp; these words can be found in the section titled "The Holy Spirit and the Church."

have been granted a lot of latitude for how they put these principles into practice.

I now attend a Mennonite church, but I can fully affirm this statement. I like to think I am rejecting the world's "unrestrained materialism"—our house is fairly modest by contemporary American standards—but you might disagree if I told you how much money I spend every spring for my boys' baseball bats, not to mention the cell phones they carry around in their pockets.

To return to the metaphor of improvisation, I sometimes feel that my wife and I are making things up as we go along. But what choice do we have? I remember talking to Ronald J. Sider some years after he wrote *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*, which encouraged people to live more simply and to give more generously.[33] Although some critics charged Sider with soul-killing legalism, Sider believed his book's approach to wealth and generosity was absolutely biblical. In any case, Sider admitted to me that having children had made him rethink how much of his paycheck he could actually give away. He, too, was improvising, making it up as he went along. It is what we have to do.

Still, making it up as we go along is not the same as going it alone. Ron and Arbutus Sider may have been stuck with improvising their way through life, but they were transparent with trusted friends about their finances. I may be stuck with improvising faithfulness, but I nonetheless believe that church attendance matters; that having honest, Christian friends matters; that denominational discernment matters; and that denominational memory matters. I try to partake of all those activities, because together they shape my life in ways it would not be shaped if I was just making it up on my own.

This, I like to think, is at least one area where I find myself in line with the nonconformity of the eighteenth-century River Brethren, who were skeptical of Christians who lived their lives as if the counsel of their Christian brothers and sisters was irrelevant. Should I follow my own lights when offered a new job? Should I trust my own judgment on what God

---

[33] Ronald J. Sider, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1977).

wants from me? Should I simply fall back on Psalm 37:4, "Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart"—a verse that contemporary American Christians use to justify just about everything under the sun? Or should I listen to those who know God, who know me, and who are willing to be honest with me? As inheritors of the Brethren in Christ tradition, I hope we would agree on how I should answer these questions.

The Liberty of Holiness: Nonconformity as Belonging

By Gerald J. Mast*

Before I was baptized into the Zion Conservative Mennonite Church in Benton, Ohio at the age of 16, my parents took me to the J. C. Penney store to purchase a new suit for my baptism day. After finding a navy blue suit that fit me well, we took the suit home and my Mom called up the seamstress who would convert the suit coat into what we called a straight cut or plain coat. I still remember the day we went to the seamstress appointment just a block from my house, where I put on the worldly coat for the last time, while Mrs. Weaver took her scissors and snipped away around my collar. When we returned a week later, my worldly lapel collar coat had been transformed into a plain coat—or, as people in my church sometimes jokingly remarked, a circumcised coat. A few weeks later, the waters of baptism poured down over my head and the plain collar of my new suit, as I renounced Satan and the world and all works of darkness, promising to submit to Christ and his Word and to support the church and its teachings. And then I was offered the right hand of fellowship, raised like Jesus Christ to newness of life, pronounced a brother in the church, and given the kiss of peace.

This baptismal memory serves as the touchstone for the central claim about nonconformity that I wish to make in this essay. In the beauty of holiness, Jesus Christ liberates us from the bondage of this world by making us members of the household of God. In Jesus Christ, our bodies are washed in baptism, raised to life and kissed with peace. In Jesus Christ, we are given the hand of fellowship and made members of Christ's body. Thus, what our

---

* Gerald J. Mast is professor of communication at Bluffton University, Bluffton, Ohio, and is the author of numerous books including *Go to Church, Change the World: Christian Community as Calling.* He is also the series editor for *Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History.*

Anabaptist and holiness traditions have called biblical nonconformity is a gift of baptism and belonging, more than a code of purity[1]

Those of us who claim the heritage of Anabaptist holiness have not always grasped the great gospel gift that we have received in the teachings of our faith traditions about nonconformity. This is because we have sometimes mistakenly understood these practices to be demands of the law rather than habits of freedom. Practices like dressing plain or avoiding worldly amusements were often presented as rules to follow that prove we are holy people. And we grew tired of the graceless fights in our churches over the details of this nonconformity, whether we were debating women's veilings or arguing about how to love our enemies. It is right to reject this legalistic approach to Christianity.[2]

And so, we must be clear that any effort to reclaim holiness and nonconformity should begin with the basic evangelical premise that salvation is a gift of God's grace through Jesus Christ, not of our works, lest anyone should boast. While we were still God's enemies, he reconciled us to himself by the death of his Son and, even more surely, saved us by his Son's life (Romans 5:10). This is good news that we can share with our neighbors and offer in the church's mission to the world. This good news does not require the sectarian protection of carefully patrolled boundary lines between church and world.[3]

And yet, surely, the witness of the Word of God is that this good news includes the liberation of our bodies from the enslavements of sin and the bondage of empire. If we confess our sins, he is not only faithful and just to forgive us our sins but also to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (I John 1:9). As both Anabaptist and holiness traditions have affirmed, through the work of Jesus Christ, we are justified and sanctified—made whole and

---

[1] The classic 20th century Mennonite work on nonconformity is by J. C. Wenger, *Separation Unto God* (Scottdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1951). Wenger incorporates numerous ideas from the holiness tradition, especially highlighting the writings of John Wesley. This book continues to be reprinted by conservative Mennonites.

[2] For a critique of nonconformity as a doctrine that is primarily negative and legalistic, see Paul Mininger, "The Limitations of Nonconformity" *Proceedings of the Fourth Mennonite World Conference* (Akron, Pa.: Mennonite Central Committee, 1950), 55-62.

[3] I have elaborated on how to offer a nonconformist ethic of peace in an evangelical way in Gerald J. Mast, "True Evangelical Faith and the Gospel of Peace," *The Mennonite*, October 2011, 16-19.

restored to full humanity, no longer defined by the sin that tempts and corrupts us—whether that sin be the addictions of consumer culture or the hatreds of political partisanship.[4]

The remainder of this essay explores how we might recover the beauty of holiness that our Anabaptist and holiness faith heritage stresses, without being wounded by the legalism of boundary maintenance that all too often accompanies the enthusiasm for holiness. The exploration begins with a critical clue to what we are missing in our Western and North American reason-based understanding of the Christian life. This clue is found in the lengthy Psalm 119, which expresses delight in and desire for the commandments of God with aphoristic poetry like this: your decrees are my delight; I shall walk at liberty, for I have sought your precepts; I find my delight in your commandments, because I love them; your statutes have been my songs wherever I make my home; oh, how I love your law, I incline my heart to perform your statutes; my soul is consumed with longing for your ordinances at all times.[5]

These poetic statements express a biblical knowledge that may seem strange to us when we attend to what they are saying. This is because the verses in Psalm 119 bring together two dimensions of human experience that we tend to regard as opposed to one another: obeying rules and expressing desire. We think of rules as existing to restrain our desire. We assume the law rightly forces us to act in ways we'd rather not.

But this opposition between commandment and desire is missing in Psalm 119. Each of the 176 verses in this Psalm echoes the basic purpose of the law as described again and again in the books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy: to remember the Lord our God who brought us out of Egypt from slavery. This law is for liberty. Somehow, in the Hebrew Bible, we can want rules; we can desire commandments; we can be liberated from slavery by a law.

---

[4] For a discussion of sin in Anabaptist theology, see Gerald J. Mast, "Sin and Failure in Anabaptist Theology," in J. Denny Weaver, editor, *John Howard Yoder: Radical Theologian.* (Eugene, Ore.: Cascade Books, 2014), 351-55.

[5] Walter Brueggemann writes that in Psalm 119, "The Torah is no burden but a mode of joyous existence." See Walter Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984), 40.

Moreover, because it provides for us the desires of our heart, this biblical law is not imposed on us; it is offered as a gift of the covenant God makes with God's people. We do not have to follow this law. It is given to us, through Jesus Christ, as it was given to Moses on Sinai, as a practice of deliverance. Jesus confirms this biblical vision of the law as friend when he is accused of doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath: "The Sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27).

So, the disciplines of nonconformity are intrinsic to the good news of the gospel, not just rules to follow if we want to be especially good Christians. God's salvation both redeems us and regenerates us. And yet, we will consistently fail to receive biblical nonconformity as gospel unless we challenge our dualistic habits of thinking that divide mind and body and therefore oppose flesh to spirit. In what follows, I advocate three mutually supporting routes to a biblical practice of nonconformity that is desirable rather than demanding—a beautiful discipline—the discipline of holiness.

Circumcising our hearts

The first path to a loving law involves what John Wesley called in one of his famous sermons "the circumcision of the heart." In this sermon, Wesley describes the circumcision of the heart as a "habitual disposition of the soul…which is termed holiness."[6] This disposition involves both a humble recognition of our human limits and a hopeful reception of God's help through the Spirit. Wesley says that when "deep humility" is joined to "lively hope" our hearts can be cleansed from unrighteousness. But humility and hope are not enough: "If thou wilt be perfect, add to all these, charity; add love, and thou hast the circumcision of the heart."[7]

Wesley gets biblical holiness exactly right here because he connects the habits of humility and hope with the affection or love that can animate these habits. This is the formula for biblical holiness: humility and hope infused with love. Humility makes space for God to work; hope anticipates what God will do; love is the passion that drives our humility and hope. Wesley

---

[6] John Wesley, *Sermons on Several Occasions*. (London: Epworth Press, 1944), 153.
[7] Ibid., 156.

makes it clear that this love that drives holiness is the love of God: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength."

But for Wesley this love of God is not posed against human desire or the pleasure of affection. Loving God "does not forbid us (as some have strangely imagined) to take pleasure in anything but God."[8] Following Augustine, Wesley insists that loving God is the one perfect good that does not exclude loving God's creatures: "Desire other things, so far as they tend to this. Love the creature, as it leads to the Creator."[9]

Christian philosopher James K.A. Smith develops this Wesleyan point eloquently in a recent book entitled You Are What You Love. In this book he critiques what he calls an intellectualist model of Christian faith that imagines the Christian disciple primarily as a "learner who is acquiring more information about God through the scriptures."[10] While learning about God and the way of Jesus Christ is one dimension of discipleship, this knowledge does not automatically translate into the godly actions of a holy life. We are capable of listening to a powerful sermon in church or a convincing presentation at a study conference, deciding that we want to act differently, but then forgetting all about it before the day is over. According to Smith, this is evidence that we cannot "think our way to holiness."[11]

Smith urges us to abandon the premise that we human beings are primarily thinkers and to accept instead the realization that humans are first of all lovers. We are defined less by what we know and more by what we love. The transformation of our lives takes place through the transformation of our affections, of our imaginations, of our longings.

In making this point, Smith rejects the distinction Christians often make between agape and eros. Our love for God as expressed in our human affections is not opposed to eros; rather agape love should be regarded as "rightly ordered eros"—the bending or training of our human desires

---

[8] Ibid., 157.

[9] Ibid.

[10] James K.A. Smith, *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit.* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Brazos Press, 2016), 4.

[11] Ibid., 5.

[12] Ibid., 10.

toward the love of God.[12] Such an ordering of our desires around the love of God is the way we acquire good moral habits or virtues, like humility and generosity and kindness.

Smith draws on Aristotle and Augustine to explain how this training of our desires takes place. First, we can follow or imitate another person who displays the virtuous bending of desire—saints, heroes, and other teachers who show us how to follow Jesus Christ in our expression of love and desire. Second, we learn by practice, just like an athlete or a musician who hones a skill by performing it again and again until achieving excellence. Smith sees Christian worship as an example of such practice that reshapes our desires toward the love of God and the way of Jesus Christ. He writes that worship is therefore the "heart of discipleship."[13] This is because "learning to love (God) takes practice."[14]

I can illustrate how this process of bending desire toward the love of God works by drawing on a personal experience. I'm quite in love with my wife Carrie, with whom I share a covenant relationship that orders our human desires for intimacy through a commitment to fidelity. Partly because of this covenant relationship by which my desire for Carrie is bent toward the love of God, I have become involved, primarily because of her influence, with a community farm in which I have learned through practice to love the work of organic gardening. This is a huge deal because the only thing about gardening that I naturally enjoy is eating the food that we harvest. I don't naturally care to be involved in plowing or planting or cultivating or weeding or mulching or naturally fertilizing—otherwise known as manure spreading. I don't really care for harvesting unless it involves crops like tomatoes or corn that are at an arm's length so I don't need kneel or stoop or squat. Frankly, I'm also not that excited about preparing food or cleaning up after meals.

Yet, after nearly eight years of gardening with my wife and our farming friends, I have found that my desire for food has expanded and deepened. By imitating my wife Carrie and by practicing the arts of gardening, I have come to enjoy growing and harvesting the food we eat, at least on good

---

[13] Ibid, 25.
[14] Ibid.

days. And I have begun to prefer eating food grown in our garden with my family around our dining room table to the shortcut pleasures of eating out. One of our family meal rituals after we thank God for the food is to name all of the parts of our meal that we grew on the farm. And we have so much food for which to be thankful; this garden produces more food than we are able to consume ourselves and so we are able to share our abundance with neighbors and friends. In this way, through the disciplines of gardening, I find my hunger for good food and my affection for my wife to be bending toward the love of God. Gardening contributes to the habitual disposition of my soul and to the circumcising of my heart.

Raising our bodies

A second path to loving law is to offer our bodies to be raised with Christ as living sacrifices, acceptable to God and therefore made holy for service. This path is closely tied to the first path since circumcising the heart affirms the power of love and desire, which arises from our experience as bodily creatures.

In baptism, our bodies are raised from under water to new life in Christ. Just as the earthly Christ was raised up to life, so our bodies are raised to walk in newness of life. This baptismal raising recalls not only the raising of Christ but also God's raising of Adam from dirt formed into the image of God and breathed by God into a living body. Our human bodies are what Nancey Murphy calls spirited bodies or God breathed bodies, temples of the Holy Spirit.[15]

We are invited by the Apostle Paul in the classic nonconformity text of Romans 12 to present our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God, which is our spiritual worship. We are called to not be conformed to the world but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, so that we can prove what is good, acceptable, and perfect. This passage suggests that our bodily nonconformity is intrinsic to our inner renewal. Drew Hart paraphrases this passage in his new book, *Trouble I've Seen*, as follows: "Our

[15] Nancey Murphy, *Bodies and Souls, or Spirited Bodies?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), ix.

bodies, and what we do with them, actually matter. We are not disembodied souls, and God cares about more than our spiritual lives. God says, put your body on the line!"[16]

Hart goes on to invite us to reject with our bodies the rituals and liturgies of American civil religion and to place our bodies in confrontation with the established imperial powers, following the same path of nonviolent confrontation that Jesus took in the temple. Hart's account of bodily protest against the social and political iniquities of our society does not simply explain bodily protest as strategic—as a way to change public policy or to get attention—but also as the disciplining of our thoughts and affections. Routinely resisting the imperial powers is a practice that brings about our conformity to Christ, rather than to the alignments of race, gender, and immigrant status by which these powers seek to define our bodies and to divide us from one another.

Early Anabaptist writer Pilgram Marpeck explains that our outer actions and inner spirits are witnesses together to the truth and holiness of God. He insists that inner witness is not more essential than the outer witness; that is, our outward actions are not merely visible signs of a more authentic inner truth—which is the way we are sometimes inclined to describe baptism or the Lord's Supper. For Christianity, the invisible inner faith is not more real than the outer display of faith. Marpeck writes, for example, that "baptism is an externally offered and inwardly given truth" and that "inward and outward obedience flow together."[17]

Embracing the holiness of our bodies leads us to reject what J. Cameron Carter calls the Gnosticism of whiteness by which we seek to escape the color and flesh of our bodies by flight into the abstractions of reason. This point extends the argument that James Smith makes about holy change being rooted more in the shape of our desires than in the conviction of our ideas. Carter shows how the definition of whiteness as a kind of absence of color and flesh and history is rooted in the early Christian theological

---

[16] Drew G. I. Hart, *Trouble I've Seen: Changing the Way the Church Views Racism*. (Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press, 2016), 139.

[17] Walter Klaassen, Werner Packull, and John Rempel, trans., *Later Writings by Pilgram Marpeck and his Circle*. (Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 1999), 79-81.

[18] J. Cameron Carter, *Race: A Theological Account*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 22.

struggle about how to cope with Jesus' Jewish body.[18]

The Gnostics wanted to make Jesus into a disembodied beautiful idea—an abstraction safely located in the mind alone and available only to intellectuals. Orthodox Christian theology, as shaped by second century writers and teachers like Irenaeus, insisted that salvation comes through the body and blood of Jesus Christ, and thus that salvation is of the Jews.[19] In other words, our Christian experience of salvation connects the flesh of the historical Jesus Christ who was executed on a cross in first century Palestine, with the Hebrew struggle for liberation from Egypt and empire. Our worship of the God of Jesus Christ is a worship of the God of Abraham and Sarah, of Isaac and Jacob, and of Hannah and Esther.

Carter makes a complex and nuanced argument rooted in a careful reading of primary sources from the early church fathers through the development of modern Christian theology to show that this early church struggle with Gnosticism never entirely disappeared from the church. At the risk of oversimplifying his argument, we could put it this way: whenever Christian theologians and teachers and pastors speak about salvation and godliness primarily in terms of concepts and beliefs to grasp rather than as a life to live, they flirt with this Gnostic vision that evacuates the gospel of its color and body and history.[20] To put it more positively, embracing the Jewishness of Jesus' body is an important step toward accepting the particularities of our own bodies as being made holy by God. When we embrace Jesus' Jewish body we discover the holiness of our own specific bodies, and we learn to speak, as Carter puts it, "with theological imagination from within the crises of life and death rather than in scholastic universes."[21] In other words, we speak and act as vulnerable human bodies who bear witness to God's holiness, to God's love and care for the whole creation, to God's presence amidst bodies that suffer. Or put another way, if we want to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, we need to leave the comfort of the pastor's study, as well as the professor's office, to present our bodies in service: whether that means showing up at a Mennonite Disaster Service work site or at a Black Lives Matter protest, or at a children's services agency

---

[19] Ibid.,23-35.
[20] Ibid., 311.
[21] Ibid., 377.

where foster parents and adoptive parents are needed. It might also mean caring for the creation by weeding the garden rather than spraying chemicals on it or cleaning out the manure shed rather than using synthetic fertilizer.

Belonging to Christ

The third path to loving is our belonging to Jesus Christ. This relationship to Jesus is not primarily an abstraction, not an attachment to an imaginary friend or Savior, not simply a matter of belief. In baptism, we have been made members of Christ's body. In Jesus Christ, as the writer to the Ephesians puts it in chapter two, "we who once had been far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ." We who are Gentiles have been brought together with Jews because in Jesus' flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility between us, creating one new humanity, and reconciling both groups to God in one body through the cross.[22] As a result, we are no longer strangers and aliens but citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God (Ephesians 2:11-21).

This passage in Ephesians displays in such a focused way the social and communal holiness that appears throughout Paul's writings. Our holiness and nonconformity is not primarily an individual matter, not a personal heroic display of Christian good works or avoidances of iniquity. In Jesus Christ we are being built together into a dwelling place for God. The very concrete good news here is that the holiness of our bodies is being displayed in us as members of the body who are being built together in Christ. Again, this is not an abstraction. It is what happens when we go to church and sing and worship and teach Sunday school and bring food to potlucks and give money and service to the ministries of the church. And yes, we are being built together in Christ when we accept committee assignments.[23] We are

---

[22] N.T. Wright, *Justification: God's Plan and Paul's Vision.* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 168-69.

[23] Gerald J. Mast, *Go to Church, Change the World: Christian Community as Calling* (Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press, 2011), 99-100.

holy together.

But this communal holiness is not a project of withdrawal from the world for the sake of sectarian purity. The holiness of God's people bears witness to the holiness of the creation that God is restoring.

One of the most profound statements about the church's witness to the intrinsic holiness of the world is found in the writings of Menno Simons where he criticizes capital punishment. Here are Menno's words.

It would hardly become a true Christian ruler to shed blood. For this reason. If the transgressor should truly repent before his God and be reborn of Him, he would then also be a chosen saint and child of God, a fellow partaker of grace, a spiritual member of the Lord's body, sprinkled with his precious blood and anointed with his Holy Ghost, a living grain of the Bread of Christ and an heir to eternal life; and for such a one to be hanged on the gallows, put on the wheel, placed on the stake, or in any manner be hurt in body or goods by another Christian, who is of one heart, spirit, and soul with him, would look somewhat strange and unbecoming in the light of the compassionate, merciful, kind nature, disposition, spirit, and example of Christ, the meek Lamb—which example He has commanded all His chosen children to follow.[24]

What is moving about this passage even more than the critique of capital punishment is Simons' account of how belonging to the body of Christ enables us to regard all of our neighbors and even those we regard as enemies to be persons who God seeks to redeem, potentially chosen saints and children of God. We are invited therefore to see in everyone we meet the same potential that God sees to be made living grains of Christ and heirs to eternal life.

In other words, for Simons, loving our enemies rather than hurting or killing them is an act of evangelism. Or we can say it another way. The presence of God's holy reconciling people in the world is like the highway of holiness described in Isaiah 35, which is for God's people: the unclean shall not travel on it. But this highway of holiness reflects the holy renewal of the creation and the creatures that surround it. The wilderness and the dry land

---

[24] J.C. Wenger, editor, and Leonard Verduin, translator, *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1956), 920-21.

[25] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*. (New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1954), 27.

will be glad; like the crocus it will blossom abundantly. The eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf stopped. Waters shall break forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes (Isaiah 35).

Belonging to the body of Christ helps us to see the potential for holy belonging and renewal that exists all around us. And at the same time, we recognize that holiness of the church is not yet fully accomplished; the holiness of God's people is also still a matter of potential, of future possibility, not just present fulfillment. Anabaptists have sometimes claimed the text from Ephesians 5:27 about the church being a bride of Christ without spot or wrinkle to be a description of the faithful church as it already exists. But this text claims instead that the church is being made holy by the service of Jesus Christ, being cleansed with the washing of water by the word, so as to present the church to himself in splendor, without a spot or a wrinkle. We as the bride of Christ are being prepared for a presentation to the bridegroom that will be made at the great marriage supper of the Lamb described in the book of Revelation. But that great marriage supper is yet to be, even though we are able to have great potlucks on earth.

So, as Bonhoeffer puts it so well in his book *Life Together*, the community of Christ does not exist as a human achievement but as a holy gift of God. It is not an ideal but a divine reality. We are bound together by faith, not experience. Our unity is in Christ, not in the agreements we negotiate with one another. Bonhoeffer describes how some Christian communities disintegrate because they arise from what he calls a "wish-dream" of what the church should be like. This wish dream is perhaps like the intellectualist model of Christian faith that James Smith challenges or the disembodied Gnostic theology that J. Cameron Carter critiques. Bonhoeffer writes: "By sheer grace, God will not permit us to live, even for a brief period in a dream world."[25] And: "Only that fellowship that faces such disillusionment, with all its unhappy and ugly aspects, begins to be what it should be in God's sight, begins to grasp in faith the promise that is given to it."[26]

For Bonhoeffer, the great gift of church conflicts and disappointments is that they challenge us to let go of our ideal vision of the church. And

[26] Ibid.

we must let go of these contrived pictures of ideal holiness in order to be reconciled to our brothers and sisters in both body and spirit; to belong to Christ in real time and space. The ideal of Christian community can otherwise do great harm to the reality of Christian community according to Bonhoeffer: "He who loves his dream of a community more than the Christian community itself becomes a destroyer of the latter, even though his personal intentions may be ever so honest and earnest and sacrificial." [27]

In other words, the path to holiness boils down to this: join the church because it fails, because it is disappointing, because it will destroy our ideals.[28] It is by joining our lives in worship and committee work with other members of Christ's body—other real historical people with bodies and desires and struggles—that God is crafting us into a new and holy humanity clothed in the garments of Jesus Christ. In yielding our vulnerable bodies to Christ's broken body, we are able to receive the holiness of our lives, conformed to Jesus Christ, as a gift of baptism and belonging. We are able by the grace of God to long for God's commandments and to be bent body and soul toward the extravagant and holy love of God that makes all things and all bodies holy.

---

[27] Ibid.

[28] Gerald J. Mast, "Go to Church Because it Fails: Why Church Conflict Can Be a Source of Renewal and Hope." *The Mennonite*, April 2016, 12-15.

Why Christian Nonconformity Matters: Church, Society, and Our Racially Organized Lives

By Drew G. I. Hart*

Introduction

Nonconformity has been emphasized in different ways in our society, but strangely it frequently failed to nurture Christian lives capable of resisting the racialized forces and patterns of this world. For many mainstream American evangelicals, the proof of their nonconformity resides in their Christian-stamped lives. By this, many mean their regular attendance at Christian services, their social networks with Christian friends, their devouring of Christian books, their delight in listening to Christian bands, and if truly devout and pious, their adorning of Christian shirts and hats. However, for many Anabaptists, this kind of nonconformity practice reminds them too much of Christendom and not enough of the life and teachings of Jesus. It has a veneer of Christianity but its core is not necessarily rooted in discipleship to Jesus leading to enemy love, truth-telling, hospitality, peacemaking, simplicity, and contentment with life. Communities that participate in the Anabaptist tradition have tended to have a much stronger history of emphasizing nonconformity in their lives together.

Since our Christian practice is done in history, our discipleship and community traditions will always bear those marks. Certainly this is the case when we gaze at Old Order Mennonite and Amish communities. There one finds the most dramatic kinds of Anabaptist nonconformity, which continue to confuse and entertain mainstream America. As the "quiet in the land," they have certainly lived in ways that make them visibly distinct

---

* Drew G. I. Hart is assistant professor of theology at Messiah College, having received his Ph.D. in 2016 from Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. He is the author of *Trouble I've Seen: Changing the Way the Church Views Racism* (Herald Press, 2016).

in society. Horses and buggies, no electricity, shoo-fly pie, simple attire, and a copy of *Martyr's Mirror* are among the many characteristics that many of us on the outside know about these communities. While many interpret them as being anti-technology, it might be more helpful to understand them as not buying into the lie of modernity and the lure of materialism, as well as being patient and present with one another in community. This does not negate the ways that legalism and unhelpful practices may have creeped into their traditions. Rather, it recognizes that they are doing more than just being "stuck" in a past era, but are consciously in the twenty-first century making determined choices as a community about what they will prioritize and value, and what they believe may deter them from the things that matter most.

And yet, when we consider Anabaptist nonconformity in the United States, we can only feel discouragement and disappointment for the ways these discipleship communities, whether Old Order or contemporary, have also been swept up by the racialized patterns of this world. In fact, it is precisely the lack of theological imagination for the practice of nonconformity in the United States that reveals the degree to which race has bound and confined American Christian life. For both Old Order and General Conference Mennonites, and in most cases even more so for the Brethren in Christ, the early twentieth century was a time of crippling adherence to our racialized society. Mennonite historian, Tobin Miller Shearer, has described the years from 1918-1943 as an era that "involved deliberate segregation, overt participation in the racial order, and initial resistance to change."[1] In fact, he reveals that "Even as they sought to separate from the influences of a world they deemed sinful, (Old) and General Conference Mennonites followed the example of secular society by practicing racial segregation."[2] Ironically, this period represents a moment when the importance of nonconformity still remained vital and when many Anabaptists had believed they had been successfully living separate and distinct lives in contrast to the world around them. While the contemporary Mennonite church has become much more

---

[1] Tobin Miller Shearer, Daily Demonstrators: *The Civil Rights Movement in Mennonite Homes and Sanctuaries* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 6.

[2] Ibid.

racially diverse nationally today, nonconformity remains an untapped Christian practice for engaging our racialized society. The Brethren in Christ are even more racially homogenous, and this probably reflects its own quicker journey towards assimilation into white dominant culture.

In our current twenty-first century moment, the character of our racialized society has risen to the surface as we witness police brutality and protest, disproportionate treatment based on race in our legal system, a growing gap of wealth along racial lines, the re-segregation of our schooling system, and most importantly, a Christian church that has not only been conformed to our racialized society, but that has unfortunately been the most powerful force in conforming our racialized society. That is, when we get intellectually honest about what has happened in this land over the last 400 years, we must confess that the (white) American church has not typically been dragged into a racialized logic and life against its will, but it was white Christians who primarily organized and reorganized our society by race. As such, the American church first needs to be born again, and then it needs to discover the liberating gift of nonconformity as an ongoing practice within our racialized world.

In this paper, I will make the case for nonconformity as an essential Christian practice for our racialized world. I will do so by demonstrating some of the ways our lives have been deeply racialized, even when done unintentionally and unconsciously. After unveiling the ways our lives are organized by race, the paper will reflect on Paul's famous challenge to not be conformed to the patterns of this world but instead to find transformation in God's reign through the renewing of our minds. No fancy interpretations or sleight of hands or reexamining Greek words are necessary. Once we grasp the degree to which our lives are racialized, which I believe most do not see or realize the extent of it, then the fresh spirit-filled word for our time should be readily apparent for those who have ears to hear.

Racialized society and our racialized lives

Before anything substantial can be said about the racialized society we live in we must lay some important ground work on race itself. Most Americans assume they are experts on race and racism, thinking that these subjects are common sense. Many never take the time to realize that the very concept of race is taken for granted in our society in unfortunate ways.

We are socialized to think that these categories of humanity are saying something substantial and scientific about the differences between various people groups. However, race is actually not a naturally scientific and biological way of making "others" of humanity. The ways that we have been socialized into these words belie the fact that race is smoke and mirrors, in that it actually obscures human similarity and difference rather than revealing them. In the end, race is merely a human social construct. That is, rather than being a meaningful biological category, it is in fact humanly created.

The way that we think of race is an extremely new phenomenon. If you were to talk to Martin Luther or Menno Simons in the sixteenth century and referred to them as white, they would have had no clue what you meant. Since modernity we certainly have used various physical features and phenotypes to try to categorize race. However, such physical categorizations testify to their own making. Racial pseudo-science like the one-drop rule are ridiculous in themselves. This racial calculation decided that anyone with any evidence of African ancestry was black even if he or she simultaneously had mostly European ancestry making up the majority of their genes. This racial formula seems arbitrary until you understand the function of race and racism in society.

When Americans have conversations about race, most think that the heart of the subject revolves around the black experience, and whether or not black people will ever progress and find equality in this country. With this focus, black people are the primary racial equations to consider, and their choices and behaviors are believed to define our racial progress as a nation. But such ways of focusing on blackness as the central subject of race misses why race was constructed in the first place, and it certainly cannot explain and make intelligible why something like the one-drop rule ever came into being. Similarly, they ignore the more obvious reality that the myth and practice of white supremacy, rather than black choice, is what created the racial injustice.

Fundamentally, race is first and foremost about birthing the myth of a superior people naturally fit and divinely chosen to rule the world. That is, race was fundamentally about white supremacy and superiority over others, for their concrete advantage. Race was used to justify various European groups dominating nonwhite people all over the world. To do so and claim

perpetual innocence, Europeans had to become something new.[3] They had to accept a new identity, a new way of moving upon the earth, and a new relationship to black and brown bodies. Western conquest, colonization, slavery, and genocide, followed by new forms of white supremacy and exploitation, from 1492 to the present day, are all part of the long story of race in the modern era. As such, race is not a neutral category of difference but it has always done social and political work. It justifies how we structure and organize our society. Western Europeans chose whiteness. That is, they chose to participate in social dominance at the expense and exploitation of others by adopting a new racial identity. Over time they reinvented themselves. The particularities of German, Irish, or Italian culture, language, last names, and identity was frequently discarded to assimilate into Anglo-Saxon definitions of whiteness.[4] The old died and the new was born. And this new creation in this land was white America. The definition of whiteness, which initially only included Anglo-Saxon Protestants eventually was stretched to include these other European immigrant groups.

The entire society was being structured and organized so that white people could inherit the earth. To be identified as white had tremendous value. It meant you mattered. To be found non-white by anyone was to be forced down the ladder of racial hierarchy. It is not surprising, then, that in the early twentieth century, when some Asian immigrants came to America, they saw how white supremacy functioned. To be white was to be granted full access to societal benefits, including advantages in employment, housing, owning land, as well as having protection under the law and the freedom of mobility not bound by Jim Crow law. So many non-European immigrants went to court seeking white status under the law. *The Color of Wealth* explains further:

> Court decisions on white status were based on a mix of supposedly scientific criteria and the common understandings of the day, leading to a mess of contradictions. Syrians were deemed white in 1909, 1910, and 1915, but not in 1913 or 1914. Asian Indians won

---

[3] Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2014), 112–115.

[4] Kelly Brown Douglas, Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2015), 34–40.

> white status in 1910, 1913, 1919, and 1920, but not in 1909, 1917, or after 1923. The persistence of immigrants in suing for whiteness is evidence of the financial and social benefits that came with white status. After all, no one sued to be considered Asian, much less black.[5]

With that in mind, we should begin to see that implicit in the function of race is its capacity to create categories of hierarchy which advantages some while oppressing and exploiting others. Too often we have meaningless definitions of race and racism that are only concerned about the intent of someone's heart, but pay no attention to the role race plays in shaping our everyday experiences in society. Moving from thin definitions that only consider if an individual has prejudice or hatred towards another person (which no one can ever prove because they are matters of the heart), we must keep track of how race justifies in our minds the status quo racial realities. That is, it does work. Race justified the forcible removal of Native Americans from their ancestral lands and their near genocide because they were deemed "merciless savages" and because white people, as the myth goes, were given the land by God and therefore had the divine right to take it from its original inhabitants. Race does work. Race justified the removal of enslaved Africans from their land and told white people that black bodies needed to be controlled, supervised, and mastered, for their own exploitative good, and so the wealth and economic boom that America experienced was not thought to be unjust or oppressive but within the natural order of things. Race does work. After 250 years of slavery, another 100 years of neo-slavery through the convict leasing system and sharecropping, as well as Jim Crow white supremacy and the lynching of 5,000 black men, women, and children that continued well into the twentieth century and beyond, race continues to do work.

Most people figure that the disparities in the legal system, in encounters with police, in employment, in education, and so on, have nothing to do with 400 years of white supremacy. It is assumed to be a consequence of black pathology. Many people believe that something is wrong with black

---

[5] Meizhu Lui, *The Color of Wealth: The Story Behind the U.S. Racial Wealth Divide* (New York: New Press : Distributed by W.W. Norton, 2006), 250.

people and their culture. Race justifies these inequities as having nothing to do with oppression and having only to do with inferior performance. It says black people are lazy, less intelligent, and incapable of keeping up. And to believe that any people group as human beings would not also be in the exact same situation given all that has gone on historically in this land, and all that continues to happen today all across our country, is to believe in a racial lie of black inferiority. Today, just like in previous generations, race does work.

Racialized society

If we are to see more honestly how race does real social and political work in justifying an unjust way of organizing our society, then we must come to terms with our racialized world. And what we will begin to see is that race and racism are not random incidental lapses from our normative post-racial lives, but race shapes our lives in deep and significant ways and in mundane ways that we frequently have not realized. As such, we are socialized from birth into our racial world. To have been socialized in such a way does not require anyone to hate racial minorities. It just means that living with race is like a fish living in water. It is all we know and so we often do not recognize the strange and odd contours of our lives.

One of the most helpful Christian texts to expose and describe our racialized society must certainly be *Divided By Faith*. The authors (two Christian sociologists) helped articulate some of the peculiarities to look for in a racialized society. They claimed that "the racialized society is one in which intermarriage rates are low, residential separation and socioeconomic inequality are the norm, our definitions of personal identity and our choices of intimate associations reveal racial distinctiveness, and where "we are never unaware of the race of a person with whom we interact." [6] Along with the signifiers of a racialized society, they also provided a helpful working definition as well: "In short, and this is its unchanging essence, *a racialized society is a society wherein race matters profoundly for differences in life experiences, life opportunities, and social relationships."* [7] What is most

[6] Michael Emerson, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 7.

[7] Ibid.

helpful about this framing is that it helps people who are tempted to think of race primarily as an issue of individual intent to begin seeing the forest and not just the trees. That is, it allows people to see the way our entire society is organized by race and how racial lines significantly affect how people are viewed and treated socially. This means that combating racism should not be centered on trying to discover who the hidden KKK members are in society, as though we can scapegoat them for all our societies' racial troubles. Instead, it realizes that we all participate in society, and therefore, we all must account for the ways that we either participate in dismantling white supremacy embedded in our systems and lives, or how we passively go along with these racial currents and patterns.

Many people like to think that if they were alive while a seriously oppressive and racist social structure was in place they would resist it. Everyone imagines that if they lived between 1619 and 1865 they would have been abolitionists or would have participated in the Underground Railroad. They would like to think that if they lived in the mid-twentieth century they would have been a civil rights activist. The truth is most white people failed to see and respond faithfully to the injustices happening in their own generation. Most white people for the past 400 years have seen themselves as nice, kind, and generally innocent of any atrocity, even as they accommodated massive oppression all around them in society. This pattern has continued to this day.

Devastating backlash followed the limited gains of the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 60s. In 1970, there were around 300,000 inmates in our prison system nationally. However, the numbers began to spike at disastrous and exponential rates. In about three decades, the prison population exploded to about two million inmates. Thorough documentation has shown this has disproportionately affected black males, mostly through conviction for nonviolent drug offenses.[8] Today we have the largest prison population and incarceration rate in the world. However, what people have revealed through research is that white youth actually use and sell drugs at the same rates as black youth. This certainly does not fit

[8] Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York, NY; Jackson, TN: New Press: Distributed by Perseus Distribution, 2012).

our stereotypes, but white people are mostly selling to white people and black people are selling mostly to other black folk. Yes, our drug habits are as racially segregated as the rest of our lives. The reality is that while drug usage is very similar, the policing, prosecution, and sentencing vary dramatically in different neighborhoods. There never was a "War on Drugs" in white neighborhoods as there was in poor black neighborhoods. White kids coming home from school are not routinely harassed, stopped and frisked, or humiliated by police officers in their own neighborhoods. And when they are caught with drugs, the evidence shows that white youth are much more likely to get a slap on the wrist while black youth frequently have the book thrown at them for the exact same offense. White youth are often seen as just innocently experimenting while black youth are described as thugs destroying the fabric of society. There are deep racial disparities in the actual sentencing as well. At every stage in the process with the policing and judicial system, there are great disparities that allow white college students to throw wild parties with very little concern for the impact on their lives while many black youth are permanently being denied access to meaningful life opportunities for the rest of their lives for the same crime.[9]

We now have mass incarceration in our nation through a prison industrial complex, replacing former systems of control over black bodies like slavery and then the convict leasing system and chain gangs. This is a deeply racialized system. Again, we are talking about disproportionate and discriminatory policies that encourage harassment and physical abuse. There are disproportionate and racially discriminatory stop-and-frisks, or searches. The arrests are disproportionately harming black and brown people, followed by disproportionate sentencing for the same crime. And if that were not enough, there are even discriminatory policies for those who have served their time because people are legally allowed to discriminate against returning citizens with convictions in employment and housing, and in many states they have even taken away their right to vote after serving time.

For an example of the impact that this has on people's everyday lives, consider a university study that explored the impact of race and a criminal

[9] Alexander, 6–8.

record on people entering the initial stages of the employment process. They measured positive responses, which could be anything from a call back to getting hired on the spot. What they found was that white men without any conviction had a 34 percent positive response. In contrast, white men with a conviction had a 17 percent positive response, which means having a conviction cut their chances of employment at the first stage of the process in half. More troubling than this was the revelation that black men without any conviction at all had a 14 percent positive response. Yes, that means white men with a conviction fared better than black men without a conviction. Let that sink in some. Finally, for those black men that also had a conviction they only had a five percent positive response. This demonstrates how blackness and criminality, which our society encourages through its systems, become stigmas placing some people in permanent outcast status in our racialized world.[10]

Racialized lives

While there are a lot more studies like that one, demonstrating the depths of our racialized society, it is important for us in the church to also do some self-examination around the racialized character of our lives. By now we probably all have heard the cliché that "Sunday morning is the most segregated time of the week." This continues to generally be a true sentiment, but in many ways it misses and avoids a much more significant problem. Rather than only examining the life of the church during an hour or two once a week, we ought to be concerned with the witness of the church 24/7. On one hand, the church is frequently looked upon by the world as a den of bigots and hypocrites that do not know how to love their neighbors very well. But my concern gets even more to the root of things, which is that the nature of our lives are too often thoroughly patterned by race, whether we realize it or not.

Again, it is not just the society as a whole, or even how we gather as Christian communities that is racialized; our very lives are racialized. Only the willingness to reject defensiveness and enter into self-examination before

[10] Devah Pager, *The Mark of a Criminal Record* (Madison, WI: Center for Demography and Ecology, University of Madison--Wisconsin, 2002).

God can deliver us from these forces. Consider your own social networks, places of belonging, and cultural engagement. Race has a powerful way of acting like a mechanism or management tool that organizes our lives without us ever realizing it. For most people, their deep social engagement is among people in their own racial demographic group. Race guides us along in our day and lets us know which spaces we belong in and which ones we do not. It identifies which bodies we can intimately get to know and engage and which ones it would be awkward or inappropriate to engage. Race is literally patterning our lives, as it cuts off, limits, or redirects our relationships and bodily movements. Who sits around our dinner table, who we call up regularly to share our lives with on the phone, what music we listen to, and even something as simple as the makeup of the authors of the books on our bookshelves will usually reveal deep and wide racial distinctiveness. This reality is a shock for most people because they did not wake up and decide to perform race in such a way.

Racialized minds

We will only begin to understand the inertia and power of the racial formation we have undergone when we come to grips with how our racialized minds shape how we view the world and its inhabitants. Our actual mindsets and frameworks make sense of the society we encounter. When we dare to get introspective, most of us will find deeply racialized minds; that is, we have been raised to make sense of the world in a way that has normalized our racialized world. And that very normalizing of the status quo mostly suggests we have internalized a racial hierarchy as a way of gazing at the bodies of other people. Few examples demonstrate this best than the Clark Doll experiments which were originally done in the 1940s.

The Clark Doll experiments peeked into the hidden and implicit biases of children. They took black children and white children, one at a time; an adult would ask them a series of questions about the white doll and black doll that was in front of them. The interviewer would ask questions like, "Which doll is the good doll?" and "Which doll is the bad doll?" Similarly, they would ask, "Which doll is the pretty doll?" and "Which doll is the ugly doll?" Now this study was first done in the 1940s so few people were surprised by the answers the white children gave back then. Most identified all the positive attributes with the white doll and the negative ones for the

black doll. These children had all been socialized at a very young age, because of the depth of the racialized society they lived in, to internalize anti-black sentiments and gaze at these dolls through a lens of white supremacy.

What was surprising during these experiments was the response many of the black children gave when it was their chance to chime in. These young black children also demonstrated high levels of prejudice, but it was certainly not reverse discrimination. Instead something even more terrible was revealed. These kids also expressed anti-black sentiments. When asked which doll is pretty or good, they pointed to the white doll. But when they were asked which doll was ugly or bad, they frequently pointed to the black doll. Many of these black kids had internalized the very same racialized hierarchical mindset. Overall they did not internalize the anti-black sentiments to the same degree as the white children but the experiments clearly showed that to be human in our racialized world made one deeply susceptible to being socialized into having thoroughly racialized minds.

Some might think this is terrible but has very little meaning for today; we assume that we have made tremendous progress and that was the 1940s. Unfortunately, the tragic truth is that this experiment has been repeated in the twenty-first century with very similar results. Both white and black children continue to internalize white supremacist views that predispose them to have anti-black mindsets. The hard reality is that it doesn't take hatred or animosity to inherit these racial lenses. All we have to do is passively be human in a racialized society, and the inertia of race will do all the socializing work necessary without us even realizing it. Some white parents are shocked when their kids espouse racially prejudicial ideas. It is common for people to say in response, "I don't know where he or she learned that because we always taught our kids to treat everyone the same." What they do not realize is that generic and well-meaning platitudes and attempts to teach your children to treat everyone the same fall short of being intentionally and actively anti-racist. Teaching your kids these universal truths must be accompanied with a targeted approach that gets at the specific problems at hand in our society. If a child gets violently sick, I hope their parents would do more than give them Vitamin C because it is good for one's body; I hope they would have the child's body diagnosed and then get the particular prescription needed to remedy that particular illness. Similarly, a universal message can be taught, but the racialized society is

what will be caught. And as we have seen, the consequences of a racialized gaze can be deadly.

On November 22, 2014, Tamir Rice was playing with an Airsoft replica toy gun in the park when someone called the police out of concern. The caller said they thought it might be a toy gun and they believed the person to be a juvenile, but were not sure. Police were dispatched but when they pulled up to the 12-year-old boy, the officers immediately saw him as a threat and shot the child in the stomach. The officers did not attempt to provide first aid to the child and he eventually died from the gunshot wound. This story is devastating in itself, but I tend to wonder how much we underestimate the power of our racialized minds. Many people think that they just go about their day objectively, without having any biases to give us false perceptions of reality. It is routine for police officers to say after shooting a black victim that they "feared for their lives." While there have been a few times when it seemed like some police officers were coached into saying that, in general I do not doubt their sincerity. My concern is that people are more prone to see black bodies as dangerous and criminal, given our particular racial history, making the task of discerning danger that much more volatile. I do not believe that white police have a greater racial bias than the average American. Most people have deeply racialized minds that encounter black bodies and see danger when there is none, or at least disproportionate to reality. Certainly the way that mainstream society uses racially coded language like calling dead black people thugs rather than at least mourning the loss of a precious life speaks volumes. If we are to view all lives as valuable, we must view black lives as precious, which requires the renewing of our minds.

Nonconformity through holy embodiment and renewed minds

"Therefore I exhort you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a sacrifice – alive, holy, and pleasing to God – which is your reasonable service. Do not be conformed to this present world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may test and approve what is the will of God – what is good and well-pleasing and perfect" (Romans 12:1-2).

In this passage, Paul is exhorting the Church to faithfully live as the people of God in a society that entices us in the wrong direction. Paul challenges us

to align our bodies and our minds with the active presence and movement of God in creation. It is a Holy Spirit-filled approach to decolonizing our everyday embodiment and mindsets through transformation and renewal. In doing so, we can resist conforming to the hegemonic patterns of society.

Not allowing our embodiment and our minds to be conformed to the dominance, coercion, and hierarchy of our world requires a different kind of discipleship than what we typically engage in. We must make the use of our bodies holy. That is, they ought not to be puppets to the way our society organizes life. Presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice suggests that what we do with them actually matters. Christian discipleship is much more than a spiritual journey. Where my body goes, and where it belongs, matters. Where I reside and with whom I live in solidarity matters. That it resists falling in line with the patterns of this world certainly matters. What ways will your body disrupt the racialized patterns of society? How will it make the story of Jesus visible in the age of mass incarceration and while black bodies are routinely subjected to violence and control by the state? Will your body take up the cross and follow Jesus through our racialized world? Paul challenges us to not move along passively in society: do not go along with the flow. This has powerful import for our society so deeply entrenched by 400 years of white supremacy. Participating in the body and form of Christ allows our bodies to be visibly present in the world as a hopeful counter-witness to the things our society normalizes and takes for granted.

We must also renew our minds to see more clearly the things we have normalized. Full transformation cannot happen when your understanding has internalized a way of viewing other people's bodies without seeing their dignity and worth as creations of God. The moment you allow your mind to view the world through the gaze of dominance, from the view of Herod or Caesar, you have already surrendered your capacity to know and see things from the standpoint of our crucified Messiah. Adopting or internalizing dominant cultural ways of knowing is a tempting replacement for the wisdom of God. Mainstream perspectives take certain outlooks for granted, and those views might seem like common sense to most people. However, those racially conformed and colonized views will pass away, and what will be left are our transformed lives expressed through faithful embodiment in the way of Jesus and our minds aligned with the truth of the Messiah's reign. When that happens, we can remember the many Christians in this

land who provided us visible witnesses into what a life transformed by God actually looks like when it refuses to conform and accommodate these death-dealing racial patterns. And we also remember those who marred the name of Jesus when they exploited the bodies of others or merely became silent witnesses to such atrocities. May each of those holy memories inspire a needed practice of nonconformity in our own lives and as we gather together in the presence of Christ in our racialized world.

Book Reviews

NICHOLAS BERRY. *Almighty Matters: God's Hidden Politics in the Bible,* Wipf and Stock Publishers: Eugene, Oregon; 2015, Pp. 135, $21.00 (U.S.)

Reviewed by Curtis Book*

Almighty Matters: God's Hidden Politics in the Bible, is written from the Constantinian perspective that God's political agenda for his people today is best accomplished by uniting church and state. Arriving at this conclusion, Nicholas Berry explores the underlying politics of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures by shedding light on their political-theological connection. He follows a traditional understanding that the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament outlines God's agenda of government for his chosen people, but challenges convention by viewing Jesus as a politician who seeks to subvert the Roman Empire, uniting church and state for the purpose of protection and growth.

Berry is Professor of Politics Emeritus at Ursinus College, a political science author, columnist, and former Fulbright Scholar at the University of Auckland in New Zealand. He is not a biblical scholar or theologian, but takes the Bible seriously, believing that linking the Hebrew and Christian Bibles reveals a hidden political progression.

So how does Berry arrive at the conclusion that the Bible supports a church-and-state union in which the politics of Jesus would subvert the Roman Empire as divine will? At its core, he sees the politics of the New Testament as an extension of the politics in the Old Testament. How then does Berry support his thesis?

God elects the Hebrews to be his chosen people and gives them title to the Promised Land, but a famine finds them in Egypt where they are enslaved. God then choses Moses, charging him to lead them out of bondage. He listens to God, and unites them into a nation with a religion, law, culture, and soldiers. He is a brilliant leader of a religious-political movement.

Joshua, who Berry portrays as a great military leader, takes God's

---

* Curtis Book worked for 23 years with Brethren in Christ World Missions in four countries doing theological education. Currently he is peace and justice coordinator for MCC East Coast, based in Philadelphia, PA.

people into the Promised Land. Most of Canaan is conquered. Over centuries, the tribal structure led by judges and then the rise of the monarchy develop this movement. The nation of Israel prospers, but eventually division, corruption, and then defeat end in exile in Babylon. Even a return from exile doesn't halt the trend. Occupation begins, and ultimately Rome takes control.

God's response is to send Jesus to redeem his people by creating a religious-political movement. Jesus accomplishes his purpose, but it results in his execution as a political activist. His disciples are tasked with spreading Jesus' movement to the Gentiles. Their purpose was to partner with the Jews, to organize, multiply, and eventually subvert the Roman Empire. With political power protecting both faiths, Berry concludes that all will be well. The Old and New Testaments present one seamless political-religious story.

What then, are the strengths and weaknesses of the book?

I appreciated Berry's insight that there is a direct connection between God, creation, human nature, and a political philosophy that empowers equitable behavior for all. Central to the author's thinking is the understanding that human nature is essentially good or evil. Berry develops the political philosophy that if one believes that human behavior tends toward evil and must be checked, good governance will ensure this check by separating judicial, executive, and legislative powers. On the other hand, if philosophers and politicians understand human nature to be primarily benevolent, then few checks and balances are necessary. The problem with this form of government is that it tends to deny liberty to the people and enrich the leaders.

Another strength of the book is that it illustrates well that not only our socio-economic views, but also our understanding of politics will affect the way we read the Bible. Berry, as a Western Christian political scientist and neither a biblical scholar nor theologian, reads the Bible through that cultural lens, and arrives at the conclusion that Jesus is a politician whose desire is to subvert the Roman Empire, uniting church and state for the purpose of Christian protection and expansion. I find that conclusion contrary to the biblical perspective of the kingdom of God that Jesus came to fulfill. Yet I am fascinated by his logic and perspective.

Having said that, I find his supposition that the Old and New

Testaments present a seamless political-religious story to be unfounded. Even though Berry takes the Bible at face value, I disagree with his interpretation. He writes:

The prophets are wrong, or at least they fail to portray the complete picture. They see the conquest through a purely religious perspective, missing a practical political reason. The conquest and those that follow—Persian, Greek and Roman—have little to do with sin. The Jews are done in by their reliance on their military culture, their neglect of diplomacy, devastating conflicts between Israel and Judah, and their religious structure that biologically restrict the size of their nation. In an era of large warrior empires, the numbers limited Jews are doomed. They don't understand that their militant political-religious culture condemns their state. (xii).

Berry's political analysis of the Old and New Testament does not convince me that it was God's intention to form an empire, a worldly nation-state with laws and an army to maintain dominance and control. Rather, the divine purpose was to form a holy people, a nation that loved God and neighbor. Israel was to be a missional people, a society in contrast to the world. They were not to become like other nations. When Israel asked Samuel for a king (1 Sam. 8:5), it is clear that both God and the prophet-judge did not want an earthly king. Governance by kings was clearly a divine compromise in the Old Testament. How then can Berry, with integrity, maintain his thesis and not even discuss this pivotal key governance change?

Reading the New Testament, Berry views Jesus as a politician on a campaign. His strategy is to redeem his people, both Jews and Gentiles, through a peaceable kingdom which unfolds through an apocalyptic event in which evil is destroyed: "Jesus invents politics for the masses. He lays the foundation for the subversion of the Roman Empire" (xiii). I agree with that part of his analysis, but when he supports a Constantinian shift, viewing the union of church and state as the desired outcome of Christ's apostolic mission, it is like saying that God wanted Israel in the Old Testament to have a king and become just like the other nations.

I was also surprised by the brevity of Berry's half-page bibliography with only 10 sources, no index, and no footnotes apart from biblical references. Where his political analysis is his own and when it comes from other sources is not specified. I finished reading the book unconvinced that his political analysis was correct.

SAMUEL J. STEINER. *In Search of Promised Lands: A Religious History of Mennonites in Ontario.* Harrisonburg, Virginia and Kitchener, Ontario: Herald Press, 2015. Pp. 877. $70 (U.S.)

Reviewed by Lucille Marr*

Faith is passed on through story—from generation to generation. In these fast-changing times the old adage has never been more true: How can we know where we are going unless we know where we came from? This story of the search of a variety of Anabaptist groups for promised lands where they could live out their faith provides an antidote to our often frantic pace in its detailed telling of the hope implicit in their stories. In 16 chapters, Steiner has brought together the search of Anabaptists from a diversity of ethnicities who chose Ontario, Canada, as a safe place to settle and to worship. Although the Brethren in Christ appear only briefly in places where their story is closely tied to the Mennonite story, we can gain significant context for understanding our own roots.

The biblical metaphor of promised land is one that has been shared by many faiths. Steiner shows how "Mennonites of all doctrines and heritages" have associated three aspects of the promised land with their faith journey: "geographic location," images of hope in the afterlife, and "more secular human aspirations." This book proposes that "the startling diversity of Mennonites" in contemporary Ontario can be explained, at least in part, through an exploration of their respective seeking of a promised land (24). Not only did a variety of Mennonites seek and find promised land in the peninsula known as Southern Ontario; their spiritual search at times divided them, thus creating even greater diversity.

The Tunkers (Brethren in Christ) were a significant presence among the minority of German-speaking Mennonites and Lutherans who emigrated from Pennsylvania to Upper Canada (Ontario) in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. While some Mennonites and Brethren in Christ looked west, others responded to Governor Simcoe's invitation to settle in what was then known as Upper Canada.

* Lucille Marr is chaplain and academic dean at The Presbyterian College, Montreal, and adjunct professor at McGill University School of Religious Studies. She has published a number of articles and books on Mennonite and other church history.

Promises of land and military exemption prompted a steady stream of Mennonites and Tunkers to settle among English-speaking immigrants, including Anglicans, Catholics, Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Congregationalists, and Quakers (77). The complexity of their stories unfolds, as others joined them over the ensuing centuries—in particular Mennonites who came from Russia in three waves between World Wars I and II. Then in the last half of the twentieth century, the mix became even more complex with immigrants from Asia, Africa, and South America joining the broader Ontario Anabaptist community.

The book probes questions around the divisions that nineteenth century promises of "religious renewal" has caused in communities and even in individual families and the diverse theologies that shaped the variety of Anabaptist experiences. Evangelicalism confronted faithful living, with the former embracing innovations in worship including musical instruments and Sunday schools, while the Old Order held to tradition. By the turn of the century, "New Frontiers" would include missions, both urban and outside Canada, and schools developed to train young folks for mission (157).

As one would expect, the Mennonite responses to war are central in the book: the War of 1812, World Wars I and II, and the Vietnam War. The four middle chapters discuss at length the developments in nonresistance, conscientious objection, relief as response to war sufferers, and immigration, all significant to the Mennonite search for promised lands. For Brethren in Christ readers, it is noteworthy that Bishop E. J. Swalm is highlighted in his significant leadership role in the Conference of Historic Peace Churches and other Mennonite-Brethren in Christ relations. Brethren in Christ readers will also be interested in developments in the post-war years including the growth of a Mennonite Central Committee in Canada, where Swalm continued to play an ecumenical role.

The latter half of the book develops the post-war years, where immigrants continued to come to what they saw as promised land, while many long-settled Mennonites discerned what it meant to live in an increasingly wealthy and materialistic society. For some, to be evangelical meant rejecting their Mennonite identity in hope of better engaging with the world, while others worked hard at preserving that identity through schools, businesses, a credit union, and numerous other institutions. As Steiner shows, whichever route they chose,

Ontario Mennonites had largely assimilated by 1970, continuing to repackage and reshape their sometimes diverse theologies and ethical responses to a modern world. Meanwhile, on their part, Old Order and Conservative Mennonites, while retaining their traditions, also grew and even flourished.

The Canadian Brethren in Christ are fortunate to have their story told in Morris Sider's 1988 publication *Two Hundred Years of Tradition and Change*. Yet it is worth noting that the Meeting House, an Anabaptist mega-church of the Canadian Brethren in Christ, was only in its infancy when Sider's book was published. Although Steiner's history treats the Brethren in Christ only peripherally, for those interested in the larger story of Ontario Anabaptist circles in recent decades, it will be well worth reading Steiner's detailed history as one way of putting that story in broader context.

Steiner's history of *Mennonites in Ontario* is also relevant for those farther away, with its distillation of knowledge gained over a lifetime of archival and historical work, including many years as managing editor of the Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online (http://gameo.org). Although it is too early to get the depth of historical perspective, the later chapters provide a valuable and informative reference resource including stories of people, institutions and the varieties of Mennonite church life.

It is worth noting that as a young man Steiner himself sought a promised land where he could live safely without the pressures experienced by draft-age American men during the Vietnam War. His thoughtful development of the vision of so many varieties of Mennonites as they sought promised lands over centuries in some ways reflects his own story. Series editor Gerald Mast said it well: "in the story crafted here by Samuel Steiner, Mennonites of all types and backgrounds understood their presence in Ontario as part of the larger story of God's people on the move from slavery to freedom, from despair to hope, from wilderness wandering to promised land settlement. Even when they could not agree on doctrine, they were bound by the shared hope of salvation, both in its earthly form of peaceable flourishing and in its heavenly form of life eternal" (15).

This hope implied in search for promised land is something we can hold onto in our increasingly fast-paced and fragmented world. Sitting with Steiner's telling of that story provides a vehicle for doing so.

SUSAN L. TROLLINGER. *Selling the Amish: The Tourism of Nostalgia.* Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2012. Pp 193, $50 (U.S.)

Reviewed by Joel H. Nofziger*

For many years, one of the many shops along Lincoln Highway as it cuts across Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, proudly declared its wares: "Not Just Stuff, Amish Stuff!" Trollinger promises us much the same in *Selling the Amish: The Tourism of Nostalgia*. Much like the tourist finds mass-produced baubles in the "authentic Amish" store, we find a book that just as easily could have been labeled "Selling America" but with the marketing power of the Amish.

Trollinger takes as her methodology an examination of visual rhetoric across three settings, all in Ohio Amish country: Walnut Creek, Berlin, and Sugarcreek. Looking at architecture, signage, and goods for sale, Selling the Amish seeks to untangle why tourists are drawn to Amish communities through what they consume and the sights they take in, consciously or not. Considering the appeal of the visual rhetoric of these towns is important because, despite the historic dismissal of tourists by the likes of John Hostetler, "Amish Country tourism creates a lot of meaning and . . . the meaning it generates matters to visitors" (xix).

Walnut Creek, with its Victorian styling, is read as a fairyland hearkening back to an imagined era when time was plentiful and gender roles were clear, with the Amish proving that even in the twenty-first century this goal is still reachable. Berlin is a frontier town in the pattern of Frederick Jackson Turner with a sub theme of 1950s Americana. For Trollinger, the town themes are commentary on technology and its place in society, with the Amish pointing to a lifestyle still free of technological shackles. The final case study is Sugarcreek, the pseudo-Swiss village planted in Ohio, home of the Ohio Swiss Festival. Sugarcreek serves as the grounds for a discussion on ethnicity and performance, comparing the Amish to those locals who don Swiss regalia for the business-sponsored festival.

---

* Joel H. Nofziger lives in Ephrata, PA and works for the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society as editor of *Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage.* He is also coordinating editor for the collaborative blog, *Anabaptist Historians: Bringing the Anabaptist Past into a Digital Century* at www.anabaptisthistorians.org.

When considering Trollinger's analysis in *Selling the Amish,* two criticisms are in order: first, the problematic assumption of the uniformity of Amish tourism across settlements, and secondly, the failure to differentiate within the tourist population.

While Trollinger does acknowledge Amish settlements outside of Ohio, she chooses to limit her in-depth case studies to central Ohio, instead of including Indiana and Pennsylvania, because "what Amish Country tourism offers is quite similar" regardless of which settlement is considered (xix). When describing how the visitors to Ohio Amish country are largely white middle-class Americans, she also notes, "My observations in the Lancaster and Elkhart-Lagrange settlements suggest that tourists to those areas also tend to come from nearby states and counties" (29). However, in Pennsylvania the tourist industry and the visitors are quite different from those Trollinger describes in Ohio.

For example, small villages in Lancaster, such as Bird-in-Hand or Intercourse, clearly take the Amish as the primary selling point, rather than supporting an imagined past. But Lancaster Amish tourism is divided into less discrete parts, taking in whole swaths of the county. This could be either because of Lancaster's position as the original Amish tourist location—creating more tourist build-up--or simply emblematic of East Coast development.

More importantly, the visitors flocking to Lancaster County are a much more diverse group than the ones Trollinger observes in Ohio. In July 2016, a quarter of those going on guided car tours with the Mennonite Information Center were international, from countries including France, Canada, and Australia. Furthermore, Jeff Landis, the director of the information center, notes that many people who come through live in the United States, but are ethnically diverse. This is significant because the rhetoric that Trollinger so carefully analyzes in Selling the Amish holds value only to the extent that the consumers work from the same imagined communal past. While Trollinger's main point, that Amish tourism is important because it holds meaning for tourists is still true, her examination of what that meaning is breaks down outside of the Ohio context she considers.

Secondly, Trollinger is limited in the analysis she can do on why people visit Amish country because she does not distinguish between tourists in general and Amish-interested tourists. In Lancaster, the tourist spectrum ranges from people who take a guided car tour with

the Mennonite Information Center to visit specific Amish businesses and learn intimately about the Amish, to folk who get on a bus to see the newest show at Sight and Sound theatre (the single largest tourist site in Lancaster County), eat a meal at Shady Maple Smorgasbord, and then return home. One group is drawn by the Amish and has one set of motivations; the other is drawn by the ancillary industries developed after Amish tourism started and created a traffic flow. Surely, where one is on this spectrum influences the activities one does and thereby the meanings gained from a visit to Amish Country.

Selling the Amish is bookended by the response of a group of New Order Amish to tourism: "I was surprised to hear these Amish men talk about the important opportunity tourism provides for sharing their Christian witness through their visibly different common life and daily practices" (xiv). Surely, when she considers whether visitors are influenced by this witness, the discussion could be more nuanced by placing visitors on a spectrum considering the focus of their interests.

BERRY FRIESEN AND JOHN K. STONER. *If Not Empire, What? A Survey of the Bible.* N.P.: Create Space, DBA On-Demand Publishing, LLC, 2014. $17 (U.S.)

Reviewed by John R. Yeatts*

John K. Stoner has been a prophet among the Brethren in Christ and the broader ecumenical community for more than four decades—advocating for peace and justice based on his reading of Scripture. In this book, he joins Berry Friesen, a Mennonite lawyer, lobbyist, media spokesperson, and nonprofit administrator, to focus on the timely theme of "empire."

The authors define "empire" as: "coordinated control that enriches itself through overwhelming socio-economic and military power...by morally powerful stories about evil… .It portrays itself as the primary source of security and peace in the world" (7). By contrast, the biblical understanding of power "operates by truth-telling and compassion, forgiveness and opportunities to try again" (7).

---

* John R. Yeatts is professor emeritus at Messiah College and pastor of congregational care at the Grantham (PA) Brethren in Christ Church.

The book surveys the entire biblical text with special attention to this theme of "empire." This review will summarize the work in a manner that makes evident the considerable attention that the Bible gives to this important and relevant theme. Genesis 1-11 culminates as people "started to build a city and completed its tower, a tall ziggurat," but "YHWH opposed the empire's pretentions" (53-54). Later in Genesis, Abram left the Mesopotamian imperial world to live in tents (57-58), and Joseph rose to power in the Egyptian empire, which enslaved his descendants (60).

In Exodus, the stories of Moses' deliverance from Egypt "made fools of the Egyptians" (61; all italics in the review are the authors'). Nevertheless, it took the Israelites 40 years in the wilderness to overcome their pining for the material blessing of the Egyptian empire (73). Indeed, the first four commandments received by Moses in the wilderness required the rejection of the idolatry of allegiance to empire, and the Sinai covenant was "a declaration of independence from imperial kings" (75).

When the Assyrian Empire threatened Israel and Judah, Exodus declared: "YHWH will defeat empire for you…by turning their prowess and pride into liabilities" (69) and "includes instructions…on how to become 'a priestly kingdom and a holy nation' (Ex. 19:6) and a witness to the world [empire]" (77). In Numbers, the 10 spies counseled return to Egypt rooted "in the calculus of empire, measuring choices by the metrics of military might" (81). Deuteronomy "endorses centralized power via a king" (84), but "sets limits on how a king may behave" (87). In Joshua, those "who wanted Israel to be a mini-empire" made "centralization of worship rituals…a key strategy" (92). After the destruction of the northern tribes by the Assyrian Empire, the authors of Judges document the raising up of charismatic, violent judges and a king anointed by Samuel, who warned people of violence that would come with centralization of imperial power (93-98).

First and Second Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, and 1 and 2 Chronicles present "David as the founder of a God-approved dynasty" (103) and Solomon as a king with administrative skills and wisdom reminiscent of the Egyptian pharaohs (108). Yet, the northern kingdom fell and Judah was threatened by the Assyrian Empire, later became a vassal of Egypt, and was finally destroyed by the Babylonian Empire (121).

In contrast to texts that glorified powerful kings, the prophets "predicted … the consequences of empire-loving policies." Elijah "tried to persuade Israelites to abandon their infatuation with the gods that had apparently blessed the Assyrian Empire with such overwhelming military success" (126). Amos "suggested restoring the spirit of [David's] leadership before he began pursuing imperial dreams of dominance and control" (129). Hosea used the metaphor of prostitution for Israel's idolatry, which "had a lot to do with greed and a desire for wealth and international prestige" (131). The royal-born Isaiah of Jerusalem anticipated a righteous king who "would make…Judah as great as Egypt and Assyria" (134). By contrast, the rural prophet Micah watched as Assyria "destroyed forty-six cities, killed many, and enslaved and deported 200,000 people," while the king in Jerusalem was able to "survive unscathed…collecting taxes from the country people to support the lavish lifestyle of the royal family…plus the Assyrian army and gods" (135). Zephaniah warned that "gaining the empire's {Assyria's) approval requires acceptance of the empire's gods" (139). "Nahum exalted in the destruction of Ninevah and attributed its astonishing defeat to YHWH… who brings devastation to empires once thought to be invincible" (139). Habakkuk "pointed an accusing finger at Jerusalem's elite…then he also pointed at Egypt and Babylon…he viewed the same spirit of domination to animate them all" (141). Jeremiah believed that because "the Israelites had lost their way" (147), they would not escape judgment at the hands of the Babylonian Empire (144). Ezekiel taught the exiles that YHWH ruled the skies over Babylon (153). Stories of Daniel spoke of four Hebrew men "saying 'no' to empire when it demanded their allegiance" (161). Second Isaiah affirmed that "Justice is what YHWH intends for Earth, which is currently under empire's domination" (164).

After Persian King Cyrus authorized the Judeans to return and rebuild their temple, Ezra noted that Joshua and Zerubbabel attributed the restoration to "the empire's authority…not YHWH's" (172,175); Nehemiah agreed (179). Yet, Third Isaiah pointed forward to the "end of empire" (188). The story of Jonah teaches that "YHWH is also the god of our enemies…" (192), who receive "a merciful response from YHWH to a pagan empire" (193). The prophet Joel anticipated "a great reversal at the end of history when the grip of empire would be broken and YHWH's justice and peace prevail" (195). Zechariah explained that

YHWH's king would be different from the imperial ruler—"humble and riding on a donkey" (196). The visions of Daniel affirmed that "kingship and dominion…shall be given to the people of the holy ones of the Most High; their kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom…" (198). Perhaps, the message of the First Testament (as the authors name the Christian Old Testament) regarding empire is best summarized in the psalmist's words: "Some take pride in chariots, and some in horses, but our pride is in the name of [YHWH]" (Psalm 20:7; quoted on p. 216).

Turning to the Second (New) Testament, in the synoptic gospels, Jesus announced: "the empire of God is at hand" (Mark 1:15, quoted on p. 219). Indeed, "the empires of Caesar and of God were not the same thing" (222). The latter is a "new, non-violent way of running the world" (230). Jesus demonstrated by his death and resurrection: "Empires still fear active nonviolence more than armies" (234).

The phrase used in John's gospel, "'Savior of the world' (John 4:42) had…imperial connotations" (240). Then, "Acts provides a partial history" of "the community that embodies a nonviolent but assertive alternative to empire" (248). Paul's letters use "church" (ekklesia) "to refer to the regular meetings of Jesus-followers…; the word had political, not religious connotation" (269). According to Galatians, "Jesus' purpose…was thus rooted in liberation from existing structures and powers of this world" (271). 1 Thessalonians' language about the second coming of Jesus "drew from imperial rituals enacted by enthusiastic city residents who would meet the returning emperor and escort him into a city" (273). When Paul deferred to "the rulers of this age" in 1 Corinthians, he "clearly meant the leaders of the Roman Empire" (276). In Philemon, "Paul's rhetorical shift from 'slave' to 'beloved brother'" was seen by some to be "a powerful subversion of the entire structure of slavery" (283). The language of Colossians reflects common imperial phrases: "Cicero…called the empire 'the light of the world' and Nero was commonly called 'the son of god'" (283). When Paul said: "I am not ashamed of the gospel" in Romans he was using the term that announced the "good news" of "the ascension of a new emperor" (290). The Philippians Paul addressed had been "unusually devoted to the emperor as 'lord and savior,' as evidenced by the active imperial cult in the city" (293). The author of Ephesians "wants the 'rulers and authorities' (Eph. 3:10) to see [that reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles]

is the new political phenomenon that subverts and delegitimizes those who insist domination and violence are necessary for justice and peace to prevail" (301). The "scenes of pain, suffering, blood, destruction" in Revelation "are all about the consequences of the way the empire runs the world" (326).

Overall, Friesen and Stoner read the Bible as "the long effort by worshippers of YHWH to form a political community whose way of organizing and running the world is different from empire's way" (336). They suggest voicing the biblical prayers quoted at the end of their book as a useful beginning for those who wish to practice living against empire. Moreover, questions for "Reflection and Discussion" at the end of each major section make the book usable for dialogue and interaction in small groups supporting each other in the anti-imperial task.

The biblical overview, which dominates the book's content, is relevant today. First, the Bible clearly does have political implications for living in the empires of today. Jesus rejected political power to form a community bearing witness to all worldly empires. God's kingdom comes by divine intervention, not through political solutions: Republican or Democrat; conservative, focusing on a great past that never was, or liberal, conceiving of an unattainable progressive future. Our hope is in the faithfulness of Jesus on the cross to overcome all powers and authorities and establish the kingdom of God.

Indeed, followers of Jesus' resist the "empires" of this world. Aspiring American "emperors" say "Only I can make America great again" or "Build on what made America great." Those of us who believe Jesus is Lord reject both claims.

Stoner's and Friesen's writing does have shortcomings. There are more typos than one would expect. The use of "First Testament" and "Second Testament" is distracting. The authors find the political in more places than biblical authors may have intended (e.g., 276-277). They affirm intense persecution under Emperor Domitian (299), which has been questioned by recent scholarship.

The book will be off-putting to some, because of the position taken on a variety of critical issues related to the reliability of the biblical text. While there are valid reasons for accepting these findings of biblical research, unnecessary attention to them diverts from the book's important message. Perhaps, the overall shortcoming is that there is

much material that does not relate directly to empire; this could be eliminated to make the book shorter, more focused, and, therefore, more accessible to the reader.

Despite these shortcomings, the authors' conclusion is certainly valid: the task of readers of the Bible is "simply to read and 'listen' to the author's testimony" (21). Indeed, Friesen and Stoner make the Bible relevant to twenty-first century empires. We can all benefit from the message of this volume on the dangers of "empire."

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I read the article, "Janice Holt Giles and the 'White Caps' of Kentucky: A Novelist Portrays the Brethren in Christ," by Michael Brown (December 2016), and it raised an interesting issue.

For the record and to provide context, I am third generation Brethren in Christ and have served in various ministries going back to the 1970s at Camp Kahquah, and further north in Ontario around Matachewan, Dobie, and Virginiatown where I was a teacher of VBS amongst First Nations children, led by George and Milly Sider. I also did two stints of summer service working with children and teens from the Bronx out of Fellowship Chapel at the last year of Camp Brookhaven (1973) and the first year of Spring Lake Retreat (1974). That was when Alvin and Theta Book were at Fellowship Chapel.

My home church is Port Colborne. I became a licensed minister in 1993 and was ordained in March 1998. Since 1993, my wife Anita (another third generation Brethren in Christ, whose parents and grandparents were involved in home missions) and I have served in pastoral ministry in Iowa, Illinois and Ohio. From 2011 forward we've served the Brethren in Christ Overcomers Program at the Navajo Mission in New Mexico, and recently were placed as the pastoral couple of Broken Walls Fellowship, a new out-of-the-box church plant aimed at connecting and staying connected with past graduates and their families.

Across the years and miles, vocally and in print, I have referred to the Brethren in Christ as the best kept secret in North America. I have been a member of the Brethren in Christ Historical Society. I even served a term on the editorial board when E. Morris Sider was the editor.

Here's the problematic passage in the article: "Over the years a handful of short works of fiction, mostly missionary tales, have been written within Brethren in Christ contexts. Recently Glenn A. Robitaille, a former Brethren in Christ pastor, published two theologically didactic novels with a minimum of veiled references to the denomination. But in all these works, only insiders can discern the connections. Only Janice Holt Giles has put the Brethren in Christ squarely (and fairly) into popular fiction."

I find it somewhat disconcerting that Mike Brown's research came to that conclusion. I have written six historical fiction novels featuring a River Brethren thread woven through the narrative from the second chapter of the first book through the sixth and final installment.

In 2012, *Days of Purgatory,* the first in the series, was published—a western with a River Brethren man as the main protagonist. Cut and pasted from the synopsis on the back cover: "*Days of Purgatory* is a mystery thriller set against the backdrop of westward expansion. The action and intrigue rolls across the frontier landscape of the 19th century as the ensemble cast of characters is swept along on the currents of time, chance, fate, or destiny. Their lives intersect at those hard crossroads where faith meets reality. From the idealism of the River Brethren of Conoy Creek to the passions of the abolitionist movement, Deke Coburn becomes entangled in the horrors and societal upheaval of the Civil War. His story is part historical epic, part spiritual odyssey. He is a man on the run, encountering friendship where he can find it."

Here I am, a living breathing Brethren in Christ fiction writer who evidently is invisible!

Ken Abell
Bloomfield, New Mexico

Author's response

My sincere thanks to Ken Abell for correcting my inaccurate statement about the near total absence of Brethren in Christ fiction beyond that by Janice Holt Giles. I am delighted to learn that other novels featuring the denomination have been written and, moreover, that the author himself is a member of the denomination, and third generation at that!

My apologies for my lack of information. Nothing about Abell's writings showed up in my online searches of various databases, and I failed to learn of his work from those who knew about my project. Too bad his novels had not been deposited in the Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives. In any case, I am happy for the correction and for the possibility of stirring up further interest in Brethren in Christ fiction.

Mike Brown
Denver, Pennsylvania

Editor's Note

We hope to feature a review essay of all six of Ken Abell's novels in a future edition of the journal. I bear some of the responsibility for Mike's not having known about Ken's novels. In conversation with Mike about my knowledge of existing Brethren in Christ fiction, I failed to point him in Ken's direction. All six novels are available on Amazon.com.

Harriet Sider Bicksler, *editor*

Addresses of Authors

Dwight Thomas: 435 N. Spruce St., Elizabethtown, PA 17055;
Email: dwightwthomas@gmail.com

Harriet Bohen Bert: deceased. Contact Arthur Bert,
309 W. 1st St., Boiling Springs PA 17007;
Email: bertwerks@gmail.com

Mark Labberton: Fuller Theological Seminary, 135 N. Oakland Ave., Pasadena,
CA 91182. Email: president@fuller.edu

David Weaver-Zercher: Messiah College, One College Ave.,
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055; Email: dzercher@messiah.edu

Gerald Mast: Bluffton University, 1 University Dr., Bluffton, OH 45817;
Email: mastg@bluffton.edu

Drew Hart: Messiah College, One College Ave., Mechanicsburg, PA 17055;
Email: ahart@messiah.edu

Historical Society Books for Sale

The books listed below are published by the Brethren in Christ Historical Society. Except for the most recent publications, they are being offered at significantly reduced prices. The listed prices include Pennsylvania sales tax.

For each book, add $2.60 to the listed price for postage. Add $1.00 for each additional book purchased (thus if two books are purchased, the cost for postage will be $3.60, or $2.60 + $1.00).

To order, contact Harriet Sider Bicksler, 127 Holly Dr., Mechanicsburg, PA 17055, or by email (info@bic-history.org). In Canada, contact Leonard Chester, 109-303 Elgin St., Port Colborne, ON L3K 6A2, or email: Leoruchester@hotmail.com. For additional books, use the same addresses.

Recent Publications

Rob Douglass and Wyndy Reuschling, eds., *Celebrations and Convictions: Honoring the Life and Legacy of Dr. Luke L. Keefer, Jr.*, 2015. 269 pages. $15.00.

Grace Herr Holland, *Planting Seeds: A Missionary Story,* 2016. 213 pages. $10.00

E. Morris Sider, *Living Simply, Giving Generously: A Biography of David and Jeannie Byer,* 2015. 208 pages. $10.00

E. Morris Sider, ed., *Worthy of the Calling: Biographies of Paul and Lela Swalm Hostetler, Harvey and Erma Heise Sider, and Luke Jr. and Doris Bowman Keefer,* 2014. 351 pages. $15.00

Back List

Paul Boyer, *Mission on Taylor Street: The Founding and Early Years of the Dayton Brethren in Christ Mission*, 1987. 176 pages. $5.00.

Miriam J. Brechbill and Hannah E. Scott, *Through Refining Fires: The Lives of John and Ada Sauder,* 2007. 91 pages. $5.00.

Joan Graff Clucas, *We All Love Dr. Virginia: The Story of a Brethren in Christ Missionary in Africa,* 2008. 42 pages. $4.00 (written for readers age 9-14 years).

D. Ray Heisey, *Healing Body and Soul: The Life and Times of Dr. W. O. Baker, 1827-1916*, 2004. 547 pages. $8.00.

J. Wilmer Heisey, *The Cross Roads Story: A Brethren in Christ Community Living at the Threshold of Tomorrow,* 2004. 274 pages. $5.00 (income from sales goes to the Cross Roads congregation).

J. Norman Hostetter, Luke L. Keefer, Jr., and Daniel R. Chamberlain, *Embracing Scholarship, Piety and Obedience: Biographies of Carlton Oscar Wittlinger, Martin Homer Schrag, and Owen Hiram Alderfer*, 2009. 357 pages. $12.00.

Wilma I. Musser, *The Brethren in Christ Churches in Kansas,* 1991. 185 pages. $5.00.

Martin H. Schrag, *Christian Lesher: Nineteenth-Century Brethren in Christ Bishop,* 2003. 175 pages. $4.00.

Morris N. Sherk, *In the World but Not of the World: Rapho District [1872–1957]*, 2009. 289 pages. $5.00.

Written or edited by E. Morris Sider

Unless otherwise noted, income from sales goes to the Historical Society.

Fire in the Mountains: The Story of a Revival Movement in Central Pennsylvania, 1996, re-edited and reprinted in 2010. 144 pages. $6.00 ($4.00 for each additional copy).

Messenger of Grace: A Biography of C. N. Hostetter, Jr., 1982. 272 pages. $4.00.

Called to Evangelism: The Life and Ministry of John L. Rosenberry, 1988. 160 pages. $4.00.

Sider and Terry Brensinger, eds., *Within the Perfection of Christ: Essays on Peace and the Nature of the Church,* 1990. 266 pages. $4.00.

Preaching the Word: Sermons by Brethren in Christ Ministers, 1994. 181 pages. $4.00.

Reflections on a Heritage: Defining the Brethren in Christ, 1999. 266 pages. $5.00 (twenty articles by church leaders on the character of the Brethren in Christ Church).

Canadian Portraits: Brethren in Christ Biographical Sketches, 2001. 416 pages. $6.00 (contains sixteen biographies).

Faithful Witnesses: Canadian Brethren in Christ Biographical Sketches, 2006. 423 pages. $6.00 (contains 24 biographies).

Windows to the Church, 2003. 373 pages. $5.00 (twenty articles from Brethren in Christ History and Life).

Sider, Rebecca Ebersole, and Dorcas Steckbeck, eds., *Celebrating Women's Stories: Faith Through Life's Seasons,* 2004. 336 pages. $7.00 (twenty-one biographies of Brethren in Christ women in the United States and Canada).

A Living and Growing Ministry: The Story of Roxbury Holiness Camp, 2010. 319 pages. $15.00 (hard covers, $25.00). (Written for the Camp's 75th anniversary. Income from sales goes to the Camp.)

IN THIS ISSUE

Produced by the Brethren in Christ Historical Society

BRETHREN IN CHRIST HISTORY & LIFE APRIL 2017

VOL. 40 NO. 1