

Sacrifice, Service, and Significance: The Ministry of Isaac and Maybelle Kanode

By Pauline Kanode Allison Peifer*

Called into ministry

Just a short distance after turning onto Little Piney Creek Road the two sisters gazed eagerly out of the car window. Were they on the right road? Would the church building still be standing?

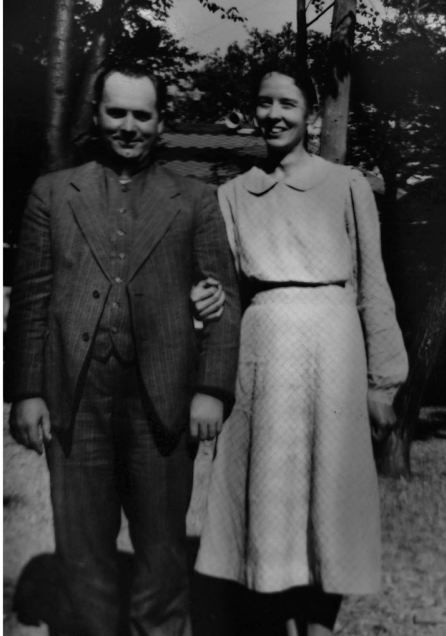
The two daughters of Isaac and Maybelle Kanode—Pauline (Kanode Allison Peifer) and Beth (Kanode Sider)—were on a road trip in Blair County, Pennsylvania, to locate the first church their father served as pastor in an area commonly known as Morrison's Cove.

Isaac and Maybelle's life together as newlyweds began in 1941 in the town of Martinsburg. Isaac, a licensed Brethren in Christ minister, with his young wife Maybelle, had a growing desire to see the ministry of their church expand. The Martinsburg and Woodbury churches were established congregations in the Morrison's Cove district. Isaac was listed on the district preaching rotation, but a desire was growing inside him to reach people who did not attend church. While church planting was not a topic of discussion at that time, Isaac and Maybelle believed God was calling them and they were ready and willing to answer that call.

The sisters were not disappointed in the search for their parents' church. As they crept along the narrow road, a small red building came into view nestled up against the mountain a few hundred yards from meandering Piney Creek. The name on a plaque beside the door confirmed they had found the right place. It simply read Eight Square Chapel. Just as the name

** Pauline Kanode Allison Peifer is the oldest daughter of Isaac and Maybelle Kanode. She is retired from nursing home administration, pastoral ministry, and service as the first female bishop in the Brethren in Christ Church. Except where otherwise indicated, all photos are courtesy of the family.*

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Isaac and Maybelle Kanode as a young couple in 1941, ready and willing to serve God and the church.

implied, the oddly-shaped building had eight sides. A small cupola rose in the center of the roof, and there was a simple white front door with a small window in the center shaped like a cross. It left no doubt. The daughters had found the church where their parents began their ministry.

Eight Square Chapel had its origin as a one-room school with the deed dating to 1834 designated for the education of children in the communities of Royer and Clappertown. For more than one hundred years, children walked to this school for their primary education.

Research revealed that it was not unusual for school buildings in the 1800s to be shaped like an octagon. The idea for eight sides was said to be “scotch.” Thrift and discipline were characteristics of the Scottish people who migrated to the United States. They believed the shape was conducive for discipline measures and saving heat. The teacher’s desk was placed in the center with the desks radiating out to the sides. Additionally, tradition stated that the many-sided windows may have been planned to aid children in watching for Indian raids. One wonders what the school teacher would have done if a child spied a raider.

As years passed, one-room schools finally gave way to progress. Children in the surrounding community of Williamsburg were transferred as late as November 1942 to a consolidated, much improved school where each grade had the luxury of individual classrooms. After years of activity, the one-room schoolhouse on Little Piney Creek Road was abandoned.¹

¹ Annual Report of Superintendent of County Schools, Blair County, Pennsylvania, 1944, 22.

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Isaac attended the public sale of the schoolhouse and, by pooling together their meager personal funds received from the sale of a life insurance policy along with the generosity of a few of their relatives, the couple bought the schoolhouse.² They were ready to sacrifice physically and materially to make their hopes and dreams come true. That was just the beginning of many months of rigorous cleaning, providing deferred maintenance, and doing necessary remodeling. They made it presentable for services.

Isaac drove up and down country roads and visited every home throughout the rural community of Williamsburg, introducing people to the idea of a church on Piney Creek Road. Their efforts were somewhat rewarded when they began services in the fall of 1943 with twelve in attendance including the pastor, his wife, and their infant daughter.

Over time people responded to the news of a church and it began to grow. If someone didn't have transportation to the services, Isaac offered, "We'll stop and pick you up." Even as a preschooler, Pauline remembers they frequently stopped at homes for prospective attendees who needed a ride. One Sunday, the number of individuals was so many that Isaac rode in the trunk the remainder of the trip to the chapel. In addition to Sunday School, they soon added Sunday worship and an evening service plus midweek cottage prayer meetings, which were held in homes throughout the community. Eventually revival services were



Isaac and Maybelle with young daughters Pauline and Joanne, and Maybelle's sister Elsie outside Eight Square Chapel.

² Blair County Deed Book K, Pennsylvania, 386-387.

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scheduled several times a year. Maybelle frequently led the singing. She told her daughter in later years about the time she took her to the platform to sit on a chair beside her father during the song service. While the congregation was singing, Pauline not only fell off the chair but also down off the platform.

After a rather slow start in 1943, Eight Square Chapel was dedicated on September 3, 1944, nearly two years after the work had begun, with Bishops Charlie Byers and Henry Hostetter preaching at the weekend celebration.³

More than ten years later, as a Messiah College student, Isaac wrote his thoughts about “The First Days in a New Field” as a course requirement in Pastoral Theology for Professor Albert Engle:

The chief interest of the pastor, at first, upon getting into a new field should be pastoral, learning to know his people and they must learn to know him. This can only be done by a personal contact in the home. To gain the hearts of the people it is necessary that he learns their name and is able to name them upon meeting them in service or on the street. The first visit in a home may be more for the purpose of becoming acquainted . . . , they say first impressions are the most lasting. Suppose a field is difficult. Should a man take it? The answer would certainly be “yes.” If a minister is afraid of a hard field, he will never succeed as a minister in any field. The greatest joy that can come to a servant of God is to take a hard field, and see, by the grace of God, the problems solved, to take a small church and through the process of nurture and the

COMMUNION, DEDICATION AND HOME-COMING	
TO BE HELD AT	
EIGHT SQUARE CHAPEL	
NEAR ROYER	
SEPTEMBER 2 & 3, 1944	
— O —	
SATURDAY EVENING	
7:30—	Devotions and Praise Service
	Preparatory Service
	Commemoration of the Lord's Supper and Feet Washing
	Directed by Bishop J. S. Oldham
SUNDAY MORNING	
9:30—	Sunday School Session
	Children Martha Sentz
	Adults Bishop Henry N. Hostetter
10:30—	"A Serious Shortage" Bishop Charlie B. Byers
11:00—	Sermon, "The Road to Spiritual Certainty" Bishop Henry N. Hostetter
11:45—	Dismissal
SUNDAY AFTERNOON	
DEDICATIONAL SERVICE	
1:45—	Devotional
2:00—	"Going Into the House of the Lord" Bishop Henry N. Hostetter
2:30—	Dedication Message Bishop Charlie B. Byers
	Offering
3:15—	Dedication Ceremony and Prayer Bishop J. S. Oldham
3:45—	Dismissal
SUNDAY EVENING	
7:30—	"A New Touch" Bishop Henry N. Hostetter
	Offering
8:15—	Sermon, "The Mystery of Godliness" Bishop Charlie B. Byers
Come and Enjoy This Season of Fellowship With Us	

Program of communion, dedication and homecoming at Eight Square Chapel, September 2 and 3, 1944.

³ "Octagon Building is Dedicated as Church Edifice," *Morrison's Cove Herald*, September 7, 1944.



Isaac and Maybelle visiting the site and reminiscing about Eight Square Chapel many years later.

blessing of God, see the work grow, until it becomes the talk of the community.”

For a budding young pastor, where did Isaac get such wisdom? How and where did it all begin? Growing up, Isaac Kanode was a quiet child who would on occasion stutter as he spoke. As a young man, his slowness of speech made him an unlikely candidate to pursue any call to the ministry or be chosen as one of the ministers at the Brethren in Christ Church where he and his parents attended in Martinsburg, Pennsylvania. But even when Isaac was a young person, God gave him a big vision and a unique capacity to turn possibilities into reality. His life began to unfold as an illustration of God’s call.

Isaac’s heritage

Isaac’s parents, Avery O. and Fannie Stern Kanode, began married life on an October day in 1913. Woodrow Wilson was president of the United States. The federal government had just amended the constitution to impose and collect income taxes. The first automobile road across the United States, the Lincoln Highway, was dedicated.

Into this changing world, Isaac was born in 1914. Over the next twenty years, seven more children, Elizabeth, Arthur, Beulah (Charles) Ruth (Fees), Avery, Jr. Lois (Smith), and Alice (Heisey) were added to the family.

Isaac’s paternal grandfather, Rufus, was a devout and pious Christian, who provided a strong church heritage. Along with his wife Leora they

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raised a large family of eleven children. Isaac's father, Avery, was their fourth child, born in 1888. Rufus migrated to Blair County from Maryland, a hub of Brethren in Christ activity in the nineteenth century. His Anabaptist ancestors had left Germany and Switzerland in the 1700s and settled around Ringgold, Maryland. It is believed they entered America through Baltimore. At that time the family name was spelled Knode. It is unclear why Rufus as an adult left his extended family in 1877 and moved to Blair County. Likely it was to buy land, have a farm, and raise his own family. However, he never forgot his roots. The story has been handed down by the family that Rufus so much appreciated fellowship with the Maryland brethren that at the time of their annual love feast, Rufus walked one hundred sixty miles round trip from Blair County, Pennsylvania to Ringgold, Maryland to attend the services. It was also recorded that on one occasion he walked to Lancaster County for love feast. Into this devout Christian family, Isaac's father, Avery was born.⁴

When Avery was ready to choose a wife, he chose Fannie Rebecca Stern, the oldest child of eight, born to Isaac Hoffman Stern and Barbara Ellen Kauffman Stern. Fannie's father, Isaac Stern, was a school teacher who later became a minister. Early in life Fannie's father experienced physical hardship. When he was eleven years old he lost the use of his right arm, possibly in a farming accident, that handicapped him from manual labor for the rest of his life. Before he was eighteen years old, he began teaching school and later worked at a weigh scale office. As an adult he united with the Brethren in Christ Church serving as a minister prior to his election to serve as bishop of the Morrison's Cove District, a role filled until the close of his life.

It is not surprising that when Avery and Fannie had their first child, they named him Isaac Stern Kanode, a namesake for Fannie's father, who was by then a respected, well-known Brethren in Christ bishop. From Isaac's birth, Avery and Fannie undoubtedly had high aspirations for their firstborn son. Isaac was seventeen months old when his sister Elizabeth was born. When it was time for Isaac to go to school, his parents had him wait at

⁴ Earl D. Brechbill, "To the Members of the Rufus and Leora Ober Kanode Relationships," Presentation at the Kanode Family Reunion, June 9, 1987.

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Isaac's parents, Avery and Fannie (Stern) Kanode married in October 1913.

home an additional year so that Isaac and Elizabeth could start first grade together and walk two miles to the one-room school.

Isaac's mother described her son at a "This is Your Life" event in the 1950s as the "adventurous type" always wanting to explore something new. She recalled that five-year-old Isaac climbed the outside ladder to the top of the silo during silo filling days, thankfully with no mishap. She also recalled the smelly encounter Isaac had with a skunk when he was walking home from school.

Isaac's mother was an excellent cook and outstanding baker, known for her homemade noodles, delicious bread, and gooey sticky buns. In her retirement years she baked pies for a local restaurant.

Isaac's father, Avery, served as one of two deacons at the Martinsburg Church. When men sat on one side of the church and women on the other, Avery's wife Fannie was quite visible in the congregation sitting on the second row of the right-hand side with the minister's wife. She was a woman of tender emotion and was not afraid to show that emotion when she was visibly touched by the hymns, prayers, or testimonies. She frequently wiped tears from her eyes, lifting her glasses up over her forehead, resting them on her starched white covering, a practice that was hers long before it was fashionable to prop glasses in one's hair.

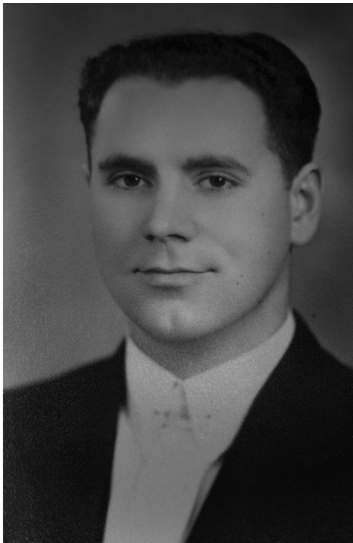
Preparation for the biennial Love Feast and Communion was significant in the Kanode family. As in most Brethren in Christ churches, it was the responsibility of the deacons' wives to bake the communion bread. When it came out of the oven, it was a special treat for a Kanode child or grandchild to receive warm samples.

As a young man, before marriage, Isaac received a practical education, learning how to do chores and run a farm alongside his father. When he graduated from high school in 1932, he got his first job working as a hired hand for nearby farmers, several of whom were relatives. After working for

four years on local farms, Isaac's parents made a life-altering suggestion to their son.

Avery and Fannie encouraged Isaac to pursue education beyond high school. He took their advice and enrolled at Messiah Junior College at Grantham, Pennsylvania, in 1937. Fannie's father, Bishop Isaac Stern, was well acquainted with Messiah College, as noted in the dedication program when he was chosen to give one of several dedication prayers at the new Messiah Junior College chapel on January 6, 1912. It was a big step for Isaac in the 1930s to leave the comforts of a rural community and travel one hundred and ten miles to enroll in higher education. He was also beginning to conquer his speech impairment.

In college he not only studied diligently, but at the same time worked in Harrisburg for Henry B. McCormick. The McCormicks were a prominent family in South Central Pennsylvania who had a significant influence on history and commerce. One hundred years ago it was thought that the McCormick family would have outranked Milton S. Hershey. Henry B.



Isaac Kanode, a student at Messiah Junior College, 1937.

McCormick was born in 1869 and graduated from Yale University in 1892. Although he was a member of the Pennsylvania Bar, he never practiced law. He was a trustee of the Henry McCormick Estate and director of the Dauphin Deposit Trust and Harrisburg Bridge Company.⁵ Isaac served as Henry's chauffeur and personal valet, pressing his suits and shining his shoes. In the summer he accompanied them to their summer cottage. This introduction into a much wider circle of society must have been quite an interesting contrast to the simpler homelife of the "plain Kanode folks" in the idyllic Morrison's Cove.

While at Messiah College, Isaac also became involved in activities that pointed

⁵ Henry B. McCormick, <https://harrisburg2.vhost.psu.edu/hum/McCormick/henryb.htm>.

him toward ministry in the Brethren in Christ Church. Along with another college student, John Garman, he was active in providing preaching services at Iron Springs, a small rural church in the South Mountain of Pennsylvania, which provided good training and experience for Isaac. After concluding his studies at Messiah, he continued to



Maybelle's parents, J. Albert and Clara (Kensingler) Carper married in 1900.

work several years for Mr. McCormick. However, his thoughts and attention increasingly turned toward a young woman, Maybelle Carper, from his home congregation in Morrison's Cove.

Maybelle's heritage

Maybelle Carper was the third of four children (Lloyd, Elsie (Feather), Maybelle, and Paul) born to J. Albert and Clara Carper, active members of the community whose farm was located two miles from the Kanode farm. Maybelle's father was a tall, rather distinguished-looking, soft-spoken man. In addition to farming, he was a courageous, risk-taking businessman.

In the early years of the Carper family, a tragic family event rocked their world. Several weeks before Maybelle's thirteenth birthday, her father Albert and Uncle Dan, along with her eight-year-old brother Paul and six-year-old cousin Carl, stopped along the highway to look at their Uncle Dan's new house and barn under construction. The fathers crossed the road followed by six-year-old Carl, and last by Paul. Going to the front of the vehicle, Paul started to cross, not seeing an oncoming car which approached and struck him. After being transported to a local hospital, he died from massive wounds to his head.

A second tragedy for the Carper family occurred during the Great Depression. Albert and a friend owned a hardware business in Martinsburg. When the financial crash of 1929 occurred, they lost their business and had to declare bankruptcy. At that time declaring bankruptcy was a very

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difficult thing for the Brethren in Christ Church to accept. After much deliberation, Maybelle's father Albert was granted forgiveness from the church and they did not remove his membership. For some unknown reason, that was not the same decision for his business partner who was also a member and had his membership removed. Those two hard times affected Maybelle's family for many years, and throughout her lifetime, Maybelle often referred to them.

Before marriage, Isaac and Maybelle were involved in the Young People's Society at the Martinsburg Brethren in Christ Church. Maybelle was the secretary and Isaac the president. They both



Maybelle's brother, Paul LeRoy Carper, struck by and automobile and killed on October 12, 1924.

helped to plan and present the first portion of the Sunday evening service each week. It was a wonderful opportunity to work together as they gained experience and cultivated their blossoming friendship.

As a young woman, Maybelle had high aspirations, perhaps even more adventurous than her peers. Immediately after high school, she took what was known then as a Six-Week Winter Term at Messiah Junior College. After this term was completed, she entered Messiah College as a full-time student the following year. Most of all, she had a desire to learn secretarial work, so she returned home the next year and entered the nearby Zeth Business School in Altoona, Pennsylvania. She learned shorthand and became an accomplished and competent stenographer.

For several years afterward she returned to Grantham and for a time worked as a cook and general household helper at the home of a prominent woman known as Lady Thornton who lived near Bowmansdale. Lady Thornton's husband, Sir Henry Thornton, was knighted in 1919 by the British Government and recognized for his ability to move men and

supplies during World War I as the head of the Great Eastern Railway Company. He later became President of the Canadian National Railway.⁶ Maybelle was hired as a cook and soon learned fine dining and culinary skills at the Thorntons. She and her long-time friend Ethel Climenhaga learned to prepare delicious and sometimes lavish meals along with hosting large gatherings. In 1935, she left Lady Thornton's employment and returned home to Martinsburg, where she began to work as a stenographer at the Lykens Insurance Company, a job which she continued until after her marriage in 1941.

It is somewhat surprising that both Isaac and Maybelle spent nearly five years working in what would have been known in their day as high society homes. As individuals with public distinction, the McCormicks and the Thorntons introduced these simple, plain folks to a significantly different lifestyle. This no doubt provided an opportunity for the young adults to evaluate the current cultural climate as well as demonstrate Christian character and values along with hard work and thriftiness.

Not given to rushing into marriage, Isaac and Maybelle "courted" over a seven-year period before their marriage. When the morning of August 10, 1941 arrived, Maybelle helped with the barn chores as usual. Then the couple along with family and friends made their way to the Martinsburg Brethren in Christ Church for the first wedding at that church. Prior to



Maybelle and Ethel Climenhaga, cooks and household workers for Lady Thornton at "Nantilly," her residence on the Bowmansdale hill on the current Mt. Allen Drive, Mechanicsburg.

⁶ Henry Worth Thornton, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Worth_Thornton.



Isaac and Maybelle (Carper) Kanode were the first bride and groom to be married in the Martinsburg Brethren in Christ Church on August 11, 1941. Prior to that time, couples were usually married in the home of the bishop.

that time, weddings were held in the bishop's home. Bishop Henry Hostetter, a much-respected Brethren in Christ minister from Lancaster County, performed the ceremony, and a ladies quartet from Messiah College provided music.

From their first days together, their lives revolved around the church. Prior to their marriage, Isaac was one of three ministers in a rotation in the district to preach at Martinsburg Church along with Howard Feather and Andrew Slagenweit. As a young and unseasoned minister, he enjoyed having opportunities to speak. God's call soon prompted the newly-married couple to purchase the Eight Square property in 1942.

Family life

Fourteen months after their marriage, in October 1942, they became first-time parents to Pauline and in August 1944 their second daughter, Joanne, enlarged their family to four. By this time, they had embarked on the Eight Square Chapel ministry.

Not long after Joanne's arrival, a gnawing anxiety grew within the young couple. It became apparent in the months following Joanne's birth that she was not developing as a normal infant. The distraught parents took her to a medical specialist who didn't give them much satisfaction, simply acknowledging that she was not advancing like other children her age. Maybelle said she tried desperately to remember whether Joanne could have had some mysterious illness or flu that may have contributed to her delayed growth. Over the next several years, it became more obvious that

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Four generations. Standing: Isaac and his mother Fannie Kanode; seated: Isaac's grandmother Barbara Stern and his daughter Pauline.

Joanne was not going to advance as a normal child.

Through a much later discovery and more sophisticated testing they learned the cause of their daughter's disability. She was born with a rare defect in a gene that causes an amino acid to build up in the body known as Phenylketonuria or PKU. They learned this buildup is toxic to the brain and if untreated, infants will sustain intellectual disabilities which are irreversible.

In 1963, when Joanne was nineteen years old, the landmark blood test was discovered by the health community that identified this disorder in any newborn. By then it was too late for Joanne. The

damage was done. Today a government-mandated heel-prick blood test is done on newborns in all fifty states within forty-eight hours of their birth that will identify a PKU infant and prevent a similar disastrous outcome by placing the child on a restricted dietary regimen.

As devoted parents, there is no doubt that Isaac and Maybelle grieved for years over the disability of their daughter. Billy Graham said many years ago, "I have been asked hundreds of times in my life why God allows tragedy and suffering. I have to confess that I really do not know the answer totally, even to my own satisfaction. I have to accept by faith that God is sovereign and He is a God of love and mercy and compassion in the midst of suffering."⁷ Just as others who dealt with disabilities more than seventy years ago, Isaac and Maybelle often bore this heavy burden in silence. They

⁷ Billy Graham, "Text of the Rev. Billy Graham's Comments at Washington National Cathedral, *New York Times*, September 14, 2001, <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/09/14/national/text-of-the-rev-bill-grahams-comments-at-washingtpm-national.html>.

rarely talked about it. Yet it did not deter them from the call of God. As a character in the movie version of C. S. Lewis's *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* said, "Hardships often prepare ordinary people for an extraordinary destiny."

As the young family continued to serve the church, Joanne was cared for in a state-run facility near Indiana, Pennsylvania, with visits scheduled from her family. While she stayed healthy physically, she never gained normal intellectual ability. Today the Americans with Disabilities Act has done much to support and respond to families who struggle with physical or intellectual disabilities so they don't have to needlessly suffer in silence. But throughout their ministry, Isaac and Maybelle did not often share their burden.

Isaac and Maybelle's pastoral ministry

Revivals and tent meetings

In his early years, Isaac's pastoral and preaching skills expanded. He began receiving invitations to serve as evangelist in congregations throughout the denomination. Revival services and summer tent meetings were a common occurrence in Brethren in Christ Churches that lasted two and sometimes three weeks. He often boarded the train in Altoona for far-away places like Buffalo, New York; Leedey, Oklahoma; or Springvale, Ontario, Canada. Other times he drove to preaching appointments in Lancaster County or Franklin County or closer to home at Blandburg, Saxton, or Sherman's Valley. Over a span of ten years,, he served as guest evangelist in more than forty congregations throughout the brotherhood.

Congregations often scheduled a winter revival followed by a summer tent meeting which was usually held under a large tent designed to hold around one hundred people. Benches served as seats for attendees, and one end of the tent had a raised platform, a pulpit, and a preacher's bench. There was the all-important altar or mourner's bench in front of the platform. During the earliest days of tent revivals, the evangelist lived in another tent on site. Tent workers, who were couples or single women, did the cooking for the group and served as prayer workers. The workers' living quarters were small tents situated near the larger meeting tent. Tent meetings were seen as an outreach mechanism for the local church with the evangelist and

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the local pastor visiting in the community on a number of days during the meetings, inviting the community to attend. The sides to the tent were open so the singing, testifying, and preaching were often heard throughout the nearby countryside during the service, hoping to draw in local residents. Tent meetings were common in the 1940s and 1950s. Each district owned a tent and benches, passing the supplies around to the various congregations during the summer season.

Woodbury

In 1948, Isaac received an invitation to leave Eight Square Chapel and assume the pastorate of a congregation located just outside Woodbury, Pennsylvania. Built in 1867, the building was one of the oldest meetinghouses in the Brethren in Christ denomination. What an irony that he was invited to leave perhaps the newest congregation and become pastor of one of the oldest congregations. In this long-established congregation, Isaac continued his passion for the unconverted. In one of his preaching services, he recounted the story of a man in the community who was not a believer. Isaac said, “One day I met up with this man. I knew he wasn’t a Christian, and God asked me to speak to him about his soul’s condition, but I didn’t do it. Not long after that, the man died suddenly.” With emotion he told the



Woodbury Brethren in Christ Church, built in 1867, one of the oldest meetinghouses in the denomination.

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congregation, “I failed that man. I did not listen to the voice of God.” Isaac cultivated an evangelistic heart that extended throughout his forty years of ministry long after revival and tent meetings were a thing of the past.

In September of the same year, the family welcomed a third daughter, Beth, and moved from Martinsburg to a country home located more convenient to the Woodbury Church. It was a peaceful spot to raise their family, nestled among the corn fields located exactly one mile between the Carper family farm to the west and the Kanode family farm to the east. This location was advantageous for Maybelle since her husband was often away spending increased time preaching in Brethren in Christ congregations around the country.

Before pastors were salaried, they were self-supporting. An assigned minister typically received a modest monthly offering from the congregation. If he served additional churches in preaching engagements as did Isaac, he received a love offering, which was unpredictable in size. To supplement their income, Isaac came up with a way he could support his family.

Across the road from their home stood an empty barn, just the right place to raise chickens. Baby chicks grew to become more than one thousand laying hens. Crates of eggs were loaded into the family car and driven twenty miles south to Altoona. Soon an “egg route” was established with regular customers who embraced the idea of buying eggs from the country. Around the holidays customers ordered “dressed chickens.” To help the process along, Isaac came up with the idea of a gasoline-powered chicken picker that removed the feathers more efficiently. Maybelle cleaned and dressed chickens every week in their basement.

Their daughters soon became a part of the regular egg trip. Pauline was not more than ten years old when she was recruited to knock on the doors of regular customers’ homes where she counted out the requested dozen or two of eggs from a wire basket, filling their requests and receiving their money. Beth remembers one eventful day when she was six-years old and went along to market. For some reason her father brought the car to a sudden stop. All the cases of eggs sitting on the back seat came rushing forward. As they opened the car doors, dozens of slimy, broken eggs ran out on the ground. Needless to say, their customers were disappointed. No matter how hard they tried, their family car had the disgusting smell of broken eggs for many weeks. Not long after that event, they purchased a

panel truck to more easily transport their produce.

Isaac continued to hold evangelistic services, primarily in Pennsylvania, and the family would sometimes attend with him on weekends. Pauline frequently accompanied him during the week. It is unclear whether this practice was to provide companionship for Isaac to keep him awake on the drive home. Perhaps it was to give an overactive Pauline something interesting to do in the evening. On one particular tent meeting trip, she was misbehaving during the service as she wiggled around, hopping from one bench to another. Isaac stopped his sermon and asked Pauline to go to the front of the tent and sit directly in front of him. It was an event she would never forget, and she learned a quick lesson on church decorum. She accompanied her father to numerous revival events and thankfully did not seem to resent the trips. As a result, even as a child, she learned to know and appreciate many pastoral families and church leaders who guided their small denomination.

In January 1953, the Martinsburg Church held the district winter revival in which the local churches participated. Rev. Marshall Winger from Ontario, Canada, served as evangelist. During the first week of the services, Isaac's parents, Avery and Fannie, along with Isaac and Maybelle and their four-year-old-daughter, Beth, made their way to the Martinsburg church to attend a scheduled morning prayer meeting. It was common practice for a group of brothers and sisters from the congregation to gather at the church some mornings to pray for revival at the beginning of the series.

Isaac's father, Avery, began to pray aloud. As he was praying, he began to cough and then he slumped over the altar and became unconscious. He never recovered and died at the church altar of what was later determined to be a massive heart attack. This tragic news soon traveled throughout the community and into the denomination. The next few days were a whirlwind of funeral planning. At the encouragement of the grieving family, the revival continued. A somber spell was cast over the revival meeting as Evangelist Winger reminded all in attendance that life was short. At nearly every service he led the congregation to sing a then-familiar chorus "Tell Mother I'll Be There" but to substitute the words, "Tell Father I'll be There." It was a moving experience for the congregation to lose their deacon so suddenly, and the revival event would long be remembered.

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The Avery Kanode family picture taken a short time before the death of their father, Avery. Back row: Arthur, Elizabeth, Ruth (Fees), Avery Jr., Beulah (Charles); Front row: Alice (Heisey), Fannie, Avery, Lois (Smith).

Canada

In the winter of 1954, Isaac received a letter sent by a pastor from the province of Saskatchewan, Canada, asking him to preach at a series of revival meetings in the more isolated churches of northwest Canada with the meetings projected to last throughout the summer. In his heart Isaac wanted to say yes, but how could he be separated from his family for so long? How could Maybelle oversee the business alone? He made the decision to take the entire family with him. It would mean closing the egg business and selling the chickens. The church was calling, and the time seemed right.

The chickens were sold. Isaac purchased a travel trailer that could accommodate their family of four, but small enough to be towed with a car. It would be their home away from home for ten weeks. The journey began for Isaac in Ontario with a revival at the Boyle Church. Maybelle and the girls traveled by train to join Isaac in Buffalo. Their trip then extended across Ontario, through Manitoba and into Saskatchewan as he preached several weeks each at the Meath Park, Paddockwood, Delisle, and Kindersley churches, renewing old acquaintances with college friends such as Pastor John and Ruth Garman at Kindersley and making new friends with Robert

Sider, pastor at Delisle, and mission workers Arthur and Velma Heise and Verna Faus at Meath Park and Paddockwood, Saskatchewan.

For the young family, the summer seemed like one continuous vacation. Isaac picked out interesting sights to tour. Family ventures included a boat trip on Lake Huron across the Straits of Mackinac, a river trip at the Wisconsin Dells, and a tour of the Henry Ford Museum in Michigan on their way home.

While they were on their trip to the northwest, Isaac received a letter from Rev. Titus Books, bishop in Dauphin County, Pennsylvania inviting him to become the pastor at the Hummelstown Brethren in Christ Church. It then became clearer why God had directed them to sell the chicken business. He was preparing them for the next step in their ministry journey.

Hummelstown

On a November day, just before Thanksgiving 1954, the Kanode family made the move to Hummelstown, a bustling town nine miles east of Harrisburg and three miles from Hershey. This decision provided the challenge Isaac needed to use his gifts in a larger congregation. Numbering less than a hundred persons, the congregation was receptive to a new pastor. Isaac was eager to further sharpen his skills in visitation, preaching, church administration, and evangelistic outreach. At the same time, he continued his studies at Messiah College and graduated with his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1957.

In contrast to running the chicken business, Isaac was grateful he could devote his time to the work of the church. However, the family still needed supplemental income. Not many churches were yet able to support a full-time pastor. Maybelle agreed that it was time to dust off her secretarial skills. As a conservatively dressed minister's wife, she worked more than five years at a well-known city insurance company. Boarding the local bus for Harrisburg early each weekday morning, she completed her tasks while working in a smoke-filled office.

During that time the denomination was facing its own internal challenges. It became apparent to church leaders that the church's over-emphasis on separation from the world with practices such as conservative dress had become a hindrance to church growth. They realized it adversely affected their families, as grown children of long-time members made

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decisions to leave the church of their birth. As a result of an earlier meeting in Indianapolis, a group of churchmen believed God was saying they needed to re-evaluate their practices of exclusivity and separation while maintaining their deeply held doctrines of Anabaptism, Pietism, and Wesleyanism. It would take many years of conversation and struggle to come to agreement on the conservative practices they could safely abandon and what doctrines needed to be strongly upheld. While there was not always agreement, at no time did the opposition become so strong as to cause a schism or denominational split.

Isaac, in his quiet unassuming way, supported the change in organizational structure which led to discontinuing numerous smaller districts. It resulted in the division of the US and Canada into six regions with five bishops. Assigned to the Atlantic Conference, with Henry A. Ginder as his supervisor, Isaac soon found not only a strong and supportive bishop, but a life-long friend and colleague, one who would influence him in many ways and introduce him to new opportunities in leadership over the next twenty-five years.

The Hummelstown Church, originally built in 1886, had a long history. Hummelstown and Fairland Church, in Cleona, Pennsylvania, were the first two established churches in Dauphin and Lebanon counties, both built in the same year. The modest, white-frame Hummelstown church was built on the farm of Samuel Brehm, a minister of the denomination. A Sunday school was not started until approximately 1900, and held on Sunday afternoons with opportunity for folk of the town and surrounding community to attend. In the spring of 1949 they procured the services of Arthur Musser, a minister outside the congregation, to serve the people. Pastor Musser served from 1949 to 1954.

In 1952 the old church structure was moved to a new foundation, encased in brick, and the church remodeled to include a twenty-foot addition including restrooms, balcony, and nursery located at the corner of Railroad Street and South Hanover Street.⁸

Over the next fourteen years, Hummelstown gave Isaac many opportunities to grow as a pastor. His preaching style, pastoral skills, and

⁸ "Hummelstown Brethren in Christ Church History," in Hummelstown Bicentennial Booklet, 1962.

friendly demeanor attracted many community families to the church. Just as he wrote in his college paper years before, he found it important to learn to know community leaders such as bank officers, policemen, and firemen. He was invited to become the chaplain of the fire company. He associated freely with other pastors of the community in the Ministerium. They were friends, each with their own denominational distinctives serving in their assigned churches; however, it was common practice for them to share freely and plan pulpit events together throughout the year.

Isaac embraced denominational initiatives such as the Forward Enlargement Campaign in October. Youth were attracted to the church by a robust Christ's Crusaders program. Both youth and adults were encouraged to join a five-year Bible Memory program. An active Bible Quiz program for youth was started and a number of the church's young people attended Youth for Christ meetings on Saturday night.

Isaac often invited Sunday evening guest speakers, arranged musical concerts, or showed Billy Graham films. There seemed to be no end to the creativity with which he approached his role as pastor. He partnered with Messiah College to provide interns and assistant pastors such as Luke Keefer Jr. and Andrew Stoner. As a result, over time the church grew to more than two hundred enthusiastic and engaged congregants.

The entire pastor's family was involved in the life of the church. Maybelle, with her years of secretarial training, served as his pastoral secretary. Throughout their ministry, Isaac was often heard to call out, "Maybelle, can you come take dictation for a letter I need to send?"

Pauline played the newly acquired organ on many Sundays, attended Youth for Christ, and was involved in the quizzing and Bible memory program. Beth demonstrated a developing musical talent by playing the piano "by ear" to accompany Junior Church and Vacation Bible School and progressed to playing for the Youth for Christ clubs and rallies. Isaac oversaw the construction of a new parsonage into which his family moved in 1963.

Throughout the years, many new families found Christ and called the Hummelstown congregation their home. Isaac's passion for evangelism was realized in the countless lives of those who became believers and were involved in the life of the congregation. The blessing of God and the success of the Hummelstown church became an important highlight of his ministry.

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Near the conclusion of their ministry at Hummelstown their daughter Pauline was married to W. Dale Allison in the Hummelstown sanctuary in June 1966. Their youngest daughter Beth graduated from Lower Dauphin High School located across the street from the church, and their first grandchild, Steven Allison, was born in 1968.

Manheim

After serving for fourteen years, Isaac and Maybelle answered the call to take the pastorate at the Manheim Brethren in Christ Church. They were delighted with the new challenge and began their ministry when they moved into a spacious, new parsonage on North Grant Street adjacent to the church.

Over the next ten years at Manheim, Isaac and Maybelle further developed those same giftings from God they had cultivated in Hummelstown, Woodbury, and Eight Square Chapel. The Manheim Church had a long and impressive history. It was founded in 1908 with the church built in 1910 on Grant Street. Just as in his previous congregations, Isaac looked for new ways to do outreach into the community such as the annual Manheim Farm Show. While the congregation was supportive, they were more cautious in making decisions. Perhaps the highlight of Pastor Kanode's ministry was his insightful evaluation and leadership in guiding the congregation to make strategic decisions about the Grant Street property. The church had worshiped there for more than seventy years. Since it was landlocked, it was nearly impossible to consider any type of needed expansion. Over a period of time, Isaac guided the congregation to locate land outside of town.

In 1977 the congregation indeed took a bold step of faith. They purchased a large tract of land on Penryn Road north of Manheim. Looking back, future leaders concluded it was a momentous decision. Manheim Church not only built on that new site in 1979 but over the years expanded and remodeled the facility several times which contributed to their significant growth in membership and programming in succeeding years.⁹

⁹ "Rev. Kanode Concludes Nine Years of Service at Brethren in Christ Church," *Lancaster Intelligencer Journal*, July 1977.

Shenks Union Church

In 1978, Isaac and Maybelle made their final pastoral move before retirement and accepted the assignment of Shenks Union Church. This church located outside of Elizabethtown had an interesting and unusual history. It developed from a cemetery set aside by the John Shenk family in 1814 for use as a family burial ground. It soon became a community burial ground where funeral services often were held under a shade tree. John Shenk was influential in support for a community church, which was built in 1868 and erected as a community project. As a union church, there were two denominations that considered Shenks their home church. Isaac served as the Brethren in Christ pastor; John Ludwig served as the United Christian pastor.¹⁰ Everyone who called Shenks their home church intermingled amicably, and the pastors and the two congregations held services on alternating Sundays. During his four years of service, Isaac worked diligently to challenge the Brethren in Christ congregation to reach out to their community.



The Shenks Union Cemetery was developed in 1814 and became the major reason the Shenks Union Church was built in 1868.

¹⁰ "Shenks Church Tied to Local History," *Lancaster Intelligencer Journal*, ca. 1980.

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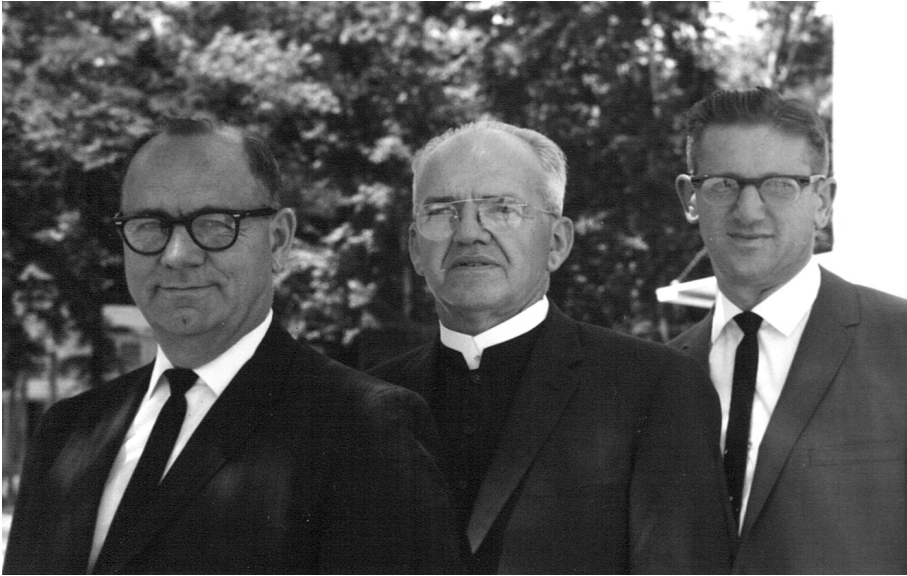
Retirement

When Isaac and Maybelle retired from the ministry in 1982, they had already celebrated their fortieth wedding anniversary and forty years in the ministry. For the first time since the Morrison's Cove days, they purchased their own home on Cedar Street, this time in Elizabethtown. This finally gave them an opportunity to live near their daughter Pauline and her family. They attended the Elizabethtown Brethren in Christ Church where their son-in-law, Dale Allison, served as senior pastor. In retirement, Isaac was excited to have the opportunity to teach Bible classes at the church. This assignment didn't last long.

In the fall of 1983 as winter approached, it became apparent that Isaac was battling some sort of significant health decline. His energy was waning and he experienced increasing falls. When he met with a medical specialist, he and his family learned that he had a progressive and devastating Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis known as Lou Gehrig's Disease or ALS. Over the next months, his major muscles became increasingly weakened including the muscles of swallowing and breathing. He entered Messiah Village at Mechanicsburg in early Fall 1984. As the disease progressed, he chose not to go on an extended breathing machine to sustain life. He passed to his eternal reward in heaven on September 29, 1984 just two years after retirement.



Isaac's and Maybelle's retirement celebration of forty years in ministry. From left to right: Bishop Charles and Ruth Byers, Esther and Bishop John Byers, Isaac and Maybelle, Beula and Henry Hostetter.



Isaac Kanode, Henry Hostetter, and Wilmer Heisey at the 1966 General Conference at Roxbury Holiness Camp. The three men worked together at the missions office in the late 1960s. Photo courtesy of the Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.

Denominational ministry

Over his forty years of ministry, Isaac's passion could be summed up in one word: evangelism. When the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) became endorsed and supported within Brethren in Christ Church circles, he enthusiastically supported those efforts and encouraged the denomination and his congregations to participate. Isaac was called upon to serve the Brethren in Christ Church at large in various ways. He served as the executive director of the Board for Home Missions in the 1960s. He spent many hours thinking about the mission of the US church and leading the Home Mission efforts.

His good friend, Bishop Henry Ginder, enjoyed telling about a car trip when traveling with Isaac on the New Jersey Turnpike as they dreamed of a ministry program for Voluntary Service workers in New York City. As they traveled, they drafted their vision for New York. Little did they know how life-changing that experience would be for many young people who would serve at the Voluntary Service Unit and later become pastors, missionaries, bishops, and church leaders.

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Fellowship Chapel, Bronx, New York. Left to right: Charles Rife, Albert Engle, and Isaac Kanode representing the Home Mission Board surveying the purchase of the property.

Isaac developed a great passion for all aspects of the New York ministry in the Bronx and in Brooklyn, visiting it numerous times. He was deeply involved in the acquisition of Brookhaven Retreat and Spring Lake Retreat as places where young people from New York City could retreat and escape city life for a few days or a week. Over the years he and Maybelle devoted many hours of their time and resources to bring life to Spring Lake Retreat. Unfortunately, the camp endeavor never grew into what they might have hoped.

Isaac served as secretary of the Atlantic Conference Extension Board. In that role, one of his experiences was learning to know businessman entrepreneur Noah Myers, who donated the land for the first extension church in the Atlantic Conference known as Skyline View near Harrisburg (now Lifepoint Church).

Isaac was instrumental in helping to develop the Atlantic Conference Loan Fund for churches and pastors so they could have the opportunity to

purchase land or property. He subsequently assisted with the unification of regional loan funds in 1976 under a new name: Jacob Engle Foundation (now the Brethren in Christ Foundation).

Isaac and Maybelle loved the Brethren in Christ Church, and they exposed their children in multiple ways to have that same love and appreciation. Bishops, evangelists, church leaders, and missionaries were frequent guests around the dinner table. Conversations often lasted well into the night. Their daughters listened quietly as stories were told, church concerns were discussed, and future ministries proposed. On more than one occasion, Pauline sat at the top of the stairs after being told it was time to go to bed. She just had to know the outcome of their conversation!

All of Isaac's ministry activities pointed to his love for the church and his desire to see people enter the kingdom of God. He attended seminars, including the Coral Ridge Evangelism Explosion and the Schuller Church Growth Institute. He was eager to stay in touch with current programs.

In every community he served, he found great joy in networking with area pastors and community leaders. Even to the end of his life he was an avid learner and reader, not only of the Bible, but the latest books and magazines on ministry, including current events newspapers and magazines. His grandson commented on "always seeing Grandpa reading *Time Magazine*." He was a student of the culture and often reflected that in his sermon illustrations. He worked hard to identify with young people. He was also known for his generosity, regularly funding trips or service projects for attendees in his



Isaac and his daughter Pauline attending one of many General Conferences along with the rest of the family.

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Maybelle Kanode was an active resident at Messiah Village until her death in 1996.

congregation. One such event was the Saturday he drove a school bus of Hummelstown youth for an expense-paid day trip to the Philadelphia Zoo. Another time he arranged for a bus to travel to New York City to hear Billy Graham at Yankee Stadium. He was always thinking of ways to motivate members of his congregation.

After Isaac's death in 1984, Maybelle continued to live in Elizabethtown. In 1986 she moved to a cottage at Messiah Village, where she enjoyed living near her daughter Beth and son-in-law Ronald R. Sider. Even though

her spouse was no longer living, she traveled extensively, often with her good friend Ruth Garman, to California, Africa, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico. Throughout her life, Maybelle had a zest for living and hard work, whether in earlier years as a pastor's wife or in retirement years working part time at the Information Desk at Messiah Village.



Beth (Kanode) Sider and Pauline (Kanode Allison) Peifer with their mother, Maybelle.

PEIFER: Sacrifice, Service, and Significance

In October 1996 Maybelle was tragically killed in an automobile accident in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania. Her legacy was one of deep loyalty and love for her husband and his ministry as well as love for her children and grandchildren. She will be remembered as an outstanding hostess to the hundreds of friends and ministry colleagues who frequented their home.

Sacrifice, service, significance

Together, Isaac and Maybelle Kanode passed on to their daughters, Pauline and Beth, and their five grandchildren, a love for God, a deep desire to see his work advanced in the local congregation, and a passion to use their gifts in ministry wherever they were called. Beginning with the days of the modest Eight Square Chapel they together modeled a lifetime of sacrifice and service and provided a strong godly heritage with significance for succeeding generations.