



# OMHGS NEWSLETTER

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OREGON MENNONITE HISTORICAL AND GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

## MISSION ACTIVITY OF MENNONITES IN THE NORTHWEST

### DEVELOPMENT OF MISSION INTERESTS

### AND WAYS IN WHICH OREGON MENNONITES HAVE WORKED AT MISSION

By Margaret Shetler

In 1905 the Kansas-Nebraska conference of which the Hopewell and Albany Mennonite churches in Oregon as well as Nampa, Idaho, were members, met in Oregon at the Hopewell Church. At this meeting the decision was made to divide their conference, and the area west of the Rockies was to be known as the Pacific Coast Mennonite Conference. The following resolution passed at that conference gives us their vision for the new conference.

"The scope of the western field includes every city, village, hamlet, mining camp, lumberman's camp, and rural district, and its possibilities are the establishing of Sunday schools, Gospel missions, and churches in every part of this vast territory, and the addition of hundreds, yea thousands of souls, to the Church of Jesus Christ, all through the faithful, earnest work of His consecrated workers, accompanied by the Holy Spirit. This conference would especially encourage the opening of Gospel missions in various places on the Pacific Coast." (Shetler, p. 54)

The following report will be an account of some of the ways in which this mandate has been worked at and some of the results. It will necessarily be far from complete and will not go much beyond the mid-1970s.

In 1905, besides the two Mennonite congregations in Oregon, Hopewell and Albany, there were two Amish Mennonite congregations, Zion and Fairview, and two General Conference churches, Emmanuel at Pratum and Grace in Dallas. There was also an active Mennonite Brethren group in the Dallas area and a few MB families were living in Portland.

This report will concern mainly the congregations that after 1921 made up the Pacific Coast Conference. Mennonite Brethren attempts to establish a viable congregation in Portland were not long-lasting. There is still a congregation in Dallas and today's Kingwood Bible Church in West Salem is an outgrowth of that congregation.

Neither Grace nor Emmanuel are Mennonite churches today. The Emmanuel congregation especially has always been very mission-oriented and I have been impressed with their mission activities and numbers of people involved in missions from that congregation, even today.

Now to the Pacific Coast Conference (PCC). When the conference was organized in 1905, three men were elected as field

members of the Mennonite Evangelization and Benevolent Board, the forerunner of the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, for the Western district for one year.

The two older congregations in Oregon at that time, Zion and Fairview, were members of the Western District Amish Mennonite Conference, whose territory extended from west of the Mississippi to the Pacific Ocean. Many hundreds of miles separated these two churches from the rest of their conference churches. So even though these two churches were not part of the same conference as Hopewell and Albany, the four congregations did cooperate and fellowship together. Early on they sponsored joint Sunday school conferences and beginning in January of 1911 they met together for quarterly mission meetings and all took turns hosting the meetings.

The first such mission meeting was held at the Zion Church on January 13, 1911. The program included introductory sermons on Missions by C.R. Gerig from Fairview and J.P. Bontrager from the Albany congregation. Then followed four topics, each of which was discussed by two brethren and one sister. Topics were: Mission Work Commanded; Who Should Do Mission Work? What Are the Greatest Missionary Powers on Earth Today? and The Need of Mission Work. An evening session included a question box and preaching.

With the exception of one or two years, mission meetings continued on a quarterly basis through 1968. As new congregations were added to the conference, they were added to the rotation of host congregations. As near as I can determine from available records and programs, the final mission meeting was No. 228, held October 19, 1968 at the Bethany congregation east of Albany.

What was accomplished by these meetings? That, of course, is difficult to answer in full. Certainly the challenge of missions was kept alive and always before conference members. Only eternity will reveal the full scope of benefits derived, but the following were a few. One benefit, not necessarily mission-oriented, was that people in conference learned to know each other and had the opportunity to meet and visit in various congregations. Folks were privileged to hear speakers and church leaders from other parts of the church and world. People proba-

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bly had a much better understanding and appreciation of our overall conference program and churches than we do today.

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Mission efforts were initiated from three different sources: individuals, congregations and the conference mission board.

I have no records available of activities of the Mission Board before the 1921 merger. Nor are we aware of a great deal of outreach activities that went on during that period. We do know that there were a couple of unsuccessful efforts at getting a viable work started in Portland and that John F. Bressler from the Iowa-Nebraska conference came to the district in 1906 and remained until 1909 and was active in outreach work. His work included starting Sunday schools in various schoolhouses, often in communities where isolated Mennonite families lived. We need to remember what transportation and roads were like in those days and it helps us appreciate that getting to meetings was not the simple task it is now. Zion and Hopewell folks cooperated in some of those early Sunday schools. The joint Sunday school conferences sponsored by the early churches encouraged these efforts.

There were several Hopewell and Zion families living several miles east of the Zion church area and this was one of the places where there were a number of schoolhouse Sunday schools. These efforts eventually led to the organization of the Bethel congregation when Fred Gingerich, who was an ordained minister, moved to the area.

Mission Board activities in the 1920s seem to have centered largely on work in Los Angeles which at that time would have been a part of PCC. Finally, in 1922 a permanent work was begun in Portland when Allen Good moved to the West Coast and became superintendent of the mission.

Allen Good came with a vision and seemingly unlimited energy. He was instrumental in the construction of the Portland Mission building on Savier Street in Northwest Portland. The work was not easy and was beset with numerous problems, not the least of which were the financial problems created by the Great Depression. An interesting chapter in the life of the Portland Mission occurred during World War II when Negro children were bussed in from a nearby housing project and several of them became members of the congregation. None remain Mennonites today but some are active Christians in other churches.

It would seem that work with orphans was always dear to the hearts of PCC folks. Congregations regularly designated offerings for orphan work in India and perhaps elsewhere. Offerings were taken for the Children's Home in Kansas City at mission

meetings. And for a time there was work done with orphans and needy children as part of the program at the Portland Mission.

One other early activity that continued until the late 1930s was that the Mission Board made arrangements for the evangelists who served the area and planned their schedules. Eventually congregations requested to do this themselves.

Mission Board activities were definitely affected by the depression years. The first mention of the depression in Board minutes was in April 1931 when what I assume to have been mission funds were lost when a local bank was closed. Likewise mission work in Portland was affected by the condemnation of both the mission hall and home by the City Fire Marshall.

With the lifting of the depression and the activities surrounding and following World War II, Mission Board activities picked up considerably. A Tract Committee was appointed in 1941 at the request of the Publication Board. James Bucher was appointed as the missionary evangelist for the district. The Mission Board became involved in the support of the Civilian Public Service (CPS) program. The Old People's Home, now Mennonite Village, was launched in Albany. The Mission Board was involved in children's home work in Nampa, Idaho for a few years in the late 1940s. About the same time the Mission Board began operating the Lebanon Hospital and continued with that for a couple of years until they asked the conference to assume that responsibility.

The Portland Rescue Mission began in 1948 and the Rescue Mission Farm Home near McMinnville became operational a year or two later.

At the close of the decade of the forties the Mission Board received a letter from the Sheridan congregation concerning mission work in Mexico. That work finally got under way in the following years, slowly but surely.

The 1950s continued to see increased and broadened Mission Board activity. This included work by a summer service unit for a number years. An outgrowth of that work included a small church begun in the Yale, Washington community. The church remained Mennonite for only a few years but is still active. The rescue mission in Sacramento was launched in 1952 and continued through March of 1958.

Not all projects considered were undertaken. Finances seemed always to be in short supply. One bright spot in this regard occurred in 1961 when the Portland Rescue Mission received a bequest of \$17,000 from a frequent attendee.

The 1950s were also the decade of church-wide tent revival campaigns. The Brunk Revivals were in Oregon in 1953. In 1954 the PCC Mission Board hosted the annual General Mission

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Board meetings on the campus of Western Mennonite School and these meetings were followed by a Hammer Tent Revival campaign. The last major tent campaign in the area was the crusade by Myron Augsburg in 1956.

The 1960s were a time of change in focus. Two early new works were in Vanderhoof, British Columbia and Pasco, Washington. 1962 was a year for evaluating the work of the PCC Mission Board. The work in Mexico was rated highest in potential and from 1963 on, the major emphasis was in that direction. I will say no more about Mexico since that will be the subject of Brother James' presentation.

The 1960s were also a time of unrest in the Pacific Coast Conference as congregations withdrew their membership in conference because of perceived laxness in maintaining the standards set forth in the Conference Constitution and Discipline. When the recommendation was made in 1967 that the rescue mission work in Portland be discontinued, the Mission Board offered it to the withdrawing congregations. Those congregations that had become affiliated with the Bible Mennonite Fellowship accepted the offer and assumed ownership and operation of the rescue mission. The withdrawal of these congregations also created loyalty problems within the Mission Board.

Now for a brief look at congregational outreach programs and some of the results. As I perused congregational histories in preparation for this talk, I made a list of some of the outreach activities of each congregation. Topping the list is the branch and outreach Sunday schools. Some congregations had as many as three or four going at one time. Another early activity and one which is ongoing today is summer Bible school. I think that in most congregations this is now probably the most effective tool for reaching unchurched children of the community. Most schools have the highest percentage of attendees from outside their own Sunday school.

Other activities mentioned, usually from more than one congregation, would include singing and services in nursing homes, hospitals and other institutions or just in homes of the elderly, ill or lonely folks in the community. There have been radio programs and street meetings. The youth had missionary projects, mainly during the 1940s and perhaps 1950s, where they would raise of crop of some kind on donated land and the proceeds would be given to mission work. Boys and girls clubs have been sponsored in some congregations.

The women's sewing circles and junior sewing circles have always been mission-oriented. Early efforts included making garments for war sufferers' relief, doing sewing for the Portland Mission and staff, providing food for the camping program of the Portland Mission and aiding families in their immediate local church communities as those needs were made known. The focus of women's ministry is a bit different today but still involves mission outreach. Quilts and other items, including many hundreds of kits (school, health, etc.) are made for MCC sales and distribution.

Another outreach activity is camping. Allen Good started taking children from Portland to the country for a weeklong camping experience. This became a summer highlight for many youngsters. Most of us are aware of how that program has grown and blossomed since then. We now have the Drift Creek Camp facility and program. Many decisions for Christ have been made at "camp."

Early singing schools also indirectly became a method of outreach. In the Zion congregation, for example, one result of singing schools was an annual Christmas night program. As time went

on, these chorus programs were given other places and times than just the church on Christmas day evening, including places like the Multnomah County Farm, other institutions and different communities as invited. A work was started in the Silverton Hills area near Silver Falls Park as a direct result of this activity. The Chapel in the Hills congregation, while not Mennonite, is still viable.

Now I'd like to mention other congregations that resulted from mission activities, usually branch Sunday schools or summer Bible schools being held in the community.

The Bethel congregations has already been mentioned. Bethel, in turn, was active in outreach. Their Bible school was one of the very first. In 1938 they sponsored Ernest and Ida Bontrager as rural mission workers in the area surrounding the church. An outreach of this work was the establishment of the flourishing congregation at Porter above Estacada.

The Sheridan congregation can trace its beginnings to an invitation to hold Sunday school in a schoolhouse near the town.

The congregation at Molalla (1934-1951) began as an outreach of the Bethel congregation. Molalla in turn had some members who became Christians as a result of Sunday school work in the Fernwood community several miles east of the town. The Molalla congregation lost members and finally disbanded because many of their members moved to Sweet Home around 1940 for employment opportunities and a direct result was the establishment of the Sweet Home Mennonite Church there.

The Fairview congregation was involved in the beginnings of two daughter congregations, East Fairview (1957-1979) and Plainview. The work at East Fairview actually began as a Sunday school held in the home of Jeanne and Jake Roth for community children and eventually the Fairview congregation assisted and helped enlarge the work. Plainview began as summer Bible school followed by Sunday school and the emergence of what is today a very active congregation.

The congregation at Blaine that resulted from Bible school and evangelistic work first conducted by the Buchers was never large because of the demographics of the community but filled a need there during its lifetime, 1956 to 1983.

Another work that started in 1956 was at Logsdan, a few miles from the ocean, east of Toledo. This began when some Sheridan folks on a fishing trip came upon the community which had been without church services for a number of years and they found an open invitation to have Sunday school in the area. Many hours and miles of driving and other sacrificial efforts were expended by folks from both the Sheridan and Albany congregations to take the Gospel to this needy area. The congregation celebrated their 50th anniversary in the year 2000.

There was a small congregation at Cascadia, east of Sweet Home, sponsored by the Sweet Home congregation, from 1945 to 1983.

Earlier I mentioned the Chapel in the Hills as a daughter church of Zion. Another small congregation began about the same time was at Meadowbrook, north of Molalla a few miles. Neither of these two churches are Mennonite today but both still have services.

The small congregation at Winston began as a vision of I-W fellows who were working at the Veterans' Hospital in Roseburg.

There may be others that would fall into the category of mission outreach groups but these are the ones I have identified for this talk.

And now finally, to a few individuals and their efforts in sharing the Gospel with those who do not know. Perhaps the first mention of work among the Jewish people was that done by D. H. Kauffman. Hugh and Ina Wolfer and also the Buchers had a burden for the Jews to know Christ as Messiah and Savior and spent

much time in that work.

Dewey Wolfer and family were among those who made the long trek to Logsdan as were the Dave Hostetler family and others. Likewise there were a couple of families from Sheridan who made the long trip to Yale, east of Woodland, Washington, week after week.

Myrtle Miller from Alberta, Canada, gave long sacrificial years to the work in Portland. And I'd also like to mention Brother Dan Shenk of Sheridan, grandfather of our guest speaker, who was a man who carried a heavy burden for lost

souls and was an ardent soul winner and witness in his quiet way in his community.

Sources:

Lind, Hope K.: *Apart and Together*

Shetler, S.G.: *Church History of the Pacific Coast Mennonite Conference District*

Lind, Hope K.: *Unpublished congregational histories*

Mission Board minutes and Mission Meeting Programs from the archival files of the Oregon Mennonite Historical and Genealogical Society

For many years brethren of the Pacific Coast Conference had

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## A BRIEF HISTORY OF MEXICO MISSION WORK OF THE PACIFIC COAST CONFERENCE

by James C. Roth

a vision for establishing mission work in Latin America. In 1951 Eldon and Jessie Hamilton and Joe and Adah Kropf went to Guadalajara, Mexico to study Spanish. After six months, study was discontinued for health reasons, but Eldon and Jessie studied another six months in El Paso, Tex. In 1952 they went to Honduras, C.A. supported by interested people in Oregon, but working under Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions. Helen Kaltenbach from Balston, Oregon went to help them in 1953 and in 1955 Maynard Headings also went. They were married that year and stayed two more years for his 1-W service. They later served 12 years in Mexico under PCC. More will be said later about their time in Mexico.

Interest in Latin America on the Pacific Coast was still alive and growing. Cecil and Faye Byers began a work in Baja California, Mexico. Joe and Ann Yoder and later Mel and Emily Mishler and their son Bob and family joined them. Latin American Fellowship, independent of PCC, was organized to support them.

Early in 1958, while I was serving in Voluntary Service in South Texas, Raymond Mishler, chairman of the PCC Mission Board, asked me to consider serving in Mexico (read from letter). I expressed to him definite interest. Soon after marriage to Noreen Byers in June of that year, the wheels began to turn.

First we were asked to take a one year assignment to mission work in East Los Angeles. This became a good introduction to the Hispanic culture and language. Soon after that we were asked to make plans to begin a work in Mexico. The Mission Board arranged for a farewell and ordination service in late November 1959 at Hopewell Mennonite Church of which we were members. Soon afterward we packed up and left for Mexico.

We were granted our request to first serve a short time in a small Methodist mission in the mountains of Chihuahua state, where Brethren in Christ friends were serving. This was considered a good place for orientation to Mexico. In early 1960, after three months of service there, we with our small son, Mark, scouted the states of Sonora and Sinaloa of Northwest Mexico for a needy field. We lived in our pickup camper. A month of this life was enough, so while awaiting the board's counsel and decision as to where to establish a mission, we rented a furnished apartment in Cd. Obregon, Sonora, a city of about 80,000. We began to witness as best we could with our limited Spanish.

The public parks were a good place to distribute literature and strike up conversations. One of these was with Francisco Urias. He invited me to visit him in his brother's home where he was staying. There was a ready welcome there and the Gospel message was shared by using a battery-powered phonograph and ser-

mon records from Gospel Recordings. After a time Francisco was led to the Lord. A friend of his, who also roomed there, also gave his heart to the Lord and gave us a welcome to his home in Camp 77. Thus began a witness to that village some miles East of town.

A month or so after these beginnings the Mission Board sent Joe Kropf and Maynard Headings to help choose a permanent location. The Headings family had also been called to serve in Mexico. It was felt best that the Roths stay in Cd. Obregon where they had already established friendships and where the door seemed open. The Headings would settle in the state of Sinaloa where we also saw many possibilities for outreach. The plans for them were later revised.

Maynard and Helen with their three boys arrived in Cd. Obregon September 24, 1960 to assist in the Gospel outreach. It was decided that they would stay in the area. After a time they were given charge of the outlying village work in Camp 77 and Polvoron. The Lord used their ministry for the salvation of many and a church was established in each of these villages. Maynard also had a prison ministry in Cd. Obregon and served as a volunteer with the Red Cross, which opened many doors for witnessing. They made occasional trips to the Guaymas Valley, 90 miles to the North, for follow-up work with a member and his family who had moved there from Polvoron. The Headings family served faithfully in Sonora until 1972 when they returned to Oregon.

After the Headings left we tried to continue occasional contacts in the Guaymas Valley. One trip to that area stands out vividly in our memory. From time to time we would invite brethren to go with us in our VW bus. This particular time some had come by public bus from both Camp 77 and Polvoron to go with us and we had picked up some in Cd. Obregon. It was an overload!

Arriving in the early evening we arranged our equipment in the back yard of some friends. Singing drew a crowd and after the service there was lengthy visiting until quite late. We headed home rejoicing in heart and singing on the way. Suddenly about 30 miles from Cd. Obregon the engine of the VW threw a rod and we were stuck along the main highway at about 11:00 p.m. Someone pulled us into the next town where we divided into three taxi cabs to go home to our several locations. A new engine was later installed and the trips north continued every few weeks.

In 1981 Bible Mennonite Fellowship Missions Committee settled three missionary couples in the Guaymas Valley to continue the witness there which the Headings had initiated. This outreach was entrusted to the Hopewell Mennonite Church in late 1995 and the witness continues to the present.

On January 29, 1961 the first member was taken into fellow-

ship in Cd. Obregon. It was Francisco Urias. Throughout the following years others were baptized and a church was established in Sochilola Colony of Cd. Obregon.

In April of 1961 Francisco and I made our first trip to his home village of Cohuibampo, Sinaloa, about 130 miles south of Cd. Obregon. This was the beginning of the outreach there. Three missionary couples were later assigned to that area. Many have come to faith in Christ and to membership in the various churches established there in the lower El Fuerte River valley. A Sonora Sinaloa Mexico Church Conference was later established and at present continues to function under national leadership.

In 1961 the radio ministry was begun on several stations, using Luz y Verdad and Corazon a Corazon (Mennonite productions) and later Paul Finkenbinder's "Un Mensaje a la Conciencia" These were widely heard and greatly appreciated.

In April of 1983 the Mission Board approved using a Voluntary Service worker in Mexico and proceeded to arrange for John Miller to serve that summer. He was placed in Ahome, Sinaloa and served mainly in the village of Cohuibampo, witnessing and instructing new believers. He continued to serve there for three summers. In 1966 he was recognized as a full-time mission worker. He married Doris Eht in 1967 and she joined him in service in Mexico. They served there until 1972. They then took a 4 year break, returning in 1976 for two more years. Through their ministry small churches were begun in several villages. The last two years were spent mostly in leadership training throughout the Mexico Conference.

In 1964 a Christian bookstore was opened in Cd. Obregon and continued for nearly 12 years. The PCC youth raised over \$7,000 to initiate this project. The first full year we sold over \$6,000 (Dls.) worth of Bibles, books and such, and the last full year \$42,500. Total sales over the years were \$214,400 dollars. In 1975 the store was sold to a local pastor and the proceeds given to the Northwest Mexico Church Conference to support national workers. We greatly enjoyed directing this part of the ministry.

In May of 1965 the Vincent Frey family from Ohio arrived on the field and after a short stay in Cd. Obregon, took up residence in Ahome, Sinaloa to serve as witnesses and teachers in that area until 1973. During those eight years many lives were touched by their witness.

In November 1957 the first national pastor, Raul Vazquez, was ordained to the ministry to serve in Cd. Obregon. Soon afterward, Manuel Espinoza was licensed to serve in the ministry in Coahuibampo, Sinaloa where the Freys were in charge.

Raul and Vanita Tadeo and their family began their service in Sinaloa in 1969 and served there faithfully for many years. Part of their labor was providing cassette tapes and literature to the believers. Messages and gospel singing were heard in many homes and the believers were edified. They also used film-strips extensively in their outreach and teacher-training programs. They terminated their service in 1992.

The coming of the Tadeos brought our staff on the field to five families, three in Sinaloa state and two in Sonora. We had many good times together and faced many challenges together as well. One was the language. Some went to Mexico City for intensive study, the Freys went to Costa Rica and the Headings to Edinburg, Texas. We all became somewhat fluent by the time we left the field.

We men had a confab once a month or so in which we exchanged visions, problems and needs. At times we would have united missionary family outings which brought a lot of joy to all, the children especially. We had regular men's meetings with the national brethren. There was a yearly convention, a highlight for the churches, when inter-state bus transportation was arranged for all who wanted to attend. Those were good years of interaction and growth for all of us.

In 1975 the Don Zimmerman family was appointed to serve in Cd. Obregon, Sonora. We left the field in the Spring of 1976. One by one all the families mentioned were led back to the USA to serve the Lord in other ways.

Besides those mentioned as full-time workers, many others also served in Summer Bible Schools, as school teachers for missionary children, as fill-ins for furloughing missionaries and in other short term assignments. God has used a great variety of people with a great assortment of gifts for the expansion of His Kingdom. We rejoiced to see national brothers and sisters take leading roles in ministry to their own people as the missionaries left.

The Lord continues to build His church in Northwest Mexico. To Him be all the glory!

My assignment is to respond to the two case studies of mission

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## MISSION: TEST OF FAITHFULNESS by Wilbert R. Shenk

initiatives within the Pacific Coast Mennonite Conference presented by Margaret Shetler and James Roth. These cases offer contrasting pictures. The first surveys the main lines of development from the earliest days of the Conference up to the present. The other traces the founding and development of one particular project, that is, the mission in Northwest Mexico that has now become an independent church. Both show the motives and understandings of missionary witness that under-girded these efforts

What we want to do is to place these developments in a larger historical framework. There is no doubt that the church is most alive and vital when it is grappling with and seeking to be a faithful missionary presence in the world. But we also observe that this sense of mission can be lost so that the church becomes preoccupied with self and turns inward rather than outward. This self-preoccupation stifles the missionary character of the

church and the only way this condition can be changed is through a fresh and renewing work of the Holy Spirit. I propose to focus on the question, "How have renewal and revival of the church been related to missionary obedience over the past several centuries?" To do that we will look at the waves of renewal that have emerged in the past three hundred fifty years and given rise to a range of developments. This will show us the ebb and flow, the challenge and response, the dynamic interaction that is involved.

### *Pietism and the Evangelical Awakening*

Let us start with Pietism. The terms *pious* or *pietism* do not have a good reputation nowadays. Our ears hear these terms as describing individuals who take on a "holier-than-thou" attitude. Most people do not know that *Pietism* refers to a movement that started in 1675 and that has made a long-lasting contribution to

the entire Christian movement. Philip Jakob Spener, a young German pastor became burdened about the widespread nominality in the church. He was determined to find ways to stir up the church. In 1675 he published a little book that became a best seller and remains a classic of church renewal literature. Spener called for individual conversion, disciplined Christian living, and accountability through meeting in small groups for Bible study, prayer and fellowship. This gave rise to what was called the Pietist movement. Although it is not usually recognized, the influence of Pietism continues to be felt even to this day. Over the years Pietism became intertwined with other renewal movements so that today we find it difficult to trace the influence of Pietism on present practices and understandings. Nonetheless, many of the things that have become commonplace in terms of Christian activism and church renewal can be traced to this German awakening in the 17th century.

A further manifestation of Pietism emerged some fifty years later when in 1722 a group of religious dissidents from Moravia gathered around Count Nikolaus von Zinzendorf on his estate in southeastern Germany. Zinzendorf had been born into a wealthy aristocratic family that was deeply pious and committed to the Pietist movement. There they established what became known as Herrnhut (meaning "The Lord's Watch"), the historical center of the Moravian Church. Less than ten years later, in 1831, the Moravians began sending out missionaries, a movement that would continue for a hundred years. The Moravians commissioned whole congregations rather than just one or two people at a time. They are an outstanding historical example of renewal that stimulates various new forms of Christian witness, including missionary sending.

We often speak about Pietism and the Evangelical Revival or Great Awakening as one movement. Pietism is associated primarily with Continental Europe while the Evangelical Revival, or Great Awakening, is identified with the Anglo-American world. But for all practical purposes these two movements merged into one. This interdependence is illustrated by the fact that John Wesley was deeply influenced by Moravian missionaries whom he met on his first visit to Georgia in the 1730s; and his Aldersgate experience in 1738 took place in the midst of conversations he was having with Moravians in London. Thus, the Great Awakening associated with John and Charles Wesley and George Whitefield in Great Britain, and Jonathan Edwards in North America drew some of its inspiration and theological perspective from Pietism.

The Pietist/Evangelical movement continued into the nineteenth century in wave after wave, making spiritual and social impact. It is worth noting some of the outstanding results. The Pietist/Evangelical movement gave rise to the antislavery movement in the eighteenth century. Until this time slavery had been taken for granted. Now many Christians became convicted that slavery was evil and mobilized to oppose it. Over the next hundred years evangelicals led the way in arousing the Christian conscience and turning public opinion against slavery. Finally, in 1833, slavery was declared illegal on British soil but the struggle was far from finished. The United States Civil War in 1861-1865 was fought over the issue of slavery.

The evangelical movement was responsible for prison reform in the nineteenth century. Elizabeth Fry, a well-known Quaker evangelical, galvanized people against prison conditions in Great Britain and led the prison reform movement that became a model

and a challenge throughout the Western world. Evangelicals led the way in enacting child labor laws. The Sunday school movement was born in the bosom of the evangelical movement. Bible and tract societies as well as the home and foreign missions movement are all direct fruits. These are only some of the better known evangelical initiatives.

### *The Second Great Awakening*

The next major stage in renewal took place early in the nineteenth century. Historians call this the Second Great Awakening. Charles G. Finney, the outstanding evangelist during this period, was also an influential social reformer. He opposed slavery in the American South and was unpopular in the Southern states. He advocated women's suffrage already in the 1830s and '40s. Thus, Finney was known as a social reformer at the same time he was the foremost evangelist of his generation. The Second Great Awakening overlaps with the start of the foreign missions movement.

I digress for a moment to note the work of Kenneth Scott Latourette because of his special relationship to Oregon. Latourette was not an evangelist; he is regarded as the most outstanding historian of Christian missions to date and exerted wide influence on the interpretation of the expansion of the Christian faith. Latourette was born in Oregon City in 1884 and died there in 1968. After a brief stint teaching in China, he went to Yale University and spent the rest of his life there. He wrote many volumes about the expansion of Christianity from its beginning up to the mid-twentieth century.

Latourette called the period from 1792 to 1914 the "Great Century." This is the period during which the modern mission movement was founded, starting with William Carey in 1792 and running up to World War I. In his autobiography Latourette notes that his interpretation of history owes a great deal to the fact he was born on the American frontier. He credited this fact with having given him the ability to keep his eye on the frontier rather than on the stable center. This perspective informs Latourette's approach to Christian history. He focused on movement and innovation rather than the institutional church. A fundamental change in outlook took place after 1792. The period from 1792 to 1914 is called the heyday of modern missions because dozens of mission societies were organized. Such missions did not exist before. Churches and groups of people across this country as well as in Europe organized both foreign and home missions.

### *The Dwight Lyman Moody Era*

The foremost evangelist in the English-speaking world from 1870 to 1900 was Dwight L. Moody. He had moved to Chicago in the 1850s where he became a successful shoe salesman. In 1858 Moody started a Sunday school in the slums of Chicago. One of his coworkers, and personal friend, was John F. Funk who was to become a foremost Mennonite leader during the period 1864-1900. Moody continued to expand his evangelistic ministry in the Chicago slums while Funk devoted himself to bringing renewal to the Mennonite churches. When the American Civil War came in 1861 Moody, as a conscientious objector, refused to serve in the military. Instead he devoted himself to his growing ministries.

In 1866 Moody became president of the Chicago YMCA and continued to promote new initiatives in Christian ministry. A life-long layman and lacking theological training, Moody had no intention of becoming an evangelist; but his gifts as a salesman

seemed to qualify him to be a “salesman for the Gospel” and he began to do revival preaching in the early 1870s. In 1873 Moody, with Ira Sankey as his songleader, went to Great Britain where they spent two years. Bolstered by Sankey’s music, Moody had remarkable success. They attracted crowds up and down the British Isles and became a sensation. This launched D.L. Moody as an evangelist. He returned to the United States in 1875 and continued his evangelistic work until his death in 1899.

Moody was a restless promoter. He had organized an extensive Sunday school in Chicago; he was active in the YMCA; and then he got involved in evangelism. In 1880 he founded the Northfield Bible Conference, held in Northfield, Massachusetts, geared to university students. This conference brought together bright young students for a month of Bible studies. At the 1886 Northfield conference, A. T. Pierson, a capable evangelist and well-known promoter of missions, preached a sermon in which he challenged these young people to give themselves for the cause of world mission. One hundred students responded by offering themselves and the Student Volunteer Movement was born. By 1920 twenty thousand young people had signed the SVM pledge offering themselves for missionary service outside North America. Through Moody’s influence the Chicago Evangelization Society was formed in 1887 and two years later this gave rise to a Bible Institute for Home and Foreign Missions. After Moody’s death the school was renamed Moody Bible Institute. It became one of the largest missionary training schools in the twentieth century.

The yeast of revival and renewal movements kept on changing form. During the Second Great Awakening Charles G. Finney and others planted the seeds of what became the Holiness Movement. The kernel of this teaching came of course from John Wesley. Wesley’s own conversion in the 1730s was the result of deep struggle and he, subsequently, advocated what he called Christian perfection or holiness. The Wesleyan movement kept this theme alive and Finney picked it up in his preaching and promoted holiness.

The Holiness movement owes a particular debt to Phoebe Palmer, a Methodist laywoman from New York City whose husband was a respected medical doctor. A gifted Bible teacher, Palmer organized Bible classes in New York City that attracted men as well as women. For forty years Palmer was the leading exponent of holiness doctrine that sparked off various movements.

In 1867 the first general camp meeting for the promotion of holiness was held. One of the organizations that came out of this movement was the National Camp Meeting Association, later called the National Holiness Association that remains active today. The NCMA sponsored meetings across North America. The movement became increasingly institutionalized as it created other programs. It established a publishing house because, of course, every movement felt the need to have its own publications to promote its ideas. A mission agency was also founded and a number of Mennonites became actively involved with the Gospel Missionary Union from its founding in 1892.

The Holiness movement, of course, constantly promoted the theme of entire sanctification. This was the great struggle every earnest Christian should engage in. Each believer needed to experience not only the first work of grace, but also the second work of grace that would lead to entire sanctification. This was called the higher Christian life. The book, *The Christian's Secret of a*

*Happy Life* (1875), by Hannah Whithall Smith, another prominent holiness teacher, was an important source of this teaching. She said: “In order for a lump of clay to be made into a beautiful vessel, it must be entirely abandoned to the potter, and must lie passive in his hands.”

The Holiness movement also spawned new churches: Wesleyan Methodist Church, Pilgrim Holiness Church, Free Methodist Church, Church of God (Anderson) and others are the fruit of the Holiness movement. As a result of their commitment to revivalism, holiness and the conviction that Mennonites must adapt to the wider culture in such matters as use of English in church and Sunday school, in 1874 Mennonite pastors Daniel Brenneman and Solomon Eby founded what became the Mennonite Brethren in Christ (since 1968 the Missionary Church), a group that has continued its emphasis on holiness in piety and missionary activity.

Holiness and revivalism took other forms under other conditions. One of the important examples in this regard was Albert Benjamin Simpson, a well-known Presbyterian pastor, who in 1874 experienced what he called the baptism of the Holy Ghost while reading a book on holiness. He also experienced physical healing for a heart condition. By 1884 he had sent his first missionaries to the Congo and began annual meetings promoting missions, evangelism and the deeper life. Simpson coined the phrase, “Christ our Saviour, sanctifier, healer and coming King.” Simpson established the Christian and Missionary Alliance in 1897 with a strong commitment to world mission and the promotion of holiness.

The Holiness movement flowed directly into the Pentecostal movement that emerged in 1906. Because of its dynamism Pentecostalism overshadowed the Holiness movement in the twentieth century. The Pentecostal-Charismatic movement is arguably the most influential development among Protestants and Catholics in the twentieth century in terms of its dynamic spread worldwide. Pentecostalism has influenced many other Christian traditions in terms of patterns of worship and emphasis on experience.

After 1850 revivalism and holiness teaching were increasingly influential among Mennonites. Some of the themes that exerted so much influence on Mennonites in the 20th century—e.g., simplicity in attire and lifestyle, avoidance of worldly amusements—were direct borrowings from the Holiness movement. Following World War 2 Mennonites felt the influence of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements.

#### *(Re)Organizing the Mennonite Churches*

As already noted, John F. Funk and Dwight L. Moody became friends and worked together in the Sunday school movement in Chicago. Funk discussed with Moody the steps he should take in promoting renewal among the Mennonite churches. His first move was to establish two magazines in 1864, *Herald of Truth* and *Herold der Wahrheit*. He relocated from Chicago to Elkhart, Indiana in 1867 so as to be closer to a Mennonite community. Funk realized that appropriate organizational structures were needed if the scattered Mennonite churches were to cooperate in activities beyond the local congregational level. Up to this time Mennonites had depended on their traditional patterns of organization that focused primarily on the local congregation, with only minimal structures that enabled the convening of a district or regional conference periodically. These conferences were not governing bodies but did bring congregational leaders together.

Over the next three decades Funk would lead out in developing organizational structures for the church. All the Mennonite program boards that served the church in the twentieth century can be traced to John F. Funk's influence. For example, as a good journalist, Funk was in contact with groups of Mennonites in Russia who in the 1870s, because of changes in government agreements affecting them, felt they must migrate to another country. Funk published many reports in *Herald of Truth* and *Herold der Wahrheit* about the plight of these people and the need to assist them in finding a new homeland. He helped many of them find their way to North America. This anticipated the founding of Mennonite Central Committee by nearly fifty years.

Funk and his associates set up structures that did not depend on centralized authority. Each of the church-wide program boards was autonomous. The Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities did not answer to General Conference. As was true for each of the program boards, the Mission Board answered to the district conferences because the members of the Board were appointed by the district conferences. In contrast to modern denominational structures where it was assumed that for the sake of efficiency and control a centralized structure was required, Mennonites opted for this decentralized pattern. The same assumptions operated at the district conference level as well. Since there was no salaried staff, the work had to be spread around among various people. The quarterly missions meetings that played an important role in the Pacific Coast Conference for some six decades are an interesting example. The District Mission Board did not organize these quarterly meetings and had no control over this activity. A self-standing committee organized the missions meetings. They answered to no one except the people who attended. It was also assumed that the Pacific Coast Conference Mission Board itself was comprised of lay people.

With regard to Mennonite organizational history, when the Pacific Coast Conference was formed in 1921 by merging the Amish Mennonites and the Mennonite Conference, two different polities had to be reconciled. The fundamental issue was that the Amish Mennonites assumed a congregational polity was the correct one while the Mennonite Conference wanted what is called a "connectional" system. As the conference records show, in order to complete the merger the leaders in 1921 agreed to a compromise. The Amish Mennonites who came into the conference were exempted from certain controls. This created tensions that lasted several decades.

#### *Currents and Cross-Currents*

Shortly before the Pacific Coast Conference was formed in 1905, several families had moved to Idaho and Oregon from the West Liberty, Ohio community. This community had been the scene of a vigorous holiness movement starting in 1890s. David Hilty, a minister at West Liberty, and his family moved to Nampa. Hilty brought with him a strong commitment to holiness teaching and promoted this emphasis in the congregation at Nampa as well as in the conference. The minute records show that the issues discussed by the conference over the next fifteen years reflect the strong influence of the holiness movement in the Pacific Coast Conference.

World War II was a major watershed. Many young people had been sent to service and they came back with a broader awareness of the world. The Civilian Public Service program had called for a lot of resources to be channeled into that effort. Immediately following the war Mennonites made a commitment to

assist in the reconstruction in Europe. These and other developments contributed to a change of perspective for many Mennonites.

Until 1945 the development of the church was driven primarily by migration. Starting in the nineteenth century many Mennonites followed the "frontier" movement by which the North American continent was settled. Undoubtedly, many of us can illustrate this movement from our own family histories. Permit me a personal example. One part of my family, the Sharers, moved from Kansas to Vancouver, Washington, in the early 1890s. And then between 1892 and 1915 this family moved from Vancouver, Washington by covered wagon to Nebraska, North Dakota, Minnesota, Missouri, California, and, finally, to Oregon. Wherever they went they organized a church. Most of these congregations did not survive in these locales. Like the tabernacle in the Old Testament, the church was portable. The people carried the church with them.

After 1945 the situation changed. Mennonites were living in a new social and economic environment. The sense of "frontier" was gone. Church development was understood as something that radiated out from existing congregations. Sunday schools were the favored methodology for getting started. Shortly after he became general secretary of the Mennonite Board of Missions in 1944, J. D. Graber challenged the church with the slogan, "Every congregation a mission outpost." The response to this challenge was remarkable. All across the continent conferences and congregations took up the task of starting new congregations. Some of the older district conferences east of the Rocky Mountains had been staid; they had not added new congregations for many years; but they responded to this challenge. How can we explain the success of Graber's initiative. First, Graber captured the imagination of lay-people. Every local congregation had the possibility of participating in such outreach. All local congregations could mobilize their people. Second, generally people used the methodology they knew best which was the Sunday school. This was a means of reaching into communities where there was no Christian witness; it was an obvious way to begin the work.

The 1940s marked the beginning of a new wave of revival based in the congregations. Revival teaching cultivated a readiness on the part of many people to become involved in this kind of outreach. This coincided with a new generation of interdenominational and nondenominational revival activity. The young Billy Graham held a crusade in Portland in the early 1950s and many Mennonites attended those meetings. Graham was only one of many well-known evangelists. Mennonites produced their own evangelists. The Brunk Brothers conducted a crusade in Oregon in 1955 and Howard Hammer and Myron Augsburg also held campaigns in Oregon in the 1950s. During this time some Mennonites were drawn to the Pentecostal experience and piety as a more adequate expression of Christian faith.

#### *The Impact of Missions on Mennonite Identity*

The foundations of the Mennonite foreign and home missions movement were laid during the nineteenth century. The Dutch Mennonites organized the first Mennonite foreign mission society in 1847. The individuals who took this initiative were involved with a group of Dutch Mennonites that was active in the European renewal movement, or Réveil. These Dutch Mennonites had been long-time supporters of William Carey and the Baptist Mission at Serampore, India. North American Mennonite interest in

missions was similarly stimulated by influences from the wider evangelical movement. The promoters of renewal were also advocates of missions and other innovations.

The course of development of Mennonite missions between 1851 and 1999 is summarized in the chart below in terms of the new missions established each decade. We will highlight the main points. The Dutch Mennonite Mission Society sent its first missionary in 1851 to the island of Java in Indonesia. A second mission to Sumatra was started in 1879. Then in the 1890s there was a flurry of organizing activity and five new missions were founded in India and Zimbabwe. Between 1900 and 1910 six more missions were established and five were launched between 1911 and 1919. The period following World War I was a time of deepening economic difficulty climaxed by the Great Depression starting in 1929. Mission development was arrested throughout the 1920s and 1930s. During World War 2 mission development had to be suspended. And then between 1945 and 1959 a boom took place. Fifty-three new missions were established in this fifteen-year period. This does not include the considerable expansion that took place on the home front at the same time.

Mennonite/Brethren in Christ Missions  
Founded 1851-1999 (by decade)

1850-1869	1
1870-1879	1
1890-1899	5
1900-1909	6
1910-1919	5
1920-1929	1
1930-1939	4
1940-1949	15
1950-1959	38
1960-1969	12
1970-1979	14
1980-1989	5
1990-1999	50

The world economy began slowing during decade of the 1960s and the post-World War 2 economic boom ended in 1967-68. Some mission agencies found themselves in financial crisis. For the next two decades, i.e., up to 1990, new missions were developed at a moderate pace. By contrast the 1990s were a decade of explosive growth. *Undoubtedly, the most important thing to note is that Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches in the Two-Thirds World—Asia, Africa, and Latin America—initiated more than half of these new missions during the past decade.* Such a fundamental shift takes place rarely in the history of the church. This particular shift corresponds, of course, with the fact that by 1990 the number of Christians in the non-Western world became the majority.

Often less than fifty years old themselves, the African, Latin American, and Asian churches have begun to organize their own mission agencies to send missionaries to other countries. For example, the Brazil Mennonite Church, which already was engaged in ministries of outreach in Brazil, decided to send workers to Angola (1994) and Albania (1999). This is a watershed moment. Where did it start? We might say it started when a particular church decided to organize a mission agency and commissioned workers to be sent abroad. In one sense this is true; but this is by no means the whole explanation. What I have been attempting to point out, through a brief review of renewal move-

ments over the past three hundred fifty years, is that there is a long lineage or genealogy that stands behind these recent initiatives. Underlying the stories that Margaret Shetler and James Roth have told are many hidden impulses. The Holy Spirit has been at work in each generation since Pentecost.

This new phase of missionary witness is resulting in a substantially new Mennonite identity. When the Mennonite World Conference met at Wichita, Kansas in 1978, worldwide Mennonite and Brethren in Christ membership was reported to be approximately 613,000. In early 2003 worldwide membership was about 1,200,000 and the Brethren in Christ and Mennonite churches in Africa have grown the most rapidly over the past twenty-five years. Today more than one-half of all Mennonites and Brethren in Christ members are to be found in Asia, Africa and Latin America. When Pieter Jansz left the Netherlands to go to Java in 1851, there wasn't a single Mennonite who was not of European origin. Missionary obedience has changed this historical reality.

*Conclusion*

I conclude with three observations. First, historically the Pacific Coast Mennonite churches, especially when viewed through their missionary outreach, have been essentially lay movements. This is a value to be cherished and promoted. Second, it is evident that spiritual awakenings and renewal, starting with the Pietists and the Evangelical Revival and continuing with the later Holiness, Pentecostal, and Charismatic movements have impacted Mennonites decisively—stimulating innovation and development but also bringing with it risks. Each new movement opens the way for fragmentation and division. New influences can cause disunity and loss of identity. Third, revival that focuses inwardly on personal needs is a half-loaf. Genuine renewal will lead to new ministry and missionary witness.

**SOWING GOSPEL SEED IN MEXICO**



**By Joe Kropf**

On March 7, 1955, we, (Mark Emmert and myself), left Sweet Home, Oregon, on a trip through Baja, California. This is a part of Mexico, consisting of a peninsula beginning below the California border, some 1125 miles long, and separated from the Mexican mainland by the Gulf of California.

Our goal was to distribute Gospels, tracts, Testaments and Bibles, in the Spanish language, to the people of Baja. Many of these people are poor and unable to buy literature, even if it were available. This trip was the result of the burden of several brethren to make the Gospel available to the neglected areas in Baja, California, which has no full time Colporter.

We stayed in Sacramento the evening of the 7th. The following day, some of the brethren accompanied us to San Francisco,

where we bought Spanish literature from the American Bible Society. We left San Francisco early on the 9th of March for Los Angeles. We obtained more Spanish literature from the Free Tract Society there.

We spent the 10th in San Diego, laying in supplies, giving the car a final check-up, getting road information, etc. We spent the night near the Border, and crossed at Tijuana at 9:45 a.m., March 11th.

We had 5,056 Gospels, (mostly St. John); 124 New Testaments, 50 Bibles, and many thousands of tracts. We also had food and provisions, camping equipment, spare tires, and parts for the car, extra gas, oil and water.

We crossed without inspection or difficulty of any kind, as Baja, Calif., is free Territory. Hence no custom inspection or duty. The only cost was tourist permits at \$3.10 each, which allows six months in Mexico.

We began our work of Gospel distribution where the pavement ends, about 75 miles South of Tijuana. Geographically, Baja stretches from the Border gateways of Tijuana and Mexicali, in the North, to Cabo San Lucas, the Southernmost tip; some 1125 rough, dusty miles away.

Baja, California, has been described as a forbidding land. Its high, rocky mountains, its deep canyons, vast and waterless deserts, all covered with a great variety of cactus and brush (well armed with thorns), together with a blazing sun by day, and bone-chilling nights, combine to make an effective barrier against the intrusion of man.

The exceptions are the resort towns, mining towns, fishing villages and lobster camps. In a few places, springs of fresh water form a green oasis in the desert, which produces food for populated villages, which range from a few hundred to several thousand people.

There are cattle ranches scattered through the peninsula. Among the latter we found true, old-fashioned hospitality and at times accepted their invitation to visit in the cool shade of a patio, which is a vital part of most Mexican homes. This gave an opportunity to give our testimony as well as the Gospel. These ranches often are occupied by several families closely related, such as Fathers, and Sons or Sons-in-law, etc. Our greatest burden was, and still is, for these latter, who have a lonely and meager existence.

#### **When Should Baja Be Evangelized?**

Due to increasing emphasis on education in Mexico and Baja, now appears to be the golden opportunity to spread the Gospel in Mexico, as most young people can read now. Baja is the most neglected area in Mexico, with the possible exception of the extreme Southern part. These people at present have very little to read, because of lack of mail service in the interior except in the larger towns. Also newspapers and periodicals are practically non-existent.

That they are eager to read was demonstrated to us, as workers in the field, travelers in the highway, housewives, merchants, ranchers, soldiers, and children would drop their work or play, and read Gospels, tracts or Bibles given them.

The scarcity of printed matter and their eagerness to read anything, makes it imperative that Christians recognize this unique opportunity, and meet the challenge of a literature-hungry people. This can be done by sending Gospel literature and teachers NOW, before less desirable literature is made available.

The new agricultural and mining developments are bringing

with them better roads, a more stable economy, and also an increase in population. These new settlers consist of farmers, factory workers, agriculture laborers, etc. They come from all parts of Mexico, also some from the United States.

We found these folk especially eager for Gospel literature, and open to our testimony. This is easily understood, as they are strangers, and are eager to form new friendships. Their very condition could also make them an easy prey to communism and other erroneous propaganda. To this writer it seems that NOW is the time to give them the Gospel before their minds are poisoned by other philosophies.

#### **Believers in Baja**

Spiritually, Baja has been largely neglected until the last few years, excepting the Border towns. We found a few small groups of believers; some with pastors and others without. (These latter are in need of pastoral care).

The lines of distinction are more sharply drawn in Baja between believers and unbelievers than in our country. Possibly this is due to persecution and sacrifices that they make, as many of them are poor and walk to church carrying their little ones. We enjoyed real spiritual friendship and blessings with these groups and they testified to the same, and invited us back.

The believers in Baja represent the Nazarenes, Brethren Church, Apostolic Faith, Baptist, and undenominational.

There are many communities and pueblos without any Gospel witness, not even Catholic. We believe that our most effective work was done in these neglected and, often isolated places. Here, the Gospel was eagerly received. Some of these folk, in a pathetic tone of voice, would ask when we would return.

#### **Is Baja A Needy Field?**

Much of Baja is unevangelized, and several areas seem much more needy than others. Among these, one district stands apart as an open door in a rapidly expanding, new agriculture development. This is attracting laborers and their families from various places in Mexico. These folk form new villages throughout the development area. These villages contain up to 500 inhabitants, and, as far as we could learn, had no Gospel witness. We were impressed with their open-minded reception of the Gospel, and our prayer is that a permanent witness will be established here soon. This area lies about 110 miles north and west of La Paz, near the southern end.

We met opposition in a few of the medium sized towns, which usually resulted in the destruction of literature. But in general, the Gospel was gratefully accepted, especially in the pueblos, the isolated villages and ranches and by many travelers on the camino real.

We drove 1500 rough, slow miles, in Baja, from one end to the other; also from side to side several times. We finished our work in Baja on Wednesday, April 6, and loaded the car on the Estrella Costera for shipment across the Gulf of California, to avoid the long, rough trail back through Baja. We arrived in Mazatlan on the morning of the 8th. We arrived home the evening of April 15. This was just two days less than six weeks from date of departure.

#### **Experiences in Baja**

Que religion es? We were often asked this question. One man suggested that we keep our religion and they keep theirs. He said that he could not accept a Gospel that did not revere Saint Mary, Saint Guadalupe, etc. When he was asked how many Saviors there were, he, of course, did not know. When he was told that the Bible teaches that there is only one, he said that he would

accept a Gospel and read it to see if it were true.

In Central Baja we met a Brother whose name is Cruz Espinoza. He has been a believer for 32 years. He was the only believer in his rather fanatical town until recently, when a young man came to help in the work. They now have a thriving Bible study class. Since arriving home, we have received letters from Cruz Espinoza, expressing his appreciation for our visit. He also invited us back. In his letters he stated the need in their group for Christian literature, sacred books, and used clothing for every age, both for men, women and children. These folks are poor, and we believe worthy of consideration.

We had many precious times of fellowship with different groups of believers in Baja. We were thrilled time and again by the children as they sang choruses, testified and prayed. I will describe a typical evening worship service. This service was sponsored and conducted by the Apostolic Faith church in La Paz, as a mission outpost 10 kilometers from the city.

While awaiting passage across the Gulf of California, we visited in the home of the pastor, Bro. Gomez. After a period of fellowship with the pastor's family and other members of the flock, we were invited to a chicken dinner which we much enjoyed. After dinner, Bro. Gomez invited us to the above mentioned evening service.

The meeting place was a covered patio between sleeping quarters and the kitchen of a farm home. The pulpit was an old box. Light was supplied by a kerosene lantern and a bonfire. There were a few benches, but most either sat on the ground or stood, throughout the service. We were inspired by the songs and testimonies of praise and thanksgiving from this group of between 35 and 40. About one-third of them were believers. These simple folk, though poor in earthly goods, were rich in God's gold. They were in possession of the pearl of great price. (Most believers do not even own a Bible or Testament.) I was reminded of the words of Jesus, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise." Matt. 21:16. Bro. Mark and myself had the privilege of speaking 'through an interpreter for a little while, after which Bro. Gomez brought a stirring message from God's Word. The testimonies were so joyous and free, and the presence of the Lord so real, that we were not surprised when at the altar call, seven souls responded, and among them the interpreter. As I pen these lines, my heart overflows with praise and thanksgiving to my precious Lord, for the privilege of witnessing this sacred scene. As those shouts of victory and praise, that rolled out upon the peaceful evening air, still echo in my own soul, I can only add my own shout of praise and thanksgiving to my matchless Saviour. Truly God is moving His Spirit, and at least a few of these too long, neglected folk are coming out of their long period of darkness, into the glorious light of eternal day.

We both enjoyed good health, and a trouble-free trip for which we praise the Lord. We are trusting the Lord for a spiritual harvest of precious souls from the Gospel Seed sown. In fact, we believe His promise in Isaiah 55:11, is true. His Word will not return void. Praise His Name.

#### Concluding Questions

1. Are these people, some of whom have never heard the Gospel, included in the great Commission? Matt. 28:19, Mark 16:15, Luke 24:47.
2. Does anyone have the right to hear the Gospel twice until all have heard it once?
3. Are we responsible to take the Gospel to them?
4. Have we done all within our power to do so?

Our sincere prayer is that the Christians of our district will accept the challenge of presenting Jesus to those who do not know Him. Amen—McMinnville, Oregon

*(Above article taken from the July, August, September 1955 Missionary Evangel. Below is excerpted from "Mission Board News" of the same Publication and the last letter is from the April, May, June 1956 Missionary Evangel)*

## ACTIONS AND WORK OF THE BOARD

### Meeting of May 31, 1955

A report of the colportage trip to Mexico by Brethren Joe Kropf and Mark Emmert was read by Bro. Kropf. **Motion:** That we accept the report. Carried. A financial report was also given, showing a balance of \$109.37 of the \$700.00 paid to them at the beginning of the colportage trip. **Motion:** That the Outreach Committee meet with the Brethren Kropf and Emmert and bring recommendations to the District Mission Board relative to this field and need. Carried. **Motion:** That we offer Paul Kilmer \$100.00 for the use of his suburban truck for the Mexico colportage trip and that a note of appreciation be given also. Carried.

### The Work In Mexico

"Great is Thy faithfulness unto me, Oh, God!" Psalm 119:90. "Thy faithfulness is unto all generations: thou hast established the earth, and, it abideth." Isaiah 42:4. "He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law." This also can be applied to the peninsula of Baja, California, for many, many thousands of people there do not have a true conception of God and less still of His law.

Alter three weeks of travel in Baja we were especially glad to see Bro. Cecil and Bro. Marks, and we very much enjoyed our two week's stay there. We spent the next three weeks about 15 miles south in the colony of Revolucion, living in a 7' x 10' room next to a Christian family. One other man was a believer and often came in the evening for Bible study. Nearly all of the many homes we visited said they were Catholic, but we believe God will bring forth fruit from the seed sown.

We lived and traveled in Baja from January 26 until April 7, and I'm sure we will never regret our many and varied experiences in the land of darkness, and we will never be the same after viewing this needy field. The people, as a whole, are without the Glad Tidings of Salvation. We were able to give Gospels and tracts to many who were hungry for something satisfying, but we regretted that we could not do more personal work because of our limited knowledge of Spanish. Very few can speak English.

In one experience at the Ford garage in La Paz, the mechanic told us there were three Catholic churches in town, but he did not attend any of them because he was not at all interested, although he was a Catholic. We asked if he had a Bible and received the usual answer—No. He was happy to receive the Gospel we offered him. The shop foreman was likewise just as hungry and when he received a Gospel immediately began to read. These people are really so hungry they just read regardless of their surroundings.

In all our visits and contacts, we met only two women in different homes that showed opposition. The one refused a Gospel but accepted tracts. The other one refused to take anything and yet we had a friendly visit with her. Praise God we were not stoned or

even asked to leave. It gave us much joy when others asked us over and over, "When are you coming back?" One young Catholic woman in Revolucion, whom we visited twice, was very friendly and she believed that soon we (the Protestants) would have a church there, too. The harvest in Baja truly is great, but it seems few are willing to go and reap.

The people in Baja are very poor, but many have been able to buy 250 acres of land from the government. In a number of cases, they offered to give me half of their land if I would furnish the money to get a well drilled and equipped with a pump. We saw many rich fields of wheat and cotton where there are deep wells and the land is irrigated, but there needs to be much work done to get this land to produce. In like manner, the harvest fields for souls, too, are lying dormant, waiting for someone to open up the wells of salvation, watering them with the Word so that much fruit might be gathered for God's glory.

After waiting a week for a boat at La Paz, Baja, California, Mexico, we finally set sail. After 38 hours we landed on the mainland of Mexico at the harbor of Mazatlan. This was our first long trip on the great waters. As we looked out in every direction and saw only water, we were made to think of the children's song,

## IN MEMORIAM

**Roth** - Priscilla Schlabach Roth died December 11, 2003 at age 73 after an illness of several years. She and husband Sterling were members of the Society for a number of years.

**Cutsforth** - Elsie Egli Cutsforth of Canby died December 15, 2003 at age 85. Elsie was a great-granddaughter of Amish bishop Jonas Kauffman who was the leader of the Amish settlement at Needy, east of Hubbard, until his death in 1907. She was very interested in her Amish heritage and at one time made presentations about the Amish to school children and other interested groups. She was a member and supporter of OMHGS.

"Wide, Wide as the Ocean." Truly it created a new meaning within as we sang of His great love and His protecting care. Yes, we prayed a prayer of thanksgiving after we were in our car again, ready to drive to new fields of opportunity.

The grandeur of the high Sierra Madre Mountains that we

crossed as we traveled eastward to Durango was indescribable. Truly God's handiwork is matchless in its splendor!

We are now about 80 miles northwest of Durango, visiting the Colony Mennonites. In Durango, we met an aged couple, Isaac Wiebe and wife, who gave us directions to their colony—Blumenort. It was not possible for us to stop at all the little Mexican villages on the way out before dark. At one village gate, we stopped to give Gospels and tracts to four or five men. Immediately a crowd gathered—some walking, some on bicycles and some on horseback, all wanting literature. We hope to stop at the other villages on the way back to the Pan-American highway as we go to Chihuahua next week. Our tract supply is quite sufficient, but we have no more New Testaments or Bibles, and have less than 100 Gospels of John to give.

We hope to be in the States by the beginning of May. Do pray for us as we march forward in this battle to conquer souls for the Master. In Christian love—The Jacob Roths in Mexico

Annual Financial Statement			
Dec. 1, 2002 - Nov. 30, 2003			
Nov. 30, 2002 Bank Balance			3,019.08
Receipts:			
Memberships	1,188.87		
Contributions (above membership)	667.00		
Offerings (spring & fall meetings)	362.00		
Books & Newsletters	259.90		
			2,477.77
Expenses:			
Newsletter Printing	396.40		
Annual Corporation Fee	20.00		
Guest Travel & Honoriums	200.00		
Postage	253.99		
Cases, Files, Folders	394.89		
Shelving	333.00		
Copier	179.99		
		1,778.27	
November 30, 2003 Bank Balance			3,718.58
			5,496.85
			5,496.85