

Mennonite Observer

December 18, 1959

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Semi-Annual Conference of the M. B. Churches of B. C.

Through the gracious providence of our Lord the M.B. Conference was permitted once more to convene on November 7, 1959, in the M.B. church at Yarrow. Some 200 delegates from the various churches as well as workers of the W.C.C. Mission gathered to plan the Lord's work for the coming year.

Brother Herman Voth, moderator of the Conference, assisted by Brother P. R. Toews, very ably guided the brethren in the various discussions. Of major interest was the report given by Brother H. Brandt of the work done in the city of Vancouver. The concern for the many unfortunate men of Skid-row was brought to the attention of the brethren. The response to the problem was, that in the coming months definite steps are being taken to provide night lodging for these people. On Mission Rally day, November 8, a goodly offering was designated to get this project under way. We praise God for the opportunities He gives to His children to alleviate the needs of those less fortunate than we.

Brother John Neumann, co-ordinator of the Youth work, reported of gratifying results in this field of Christian service. Renewed interest was manifested in the memorization of Scripture verses. The camp work also brought with it many blessings. The radio ministry of the "Gospel Hour" has reached countless people and proved a blessing. The Conference extended a hearty "Thank you" to Brother B. Thiessen for his long service in the radio ministry.

The work of the S.S. is going on, with constant search for improvement. The Annual S.S. Convention is planned again for January 1-3, 1960 in the M.E.I. Many workshops will be conducted to promote and further this so important phase of the church.

The major part of the day was devoted to the work of the West Coast children's work. It is no longer a small undertaking, but has become a tremendous challenge as well as a big responsibility. It will require much planning and grace to meet all the problems this work brings with it. The response of the conference was, to support the work

both financially and prayerfully, so that the work may continue to be a blessing. It is gratifying to see small groups being organized and becoming new M.B. churches.

In the field of music and choir work there also has been progress.

Brother C. D. Toews reported renewed interest. All singing and music must be to the honour and glory of God. The message of the song is to be the all important factor.

We are thankful to God that He has blessed the work of the past year, with the confidence that He will continue to do so in the days that lie ahead. Abram Goerz.

"For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified."

I Cor. 2:2

★
YOUR CHRISTIAN
FAMILY WEEKLY

Merry Christmas

"Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable Gift." 2 Cor. 9:15.

The first great Christmas gift to men

Was hung upon a Tree;
It was not by a fireside,
Where only those could see
Who near of kin or friendship were,
And gifts unchanged would be;
But out upon a mountain side
For all the world to see.
He gave His all, His life, His blood,
That men redeemed might be;
Then what can man give in exchange

For love so boundless, free?
The debt of sin, He paid it all,
Nought in ourselves have we,
Nothing to bring unto our King,
Maker, Redeemer, He.
Our hearts, if emptied of this world,
Filled with His tasks shall be;
Our hands if free from selfish toil,
Filled with His love shall be;
Our sin-sick souls, if brought to Him.

Shall pure and cleansed be.
"What shall I render unto God
For all His gift to me?"
This only do: Call on His Name,
Enjoy Salvation free.

—Addie Algier.

Budget of Over One Million Adopted

Berne, Ind. — The General Conference Council of Boards concluded its three-day session, December 4, by adopting a 1960 budget of over one million dollars.

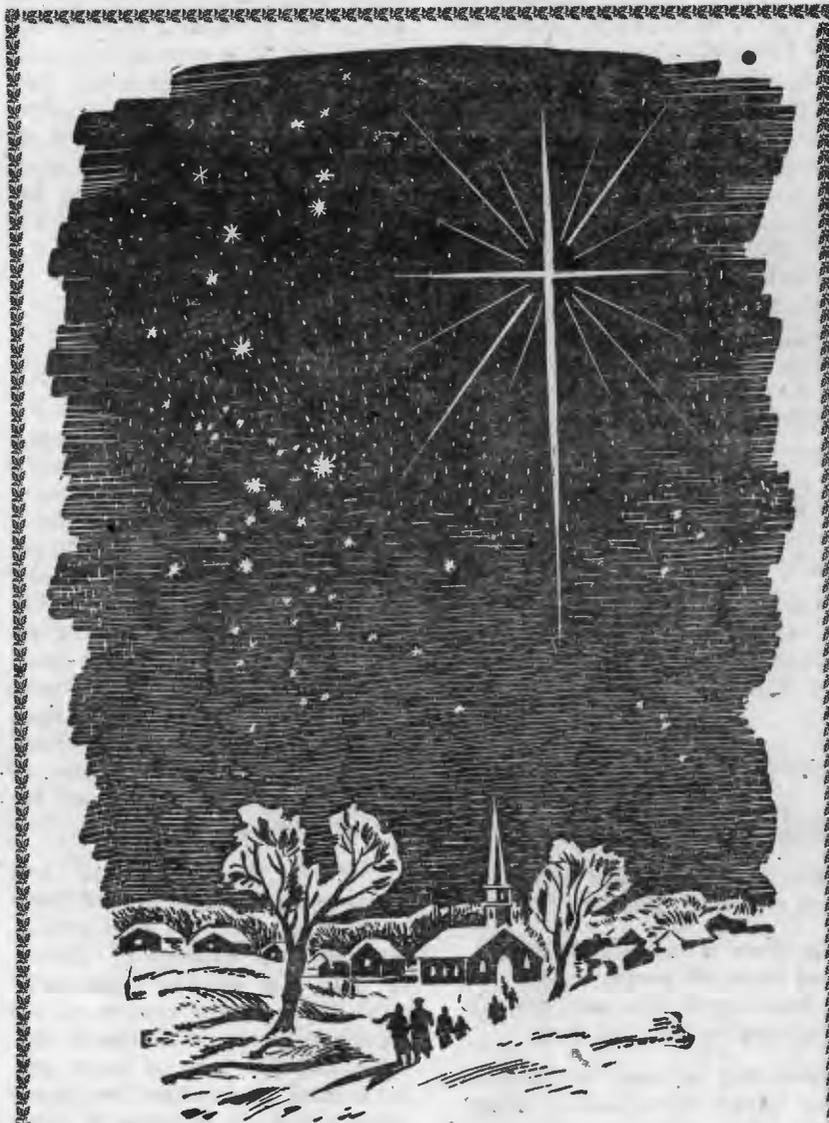
The occasion was an historic one in that the session and record budget came during the Centennial Year of the conference and that at the same time the meetings were held in the largest General Conference church.

The First Mennonite Church of Berne, which recently completed a \$600,000 education building, has a membership of 1,313.

The \$1,037,500 budget total is divided among the four major conference boards as follows: Missions \$740,000, Christian Service \$181,300, Education and Publication \$83,700, and Business Administration \$32,500.

Wide Representation

Present for the session were approximately 70 board members and (Continued on page 4-1)



A Hearty Greeting

on the Birthday of Our Lord Jesus Christ

To All The

READERS, REPORTERS and CONTRIBUTORS
of the "Mennonite Observer"

The Christian Press, Ltd.

EDITORIAL

Past, Present and Future Christmas

Past Christmas. The dictionary defines Christmas as "an annual church festival in memory of the birth of Christ." The word means "Christ Mass." In many countries the birthday of Jesus is commemorated and many people praise God for the gift of His precious Son. A choir of angels sang the heavenly anthem, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men", when Jesus was born.

A messenger of God from the very throne of God spoke words of comfort to frightened shepherds who watched their flocks by night. Even the stars saw in their midst another star of unusual brilliance — the star of Bethlehem. The reason for its brilliance was the fact that God had given His most precious treasure — the Lord Jesus — to be the Savior of men.

This gift, though wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a lowly manger, makes every other gift unworthy by comparison, because it is God's gift to all the world, which, if accepted by faith, bestows eternal life with all its blessings to those who believe. To multitudes this first gift-day is precious because it is basic for life everlasting and a living hope.

Present Christmas. In our times we observe December 25 as the anniversary of the first Christmas. Floral decorations, tinsel, Christmas trees, Santa Claus, lights, color, gifts, music and voices of happiness are the order of the day.

The true Christmas, however, is marked by a more sacred and deeper feeling. Jesus is indeed the Babe of that first Christmas, but to the true believer He is now the crucified, risen and glorified Savior. Christmas may be observed often, but the one most meaningful to the Christian is the one which he celebrates with Christ in his heart. It was truly a glorious day, when we gave ourselves to Christ and Christ gave Himself to us. Since that day Christmas was meaningful to us.

Jesus does not give us the jingle bells of temporal pleasure, but the joy bells of a redeemed heart. He does not ask us to an earthly banqueting hall, but to His table with spiritual and heaven's bounty. He does not offer to any one the restless music of the world, but rather the matchless harmony of heaven.

Future Christmas. The greatest Christmas of all is still to come. As Jesus came to the world on the first Christmas, so He will come again. As the angels sang notes of comfort to the shepherds, so the mighty trumpeters will sound a note of victory which will be heard all over the world.

Then the Prince of Life, of Peace and of the House of David will be seen and heard. Tongues will then be loosed to shout praises unto Him and eyes will then be opened to see His glory. The Christmas which is still to come will be the culminating day of everlasting wonder and joy. —G.D.H.

Bethlehem and Calvary

There was no room in Bethlehem
For Him who left His throne,
To seek the lost at countless cost
And make their griefs His own.



But there was room on Calvary
Upon the cross of shame,
For Him to die uplifted high
To bear the sinner's blame.

There was no room in Bethlehem,
And in the world to-day

Men will not give Him room to live,
And bid Him turn away.

But there is room on Calvary,
And there He stands to give
A home to all who heed His call
And look to Him and live,

There was no room in Bethlehem
For Christ, the Prince of Kings,
From throne and crown to earth
come down
With healing in His wings.

But there is room at Calvary;
For sinners to abide,
And who will come may find a home
In Jesus crucified!

"Come unto Me, all ye that labour
and are heavy laden and I will
give you rest." Matt. 11:28.

E. M. Clarkson.

DEVOTIONAL

The Gift of God II Cor. 9:15

By John M. Schmidt

We have entered the joyful season of Christmas, a happy time of giving and receiving of gifts and well-wishing. Excited children are thinking and talking of the gifts which they hope to receive, while stores brightly decorated for the occasion are crowded with eager shoppers. Everywhere men and women are delightfully turning their thoughts to Christmas. The Hebrews also have a similar annual feast of joy and thanksgiving. It is the festival of Purim, lasting two days, in which they commemorate their miraculous preservation by Esther and Mordecai from the awful massacre planned against them by evil Haman. We read of this feast in Esther 9:19: "Therefore the Jews of the villages that dwelt in the unwallied towns, made the fourteenth day of the month Adar a day of gladness and feasting, and a good day of sending portions one to another." It is because God graciously gave His unspeakable Gift, the Lord Jesus, His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish" that gives occasion to us for celebrating the birthday of the Redeemer. The



true reason and motive for Christmas is to thank God for sending Christ, who by His death and atonement wrought salvation that saves us from the gallows of a greater henchman than Haman, even Satan himself. Our gifts, which we send and receive during this season, are to serve as reminders of God's unspeakable gift to us. For we read, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sin." Christ is to be the centre of our celebration, the cause of our rejoicing, and the reason for our thanksgiving.

Paul was so overwhelmed and overcome by the greatness of God's gift, compared to the puny gifts of man that he exclaimed, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift." With all the oratory at his command, Paul was unable to describe the greatness of God's gift, but sensing utter failure if he should attempt to do so, he spoke of Christ as "God's unspeakable Gift" to us. The more we come to realize the greatness of His gift, the more we will thank and praise Him. Only with such a disposition can we celebrate Christmas in its true meaning and spirit. We shall not attempt to describe the greatness of God's gift, but merely point to some reasons why Christ is such a great gift to us, hoping that this will condition and prepare us to celebrate this

joyous season in a more God-pleasing manner.

1. Let us note first that the gift is valued according to the Person giving it. We prize some gifts higher because they are given to us by persons whom we esteem above others. I met an aged gentleman who had received many gifts for his 104th birthday, but the one he valued above all others was a small card sent to him from the Queen. He rated the card so highly because of the person from whom he had received it. Beloved, Jesus is such a great gift because God gave Him to us. "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift." He was sent to us from no one less than God the Father, the Creator, the Almighty, Holy and Righteous One.

2. Then too, a gift is valued according to the love that prompts the giving. Many of the Christmas gifts are given only because it is tradition to give at this season of the year. Therefore, it is the gift that is given from a heart of love that we treasure most. The gifts which you receive from someone who sent them only because he expects to receive some from you have little significance. The gift that the bride values above everything else is the one from her bridegroom, for it was given because of love. Christ is such an unspeakable gift. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son. . ."

"Oh the love that drew salvation's plan, oh the grace that brought it down to man." Can we estimate such love? Other gifts may amaze us, but this utterly overwhelms us. If the streams of its blessings be fathomless, who shall find a plummet to measure its fountain? Oh let us bow down with

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the salvation of man as its goal,
and the essential unity of all true
Mennonites as its guiding principle.

the wise men and pay our respects and adoration to such an unspeakable gift. For it is a gift from God, sent because he loved us so. Do you value this gift according to the love that gave it?

3. Next a gift is valued according to its cost. There is a great difference of attitude to a gift that has cost the sender only 15 cents and one which cost \$1,000. We naturally esteem the expensive one far above the cheap one. Here again, God's gift is so unspeakably great because of its great cost. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." God gave the dearest of His heart, He emptied heaven of its most prized possession, that we might live through Him. It is in vain to even attempt to declare the height, the depth and the width of the wondrous gift of God to mankind.

4. A gift is also valued according to its usefulness. An ornament is not nearly as valuable as a practical gift, and therefore many seek to give that which the other needs most. A bag of gold is of no use to a man dying of thirst in the desert. What he needs is water. Beloved, God's gift is something we needed more than anything else in this world. We were lost, but in Christ we found the way; we were dead, but in Him we have life. We were condemned, banished from God, ready to be cast into outer darkness, into hell, where no joyful singing is ever heard, but where there is only weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth. But God sent His unspeakable Gift, which came to seek and to save that which was lost, to redeem us from everlasting destruction. We were about to reap what we had sown, for the wages of sin is death. But God intervened and gave His Son, and now the Gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. God could not have given us a more practical and a more needed gift than Jesus, Who saves us from our sins.

In closing note the text again: "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift." Have you, dear friend, thought of thanking God by giving something in return for His great gift to you? Give yourself and of your substance to God. Let me kindly entreat you to receive Christ, for "as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God." May God help you to take Christ as your Gift from God and to give yourself to Him in return. Then you will celebrate Christmas in the joy and assurance of sins forgiven. Eternal life in Christ is God's gift for you. Will you accept Him right now? God bless you with His unspeakable gift.

'Dienst am Evangelium' in South America

Our South American District Conference, consisting of our churches in Paraguay, Uruguay and Brazil is to convene at Curitiba, Brazil, beginning January 31. The conference will also have a centennial emphasis.

Several brethren of the Board of General Welfare plan to meet December 17 to consider various concerns and questions since the annual meeting of the full Board membership will not likely be held until March. The following brethren will meet in Chicago where several of them will participate in various MCC meetings in subsequent days: Waldo Hiebert, C. J. Rempel, M. A. Kroeker, C. A. DeFehr, Raymond Schlichting and Marion Kliewer.

Brother John Wall, Board worker in Montevideo, Uruguay, spent several days in Bage, Brazil, in November making preparations for the Bible school term next year. Brother Wall, who will be school principal, reports that there are enough interested students for four classes, but outside financial assistance will be necessary to a greater extent than in the past. Income

from the harvest will be quite limited. Some farmers will not harvest at all. Adverse weather conditions during seeding time got the crop off on a bad start.

The Boqueirao Mennonite Brethren Church in Brazil had the joy of baptizing and receiving into its fellowship 15 persons on October 25, and 20 persons on November 1. It is more than two years since the congregation had a baptism.

The Volendam Mennonite Brethren Church in eastern Paraguay baptized eight believers recently and joyfully looks forward to another baptism in January. The Volendam Church feels the need for assistance in its youth work and evangelistic outreach and repeats its request for another worker from North America to help them in the spiritual needs and opportunities confronting them.

The Bage Mennonite Brethren Church in Brazil also anticipates a baptism in January. It is a cause for thanksgiving that here, too, there continue to be converts and believers interested in becoming members of the church.

centers in Nagoya, Kuwana, Aichi Ken and Tsuchima.

Needs Are Great

The pocket of real need, reports Peachey, is a sort of triangle in Aichi Ken, the apex of which is Tsuchima and the base formed by Kuwana and Nagoya. On November 12 the dike was temporarily closed for the first time which enabled the water to be pumped from Tsuchima. No private agencies have worked in Tsuchima thus far. With the water starting to recede, the inundated part of the city is now at the point where Kuwana was nearly a month ago when the workcamp team arrived there.

"Publicity given the Mennonite sponsored project has brought over \$4,000 from various groups, some of which came out of the blue and which was really more than we were prepared to handle at the time. One of the important and thrilling by-products of our effort has been stimulation to other denominations," asserts Peachey.

Two-thirds of the world's population is undernourished. In many countries available food supplies make well-balanced diets impossible. Meat, though high in nutritional value, is absent from the diet of many because of its scarcity and expense. Meat is needed in Asia to supplement the rice diet, in Europe to supplement potatoes.

Because of this special need, MCC has distributed over a million cans of meat during the last six years. Last year meat went to Austria, Germany, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Jordan, Korea and Vietnam. Even though the need is great, MCC is the only relief organization that distributes meat in large quantities overseas, making this a unique and highly appreciated contribution of Mennonites.

Missions and MCC Work

Indonesia

Brother Lim Khi Thin writes that since they as a family have none of their relatives in Indonesia (they are on the mainland of China), they greatly appreciated all words of comfort and financial help during the illness of his wife and finally during the time of her death. For this comfort he again sends a word of thanks. He also indicates that his youngest daughter and son miss their mother much. The daughter has been ill twice since her mother's death. He requests continued prayers for them as a family and that the Lord might direct them in the matter of his service and ministry.

India

The following observations on Christmas in India are shared by Sister Frieda Neufeld, Jadcherla, India: "Once again the blessed news rings out: 'The Saviour of the world has come.' But here in India we do not see any celebration of Christmas as a whole. The Indian people do not know of the living Savior who was born on Christmas Day. Instead, they continue in their heathen festivals of lights and others, where they make big celebrations and worship the powers of darkness and superstition at different times of the year. But the Christians, of course, celebrate Christmas. We have Christmas programs with the children in our schools and Sunday schools. On Christmas day the morning services are well attended. I remember Christmas morning. After several

special numbers of singing, the Indian preacher started to give the message. Quite a few people came late so he continued preaching. After some time some others came into the church so he kept on preaching so that all might hear the Christmas message."

Feeding Program

JAPAN

MCC's immediate interest focuses on two milk projects. In a village adjoining Tsuchima (with a population of 44,000) a daily bread and milk program which is to run daily until Christmas was started on November 27 in a recently resumed school of nearly 300. The families represented by the children are rice farmers who lost their income, whose houses were severely damaged and who are too poor to furnish school lunches for their own children. Fresh bottled milk is being purchased as an emergency measure until the city can make other arrangements.

In Kuwana on Dec. 7, milk was given to nearly 1,000 children. Other possible food projects are being studied. In addition to milk and clothing, scores of futons have been distributed within the last six weeks. (A futon is a special Japanese bed and cover combination which is used to sleep directly on the straw mat covered floors.) The first futon distributions were made Oct. 29 to families in evacuation

FUTURE SUBSCRIBERS

Born to Rev. and Mrs. Jake H. Friesen of Terrace, B. C., a daughter, Valerie May, on October 4, 1959, a sister for Grace Eileen.

Four brothers were happy when their first sister arrived on October 26, 1959. The parents, Mr. and Mrs. Werner Boldt of Glenbush, Sask., named their daughter, Leona Joyce.

Mr. Rudy Baerg and his wife Hildegard of Winkler, Man., were blessed with their first-born child, a daughter, on December 9, 1959. They named her Valerie Lynne.

Pacific Grace Mission Chapel

Vancouver, B. C. — 'And confessedly great is the mystery of godlines: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory.' How beautifully, from the Cradle to the Crown is salvation's story described in this verse. The gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is being proclaimed in the Pacific Grace Mission Chapel. Every Sunday is packed with its message. We certainly appreciate our Devotional Hour, our Sunday School Time, our Worship Service, and also our Gospel Service in the evening. It's wonderful to work with such a dedicated, sacrificing and cheerful group of workers, who make this possible, profitable and pleasant. We just praise God for them. It was our thrill and joy, to say the least, to see nine adults and a few youngsters profess Christ as Saviour this year. Our Bible-reading time in the homes is indeed an enjoyable phase of the ministry. These people have questions. There is no dull moment. And it's so gratifying to hear them pray and express their love for Christ. Will you all stand by and help us pray and preach these dear converts into a more abundant life in Christ?

H. G. Classen.

* * *

"Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people," is what the angel said that first Christmas night. This ALL includes the many, whether red, yellow, black or white, which God entrusted to us at the Pacific Grace Mission. We thank God for the various mediums in which these good tidings can be made known. It is a joy to have a filled chapel upstairs and down every Sunday morning with eager hearts to learn more about Jesus. Our enrollment

Budget Over Million

(Continued from page 1-4)

conference officials from different parts of the U.S. and Canada.

Dr. Erland Waltner, Elkhart, Ind., president of the General Conference, reminded the delegates that this Centennial session is a crucial one because we need to recognize the will of God and our destiny as a conference... We need to face, and face crucially, some of the challenges and mandates that came to us during the conference at Bluffton."

Rev. I. I. Friesen, Winnipeg, Man., vice-president, stated that among the assignments for the year ahead are a study of the relationship of schools of higher education to the General Conference, district conferences and local congregations; also that a doctrinal statement on the Inspiration of the Bible is to be prepared at an early date.

at present stands at 259 with an average attendance of 200 for the year. These are divided in 16 classes. The latest being a class for the adults.

Many of the boys and girls and young people profess to be saved. Two girls, 15 and 17 years of age, were saved just recently. To see these Christians grow up in Christ is a tremendous concern for us. We are happy to see as many as 50 children and over from ages 6 to 12 come eagerly to the Saturday Bible Club. Every Friday night is Young Peoples'. One Friday is entirely devotional, while the next is devoted to craft work. During the first part of every Friday, though, we have our choir practice. These young people, some 16 and 17 years old, are heavy upon our hearts. We would to God that all would be of those that could sing, "The cross before me, the world behind me, no turning back."

Looking back over the year we are also thankful for those that were able to attend Bible Camp and especially the many that came to Vacation Bible School. Our hearts were thrilled to see one of our Christian mothers and 6 young people take real active part in the work. One of these, a teenage boy is certainly a tremendous example of real Christianity in spite of the environment he has to cope with. There is a great want in so many of our homes, be it clothing, food or cleanliness and especially love. They represent religion of every description but they are without Christ. God has proven that His Word is not in vain, and in the past year He has given us two homes with household salvation and also several mothers who are now praying for their husbands. Will you help us pray for these converts, and for the many, many others, that they too, might accept the good tidings of great joy?

Sue Neufeld.

* * *

"And His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Surely there is no peace in this world. Real peace can be experienced only with the Prince of Peace living in our hearts. It is our prayer for this to become a reality in the life of each member in our "Mothers' Club". Our club has grown to 31 active members. Of these ladies five have accepted the Prince of Peace this year. Pray with us that they might truly grow and be used of God to bring others to a saving knowledge of Christ. We meet in the Chapel on the 2nd Wednesday of each month. We begin the handiwork at 1:30 p.m. At about 2 p.m., when most of the mothers are

(Concluded on page 9-1)

Program of M. B. Bible College

The M.B. Bible College Choir, under the direction of Mr. Victor Martens presented Mendelssohn's Oratorio "Elijah" in the Elmwood M.B. church, Winnipeg, on December 12. The hearts of the people present were touched, blessed and impressed as they listened to the splendid performance of this Bible-centred oratorio.

Mennonite Brethren Bible Institute

Clearbrook, B.C. — Staff and students of M.B.B.I. have enjoyed numerous blessings as a result of school activities and visiting speakers. In the Christmas season we are looking to Christ for many more.

A day of prayer and fasting was held in the school on November 16. At this time new committals and dedications were made to the Lord.

Some of the guest speakers and missionaries to our school in the past weeks have been Mr. and Mrs. Peter Derksen, the Janz Brothers Team, Rev. C. N. Hiebert, Rev. John Baerg, Rev. Clarence Giesbrecht, Rev. A. H. Wieler and Rev. John Reimer.

The club work done by the 37 student teachers reaching about 275 children with the Gospel every week, is progressing favorably; but some teachers do report that discipline problems are hindering the presentation of lessons. For practical projects the children are making stuffed animals, foam slippers, plaques, model cars, aquariums and leather and copper articles.

The Radio Committee is finalizing plans to present the serial, "Pilgrim's Progress" over "The Bible School Hour" which is presented weekly over CHWK, Chilliwack and KPUG, Bellingham.

Work has already begun on the December edition of the school paper, "Envoy." This month's paper will feature special Christmas articles. The paper will come out just prior to the Christmas recess.

The M.B.B.I. presented a program on December 13. At this time the choir sang "For unto Us a Child is Born" and "Glory to God" from the "Messiah". Also, an all male cast presented "Die Verpasste Gelegenheit" under the direction of Mr. J. B. Epp.

On December 18 the school family will gather for the annual Christmas banquet. The student body has decided for this year, rather than exchange gifts and cards, to take an offering for the work of the Vancouver City Mission.

Betty Dahl.

Friesen Is Rhodes Scholar-Elect

Gilbert Friesen, a political science student at the University of Manitoba, has been named 1960 Rhodes Scholar-elect for Manitoba.

Mr. Friesen, the 21-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Frank P. Friesen of Steinbach, received his elementary and high school education in Steinbach.

In 1956 he entered United College and two years later began his studies at the University of Manitoba. He is now a fifth-year political science student.

After graduating at the end of this term he will attend Oxford University where he hopes to obtain his Ph.D. He will study philosophy and economics as well as political science.

John Krahn to Palestine

Dr. and Mrs. John Krahn with their two children of Winnipeg expect to leave for Jordania, Palestine in the near future. Their work is to be done among the people in the vicinity of Bethlehem. Dr. Krahn's parental home is Abbotsford, B.C., and Mrs. Krahn (nee Frieda Ewert, daughter of Rev. and Mrs. Isaac Ewert) comes from Kitchener, Ontario. The MCC is sending Dr. Krahn to do hospital work among the people who are in dire need of medical assistance.

Eastern Mennonite College Granted Accreditation

Harrisonburg, Va. — An historic event for Eastern Mennonite College was the announcement on Dec. 3 that the college had been accredited and accepted into membership of the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.

Accreditation followed several years of negotiation and special effort to meet the requirements. An endowment drive was climaxed last month by the granting of a \$25,000 Quality Improvement Award by the U. S. Steel Foundation, raising the fund past the goal of \$300,000.

Word of the accreditation was received from President John R. Mumaw and Dean Ira E. Miller, who attended the Southern Association meeting at Louisville, Ky. They returned to the campus by the following day, when President Mumaw called a special meeting of the faculty and the college and high school student bodies to review the attainment of this goal.

The high school department of EMC was accredited in December 1957. Eastern Mennonite College which is under the auspices of the Virginia Mennonite Conference, has an enrollment of more than 480 in the college department, and over 200 in the high school department.



FOREIGN MISSION NEWS

Japan

In the Japan typhoon-disaster area, our Bible school staff and student body has participated in a work camp project organized by MCC. Their work is described as follows by Sister Ruth Wiens: "During the four days the 11 of us were able to clean up a contagious disease hospital which had been under water, mire and debris till the day before we came. In response to a request from the city office, we were able to go to one of the refugee centers one evening on condition that we refrain from preaching. The young people interestingly rendered a playlet of the Good Samaritan. One of the boys skillfully explained how our love to them was only an example of what Christ came to do. In song we were able to tell them what Christ came to do. After the program, we spoke to them personally. The 110 present had lost 80 relatives and 17 bodies still had not been found. Since then we have also been able to distribute bedding and clothing, and more follow-up work is being done. Over and over these days we have heard exclamations concerning the helplessness of man. Could this be one of God's means to bring more Japanese people to repentance?"

The Ishibashi church in Japan baptized 10 believers in November. All of the converts gave radiant testimonies of the reality of Christ to them. The new building of the Ishibashi church has been the means of many blessings and of furthering the work. Average attendance is now equivalent to the highest attendance before the new building was available. The missionaries indicate that the church is becoming more stabilized and that among those who attend are many seekers in whose hearts the Lord is working.

The Bible school in Japan has begun its second term of the school year. At the conclusion of this term the first class will be graduated. May we continue to remember in prayer the important work of training Christian workers and leaders.

Brother J. B. Toews attended a meeting of the mission board of the North American Baptist General Conference (German Baptists) in Chicago on November 27 at which Bible school and seminary work in Japan were discussed. The possibilities of mutual responsibility for capital outlay and personnel in the operation of a Bible school and a seminary were explored. Another meeting is to be held near the end of December to consider the matter further.

Sister Ruth Wiens is now assisting in the work of the Nagase

church in Japan instead of the Ishibashi church. This results from new work assignments caused by the change of missionary personnel on the field. Nagase, one and one-half hours distant from Ishibashi on the other side of the city, is a three-year-old church. It is near a large new growing housing area which presents a tremendous challenge. The Nagase believers would like to change their meeting place to a location in that area. Since Nagase does not yet have its own church building, an old English school building is used. The membership includes 11 believers who attend regularly. The group includes four active brethren—two Bible school students, a school teacher and a businessman.

Japan has the fifth largest population of all the nations of the world, with a density of 620 persons per square mile. Two-thirds of the land area is covered by forests and mountains, and is therefore not arable. In spite of these major economic drawbacks, the intelligent, industrious Japanese have made a remarkable recovery from World War II. Progress is slow spiritually, however. Only about 400,000 Japanese are professing Christians (a minute fraction of the total population), and of these perhaps only a minority have actually experienced salvation. A spiritual revival in the church in Japan is seen as the primary need of the nation, a revival that will revitalize the professing Christians and restore the many baptized believers who have fallen away, so that the Japanese will take the initiative in evangelizing their own people. Join the many concerned national Christians and missionaries in prayer for a powerful, life-transforming revival.

Belgian Congo

Sister Marcella Wiens is returning after a period of service at Ecole Belle Vue missionary children's school in the Belgian Congo. She is expected to arrive at her home in Delft, Minnesota, by Christmas.

Ecole Belle Vue missionary children's school closed earlier than usual so parents could get their children home before the possibility of political unrest breaking out in connection with the national elections beginning December 6.

Sister Elsie Guenther has returned home from the Belgian Congo by plane to be at the bedside of her father, Dan Guenther of Reedley, Calif., who was quite seriously injured in an accident. Sister Guenther's furlough was already due in the summer of 1959, but she had consented to extend her term. Her most recent ministry in the Congo has been at Kafumba where she served in the literature production and Bible school work.

In the Belgian Congo the struggle between the Bahutu and the Watutsi (sometimes written Batutsi) continues in many areas, although

larger centers have been brought under control by Belgian paratroopers. In general there seems to be no retaliation against Protestant missionaries. One mission station was attacked, but the attack was not against the missionaries but against the refugees who had fled there for care. The fighting has caused several hundred casualties and destroyed dozens of villages. There has been no recommendation by Belgian or the U.S. that whites leave the Congo. It is felt that calm will return.

Europe

A meeting of our workers in Europe was held in the home of Brother and Sister H. H. Janzen in Basel, Switzerland, on November 24. Present were the Brethren J. A. Harder, G. H. Jantzen, H. H. Janzen and J. W. Vogt. A review of the work at the various centres indicated progress and encouragement, but also revealed the need for expansion to meet the great spiritual needs and opportunities of Europe. Recently the brethren have begun occasional services in several new locations. The inquiries for spiritual help coming in response to Brother Janzen's ministry on the (Old) Mennonite radio program in Europe are encouraging. Brother Harder was encouraged to visit scattered believers around Bielefeld and Gronau in Germany and the missionaries in Brussels. Workers are to be stationed as follows: Jacob Thielmanns at Linz, Wolfgang Rueschhoffs at Steyr and Max Woerlen to remain at Neuwied for another six months.

The ordination of Brother and Sister Wolfgang Rueschhoff to the ministry is planned for the near future. The Rueschhoffs will be the first persons to be ordained in our European work. This is a cause for gratitude to the Lord. They will be ordained by the Neuwied Church. The Rueschhoffs are serving in a difficult field in Steyr, Austria. Sunday morning services have been started. About 14 persons attended the first service in Steyr.

Brother Abr. J. Neufeld has returned from Austria to Steinbach, Man., to be with his family. Son Gary was scheduled to enter a Winnipeg hospital on December 7 and submit to surgery on December 8. This was the third surgery for Gary in recent months and was made necessary by further complications on the other side of his neck.

South America

The Bible distribution project at Curitiba, Brazil, has worked out successfully. The original plan was to distribute the 5,000 Bibles purchased by our mission, during November and December. But within one month almost all of the Bibles were gone. It is encouraging that these Bibles have gone into the hands of thousands of people of the

city of Curitiba with the promise that "my word shall not return void; it shall accomplish that for which it has been sent." It is of great encouragement to see the eagerness with which the older children of the mission as well as the Christians in the neighborhood were willing to distribute these Scriptures and sell them at a small nominal price.

Brother and Sister J. H. Franz have again arrived on the Paraguay mission field in the Chaco. Their residence is in the little city of Filadelfia where they made their headquarters during the first two terms of service. The Franzes report that their freight has arrived in Asuncion which was shipped from North America at the time when they left as a family by plane. The cost of going to Paraguay by plane is now less expensive than by ship and certainly requires less time. In his report, however, Brother Franz states that their freight has suffered some damage along the way and a goodly number of articles are missing, the containers having been broken into. Although the amount of the loss has not been ascertained yet, it always constitutes a great disappointment to a missionary family to whom every item taken along is of such great importance.

Brother and Sister Gerhard Hein, Paraguay missionaries, are the parents of a son, Albert, born in Filadelfia November 6.

All missionaries in Paraguay met for a workers' conference on November 27 and 28. The theme for consideration was the indigenous church and the national worker in this church.

From Bogota, Colombia, comes a report that the persecution is to receive a governmental investigation. Evangelical Foreign Missions Association shares the following information: "Alarmed by charges that during the past 12 years Protestants have been victims of a religious persecution in this country, the House of Representatives requested three ministers of the presidential cabinet to appear on November 19 to explain the treatment which Protestants have received. The tragic plight of Protestants in Colombia had been brought to the attention of the House of Representatives last month in a memorandum denouncing persecution. The memorandum had been signed by 14,000 Colombians, including Protestants and others interested in religious freedom.

Ecuador's recent election—after weeks of court hearings—brought into the office of president a strong Roman Catholic. After thousands of illegal votes in his favor had been discarded, he won by the narrow majority of 3,000 votes. Prior to election, he had promised to rid Ecuador of all evangelical missionaries. This situation needs much prayer.



THE Young Observers

Let's Visit a Minute

Hello, Boys and Girls,

Is this the time to wish you a very Merry Christmas? As I am writing to you tonight it is my sincere prayer that Christmas for you this year may be a wonderful one! You know that I don't mean more turkey and plum pudding than ever; nor more presents under the tree; but rather, a wonderful Christmas that will be wonderful to you for a long, long time to be. Can you guess what kind of Christmas I mean?

Christmas! What tremendous event! The Almighty Lord of heaven being a helpless, sweet little Babe; the Great God of all treasures being poor was put into a manger among the animals of the barn; the all-loving, eternal God born as a child to grow up to die shamefully on a rugged cross. All this He gladly accepted, He willingly took it upon Himself. Without complaint he bravely bore it throughout His hard life and unto His meaner death. The key to such a wonderful life was His love to us.

Christ did not come only to be a Babe; He came to grow up and to die! He did not come because of the manger; He came for the cross! It is not Bethlehem that tells the story; Bethlehem is not complete without Calvary. His was a life unto death, that ours might be a death unto life!

Now if Christ came to die, and He did; if Christmas to Him meant the road to Gethsemane and Calvary, and it did; if His coming was the greatest self-sacrificing love the world has ever known, and it is; what right have we to make our Christmas a selfish, indulgent, self-centered, wanting-it-all-for-ourselves affair? Listen, boys and girls, are we honestly followers of the Lord God of Christmas?

Perhaps it is not too late to remind you of your plans and preparations for Christmas? Will there be room for more than for I, my, me and mine? Check, will you?

Christmas! What a lovely event, for God so loved the world that He gave! Christmas again now can be such a lively event, when we who call ourselves Christians will be true Christ-followers, in all things and at all costs! Let's have a Merry Christmas this year, shall we?

Love, Aunt Anne.



Long ago and far away
A little Babe was born one day;

Jesus was His lovely name.
Do you wonder why He came?

Do you know why angels sang,
And all the bells of heaven rang?

Do you know God hung a star
To light the Wise Men from afar?

Little children, this is why
All the earth and sea and sky

Rejoiced on that first Christmas
Long ago, and far away: [Day,

God so loved the world, He gave
His well-beloved Son to save

All who call upon His name;
Children, that is why He came

On the world's first Christmas Day,
Long ago and far away.

M. S. Nicholson.

The Little Green Tree

Tony slowed his steps, leaned against the old stone wall, resting his heavy bag of papers on the crusted snow and looked. Yes, it was still there, the little green tree, right in the middle of the lawn. Last year it had been too small for a Christmas tree, but this year it was just the right size.

How he wished he could slip into the garden and chop it down! How Marcia's tired eyes would sparkle

at the sight of a tree their very own! They could make paper chains and silver stars, even if they couldn't afford the shining baubles and tinsel.

This tree was different from the big trees that came all the way from western Canada to the city where he lived. They were big and rough. This little tree looked thick and soft. And they would never be able to buy a tree. Even the thin, straggly ones cost a dollar or more, and the money he made on the

paper route was needed for food, although he had managed to save enough to buy Marcia the stand-up paper dolls she wanted and a gift of the special soap Mom liked.

Tony sighed. If only they could have a tree like that it would seem like Christmas, even if they could not have turkey and mince pie. Every night when he got to Harrison's place, he would stop and look. It seemed a shame that old Mr. Harrison never did anything to make his place look like Christmas the way other people on the street did. Maybe it was because he was an old man, and didn't care about Christmas any more. And maybe he didn't know that Christmas was a time when even old people could be glad, because of the gift God had given for everybody, whether they were young or old.

He hurried down the road, hugging his papers close to him. Tony liked the big corner house the best of all. They always put a manger scene on the lawn on Christmas Eve, with a lovely star on top and a soft blue light around. There was an illuminated verse, too, the first one he had learned at the Mission: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Tony stopped to read the words again. He smiled, remembering how Marcia always said "forgotten Son." Why, surely Christmas was proof that God did not forget anyone.

Everybody seemed happy tonight. Tony hurried up the wide avenue, flipping each paper onto a veranda where it would land with a little thud. People on his route were kind and generous at Christmas, but usually they gave him things on the day after, not on Christmas Eve.

Tonight they were all busy with their preparations, putting up decorations and trimming their trees. He could see them hurrying about inside the big picture windows, laughing and talking. Children were dancing excitedly around glittering trees. Some of them had two trees with colored lights—indoors and out. It hardly seemed fair to have two trees when they didn't even have one. He wished somebody would give him a tree to take home, but nobody would do that until after Christmas and then it would be too late.

He was back to the Harrison place again now. There were no lighted picture windows here—just a small, single square of light by the big door. Maybe old Mr. Harrison was sitting there all by himself. Suddenly Tony had an idea. What would the old man think if he knocked at the door and wished him a happy Christmas? Maybe Mr. Harrison didn't know about the gift of God that could make old people happy, as well as young ones. Should he? Yes, he would do it! He pushed open the gate.



But what was that? That sound?

Tony paused for a moment. He thought he could hear voices. Not the shouting merry voices of people on the street but low whispers—here in the garden. He was still hidden by the gate pillars. He peered cautiously around. There were people there! He could see a couple of dim figures close to the tree, close to his little tree! What were they doing? He heard a low voice.

"Aw, the old man's dozing by the fire. He won't hear us."

"We gotta work fast, before anybody gets suspicious," another voice said.

"Got the saw?"

"Yes . . . in this bag. Quick, somebody's coming."

Tony knew they had seen him as he pushed the gate further open, but he didn't intend to let them know that he had seen them, not for a minute. Whistling a carol he sauntered up the path, taking a folded newspaper from his bag.

"Have to wait till the kid's gone," he heard one of them whisper. He walked up to the door, still whistling, but his heart was thudding against his ribs. They were going to steal the tree! He knew it! He had to warn old Mr. Harrison somehow. Bravely he walked up the shallow steps, banged the old knocker.

No sound inside. He banged again. Now he could hear slow steps shuffling. A light went on in the hall. The door opened a crack and he saw the tip of a nose.

"Merry Christmas, Mr. Harrison!" called Tony. The door opened wider.

"Eh? What that? I don't take the 'Chronicle,' boy. Are you new in these parts that ye don't know that?" The old man's eyes were on the paper in Tony's hand.

"Complimentary copy, sir!" Tony said. "And I came to wish you a Merry Christmas!" He kept his voice raised so that the dim figures in the garden would be sure to hear him. Then he spoke swiftly, in an undertone, praying that the old man wasn't deaf. "Mr. Harrison, a couple of fellows are outside here trying to cut down your little fir tree. I came to warn you."

Sharp old eyes peered into the shadows.

(Continued on page 10-2)

The Story of the Origin of 'Silent Night, Holy Night'

This beautiful and world renowned hymn, one of the few hymns belonging to both the Catholic and Protestant confession, was one hundred years old on Christmas Eve, 1918.

The author, Joseph Mohr, composed the song while taking a walk on Christmas Eve, 1818, on a beautiful moonlight night. On the same evening he took the song to his friend, Franz Gruber, and asked him to set it to music. In a very short time he had completed the musical setting, and a few hours later it was sung as a duet in the Church of St. Nicholas in Oberndorf. Joseph Mohr singing it with his fine tenor voice, accompanied by the organist and composer, Franz Gruber (bass). The intelligent and reverend rendering of this simple and touching melody made a deep impression on all present. It is only just that the two men who gave us this beautiful Christmas song should be kept in loving and lasting remembrance. It is with this thought in mind that we venture to publish the story of the origin of

Silent Night, Holy Night!



"Silent night, Holy night!
All is calm, all is bright.
Round you, Virgin Mother and
Child!
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in
heavenly peace.

"Silent night! Holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight,
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing, Hallelujah;
Christ the Saviour is born!
Christ the Saviour is born!

"Silent night! Holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from Thy holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth!
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth!

the song and a short biographical sketch of its authors.

The little province of Salzburg, the birthplace of Mozart, is also the home of the author of our song. Joseph Mohr was born there December 11, 1792. His father was a musketeer and his mother was Anna nee Schoiber. Joseph took music lessons while still very young and entered the boys' choir at the chapel in Salzburg, where the most famous of all the choir boys, Carl Maria von Weber, had just previously left. At the time when his voice changed, he left the circle of Cathedral singers and entered the Bavarian Lyceum at Salzburg. After graduating from there he took up the study of theology. On August 22, 1815, he became assistant curate at Lungan. From there he went as assistant curate to Oberndorf on the Salzach, and here, on the 24th of December, 1818, he composed the words of "Silent Night, Holy Night." Joseph Mohr died in poor circumstances as a worthy vicar in Wagrain, Austria, December 5, 1848.

The composer of our song, Franz Xaver Gruber, was born November 28, 1787, at Hochburg in Innviertel, the third son of a poor linen weaver. Already in his first school years this gifted boy had great delight in music and a deep longing to learn to play on an organ. His father, however, tried to crush this desire, as he didn't wish his "Franzl" to learn any other trade but the weaver's. Thus the boy passed through hard times, during the day he would work helping his father at weaving and at night he would steal away secretly to the teacher, who was fond of "Franzl," and take lessons on the organ. It is touching to read how he nailed blocks of wood in the wooden wall of his room, in order to practice his finger exercises. The teacher plead and begged in vain to let Franz take music lessons, but it only seemed to harden the father's heart still more. Even the advice of the district curate could not change his obstinate mind.

Soon, however, something occurred to bring about more hopeful days for the music-loving boy. It happened that the teacher was absent one Sunday, on account of illness. There was no one to take his place at the organ. Courageously little twelve-year-old Franz came forward and played the organ during the entire service, much to the amazement and delight of the whole congregation. Now the father was convinced of his son's musical talent, his pride also was aroused and he permitted Franz to continue his music lessons. Yes, he even saw to it that "Franzl" got an old spinet, which he bought for him for five gulden

Although the father heartily consented to let Franz continue his study of music, he however still had

his doubts about letting him become a teacher. Finally, at the age of eighteen, the tireless boy succeeded in leaving the weaver's loom forever in order to take up the profession of teaching. In the year 1806 he took his first position as teacher and organist in Arnsdorf; at the same time he also took the organ and cantor service in the village of Oberndorf. It was during this period of his activities that the memorable Christmas Eve occurred which gave us our song. In 1833 Gruber was called to Hallein, near Salzburg, as choirmaster, where, after an extraordinary busy life, he died June 7, 1863. Close to his former dwelling, Franz Gruber lies buried. The memorial tablet on the house has the following inscription: "What he taught in song, dreamed Of in the kingdom of sound, At the fount he sees it now; The Beautiful and the True!"

On the schoolhouse in Arnsdorf, the birthplace of our song, is a marble tablet with the following inscription:

"Silent night, Holy night!
Who has made thee, o song?
Mohr made me so beautiful,
Gruber gave me my reverent
sound,
The Priest and the Teacher united."

And now, just a little more of how our song began its wanderings into the world. Although Gruber never published his composition, it seemed to be destined to become a universal Christmas hymn. A few days after Christmas, 1818, an organ builder from Tyrol came to repair the organ of St. Nicholas at Oberndorf, and there he heard the song, and after his return to Tyrol sang it there. It soon became immensely popular and was called affectionately the "Christ-Child Song" (Christkindlied). In this way the song spread from town to town, and to every village and hamlet throughout Germany, and from there to other countries.

Today it is sung all over the world, the Christian Negroes in Africa, the Indians in America. The missionaries have taken it to China and up to the far North. So that the two authors, without in the least intending to do so, have created a "world folk song," which has no equal.

May the Christ-child song impress its sweet and strong message of goodwill and peace on the hearts and minds of God's children everywhere, and may there be not one nation nor one individual excluded from its healing message of love.

Anna C. Preston

The Little Town of Bethlehem

The best known little town in the world is Bethlehem. When Christmas Eve comes to Bethlehem, a visitor may stand on the outskirts of the Little Village and look down at the blinking lights and hurrying



Joyous Christmas
and a
Blessed New Year
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people. It is not difficult to imagine how the little town appeared on the first Christmas Eve.

On Christmas Eve in 1865, Philip Brooks, a young rector of Philadelphia, spent Christmas Eve in Bethlehem. He stood on the top of a little rugged hill and looked down on the village. He saw the shepherds, the twinkling stars. When he saw these sights, he relived in his mind the night that Christ was born.

Three years after his visit to Bethlehem, in 1868, Brooks, who was devoted to children, wanted to write a Christmas poem for them. He sat down and wrote the words of "O Little Town of Bethlehem." The following Sunday he read the poem to the children of the Sunday school. They wanted to sing it. Lewis Redner, church organist, promised them that by the following Sunday he would have a melody for the words.

All week, try as hard as he could, Redner could not think of a suitable tune. It was not until Saturday night while he was dozing that a refrain came to him. He quickly arose and jotted down the notes. The next morning the children happily sang the carol. Redner always felt that the melody was God-given. The song, "O Little Town of Bethlehem," is a favorite carol around the world.

But more than the village and more than the song, we love the Saviour who was born there many centuries ago. His incarnation, His death and resurrection have changed the course of the world. He will change your life. He will change your little world. He will give unto us eternal life when we recognize Him as the "Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).

Prayer Week Program

For Use in M. B. Churches January 3—9, 1960

(Continued from previous issue, page 4)

Third Evening

OUR HISTORIC CONCEPT OF SEPARATION

Introduction: The early Mennonite Brethren believed in separation, and this they clearly expressed in their *Document of Secession* (1860): "Lovers of money, drunkards and blasphemers are numerous today and are allowed to fellowship at the Lord's table. . . The Saviour speaks on this wise in Revelation 18:4: 'Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and receive not her plagues! II Cor. 6 also states that the believers are not to have fellowship with the unbelievers, and are to separate themselves from them' (P. M. Friesen, pp. 189ff). The concept of separation from the world was quite central to the proceedings which led to the organization of the Mennonite Brethren Church. The Gospel of Jesus Christ was not only something to be believed but also something which placed upon the believer the responsibility of conforming to its precepts in daily living. "The Christian not only implicitly believes the Gospel but explicitly behaves the Gospel" (D. Edmond Hiebert). Great care was exercised by the early brethren in the form of spiritual nurture and admonition to leave a group witness, and to maintain a united front in the expression of discipleship.

Praise and Thanksgiving

1. Let us praise our Heavenly Father, who called us out of darkness into light and sent His Son to live a perfect life of separation for our guidance (I Peter 2:9; Col. 1:13; John 5:39; Heb. 1:2; Phil. 2:5).

2. Let us thank God for the conviction still present in our brotherhood that the Christian, in following Christ, must conform to the standards of the Master and live a separated life (I Peter 2:21-25; Romans 12:1-2; II Cor. 3:2-3).

3. Let us thank God that our brotherhood still accepts the Word of God as the inspired guide and standard for the daily walk; and that there is separation in matters of doctrine and teaching (John 14:23; Rev. 2:2; I Tim. 6:3).

Reorientation

After one hundred years, we pause to ask ourselves some searching questions concerning the state of separation in our brotherhood of today:

1. Are we as a brotherhood able to maintain a group witness of non-conformity, or has the matter of the daily walk of the church member become an individual affair entirely?

2. Are we relying on the dynamics of a spirit-filled life dedicated to Christ alone to produce effective separation in our brotherhood, or have we in our many pursuits of life begun to "adjust" to the pressures of the world about us?

3. Are we still diligent in our application of Scriptural standards of discipline in the church as a means of loving correction, or are we powerless to cope with the worldliness in the ranks of our membership? Are we able to maintain the principle of separation in matters that pertain to the relationships between church and state, participation in questionable amusements, etc?

Rededication

In the light of our relationship as believers to the injunctions of the Word of God, with regard to holy living, let us, as individuals and as a brotherhood, dedicate ourselves anew to the cause of Christ and separation from the world. This would include:

1. Personal discipleship in everyday living, in which the standards of the Word and the example of Christ become "a consuming passion" in our lives in order that we may become effective witnesses by our lives to the redeeming grace of God.

2. Group standards within the brotherhood which make possible a united witness against sin and for righteousness, where each member of the church voluntarily accepts the standards of the church and seeks to live accordingly so that the brotherhood may truly be one in the Lord.

3. Nurture and correction in the brotherhood so that the immature may learn to walk in the ways of the Lord and the erring may be brought back to obedience and faith.

Fourth Evening

OUR HISTORIC CONCEPT OF THE FINAL AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

Introduction: When the first brethren seceded from the established church they were motivated by obedience to their understanding of the Word of God. Whenever they gave an explanation for their actions they referred to the Scriptures. Even their documents to high government officials referred to Scripture passages. Although the brethren repeatedly referred to the writings of Menno Simons, it is clear that for them the Scriptures were the final authority, and the writings of Menno were thought to agree with the Word. It is important, however, to realize that the brethren did not only use the Word in the defense of their faith but

were diligent in reading and studying it in their homes and in their Bible studies for the sake of finding the will of God for their lives. As a result of this motivation, they established Sunday schools, Bible schools, and undertook to sponsor the printing of Christian literature.

Praise and Thanksgiving

1. Let us praise our God for His divinely inspired Word, and for the freedom which is ours to read and to spread it. (Joshua 1:8; Psalm 119:11; II Tim. 3:16)

2. Let us thank our God for Christian homes where His Word is read, taught, and obeyed. (II Tim. 3:15; Joshua 24:15; Deut. 6:6-9)

3. Let us thank our God for our Sunday schools and for the printed page by which the Word of God comes into many homes. (II Tim. 2:15; I Peter 2:2; Acts 17:11)

Reorientation

With these perspectives, we must re-evaluate our position today. Many new influences have forced themselves upon us and we too must discern on the basis of the Word of God. It is of utmost importance that the Scriptures be our point of reference in making decisions, both personal and collective.

1. Do we read God's Word as individuals with a sincere desire to obey it or are our lives so entangled in the affairs of this world that we have little or no time for personal study of the Bible?

2. Have we as Mennonite Brethren Church been diligent in spreading the Word through literature and the printed page?

3. Are we still diligent in maintaining a vital family altar in our homes where our children are taught in the ways of God, or have we relegated this responsibility to the Sunday school?

Rededication

In the light of our dependence on the Word of God for a deeper Christian life and for the attainment of a pure church, let us, as individuals and as a brotherhood, dedicate ourselves to:

1. Giving the Bible its proper place in our personal lives and in our homes.

2. Greater emphasis on Bible study in our churches through biblical preaching, Bible studies and the Sunday school.

3. Greater efforts in the area of Christian literature by which many receive the Word of God into their homes.

Fifth Evening

OUR HISTORIC CONCEPT OF CHRISTIAN TRAINING IN OUR SCHOOLS

Introduction: In Russia, the Mennonite Brethren Church cooperated with the other Mennonite groups in the maintenance of the schools in the colonies. Since many of the teachers were born again and the Bible was given its rightful place

in the curriculum, they made no efforts to organize their own schools. However, after the turn of the century, a Bible school was established in the Crimea for the training of Christian workers.

When the Brethren came to America, they soon felt the need of private schools for the training of their future leaders. As early as 1881, at the annual conference in Henderson, Neb., the matter of education was discussed. Each church was to elect a brother whose task it should be to gather information about the possibility of establishing private schools in the USA. An offering was taken for school purposes. In 1883, the fifth annual conference advised that the churches look for young people who had the interest and ability for teaching, so that these might be trained for foreign and home mission projects. After much prayer, Tabor College was founded in 1908.

It is important to note that the Bible was central in the curricula of the early schools. Many schools were called "Bible Schools," and the first seminary which was established was called a "Biblical Seminary." Today the Canadian Conference supports a "Bible College."

Praise and Thanksgiving

1. Let us praise our Father for the body of revealed truth which we can pass on to others by the way of teaching. (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 5:42; Eph. 4:11-12)

2. Let us unitedly thank God for the schools which were given to our Conference by the grace of God and through the vision of brethren who saw the need for Christian training. (Deut. 4:10; II Tim. 2:15; II Tim. 3:16-17)

3. Let us thank God for faithful teachers who have dedicated their talent and training to God for use in our brotherhood, and for the willingness of the brotherhood to support our institutions so that our youth might be trained. (II Tim. 2:2; Heb. 13:7; Heb. 13:17)

Reorientation

Realizing the tremendous impact which training and teaching make upon the minds of children and youth, we must ask ourselves whether we have truly done our best as a Mennonite Brethren Church to establish and maintain schools on a high level. Let us, therefore, examine ourselves with reference to the charge which is ours in respect to teaching youth.

1. Have we supported our schools adequately so that they could offer the training which was required to meet the challenge of witnessing to our world?

2. Has the total brotherhood taken an active interest in the program of education in our Conference, or have we as a brotherhood been content to let a few brethren carry the burden of Christian education?

(Continued on page 10-4)

Pacific Grace Mission
(Continued from page 4-2)

there, we have a time of Bible-Study with a positive lesson from the Word. Here the mothers, too, have an opportunity to sing. And how they love to sing! After this session we all go back to the handwork, such as: quilting, embroidering, making of flowers, etc. Then comes the time of refreshments. This affords a good opportunity to become better acquainted one with another. During this time we also distribute the many fine articles of clothing so kindly donated by you dear friends of the mission. May I now thank each of you personally for them.

At our Annual Bazaar on November 19, the ladies took an active part in the program. One of the new converts had the invocation with Scripture and prayer. Another convert had a fine reading, the topic being: "Little is much when God is in it," and one of the mothers read a suitable poem. With the exception of a few, all ladies took part in singing a special number. It thrilled our hearts to hear them sing. At the sale of articles in the lower auditorium as well as in the kitchen, they were busy and happy doing their part. The greater part of the money realized from the bazaar, goes to various missionaries who have visited us, and in addition, we have adopted a Korean orphan at the cost of \$15.00 per month support. At our meetings we have no collections, as we do not want to embarrass anyone of them that are very poor. May the Lord help us as our lives touch these dear souls. May they also see the Prince of Peace in us and become attracted to Him.

Our final Parent-Teachers' Social was held on December 2. We had a fine attendance. There were about 30 homes represented, plus the staff members. The program was profitable. The film, "As the twig is bent" was shown. Its message made an impact upon us. All these activities are but a means to an end. We must reach them for Christ and show them how to make a life. Thank you one and all for making this work possible and enjoyable. Your prayers and gifts, including the canned goods, cook-

ies, clothing and quilts are greatly appreciated. And a hearty thanks also to all the Clubs for the Christmas Hampers and Parcels. It is a pleasure to distribute these gifts so beautifully wrapped and prayerfully prepared. God will bless you richly as you continue to pray for the families you adopted this year. And now a very joyous Christmas to all of YOU from all of US.

Mrs. Sara Classen.

And now, in closing, after the Retrospect regarding our Christ, the Introspect regarding our Christmas, and the Circumspect regarding our Christian Activities, let us dwell a bit on the Prospect of our Christian Duty. We marvel at what God has done; yet there is a great Need. Our Sunday School classes are over-crowded. We do need an addition to the Chapel. This would also give us needed storage room. We have been praying to God; and have been working with the City Hall for a permit for such an addition. This request has been granted on December 3 at 3:45 p.m. How we rejoice and praise God for this answer to prayer. We shall now, in a practical way, look forward to its realization.

Then, when we see the many men on the streets — Christless, Hopeless, Careless and Homeless — our hearts go out to them and we cannot be at ease. We must do something! Many of them could be reached with the love of Christ. Do pray that we might know God's will and way to establish a shelter for them.

The following are the words of Bramwell Booth which have stirred my heart and soul: "One morning in the 'eighties, he was an early caller at his father's house. The General was dressing, and the hair-brushes which he held in each hand were being wielded with quite eloquent vigour. There was no 'Good-morning-how-do-you-do!' 'Bramwell' he cried, 'did you know that men slept out all night on the bridges?' He had arrived in London late, and what he had seen at midnight had startled him. 'Well, yes,' was the reply, 'a lot poor fellows do that, I suppose.' 'Then you ought to be ashamed of yourself to have known it and to have done nothing for them!' he cried vehemently. Bramwell began to speak of the difficulties — — 'Go and do something!' said the General. 'We must do something!' 'What can we do?' 'Get them a shelter.' 'That will cost money.' 'Well, that is your affair! Something must be done. Get hold of a warehouse and warm it, and find something to cover them. But mind, Bramwell — — no coddling!' That was the beginning of the Salvation Army shelters.

Stir me! oh stir me, Lord, I care not how, But stir my heart in passion for the world.

Stir me to give, to go — — but most to pray,
Stir me! oh, stir me, Lord, 'til all my heart Is filled with strong compassion for these souls,
'Til that compelling "must" drives me to pray,
Stir me! oh, stir me, Lord, 'till prayer is pain, 'Til prayer is joy, 'til prayer turns into praise!
Stir me! oh, stir me, Lord, Thy heart was stirred By love's intensest fire, 'til Thou didst give Thine only Son, Thy best beloved One, E'en to the dreadful Cross, that I might live.
Stir me! oh, stir me, Lord, for I can see the final glorius triumph day to break!
The dawn already gilds the-eastern sky, Oh Church of Christ, arise! awake, awake!
Oh stir us Lord, as heralds of that day, For night is past — — our King is on His way!

H. G. Classen.

Yule Tree Precautions

Christmas trees, a symbol of gaiety and happiness, too often become a mass of flames and a symbol of disaster, warns the All Canada Insurance Federation.

Tree, decorations, and special Christmas costumes should all be chosen with special care and protected from fire. The federation, which represents more than 250 Canadian fire, automobile and casualty insurance companies, makes these recommendations for safety in the home during the Christmas season:

- Keep the base of the tree in a container of water; the water will be absorbed and keep the tree moist.
- Keep trees away from stoves, heaters and fireplaces.
- Use good quality electric lights on the tree, not candles.
- Check your lights for any defects which might cause short circuits.
- Be sure that Christmas lights do not overload the electrical circuits in your home.
- Keep papers, gifts and other inflammable articles away from the

base of the tree until Christmas Eve.

- Always turn out electric tree lights when room is unoccupied.

On the Horizon

GERMAN CHRISTMAS PROGRAMS of the Manitoba Mennonite Schools shall be heard over radio station CFAM every Sunday from 6:30 — 7:00 p.m. in December of 1959.

December 27-29. — Annual Bible Conference in the Elmwood M.B. church. Speakers: H. H. Janzen, J. A. Toews, F. C. Peters, and David Ewert.

January 10. — Centennial Sunday of the Mennonite Brethren Church.

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The Little Green Tree

(Continued from page 6-4)

"Thank you, boy!" Mr. Harrison said loudly. "Just a minute, I'll give you half a dollar for your trouble."

He slipped inside. He must have touched a switch, for suddenly the garden was lit with brilliant white light. Tony saw a man straighten, blinking. The light caught the saw in the other young fellow's hand. They gave a startled exclamation, dropped the saw and made off on a run.

"I'll have the police after them!" Harrison barked. "What were they doing here?"

"Maybe they just wanted it for a Christmas tree," Tony said. "Like I did. And it's no wonder. It would make such a grand Christmas tree." He stopped.

"A Christmas tree?" the old man repeated, looking perplexed.

"Yes," Tony said, hesitantly. "It's so pretty, it seems a shame it isn't lit with colored lights instead of standing there all alone on Christmas Eve in the dark."

"Yes, it does look like a Christmas tree," Mr. Harrison said slowly. "But I've forgotten all about Christmas." Then—"Do you have a

tree waiting for you when you get home?" he asked.

Tony shook his head. "We've never had a tree. But maybe we will, some day. I wish I could bring Marcia to see this little green tree." And, he found himself telling Mr. Harrison about Marcia who couldn't go outside and see all the houses with their pretty trees, and all the things for Christmas, because she had been ill with rheumatic fever . . . and how he'd wished he could have a little tree just for her.

"The old man listened sympathetically, but when Tony finished he turned on his heel.

"You're young. You've plenty of time for Christmas trees," he said. "Now run along. Oh, here." He slipped a fifty cent piece into Tony's hand.

"Thank you, sir." Now he would be able to buy some nuts and candies for Marcia's stocking, hanging there by the end of her bed. Then he remembered.

"Merry Christmas, Mr. Harrison."

"I've had all my merry Christmasses, son. I've come to the end of life, I don't think about Christmas any more."

"But that's where you're wrong, sir," Tony said. "The gift of God is eternal life, the Bible says, and when you have God's Christmas gift, you never come to the end of it!"

The old man had turned away and slowly closed the door. Tony ran down the path into the street. Now he could buy the extra things for Marcia, and for Mom. But he felt a little sad inside. He wished old Mr. Harrison could be happy about Christmas too.

Marcia was asleep when he got home. His mother was moving quietly about the room, preparing the little things they would have for the next day's celebration. Tony threw his bag into the corner, washed his face and hands. His mother took down the cocoa tin to make him a hot drink.

"Tired, son?" she asked. Tony started to tell her about the evening's adventures, when suddenly there was a loud knocking at the door. He went across the room and opened it. A man stood there, in chauffeur's uniform and cap.

"Tony Turner?"

"Yes . . .? Oh! You mean you want me . . .?"

"Nothing would do but I go out there and chop it down and bring it here. Where do you want it put?" The man stooped down and picked up a green wooden tub. In it, soft and thick and green, was a tree! Its fragrance already was filling the room. "The box there has the old decorations they used before . . . his daughter died . . ."

"You mean . . .?"

"Yeah, Mr. Harrison." He jerked his head in the direction of the Harrison property. "He said to give you this."

When the man was gone Tony opened the envelope.

"Thank you for wishing me a Merry Christmas. Maybe I won't be here next Christmas, so I want you to have the tree now. And I want you to know that this Christmas I've accepted God's gift, eternal life, through His Son. God bless you."

Tony stood there for a minute, looking at the tree. Then he opened the cardboard box, took out the tinsel, tarnished but still glittering, the big, colored balls, a tiny doll dressed like a fairy. They were old-fashioned things, not like the Christmas decorations Tony had seen in the store windows this year, but they were lovely. He'd put them on the tree, so that when Marcia woke up in the morning . . .

He glanced toward the bed. Marcia's brown eyes were open, and she was smiling.

"I dreamt we had a tree after all!" she said, and the eyes closed wearily.

Tony smiled. "Go to sleep, Marcia. Who knows—maybe in the morning your dream will come true!"

M. A. Clark.



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Prayer Program

(Continued from page 8-4)

3. Have we encouraged our teachers sufficiently, so that they would feel themselves a vital part of the teaching force of the Church and be challenged to greater sacrifice for the cause of Christ?

Rededication

Knowing, then, that our schools act as a link between the past and the future in that they interpret the wisdom of the past for a preparation for the future, let us give ourselves wholeheartedly this day to:

1. Greater prayer support and more sacrificial giving for our schools.

2. An active participation in the planning of a program of education for the future, realizing that much depends on the training of our youth and the outlook on life which they receive in our schools.

3. A biblical frame of reference in our training program, knowing full well that many denominations have experienced inroads of liberalism by way of their schools.

Raising the Spiritual Standard of Our Private Schools

By Jake Isaac

No one will deny that certain shortcomings exist within our private schools. We all lament the fact that the spiritual standard among our students is not higher than it is. The fact that a goodly number of the professing Christians show very little spiritual interest, not to mention spiritual growth, is a grave

concern to all of us. It grieves us also when we become aware of the defection of some students upon leaving the school. That some of these are those who were seemingly staunch supporters of the faith while at school is especially disquieting. In view of this, what can we do to raise the spiritual standard of our schools? And what will make the spiritual experiences of our students more vital and more permanent?

In our discussion, the opinion was expressed and was quite generally supported that the failure to meet the standards set was not necessarily the fault of the school only. The group thereby was not trying to "wash its hands" of the observed deficiencies and defections nor to minimize its responsibility toward the spiritual tenor of the school. A realistic appraisal, however, shows that the school is only a part of the setting for the lives of our young people, that within the school itself there is an environment which can be adjusted only in part by teacher action and policy, and that the home, the church, and the community constitute very important aspects of the environment of our students. Again, one might say that it is not realistic to expect to win and to hold all students. Christ Himself in His ministry experienced desertions again and again.

The problem, however, remains: Though we may not gain all, we want to gain as many as we can. What should we do, how should we proceed to be most effective in this respect? The group had the following suggestions as a stimulus to further discussion.

It was felt that teachers should make a conscious effort to get students to think for themselves, so that they will be in a position to "stand on their own feet" intellectually when it becomes necessary to do so. Several factors seem to indicate the need for such a procedure. Some young people seem to become Christians merely because their parents are Christians and expect them to follow in their faith. Such individuals, when asked, really don't know why they are Christians. Others accept this "way of life" because it is the acceptable thing to do. They are in the crowd and they want to be of the crowd, so they accept the religion of the crowd. Still others, because of lack of pressure for or against the Christian faith, find it so easy to coast along without ever really coming to grips in mind and heart with the truths they say they have accepted. For all those groups, it becomes essential for us to provide the necessary stimulation toward an active acceptance of the truths of the Scriptures.

The question as to the proper treatment of the individual was raised, but no decision was reached in this respect. Are we being too hesitant in approaching, counseling, reprimanding, and so forth, in spiritual matters? Are we being too disciplinary or not disciplinary enough in dealing with problems primarily spiritual in nature? Is our concern in trying to win the students, yet not to offend or to spurn, making us too soft and tolerant at times, with the result that we are not always consistent? In other words, do we have the tendency to overlook some things which we should be dealing with?

One aspect of the spiritual activity within the school merits special attention. What are Mennonite schools doing to make the weekly devotional period effective? Can we combine methods or change them to make them more effective?

The Yarrow teachers have found that bringing in outside speakers—representatives of various professions, phases, or even religious denominations—has had a stimulating and otherwise wholesome effect. Not only do the students become acquainted with various aspects of Christian work, but they also meet new personalities, from whom they can learn many things. This practice appears to provide broadening and enriching experiences for our young people. We, in Yarrow, have a special problem in all of our united efforts in devotions, namely, the wide range in the ages of the participants (Grades 6 to 12) with a corresponding spread in ability to comprehend, acquire, and apply. It is hardly feasible for us to divide the larger group into two smaller but more homogeneous groups.

(To be concluded)

Meetings at Niverville

Niverville, Man. — The Holy Spirit has once again moved among us in a special way during the last two weeks.

German evangelistic meetings were held in the General Conference church November 23 to 27. The speaker was Rev. A. G. Neufeld of Ninga. Then on November 30 to December 4, Low German evangelistic meetings were conducted in the Chortitza church. These were led by Rev. John D. Friesen of Saskatoon. During both of these campaigns the buildings were filled to capacity.

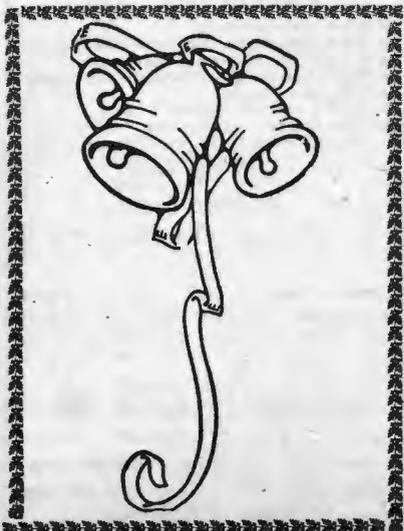
God moved visibly among us. Many were convinced of their sinful condition and accepted Christ as their Saviour. Jesus truly has full atonement for us sinners. May the newly converted children of God grow spiritually and testify of their new life.

In the M. B. church, Rev. J. A. Toews expounded the first five letters to the Asiatic churches (Rev. 2:1—3:6) from December 4 to 6.

Rev. Toews very capably tried to show that all of those letters were also meant for the Christian church of today. It was made very clear that true believers must continually cleanse themselves from evil and live a holy, consecrated life acceptable to God. Only then will we be found worthy to look upon God's face some day.

May God's richest blessings be with all three of these servants of the Lord as they continue to labour in His vineyard.

Walter Foth.



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MCC Christmas Greetings

At Yuletide, the MCC family is appreciative of worldwide opportunities to serve because of Christ. To each of you, partners through giving and praying, we gratefully acknowledge that we are workers together with God. Our seasonal greetings are well expressed by James Wallingford: "Christmas is not a day or a season, but a condition of heart and mind. If we love our neighbors as ourselves; if in our riches we are poor in spirit and in our poverty we are rich in grace; if our charity vaunteth not itself, but suffereth long and is kind; if

when our brother asks for a loaf we give ourselves instead; then every day is Christ's day and Christmas is always near."

Paraguay

US Ambassador Visits Chaco

On Nov. 27-28 the recently appointed US ambassador to Paraguay, Harry Stimpson Jr., visited the Chaco to acquaint himself with the area. Ambassador Stimpson, along with MCC workers Robert Unruh (from the MCC experimental farm), John Schmidt (a medical

doctor in the Leprosy Project) and Frank Wiens (MCC Director for South America) and representatives from the Mennonite colonies, visited Filadelfia, the largest city in the Fernheim colony.

"The Ambassador said," reported Wiens, "that he was highly pleased with his visit and believes the Mennonites with their integrity will come through successfully."

MCC personal and Oberschulz Wall, Peter Neufeld and Andres Balzer from the colonies met and greeted the Ambassador and his party at the airport in Filadelfia. After a brief discussion the group visited a school, a cooperative, an industry, a private store, a privately operated tinsmith, the Indian Mission, the MCC experimental farm and the north end of the Trans-Chaco road project where Williams Company is now working.

Upon arrival in the Chaco, Betty Unruh (daughter of the Robert Unruhs, Bloomfield, Mont.) presented the Ambassadors wife with a bouquet of roses.

Akron

1959 Shipments Enter 20 Countries

Medical supplies, a garden tractor, station wagons, flour, clothing, milk and soap, plus many more items, were included in MCC relief shipments during the past year. Twenty countries in the Far and Near East, Europe and in South America were the receivers of more than six million pounds of goods—goods which were needed for MCC personnel, for the relief feeding and clothing programs or for development projects.

Over half of the shipments were comprised of the government surplus supplies of milk, rice, corn, cornmeal and flour. Of the nearly five million pounds of surplus sent overseas, flour made up approximately three million pounds, milk

600,000, cornmeal 550,000, rice 480,000 and corn 168,000. The Far East countries of Vietnam, Korea and Hong Kong received about half of the surplus shipments.

Among the variety of items shipped, four vehicles were sent to two areas to ease transportation problems. Station wagons were sent to Indonesia and Korea; Paraguay received two trucks. In addition to shipments to meet direct program needs, the 1959 shipments included personal materials to help facilitate good living conditions for MCC workers.

An estimated value of the year's shipments totals over one million dollars, according to John Hostetler, material aid administrator.

Change of Address

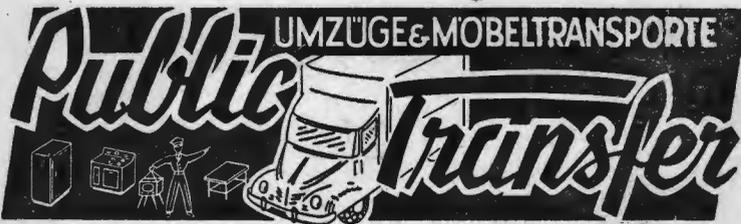
Rev. and Mrs. Jake H. Friesen
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Present address: Box 759, Terrace, B.C.

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Former address: 1617 — 15th Ave., Regina, Sask.
Present address: 2426 Harvey St., Regina, Sask.

Announcement

Please address all correspondence in regard to the Mennonite Brethren Church at Linden, Alberta to Rev. W. E. Thiessen, Box 153, Linden, Alberta. Rev. Thiessen is the present pastor of this church.

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and a Blessed New Year



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