

HISTORY OF THE
KINGMAN MENNONITE CHURCH

written by
Willard M. Voran

1979

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Jacob L. Goering - Zion History
Mrs. Delmar Voran - K.W.M.O. Report
Lelo Albrecht - Lollipop House Report
Myron Schrag - Term Paper, names and dates on page 13
A.E. Kaufman - Ordination of Erwin Albrecht
Elmer Krehbiel
W.C. Voran

PROLOGUE

The beginnings of the Kingman Mennonite Church have been a progression from idea to reality. A multitude of things have been involved in the progression: joint church services, discussions, prayer --- much prayer and heart searching.

The first joint business meeting was held October 29, 1972, at the Bethany Church. A seven-member committee was chosen to explore a joint outreach of the two churches. The Committee --- Ruth Unruh, Terry Schrag, Gary Krehbiel, Ellen Voran, Delmar Voran, Mel Siemens, Harvey Graber met six times. Their proposal was: for the combined purpose of assuring that there be a Mennonite Church in the Kingman area and to strengthen its out-reach. The committee moved unanimously that the Bethany and Zion Churches unite and organize the Kingman Mennonite Church and a day care center for a local community service and out-reach.

At a joint business meeting, January 28, 1973, the proposal was accepted. A second committee --- Menno Doerksen, Mel Siemens, Elmer Jantzen, Harvey Graber, Lois Schrag, Ellis Flickner, and Lelo Albrecht was elected to implement the merger.

The first Sunday we worshipped together as a group was May 6, 1973.

Incorporation papers for the Kingman Mennonite Church were filed in Topeka on December 14, 1973, and in the Register of Deeds Office in Kingman on January 3, 1974.

The former Zion Mennonite Church at 450 Ave. A East was renovated into the day care facility named "Lollipop House."

We remember the past with gratitude and anticipate the future with high hopes.

The organization of Lollipop House began with the election of seven board members on May 27, 1973. Those elected were: Elmer Jantzen, Menno Doerksen,

Mrs. Joyce Krehbiel, Mrs. Jeanette Stucky, Mrs. Ellen Voran, Mrs. Sharon (Everett) Flickner, and Delmar Voran.

The organization was incorporated on August 4, 1973. A dedication service was held on October 7, and the first day of operation was October 8, 1973, with Miss Prisca Wiens as Director.

A public open house was held on November 18, 1973.

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INTRODUCTION

"Expectations are sometimes greater than realization." While the children of Israel were suffering hardships in the desert on their way to the promised land, they sometimes forgot their lot as slaves from which they had been delivered. In moments of nostalgia they yearned for the watermelons, the cucumbers, and the onions of which they ate in Egypt. Drawing an analogy at this point, I cannot help but wonder what thoughts of regret must have entered the minds of our forefathers when; after their arduous journey of thousands of miles to the end of the rainbow they found themselves in the wide open spaces of the Kansas plains.

During the depression in the "Dirty Thirties," sixty years after the migration, I overheard two immigrant fathers discussing conditions as they were in America when one made the observation; "It never was this bad, even in Russia."

"If there is a reason for the way in which things happen, there should also be a purpose in it." Surely it was not by mere chance that Israel found herself as slaves in Egypt; nor that our forefathers came to America as pioneers; but God's leading in both instances for they were to retain their identity by avoiding integration until they grew in numbers sufficient to make their presence felt in the world around them.

"Much water has passed under the bridge since 1874." First hand knowledge of how things happened and what life was really like then is no more available. Legends grow with time so the real struggles and heartaches of our parents are now, for the most part, happily forgotten. Only the better remains. While reflection of the past is good, let us guard against overdoses of nostalgia; for as time often heals wounds so legends distort facts and tend to take the place of history.

The "Good Old Days" still visualized by some

today as being so wonderful, were in reality not so wonderful; nor could any who remember them be bought to relive them.

Few who review events long past were eye witnesses to all they propose. Most rely on existing sources to fill the missing gaps. One has only to read histories of war in order to see that true objectivity and total neutrality seems all but impossible. It follows then that accounts written on a like subject too are accurate only to a degree. The dates appearing in this writing may be only approximate; but assuming that it is more important to know that water may be too deep to wade than to know the exact depth in feet and inches, I have made no attempt at striving at perfection.

OUR BEGINNING -- 1886-1907

All Swiss Mennonite Churches in Kansas trace their roots to the original Hoffnungsfield Church in McPherson County, Kansas. The congregation was organized in 1880. The church building which is still being used today was erected on Railroad Land in 1882.

The entire congregation consisted of like faith having a rural background. The land surrounding the immigrant house in which they lived a communal life was quickly taken up by the more affluent; which induced the younger generation and those of more modest means to seek new horizons elsewhere.

This search for cheaper land motivated the proliferation of Mennonite settlements and the establishing of new churches, some in other counties many miles from Hopefield.

Some time before 1886, the Peter Goering (German spelling) family, had brought a knowledge of the milling industry with them from Russia and found promising possibilities in a bend of the Ninnescah River approximately two miles south-west of New Murdock. As early as 1886, this family was already living on the banks of the Ninnescah. They were the first of the Mennonite influx which was to follow in 1900.

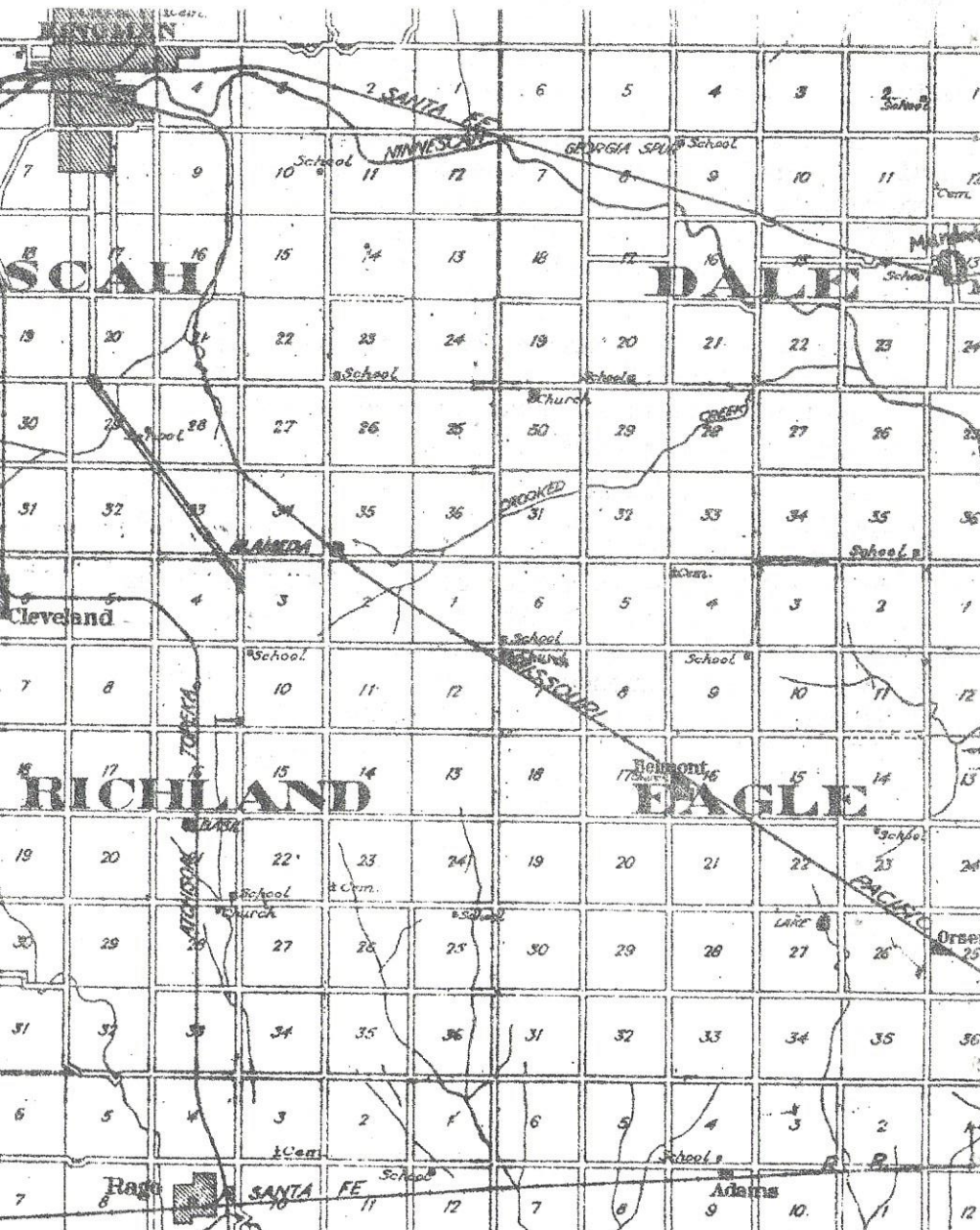
LOCATION OF THE SETTLEMENT

In 1900, the families of John and Christian Albrecht, John and Jacob Flickinger, John Flickner, Peter C. Kaufman, Andrew Schwartz, Joe and Peter Stucky, Peter J. Stucky, John Saner, Carl Preheim, George and Peter Kopper and Jacob Zerger, all from the Pretty Prairie area settled in the New Murdock area. With the help of these new arrivals a mill race was dug from the afore mentioned bend in the river to a point where an old-fashioned water-driven mill was later built. This venture proved to be a worth-while undertaking and served the community for (X) number of years. *1

In 1905, there were about 15 Mennonite families living in the New Murdock area who were still members of the Pretty Prairie Church. Since these were still the horse and buggy days distance and transportation generally created a real problem. The alternative was to hold group services in what was then the Pleasant Hill school house located a mile east of where the first church was later located. Whenever possible a pastor from the Pretty Prairie Church assisted in the services. When there was no pastor present the services consisted mostly of Sunday School and prayer. *2

In 1906, the families of Jacob J. Voran Sr., Mrs. Peter J. Voran, Jacob J. Voran II, Andrew J. Voran and Andrew Schroeder from Edwards County, and C.J. Voran, P.D. Schrag and Jacob Kaufman from McPherson County, and J.P. Krehbiel of Pretty Prairie settled in and around the Belmont, Cleveland and Alameda area. *3 The Mennonite community in Kingman County was now roughly bounded by the Ninnescah River on the north, the Missouri Pacific Railroad on the south, and extended in a north-easterly by south-westerly direction from New Murdock to where the little town of Alameda, or Julia once stood. The Sand Creek,

*1 and *2 - Church Book No. 1, P. 7. *3 - The latter 4 may have arrived in early 1907.



earlier known as Crooked Creek with it's source rising about a mile southeast of Alameda, and running in a north-easterly direction confluent with the river at the present Mennonite retreat grounds cut the settlement in half.

A common misconception among some today could be that the area I have just described was in reality a prairie, no-man's land when our forefathers arrived and were the first to settle here. This is not the true picture for there were probably as many, or more Non-Mennonite families living in the area then as there are Mennonites today. * 1

The Greenwood and Murdock township cemeteries, as well as the many keel rock foundations under older buildings, and hand-dug wells all bear mute witness that many of these existing homesteads were likely taken up by soldiers after being discharged from service during the Civil War.

The "Dutchmen" paid a fair price for whatever land they bought. Non-Mennonites not being particularly interested in being surrounded by them as neighbors saw an opportunity to make a profit on their holdings sold and moved elsewhere.

Those who settled in the area in 1900 lived on the north side of the Sand Creek; those who came in 1906 and later on the South, but all Mennonites in Kingman County were being identified by other Mennonite groups as being "Murdockers."

* 1 - Even now old timers refer to specific places as the Albrecht Ranch, the Litchfield 80, the Bobst Place, the Gilbert Place or the Kopper Place. Others were Yeoman, Pro, Cappis, Dellenbaugh, Young, Johnson, Vandolah and others, and all lived on the south side of the Sand Creek. A few of those living on the north side were Kelly, Keeler, Snyder, Stone, Leiford and Burrows.

LANGUAGE

At this time there were still a goodly number of those who made the migration from Russia among us who had little or no knowledge of the English language. They came from a land whose language they hardly knew, for in their ethnic seclusion they spoke only the German language even in Russia. Upon settling in America they continued to use the German language and among the older folks relatively little effort was ever made to learn the English language. Therefore; upon entering a new life in yet a strange land and having some first-hand knowledge of a mild form of persecution by Russian soldiers, they were in fear of losing themselves one from another and were therefore determined to stay together and retain their identity not only as Christians but as (German) Mennonites.

ORGANIZATION - 1906-07

With about twenty-three families now living in close proximity gatherings held in the Pleasant Hill School house somehow lost their appeal. The logical solution was to organize and build a local church building. So it was that a number of organizational meetings were held for the purpose of determining how best to proceed. The first of these meetings was held on March 20, 1906. Nineteen men were present. First of all the wisdom of attempting to build was discussed, after which a standing vote was taken to determine where each one stood concerning the matter. 16 voted in favor, 3 were opposed. *1

A call was to be given to Rev. C.J. Voran, who was then an associate pastor at Hopefield to become pastor of the newly organized church at New-Murdock.

Meanwhile, two men were chosen to arrange for and oversee worship services until a residential pastor could be procured who would then inherit their duties.

Rev. C.J. Voran accepted the call as pastor but

*1 - German Record Book No. 1

had not yet arrived. Another meeting was called at which three men were chosen to lead Sunday School and prayer meetings.

It appears that by January of 1907 the need for a church in the community was being keenly felt. At a meeting on January 17, 1907, the location of such a building was agreed upon which was a four-acre plot located in the N.E. corner of the N.W. 1/4 of Sec. 30-28-6 in Dale Township. This was the approximate center of the community, situated 4 miles south from Hwy. 54 in Kingman and 5 1/2 miles east. This land was then owned by Peter A. Schwartz who donated it to the group to be used as the church site and adjoining cemetery.

Mrs. Jacob J. Voran Sr. was the first to be buried here in 1907. (See App.-page 42)

A meeting held on Feb. 1, 1907, was for the most part a continuation of discussing matters of financial nature. On Feb. 11 it was decided to start building with whatever funds were already available. All the above mentioned meetings were opened and closed with prayer.

By this time it had already been decided that the church building was to be a simple 32 x 40 foot frame structure which was to be built for an estimated \$1,186.00. The final cost was \$2,000.00.

Having come this far, we now take leave of our German Record Book No. 1. The die was cast; there was left but to build the church. So it was that on a certain day lumber and supplies sufficient to erect the shell of the church were loaded on a caravan of horse-drawn wagons and transported to the building site, sometimes over stretches of trails that were serving as roads for another 21 years before being graded.

BUILDING AND DEDICATION

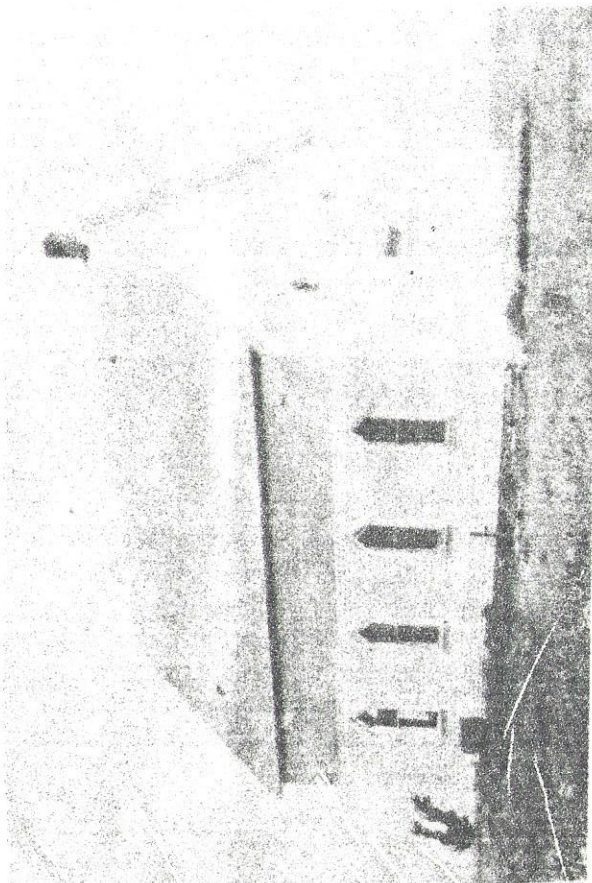
Mennonites have always been known as an industrious people often praised by some for their seeming ability to make things happen; while being cursed by others because of it. No doubt circumstances and environment had much to do with teaching them to help and share with one-another---for the most part without compensation and with the assurance that should they need assistance they too would receive it in the same spirit in which they gave it.

Pioneers were of necessity "Jacks of all Trades," but some were also masters at their own. Home-made furniture that would grace the better homes of today gives evidence of their craftsmanship.

There was little equipment to be had before the machine age of the "Roaring Twenties," therefore the church was 6 months in building. On June of 1907, the Bethany Church stood as a familiar landmark, "On the Hill," where it could be seen for miles and was often used as a reference point when giving direction to other places not too far distant. *1

Although I have faint memory of the church being built, obviously I cannot recall details other than the fact that Father was gone from home so much of the time that the family made a trip or two to the site. In those days cameras were a luxury. A picture of the church under construction is probably nonexistent, and to elaborate on its interior arrangement could be superfluous.

*1 - The shelter belts which now restrict view, were planted as a Public Works Project during the "Great Depression" of 1929 through 1935. Although the church was built in 1907; it was not painted until 1915. The building was reshingled in 1927. The janitor served for \$40 a year. (Record Book No. 1)



Bethany Church - 1907

THE MOOD OF THE PEOPLE

Church services were being held in much the same way as custom dictated in Russia. Men sat on one side of the center isle and women on the other. There were no adult integrated Sunday School classes and segregated seating persisted for the next 65 years.

There was no musical instrument in the church and all was German.

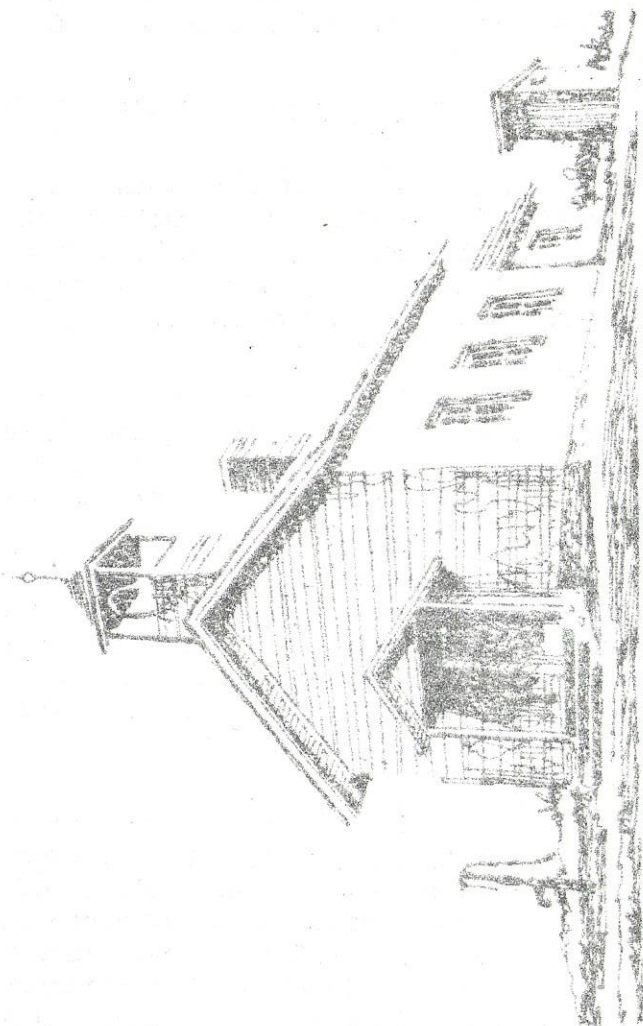
Grievances and complaints of all kinds were frankly and freely aired during "Bruderschaft" (business meetings) for the church to judge and if possible settle. Disobedient members were admonished, put on probation, or if the situation warranted - excommunicated.

As early as Dec. 1, 1908, there was a motion made to purchase an organ for use in the church but the motion was voted down. Although the subject came up time and again it was tabled for 6 years before an organ was allowed in the church.

Regular church attendance of all members was expected. The church secretary kept a record of all member's attendance which was read to the congregation 4 times a year. All who missed church were asked to give their reason for being absent. The secretary then decided whether their reason was valid or without excuse.

For about 12 years the growth of the church was limited to births within the fellowship. However, in about 1909, the families of Mrs. John Flickner of McPherson County, Kansas, Chris Stucky of South Dakota, and Andrew Voran of Meade County moved into the community and joined the fellowship. The Flickners lived near Spivey, Chris Stucky near Murdock and Andrew Voran near Basil.

Probably because most were farmers and government red tape had not yet been invented, little need for education beyond the grades was being felt. If



School

my memory serves me correctly, only 5 of our young people ever attended High School even as late as 1910. * 1

Today with so many High School graduates hardly able to read or write and many professional people out of work and on relief because they refuse to do work below their dignity, we may have come full circle. In many large schools the basics have been neglected resulting in education that is inferior to that received in the one-room schools of 75 years ago.

In the period between 1915 and 1920, another group was added to the community. This group came from Oklahoma, where in Caddo County, they had a small fellowship of their own. J.J. Kaufman was serving there as pastor and although he was probably one of the first to settle in Oklahoma Territory, having taken part in the 1893 land rush for the Cherokee strip, his family was the first to leave arriving here in 1915. Dan Schwartz came in 1916, Gideon Albrecht in 1918, Jake Schwartz in 1919, Christian Albrecht and Ben Albrecht in 1918, P.R. Kaufman and John Zerger came in 1920.

The church now had a membership of 209 and as all lived in the community they made a point of attending church regularly.

Even as the children of Israel grew to become a nation under Joseph's protection in the land of Goshen in Egypt, so the Bethany Church, because of the language barrier, grew in the shadow of the church; as proposed in her original purpose set forth in the first paragraph of her first constitution in 1907. "To better build upon our most Holy Faith and to train our youth for the Lord."

Although a noble purpose indeed you may have

* 1 - Hulda, Elizabeth, Chris and Fred Voran, and Helen Goering Brown. I acknowledge the Church Record Book, Myron Schrag's research paper, my father, J.J. Voran and Henry Kaufman for letters to Myron Schrag for some of the names and dates.

noticed the absence of any form of intake or output whatever.

It is at this point that in my mind's eye I see the curtain decending upon what I have earlier referred to as the first stage of our development, with its purpose also earlier stated at least partially accomplished. We had survived, grew in numbers, and had retained our identity, in spite of our differences among ourselves and our reserved attitude towards our Non-Mennonite neighbors. I cannot help but believe they too benefited because of our presence. (From theme - Has the Bethany Church Served Her Purpose?)

One might ask, "Why did those who came to America as a close ethnic group become so isolated of one another only to regroup later?" Those who came to Kingman County from the Pretty Prairie area came primarily because of economic reasons. They prospered and remained to become a permanent settlement. Those who came from Edwards, Kearny and Meade Counties in Kansas and Caddo County, Oklahoma left their former localities for economic reasons, however their real purpose for returning to Kingman County was more social than economic. They left in the first place to "Find their Places in the Sun" and establish a home in which to rear their children. Once the children were grown and wished to marry they found themselves in the same situation as Isaac of Bible times; for the few they were associating with in their isolated state were closely related.

Their inherent ethnic mating call brought the "Birds of a Feather back Together."

THE WARS - 1914-18

The ominous war clouds that were hanging over all of Europe in 1913 were soon to envelop the entire world. The dread, if not fear, of war was everywhere. It was the center of every conversation. When war was declared in 1914, people were not psychologically prepared for the shock wave that was

felt throughout the entire nation. For the younger generation it was the first real tragedy of their lives.

Forty years earlier our people left Russia in order to avoid the very situation they would now be facing should the United States become involved, and now there was no place to go nor was there any thought of doing so.

"What you fear most usually happens," so without any more introduction or detail to a story we know so well I simply say "The Enevitale Happened," not as hoped for nor expected, but as we feared it would.

By the time the United States entered the war in 1917, all that was German was being frowned upon and probably not without cause. Germany was to many of us then what Ireland is still to the Irish today. German text books, such as "Geschichte und Sage" extolled the German Kaisers and their generals while singing the beauty of the Rhine and guarding the secrets of medievil castles on its banks.

In the innocence of my youth I thought of Germany as the promised land where all was not only German but Mennonite as well.

It is true that our German-Vacation Schools were being monitored, but contrary to other accounts I have read, I do not remember them being closed "By Civil Authority," but voluntarily closed in 1917 in order to avoid giving offense. However, the German continued to be used during church services and was never changed. * 1

No local Mennonite was ever in serious trouble relative to the war; but mail was illegally opened and a rumor persisted that the Ku-Klux-Klan had infiltrated the area and induced certain "Overzealous"

* 1 - The German School house spoken of here was a single room taken from the old house located on the Litchfield 80. It was moved to the southeast corner of Joe P. Krehbiel's pasture where it met its demise.

Non-Mennonite members of the community to act as "Watch Dogs" over German activities in Kingman County. At first the idea seemed at bit absurd. Later evidence proved this so called rumor to be more truth than fiction.

Eight of our young men were drafted into the army still holding to their non-combatant principals. They were assigned to duties other than serving in the infantry and all were honorably discharged.

WORLD WAR II - 1941-46

Although I received letters from the front during this period I admit having little or no real information relative to the general attitude of our people toward military service. However, one source lists 18 of our young men as having served in the armed forces. * 1 I take this figure to include all Mennonite inductees in Kingman County.

Obviously the C.O. position had erroded to where it was unenforcable and was then relegated to a matter of the individual conscience.

Of those who went as regulars only one rose through the ranks to Major. Two were presented the Purple Heart, one died in action while another continued to serve the Government in other capacities for many years while in the Orient. He is presently stationed in Washington D.C.

THE RUPTURE IN 1929

For 18 years Rev. C.J. Voran gave sacrificially of himself to the church. For the most part he received no pay never more than \$300.00 a year and that for only the last 2 or 3 years.

REV. SOLOMON MOUTTET - 1925-31 - Our first salaried, college-educated pastor was Rev. Solomon Mouttet of Inola, Oklahoma. He was a graduate of Bethel

* 1 - After World War II, most young men again served their military obligations in I.W. or Voluntary Service while others chose the army.

College and brought about the use of the English language in Bible study and catechismal instruction.

Probably because our people were never over enthusiastic about Bethel College some of Rev. Mouttet's fresher input was construed as being too modern and was not quite in line with what the congregation was thinking.

However; the general mood of the people seemed to be one of comparative contentment. They went about their own business of making a living, yet no one family was entirely self-sufficient, so all relied heavily upon their neighbors. "Familiarities Breed Contempt," so it was that friction, however negligible, arose over a variety of matters: over fences, tree rows, wages, Sunday work, and whether or not to continue the ordinance of foot washing in the church.

At first these things caused no great stir, "But Where there is Smoke, there is Fire." No one is perfect as the tongue, though a small member of the body is capable of setting a great fire," so a disagreement among neighbors even over negligible things, becomes a family affair which leads to factions within the church. When the church failed to bring about reconciliation, and meditation from the conference was not forthcoming the courts stepped in. When this happened the cloak of religious piety fell and the lack of spiritual maturity was clearly revealed. This was the point of "No Return" for "A brother offended is harder to win than a walled city."

For 22 years Bethany was the only Mennonite Church in Kingman County. Now approximately 12 families withdrew their memberships, relinquishing all duties and responsibilities to the church; while still retaining their rights to the cemetery. Subsequently the Zion Church was born.

It is to no one's credit that for (X) number of years these two churches "Plowed the same seas while passing one another like ships in the dark." Our

crucial years had begun.

The following is a short account of the Zion Mennonite Church Activities as written by Jacob L. Goering.

ZION MENNONITE CHURCH ACTIVITIES

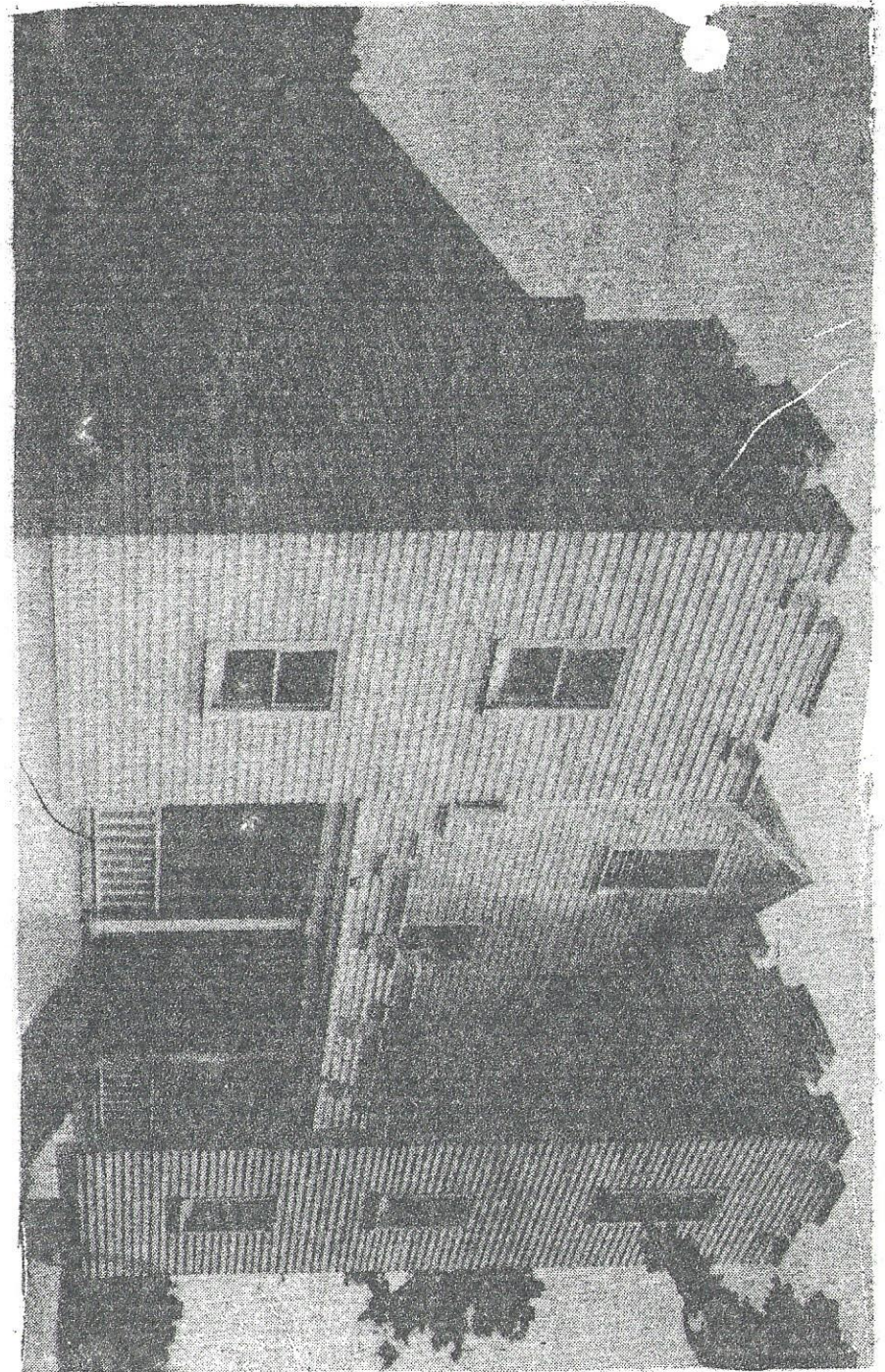
A history of the Kingman Mennonite Church would not be complete without at least a resume of the important activities of the nearly 50 years of the Zion Mennonite Church.

As one of the former members, I resided here since 1930 and became a member in 1942. Therefore, I had a view of the activities both as a member and an observer not belonging to the group from its inception.

We would certainly do violence to all the faithful ministers of the Gospel who served our church during its history if we did not mention them here with honor and blessing.

The list of ministers who served here is a long one due to the fact that we often had, because of limited financial means, student ministers--many of which went on to become real leaders in the ministerial field. The long list of ministers who served here is as follows:

Rev. J.J. Kaufman - 1932-34
Rev. D.B. Ediger - 1934-34
Rev. D.C. Ewert - 1934-35
Rev. J.R. Duerksen - 1935-37
Rev. Theodore Epp - 1938-39
Rev. J.R. Barkman - 1940-41
Rev. Jacob Unruh - 1941-42
Rev. Ben Rahn - 1942-43
Rev. J.H. Epp - 1943-47
Rev. William G. Unrau - 1948-51
Rev. Ramon H. Jantz - 1951-53
Rev. J.J. Voth - 1953-53
Rev. Boyd Bonebrake - 1954-58
Rev. Milton Ewert - 1958-61



Rev. Donovan Unruh - 1961-63
Rev. Kenneth Smoker - 1963-65
Rev. Peter Neufeld - 1965-66
Rev. Herbert Miller - 1967-68
Rev. Sanford King - 1969-73

In reviewing the minutes of the church history, we find that any smaller church body of less than 100 members has its problems of finance. This was also our continuing problem. Then this problem was also compounded, as I remember it, because certain ministers were not conference minded and our support to important causes was often minimized by this divisive influence.

Because of the need for greater salaries for the minister teaching jobs were sought for our resident ministers. Of the list of ministers enumerated, the following were resident here:

Rev. Jacob Unruh, Rev. J.H. Epp,
Rev. Wm. G. Unrau, Rev. Boyd Bonebrake,
Rev. Milton Ewert

The last three resident ministers here enumerated also taught in the public schools.

Owing to the natural attrition due to death, change of residence or occupation and young people leaving the community due to various causes, our number declined. The influx of other younger couples coming into the community with a real loyalty to the Mennonite Church resulted in our church having a new resurgence of church life in the 50's and 60's. We do praise God for them and their meritorious work among us!

In any small church congregation it is necessary for every man, woman and child to fill their niche, do their duty by precept and example, work, pray and pay. We had a liberal number of dedicated, believing Christians who were willing to do what was needed for this church to survive nearly 45 years.

We thank God for the leadership of all the ministers and faithful members who labored here to keep the

faith of our Fathers for this day!

Jacob L. Goering

THE CRUCIAL YEARS BEGINNING WITH 1929
AND THE DEPRESSION

There would be no need denying that things were different now, but "Blood being thicker than Water," the division that had just taken place was for the most part along family lines; so it was not felt as severely as it could have been otherwise. At first things seemed pretty much as "More of the Same." Rev. Mouttet was shepherding what was left of the flock and services continued as usual.

It could be that things were TOO quiet, for in the early morning hours of Aug. 24th., 1930, after a gentle, all-night rain, a solitary bolt of lightning struck the northeast corner of the church throwing splinters of wood as far north as the road. Ironically Aug. 24th. fell on a Sunday.

In spite of the rain it was a hot fire. The building burned quickly and completely. When clean-up operations took place, King Solomon's advice "Not to remove the old land marks" was not heeded, for not only were the concrete steps and porch broken up but the foundation was dug up and hauled away.

Being a collector of sorts myself, I salvaged a glob of yellowish molten metal from the debris which I believe to be the remains of the brass locks to the front door. Today a limestone memorial stands on the church site.

The church sailed troubled seas and weathered violent storms in 1928 and 1929, so the loss of the church building agitated an already difficult situation.

Someone once referred to our Mennonite tendencies to differ within our churches as being "Growing Pains," but unless these pains are dealt with they could get out of hand. Unfortunately not all efforts at resolving differences succeed.

When a church building in a rural area burns because of lightning, little or nothing can be done to prevent it. We are unable to prevent lightning from striking so we call these happenings "Acts of God." If this assumption is correct, then the church was burned by an Act of God.

Whether this was judgment or a test of faith I cannot tell. It could well have been BOTH. "All things serve for better to those who love the Lord," but needless to say this was a low blow to the morale of the congregation. For two reasons: first, because of the loss in membership just previous to this time, and second, because of the depression which was now worsening causing a financial crisis in the nation.

The first loss was numerical as well as spiritual and was critical because of its origin for it came from within and gave evidence of much spiritual immaturity within the church. The second was financial and became very difficult because the depression already existed on the outside.

No more having our own building, worship services were now being held in the then vacant Lutheran Church, located in the northwest section of Kingman. While there, the Sunday School elected Rev. C.J. Voran (then retired) as superintendent, which I now recall as a stabilizing force in the congregation.

By modern standards the first church was a very crude and inexpensive structure. I can understand why those who never knew hard times should have difficulty understanding why the loss of so an inexpensive building should cause any concern at all.

This being a seeming paradox, I find it necessary to say a few words about what times were really like in those days lest some should conclude that things have since been added to and now be a bit exaggerated.

I hasten to say that depression means many things to many people. Not all people were poor during the depression just as not all are wealthy today. The

loss of an inexpensive building did not bring about hard times, it only intensified an already bad situation. The majority of the congregation was already having a hard time of it financially. After the close of the first world war in 1918, the nation's economy slowed down to such an extent that the "Great Depression followed."

In 1929 came the Wall Street crash, one of the darkest days in American financial history. Not many of us live on Wall Street but all were affected. Even those who were not hurt financially had to pretend that THEY WERE in order to KEEP what they had.

Under these conditions the church BURNED. Most families still in the congregation had little or nothing to give towards a new building. It was a question whether to undertake building a new church building NOW, or wait for better times. Some felt should we wait, enthusiasm would wear thin or be lost, in which case the congregation would eventually be dissolved. (As for myself, I feel this would have happened for the depression of the congregation was a very real threat.)

Accordingly by Oct., 1930, plans were drawn for a new building. In Nov., 1930, it was decided to build as quickly as possible to forestall the possibility, if not the real threat, of liquidation of the congregation itself.

Even before the church burned the center of the Mennonite Community had shifted far to the south. There was also the added attraction of better roads at the new location, yet I regret to state that after it was decided to build the present church on its present location, 32 more members asked to be relieved of all duties and responsibilities to the church while still retaining their rights to the cemetery.

Now even individual family ties were being strained and the Bethany Church stood on the very edge of disaster.

Despite all odds the ground-breaking ceremonies took place in March of 1931, and building got underway. A Mr. Dan Unruh was hired as head carpenter and the labor was being donated. Many marveled at the spirit of the people daring to build at this time, and rightly so. History records that about this time, (Here I quote the encyclopedia) "The nation's economy was so depressed as to be compared to panic." To pay for a church NOW meant that some were being asked to make a real sacrifice. Some in this congregation were trying to help build the church while they were actually in the process of losing their own homes. Again I say, not ALL were asked to make this kind of sacrifice.

When the Administration in Washington changed in 1932, drastic measures were taken in order to stem the tide of depression. A bank holiday was called and for several days virtually all banks in the nation were closed. Those that were not solvent were shut down; others were revitalized. The Federal Land Bank was established, which gave thousands throughout the country an opportunity to regain control of their farms.

Many frowned upon the P.W.A. (Public Works Administration.) Some who needed no assistance from the Government saw it as unnecessary, it was not a handout. Rather it was the government's substitute IN the country for the bread and soup lines in the cities.

Gradually confidence was being restored and again I quote the encyclopedia. "At this point the crisis was over." That quotation sounds good, but in reality it was an over-statement, for although the recovery was faster than the decline, the aftermath lingered for many years.

On May 29, 1932, the church was dedicated and ever so slowly the debt was being paid off. I have recalled the past as I saw it from where I stood in the picture. Others more directly involved in financial aspects would no doubt have another story to

tell. Those charged with the over-seeing the actual construction of the building still another, but although seeming discrepancies would probably appear if such reports were made, the over-all picture and the end product would of necessity be much the same.

For the first 30 years, or until 1937, the church records were being kept in the German language. The gradual transition from the mother tongue to the language of the land was being accomplished and our crucial years had come to an end.

At this point I would like to insert a bright spot into the picture.

THE SEWING SOCIETY ORGANIZED - 1931

The Women's Sewing Society was organized at the Solomon Mouttet home in 1931. This organization grew to become the present K.W.M.O. (Kingman Women's Mission Organization) which today is one of the most active and productive organizations of the church having a world outreach by sending relief bundles around the world all "In the name of Christ." Among other things they visit the shut-ins, help with the Mennonite Relief Sales, furnish lunch at local sales, give benefits for Lollipop House, and feed those who happen to be in the area attending funerals. They are to be commended for their efforts and dedication to their cause.

A special report on the activities of the K.W.M.O. will appear later as an appendix to this writing.

DEDICATION OF THE NEW CHURCH BUILDING

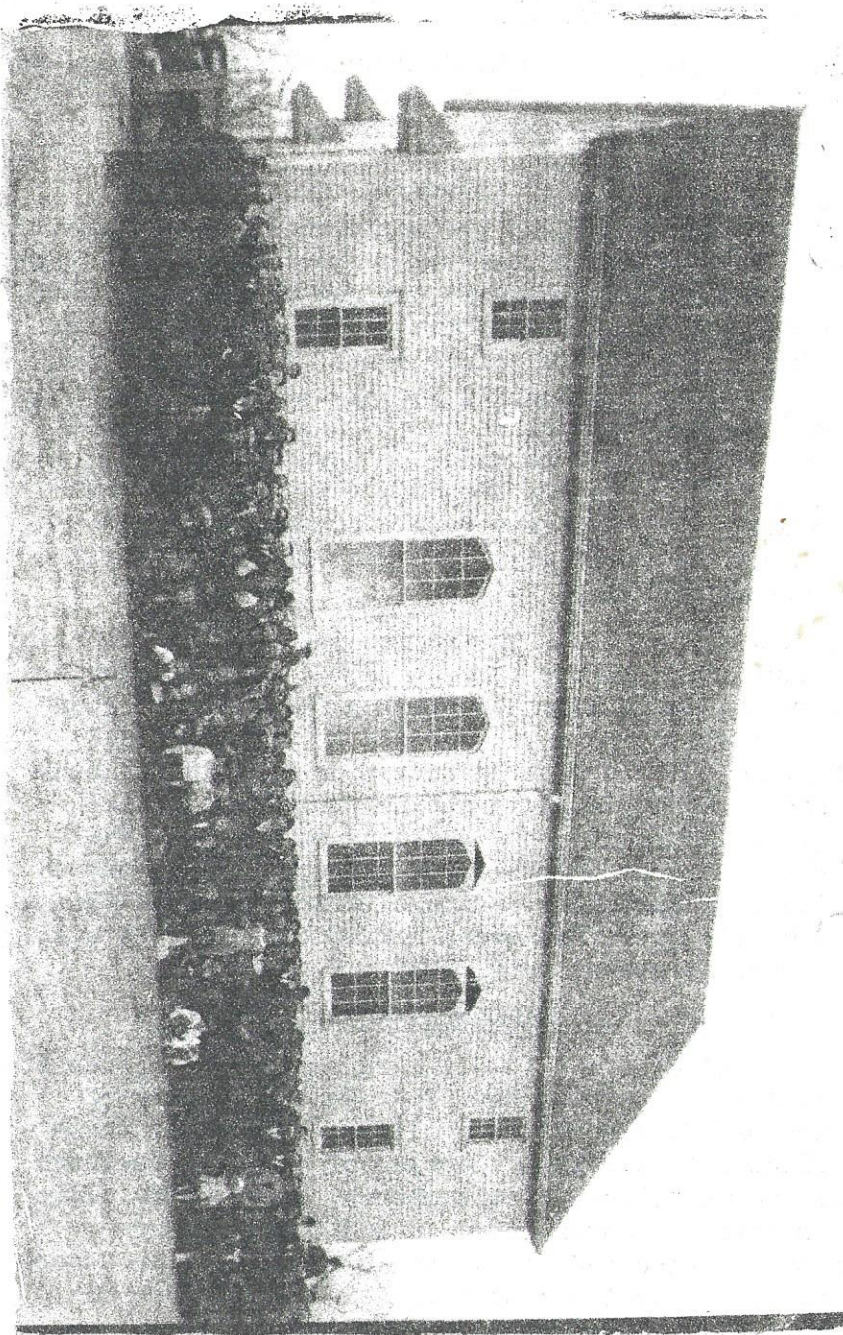
May 29, 1932

Here I quote Rev. C.J. Voran's notes as they appear in the church records. Hundreds of friends gathered for the occasion. Rev. B.F. Jansen presided. Rev. C.J. Voran offered the dedicatory prayer. The principal speakers of the day were Rev. P.P. Wedel, Dr. E.G. Kaufman and Rev. D.D. Eitzen. The male quartet of Bethel College gave several songs and nearly every pastor of the surrounding churches participated



Women's Sewing Society

Bethany Church Dedication



in the afternoon services.

The church was built on Charley Roger's land, who donated it to the congregation for as long as the building was being used as a church.

REV. B.F. JANTZEN - 1932-35

In order to relate events in their proper sequence we must now go back to a previous event. Shortly before the dedication of the new church, Rev. B.F. Jantzen from Turpin, Oklahoma, while passing through Kingman on his way to points north, was somehow very much impressed with our fair city and became convinced it was the Lord's will he should take up residence there. Accordingly he made the move which proved to be a fortunate one for both his family and the congregation. The Jantzens were a conservative family and could therefore affiliate with the churches' financial difficulty.

The family lived in Kingman in a rented house on the south side of the tracks. For a time he operated his own open-air lunch counter on South Main. When asked to serve as pastor, he did so for free-will offerings. For a time he served in the old Lutheran Church in town; later in the new building. Still later he rented an empty building on Main and West Sherman where he bought cream and eggs. The congregation patronized his business venture and all things considered, the arrangement served both parties well. He served as pastor until 1935. * 1

REV. E.J. NEUENSCHWANDER - 1935-45

Sometime before 1935 the church held a series of revival meetings with Rev. E.J. Neuenschwander of McPherson, Kansas, as evangelist. I remember these meetings as the most productive of any such meetings ever in the history of the church; so when Rev. Jantzen's term as pastor ended in 1935, Rev. Neuenschwander was asked to succeed him. Since the Neuenschwanders' had their home in McPherson, where Mrs.

* 1 - Bill Voran

Neuenschwander had a small bake shop and the children were all attending school, he accepted on condition that he be allowed to stay in McPherson and drive the 140 miles, round trip every Sunday instead of moving into the community. This arrangement was agreed to and to the amazement of most everyone the entire family drove the 70 miles from McPherson to Kingman for the next 10 years. They were faithful even beyond the call of duty.

Sometime in 1936, an "ATTEMPT of sorts" was made at reconciliation with the Zion Church, but neither side had their heart in the matter so it was a miserable failure and the doctrine of "Equal but Separate," prevailed for the next 33 years.

It was under Rev. Neuenschwander's leadership that the Christian Workers Programs were started. Few today appreciate what these programs have done for the church for church leadership had traditionally been delegated to the older generations within the church. The younger people had little or no actual experience in taking over duties they would one day be asked to assume. The Christian Worker's Programs furnished this forum of active participation and has been an ongoing addition to our services of immeasurable value, for it has eased the transition of responsibility from one generation to the next.

THE SILENT YEARS - 1945-57

Beginning in about 1945-57 it seems church related events became more quiet, almost uneventful, almost as though we had once again entered an era of complacency. Details seem conspicuously absent and hard to come by. I have searched for a record of events during this period without success, so I can do no better than caption these years as the Silent Years.

This is by no means meant to be a reflection on the Rev. Herbert Miller and Frank Loewen who served during that period, nor on Rev. P.P. Tschetter's first five years of service here. For records are wanting here also. I ask us to remember that the Israelites once "Lost the book of the law" in the temple, so it is altogether possible that we may have lost some of our records.

REV. HERBERT MILLER - 1946-49

Rev. Herbert Miller, a graduate of Bethel College and Mennonite Biblical Seminary came to us from Deer Creek, Oklahoma and became pastor in 1946 serving through 1949. He preferred to preach by faith and relied on free-will offerings of the congregation.

When the family arrived the church had no parsonage. They rented a house situated just south of where the Belmont Co-Op is located, in which the family lived until the church purchased their first parsonage in Kingman. However, this parsonage proved to be inadequate. It was soon sold and a second bought at 322 Ave. A East in its stead. In time the second was also sold and the present parsonage located at 330 E. Washington took its place. In 1949, Rev. Miller left here in order to assume duties as pastor at Grace Hill Church near Newton.

REV. FRANK LOEWEN - 1949-52

In September of 1949, Frank Loewen, a graduate of Moody Bible Institute, became pastor. It was under his leadership that a church library was started. This project has not only survived but increased in popularity ever since.

It was in June of 1952 under Rev. Loewen's tenure that Carl Flickner was ordained as missionary to India.

On April 23, 1952, the Flickners left as missionaries to India where they are still serving an unbroken 27 year term of service.

Although they did not go under the auspices of the Western District, nor the General Conference, the Sunday School has consistently contributed towards their support.

REV. P.P. TSCHETTER - 1952-60

Rev. P.P. Tschetter, a product of Grace Bible Institute and Bethel College, came to us as a much respected and well-known Bible Scholar, who had pastored the Pretty Prairie Church for 10 years and served for the next 8 years.

Although there were no great or significant breakthroughs during these 8 years they spoke well of his acceptance and ability. He exemplified the voice of experience and his efforts among us will not be soon forgotten.

In 1954, the church year books began and there was much talk about kitchen improvements, a water system and a new heating plant.

Near the close of Rev. Tschetter's pastorate several members "Made Waves" that disturbed the placid waters for a time, but to document specific events that were to no one's credit during this or any other period would serve little or no good purpose and should probably be left to perish in the memories of the few who still remember.

REV. PETER NEUFELD - 1960-67

On Oct. 16, 1960, Rev. Peter Neufeld, a graduate of Mennonite Biblical Seminary, took over the pastorate and served for 6 years. Under his leadership church bulletins were introduced and the Bethel Fellowship and Youth Group were organized. While pastor

here he was honored by being nominated for the office of President of Western District Conference. With his help the constitution was revised and adopted in 1965.

The first real attempt on our part at reunion with the Zion Church was made in 1965, when it was agreed by a vote of 61 to 3 to allow Rev. Neufeld to serve both churches in case Zion did not wish to join our services. * 1 Joint communion services were held on Sept. 15, 1965, and although this attempt was not the solution to our problem, it WAS a move in the right direction.

During the winter months of 1965 and 66, the adult Mid-Week Bible Class was being taught by an elected layman, while Rev. Neufeld chose to teach the youth. These meetings were very well attended throughout. * 2

In May of 1965, the J.P. Krehbiel family presented the church with an electric organ as a memorial to Mrs. Joe Krehbiel Sr.

In late 1967, the Neufelds moved to Fairview Park, Ohio, where they continued work in the suburbs of the city under the auspices of the Western District.

BETHEL COLLEGE STUDENT SUPPLY PASTOR
ROBERT FRIESEN - 1967-68

Robert, a Canadian, was a capable young man with a promising future. He was personally acquainted with Rev. Peter Funk, also of Canada, and so was influential in the church making contact with him which resulted in Rev. Funk becoming our next pastor.

* * * * *

Myron Schrag, the third young man from this church to enter the ministry, was ordained on Oct. 29, 1967. He was elected President of the Western District Conference in 1969-71 and went as missionary

* 1 - Record Book #3, P. 69

* 2 - Record Book #3, P. 91

to India in 1973-76.

Lois Schrag is presently serving a second term as Secretary to the W.D. Conference.

On Aug. 12, 1971, Mike Graber took an assignment under the auspices of M.C.C. and left to serve in Zaire, Africa.

On April 3, 1973, Adrian Voran also left for Zaire, Africa on a 3-year assignment under the auspices of M.C.C.

Marcella Risley served in Bogata, Columbia, Arlo Ewy served in V.S. in Colorado and Virgil Ewy served in P.A.X. in Tournervista, Peru, S.A.

Rita Ewy, Ruth Strausz and Barbara Janzen served in Voluntary Service at different times and places.

REV. PETER FUNK - 1969-75

Rev. Peter Funk came to us from Saskatoon, Canada. He was of a rural background and so was perfectly at ease with modern machinery, remodeling a building or repairing a combine.

He was influential in the city of Kingman among fellow pastors and civic groups alike.

Although the merger of Bethany and Zion had been the dream of others before him it was under Rev. Funk's pastorate that circumstances and conditions decreed, that these two Mennonite Churches in Kingman County merge in order to survive and be effective in the community.

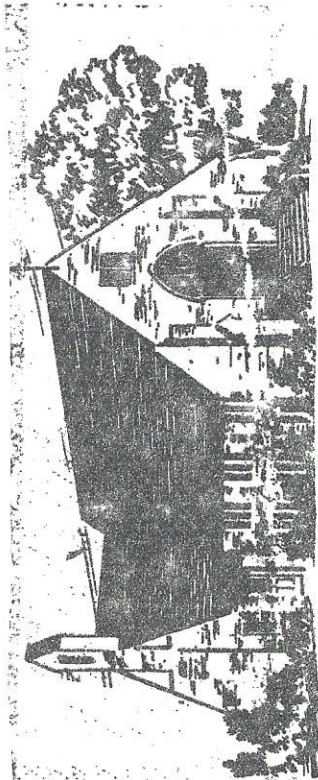
I shall not attempt to make a scenic of events leading up to this merger. As I have tried to document the fact of a rupture within the Bethany Church, which resulted in the Zion Church being organized, without going into belaboring details, I will now try to document the merger in the same way.

There WAS a Bethany Church - 1907-73.

There was a rupture within the church which resulted in the emerging of the Zion Church - 1928-9-1973.

Church

News



Zion and Bethany Mennonite Churches are now one

Two Mennonite Churches, Zion and Bethany, have united and will be known as the Kingman Mennonite Church. The Zion Church is located in Kingman and the Bethany Church, ten miles southeast of Kingman.

The first service of the combined congregations will be held Sunday, May 6, in the Bethany location.

This first service will begin

at 10 a.m. with special numbers, a communion service and two guest speakers. Rev. Elbert Koontz of Newton, conference minister, and Richard Ratzlaff of Hutchinson, conference chairman, will speak.

There will be a fellowship meal at noon. All former members and interested persons

are invited to attend this service.

Rev. Peter Funk and Rev. Sanford King, who lives in Hutchinson, are the local ministers. Rev. Funk lives in Kingman.

There was eventual reconciliation between the two groups resulting in BOTH organizations DISSOLVING and then combining to form the Kingman Mennonite Church, Rt. 2, and Lollipop House, Inc., in Kingman.

Obviously there were contacts between the two churches by way of organizational and planning committees representing both groups.

There were joint congregational meetings, joint worship services including the observance of the Lord's Supper, all before the merger, but to go into detailed specifics on such a matter would weary even the most patient of minds. I have included a few pages dealing with the records which contain what I considered some of the more important.

For any who need to know more, "The Fine Print" is fully and accurately recorded in the current Kingman Mennonite Church book in custody of the present church secretary. (See the Prologue to this merger) I have also included several photocopied pages stating the aims, and recommendations of the study committee relative to the merger and organization of Lollipop House, Inc.

The format accepted and under which the merger of Bethany and Zion took place was essentially the same which had been rejected previously for many years.

It may be impossible to correctly evaluate the importance of any event while it happens, but time will clear the visions and its true perspective will be revealed.

REV. WILLARD STUCKY - 1975-77

When Rev. Funk resigned on Nov. 9, 1975, the church was indeed fortunate in securing the services of a very capable yet unpretentious man in the person of Rev. Willard Stucky as interim pastor. He was a graduate of the Mennonite Biblical Seminary at Elkhart, Indiana, having served 2 years in Germany, 2 years in Greece, and 3 years in Mexico, and is now

supervisor at Camp Mennoscah.

Lollipop House was now already in operation, as Rev. Funk had given of himself to its beginning so Rev. Stucky has given of himself to its promotion and wellbeing. "Bill's" services were greatly appreciated.

A historical report on Lollipop House, written by Lelo Albrecht, appears as an appendix to this writing. (Pages 44-45).

MUSIC

Mennonites, generally have long been recognized for their musical abilities. In about 1945, a standing men's chorus was organized and directed by F.E. Voran, until about 1951.

In addition to several younger groups known as the "Happy Half Notes" and "Movin' On Mennonites" led by their respective directors, the Adult Choir is now under the direction of Robert Unruh and has become a vital and much appreciated part of our church program. We have every right to be justly proud of our musical programs.

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

In 1975, new concrete was poured in front of the church entrance.

The ceiling of the sanctuary was lowered, and the walls paneled which is a notable improvement, not only in appearance but fuel economy as well.

W.C. Voran made a gift of his grand piano to the church as a memorial to Gertrude Kaufman Voran and Grace Madison Voran.

An Education Committee was formed and annual Sunday School picnics are being held at Camp Mennoscah, as are Memorial Services at the cemetery.

The order of worship has been changed. Now worship services precede the Sunday School or Study Hour.

Vacation Bible School, first taught by Louella Albrecht in the Clearwater School in 1941, is still

being held with good attendance and seeming success.

As a church, we have been of some help in meat canning projects and in disaster service and relief.

An evergreen wind break was planted south of the church and a new church sign painted and placed next to the all-weather black top Belmont Road.

The church had no full-time pastor during the first half of 1977; however, Kenneth Shelly of North Newton, Ks. led regular worship services for a three-month period easing the situation substantially.

HAROLD MILLER

The church is presently entering a new chapter in her history with Rev. Harold Miller who served the church on a trial basis during June, July and August of 1977.

After accepting the pastorate, he returned to Elkhart, Ind., where he finished his final year of Seminary and returned to resume his duties here as pastor in July of 1978. Rev. Willard Stucky again served as interim pastor during the winter months of 1978. Harold was ordained as pastor June 17, 1979. A more detailed account of this event taken from the Kingman Leader Courier appears below:

Ordination services for Harold Miller were held Sunday afternoon, June 17, at 2:30, at the Kingman Mennonite Church. Conducting the ordination service was Western District Conference Minister, Rev. Frank Keller. Also assisting in the service were Rev. Richard Tschetter of Pretty Prairie and Rev. Jim Gingerich of Moundridge. Rev. Willard Stucky, director of Camp Mennoscah, served as Chairman. Harold Miller was graduated from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Indiana in 1978, and from Eastern Mennonite College, Harrisburg, Va., in 1970. His hometown is Leo, Indiana. Miller has been pastor of the Kingman Mennonite Church this past year, beginning in July, 1978. He also served here as summer assistant in 1977 and in the Eden Mennonite Church of

Moundridge the summer of 1976. _____

The ordination services for Rev. Miller were well attended and it is hoped the interest shown is an omen of many more good things to come.

May the Lord bless his efforts among us and ours as he continues to minister to us and undertakes in our behalf in an era during which our traditional conservatism is being challenged by individual liberties and collective innovations.

Willard M. Voran

APPENDIX

ORDINATION OF ERWIN ALBRECHT * 1

The year 1939, the Festival was held on Sunday, June 11. It was given added significance and meaning on this year because on this day one of the young members of the church was ordained into the Christian ministry. Brother Erwin Albrecht, having heard the call of the Master, surrendered himself and dedicated his life to the service of the Lord. Having made this decision, he at once entered college in preparation for that work. After four years of college, he felt the need of more specialized training and entered the Hartford Theological Seminary for three more years of study. Here in his second year he took over as student pastor for the Westminister Congregational Church at Canterbury, Connecticut.

This work proved to be of good, practical experience supplementing his study in the seminary. He was brought face to face with the problems and needs of a country parish and the responsibility of the tasks to which he had given himself was deeply impressed upon his mind and soul. To minister to the needs of this congregation, both Brother Albrecht and the church felt it necessary that he be ordained. Desiring that such ordination take place within his own church and denomination, he received the kind consent of the Westminister Church that it be so. Upon which they sent a written request, and it was upon this expressed wish of the Westminister Church that arrangements were made for the ordination here in the Bethany Church.

Thus, on the afternoon of June 11, Erwin Albrecht was ordained as Minister and Elder. The service was arranged by the home pastor, Rev. E.J. Neuenschwander, who also served as chairman of the program. Rev. P.P. Wedel officiated at the service, being assisted by Rev. E.J. Neuenschwander and Rev. C.J. Voran, the home pastors, Rev. P.P. Tschetter of Pretty Prairie, Rev. Clyde Dirks of Hutchinson, and Rev. J.R. Duerkson of Kingman, Ks.

* 1 - Taken from the Church Record Book, P. 7

On August 28, 1940, the young brother received and accepted a joint call from the Home Mission Board of the General Conference and the First Mennonite Church in Chicago to become the pastor of the First Mennonite Church.

On September 15, 1940, he took up the work there and on October 6, the Installation took place. Let us remember the young worker in our prayers that God's Spirit may richly descend upon him and prosper him in his work.

A.E. Kaufman

THE CEMETERY THEN AND NOW

Although the first burial took place in what was then the Bethany Mennonite Cemetery in 1907, the cemetery was not plotted until 1908.

When Grandmother died there was no spectacular funeral procession. A team of horses hitched to a spring wagon with Grandfather and one of his grandsons (Carl Voran - age 10) who was doing the driving took the place of the lavish funeral coaches of today.

The first motorized funeral coach used at Bethany was in 1918. Needless to say, for far too many years the cemetery was sadly neglected. Things began to change for the better in about 1935 when the first map of the grounds was drawn. In 1961, this map was revised and at this writing is again being perfected and brought up to date.

In about 1940, the grounds were being mowed and cared for professionally. A steel gate and archway were donated by the Christopher Iron Works, of Wichita. Evergreens were planted on the north next to the road and steel posts were donated and set by members of the church. Now that the cemetery has taken on a respectable look memorial services are being held each Decoration Day.

In 1978, a limestone memorial was erected on the original church site. It bears a bronze plaque bearing the following inscription: "Site of the first Mennonite Church in Kingman County. This was the site of the Bethany Church dedicated June 9, 1907 until it was destroyed by fire Aug. 24, 1930. A new building was relocated 3 miles south and dedicated May 29, 1932. The Zion Mennonite Church emerged from this congregation in 1929 with dedication May 1, 1938. On May 6, 1973, these two congregations merged to form the Kingman Mennonite Church and to begin Lollipop House, Inc."

There are now 167 graves in this cemetery, and the name has been changed from Bethany Mennonite to Mennonite Cemetery. All who were buried here were

Mennonites or had Mennonite connections.

To my knowledge the cemetery was vandalized only 3 times. Once a stone weighing about 40 lbs. was removed and later found in a post office in Wichita. On another occasion, a stone was upset, and again when some "Would-be sportsman" used the face of a stone for target practice.

CEMETERY POLICY

The following motions were passed at the congregational meeting on Nov. 1, 1976:

Motion #1: All burial plots in the Kingman Mennonite Cemetery be changed from 20' x 20' to 10' x 10' unless this is impossible because of existing graves. These plots will be designated alternately to provide space for children next to the parents.

If after the parent plot is full and the next plot is not needed for the children it will be free for another parent couple.

Motion #2: Convenience of the new lots in the Kingman Mennonite Cemetery will be limited to members of the Kingman Mennonite Church. Burial in existing family plots of non-church members in their own family plot at the discretion of the board of trustees.

Plots will not be conveyed before the time of need.

In 1907 - 4 acres.

166 graves in 3/79.

HISTORICAL REPORT--LOLLIPOP HOUSE-1973-79

In May, 1973, it was voted by the congregation of the newly organized Kingman Mennonite Church to use the existing town church building for a Child Care Center. A seven member board of directors was elected and given authority for financing, building, and administering all needs necessary for the Child Care Center. The former Zion Church building was remodeled according to state regulations to make it suitable for child care.

Lollipop House, Inc. opened Oct. 1, 1973, with five children attending. Prisca Wiens was the first director. On Oct. 7, 1973, the congregation met for a commitment of service for Lollipop House and on Nov. 18, 1973, an open house was held for the general public. During 1974, a total of 51 different children attended, averaging approximately 17 each day toward the end of 1974.

The number of directors on the board was changed to include 8 members from the Kingman Mennonite Church and 4 members from parents whose children attend Lollipop House. It was organized as a non-profit organization with the income from the parents that use the service to pay operating costs. The church supports Lollipop House by having 4 offerings a year as well as other personal donations. The ladies of the church furnish daily snacks for the children and there is much other donated work and time by members of the congregation to keep the place operating.

In 1977, the board of directors voted to go ahead with a new addition to the existing building. This for the purpose of providing more play area in bad weather and to increase the limit of the number of children we could be licensed for by the state. This building was completed early in 1979, and was built almost entirely by volunteer labor. In order to raise money to pay for capital improvements and other extras, Lollipop House has been since 1976, yearly holding a fund-raising supper with the work and organization provided mainly by the ladies of the

church. Also there has been a yearly musical talent benefit show with talent from the local community. The Kingman County United Way has also been including Lollipop House in its yearly budget with a generous gift.

Lollipop House has been well received in the community because there was a need for this kind of service. Also because we have been fortunate in the type of directors we have been able to hire. We know that God had a definite hand in this matter.

Directors have been - Prisca Wiens-----1973-75
Maureen Ditmars----1975-78
Pam Gerlt-----1978-79
Peggy Jo Stucky-----1979-

What has been the benefit of Lollipop House to the Kingman Mennonite Church? It has given us a project on which we as a church were able to work together with the effect of drawing us closer to each other in a united effort. It also provided a worthwhile use of a church building that might otherwise not have been used. It has also given opportunity for us as Mennonites to demonstrate our Christian love and principles as we work together with people from other backgrounds. And most important, hopefully the influence on the children themselves, will result in better adjusted lives with an awareness of Jesus that will bear fruit in times to come.

Lelo Albrecht

HISTORY OF THE
KINGMAN WOMEN'S MISSION ORGANIZATION

DEDICATION (Copied from the Constitution of the Western District Women's Missionary Societies.)

Our Lord commanded us to make disciples of all nations - Matt. 28:19,20. To this end we dedicate ourselves:

- (a) to a service of prayer - Matt. 9:37-38
- (b) to a stewardship of possessions - Lk. 21:1-4
- (c) to a stewardship of time - II Cor. 8:1-5
- (d) to a stewardship of talents - Rom. 12:1
- (e) to the cultivation of Christian fellowship thru the study of the Bible and Missions

Article I (Name)

The name of this organization shall be "The Bethany Mission Society."

Article II (Purpose)

The aim of this organization shall be to promote knowledge of Missions, to deepen interest in world evangelism, and to secure systematic contributions for missions.

The above statements are quoted from the constitution which was prepared for the Women's Missionary Societies of the Western District Conference, and was adopted by the local Mission Society approximately in 1948.

However, the Society had been formed fifteen years previous to this time, and had been practicing these aims in their efforts.

On Feb. 22, 1931, fifteen women met in the home of Rev. Solomon Mouttet, the pastor of the Bethany Mennonite Church at that time, for the purpose of organizing a group who desired to become more active workers in the Lord's Mission Field. Officers were elected and plans were made for the future work. Mrs. G.G. Albrecht was elected president; Anna (P.R.) Kaufman was vice president; Mrs. Clara Kaufman, secretary; and Mrs. Andrew Albrecht, the newly elected

treasurer.

There were 15 charter members, and of these, four are living today: Mrs. Solomon Mouttet, Talequah, Okla; Mrs. Lydia Goering, Moundridge, Ks.; Mrs. Clara Kaufman, Kingman, Ks.; and Mrs. John Zerger, Pretty Prairie, Ks.

The decision was made to work under the leadership of the Women's Missionary Organization based in Newton, Kansas. The Western District Conference was engaged in establishing Mission stations and churches among the Indians in the United States and Canada. They sent out missionaries who requested that clothing and material aid be provided for distribution to those who needed assistance.

The local group became enthusiastically involved in the work of supporting the missionaries in every possible way. Each member paid 25¢ per month dues, and with the proceeds, material was purchased. Garments were cut out and sewn at the meetings which were held in the homes of the individual members. Generally the meetings were held once a month, although when a special project was undertaken, often more frequent meetings were called.

After two months' work, the first shipment of new and used clothing, consisting of 21 garments, was sent to a mission station in Oklahoma. At the end of the first year, 5 shipments of clothing and comforters had been sent to stations in the United States and Canada.

This was a modest beginning, but through the years the work grew. Although the objectives remained the same basically, the work was modified to meet the requirements of the changing needs. The missionary effort of the Mennonite Church was expanded to embrace the ever-widening program of evangelization and service. As the missionaries established new mission stations, they sent their requests for clothing, bedding, hospital supplies, soap, towels, yardage, sewing supplies, baby layettes, etc. Mary

more items were added as the endeavor branched out and grew in scope.

The needs and the fulfillment of them were co-ordinated in the M.C.C. headquarters in Newton, Kansas. Our Mission Society received the assignments from this place and faithfully worked to fulfill them.

In March, 1932, a year after the organization was formed, the first meeting was held in the new church basement. It has continued this practice since that time.

Gradually the dues were increased and other monetary obligations were accepted. The group voted in 1933 to begin doing custom quilting. At first the charge was only 1¢ per yard of thread used. This was increased in later years.

Through the years, the membership changed in number and individuals. One major change occurred in 1973, when the Bethany Mennonite Church and the Zion Mennonite Church combined their organization and formed the Kingman Mennonite Church.

This action was carried out by the Missionary Societies as well. The two groups were re-organized in one organization and adopted the name: "Kingman Women's Mission Organization."

In researching the material for this history, considerable effort was made to include the records of the Zion Missionary Organization. No complete record has been found. Former members were interviewed and several hours were spent in the Historical Library in Newton, Kansas. Only fragments of their endeavors have been discovered and these occurred in different time periods. Thus, no complete consecutive record has been available for this writing.

The earliest positive function which was found was: "The Zion Women's Missionary Society had a bridal shower for Veradine Voran in 1941." Church bulletins from the Zion Church are held in the Historical Library and in these bulletins are several

announcements pertaining to the Society since 1951.

One example of their efforts is shown in one recorded item: "On Dec. 31, 1952, the Zion Women's Missionary Society had a fellowship supper followed by the annual business meeting, and concluded with a watch nite service." This reveals their desire to seek and to carry out the Lord's will in their activities as a group as well as individuals.

Even though it has not been possible to find the written record of their work, as a whole, there is no question of their sincere and earnest endeavor to serve the Lord and to uphold the missionary enterprise.

In scanning the records of the Bethany Mission Society, from the beginning, the nature of the work varied as the needs and conditions changed. Comfort making continued to a greater or lesser degree. Less custom quilting was done. When the annual M.C.C. Relief Sale came into existence, the Society began to make quilts to donate, as well as other items such as needlework, crafts, etc.

One activity which continued for a number of years was the Christmas Bundle project, which ended when the project was discontinued by the M.C.C. Clothing Center in Newton. The earliest Christmas Bundle project reported was 13 bundles in 1949. Amounts varied through the years; the largest contribution being in 1969 when 100 bundles were sent. The last shipment was prepared in 1977 consisting of 87 bundles.

The children were generally asked to participate in this endeavor also. But one plan which was for the children only was called the "Young Mission Workers." In 1944, Rev. and Mrs. E.J. Neuenschwander gave each child 50¢, which they were to use for a year and earn as much money as they could in a project of their own choice. At first it was under the direction of a supervisor who was chosen for the position. Later it was sponsored by the Mission

Society. It proved worthwhile and the children learned valuable lessons in stewardship while engaging in the project.

Kits and bundles were made: leprosy bundles, sewing and health kits, layette bundles, etc. They were made according to the instructions which were sent from the M.C.C. Headquarters.

Circumstances changed through the years. Adversities and difficulties had to be met and overcome as much as possible. During the year 1942, the Mission Society encountered its most difficult test. The average attendance at the monthly meetings fell to 7 members. Added to this lack of interest, and possibly contributing to it, was the government restrictions on gas and tires. In December of that year it was decided to discontinue the group meetings indefinitely, as it seemed impossible to do effective work when so severely handicapped.

This did not mean that the work was dropped entirely. Some of the members sent for cut-out garments from the Cutting Room in Newton and began to sew them in their homes for relief and mission purposes. This practice was adopted by more members and the interest was kept alive. In August of the next year, (1943), the Society was reactivated under the leadership of Mrs. E.J. Neuenschwander, and has continued with no more interruptions except for the summer vacations.

Although mission programs had been given at intervals during previous years, it was at this time that the Society resolved to give quarterly programs to arouse and promote interest in Missions, and as a means of raising funds with which to carry on the work.

Different methods besides custom quilting were used to obtain money. The group served lunches at public sales, served meals for the Belmont Co-op yearly suppers, and other social activities. Bake sales were held and other projects were used to

acquire funds. Church collections were received several times a year. This furnished an opportunity to combine the work of the church and the Mission Society in various ways.

The Mission Society became increasingly connected with the work of the Church. Since the Society work meeting was conducted in the church basement while the brotherhood of the church held its annual business meeting, the members were invited to participate in the opening worship service. In 1957, this period was extended when the chairman of the business meeting invited the ladies to remain for the reading of the minutes of the 1956 business meeting. Gradually the scope of this involvement increased and a mutual benefit and blessing has been derived from it.

In summarizing, it is impossible to relate all the enterprises and achievements of the Mission Society. Always it kept informed about the local concerns and tried to help as much as possible. Donations of money, material, and other items were given to assist those who had experienced disasters or difficult times.

A few of these efforts may be listed: The Service Committee came into existence in 1956 to function in times of bereavement and other times of stress in the church community.

Our missionaries (Carl Flickners) have been supported with money and material gifts which are necessary to maintain them in their work.

Sometimes the Bethany Mission Society combined with other groups in preparing assignments. One such project was fulfilled in 1960 when the Zion Mission Society shared in the effort of supplying a Chinese-Korean orphan boy with clothing for a year.

When the Children's Day Care Center (Lollipop House) in Kingman was organized in 1973, much was done to help establish it. Members continue to uphold it by providing quilts, sheets, curtains,

pillows, and cases, stuffed toys, snacks, etc.

The church parsonage benefits greatly during times of necessity. In 1965, the Society financed a large part of the re-decorating process, as well as worked in the restoration.

Camp ennoscah has been supplied with help and other support through the years. Other community projects are advocated and participated in by the group. One is the World Day of Prayer.

One outstanding example of the Society's helpful efforts is evidenced when Topeka, Ks. was hit by a devastating tornado on June 2, 1966. The list of supplies which were prepared and sent to Topeka are: 147 lbs. clothing, 58 lbs. bedding, assorted items such as cooking ware, 173 lbs. dishes, and a money gift of \$130 were sent.

Mingled with the practical contributions, the Society has also stressed the need to learn more about the cultural environments of the areas which receive the material help. Trips to other cities have been made to participate in the W.M.O. meetings. Examples: Denver, Kansas City, Oklahoma City, etc. In several instances, the trips were followed with large collections of clothing, bedding, kitchen-ware, etc. for the needy people there. This occurred after the Kansas City trip when a pick-up and a camper full of supplies were taken to Kansas City to be distributed among the needy people. Also sent was a toy truck loaded with \$140.00.

One memorable experience was a Japanese Supper, which Missionary Lois Voran prepared and served at one meeting. She showed slides and told of the work in connection with this meal.

Changes were made as it became expedient to make them. In 1973 the Society withdrew its support of the Young Mission Workers.

Also in 1973, the Society voted to replace the membership dues by having a free-will offering during

the business meeting. Other methods of providing financial support to various endeavors were adopted and assessments were adjusted to the needs.

The Society has been responsive to the concerns of the church in the immediate community. The shut-ins and handicapped have been remembered in numerous ways, such as gifts, visits, card showers, etc. Flowers and remembrances have been given at appropriate times. A Prayer Sister Program operates for all who desire to join the group.

Assistance has been given in maintaining the church building in a physical as well as in a financial way.

This resume of the Mission Society's History during the past 49 years of its existence has merely touched upon the efforts and accomplishments. Underlying the whole ministry has been the feeling of love and compassion in the hearts of the members who continue to be motivated by the commandment of our Lord: "Thou shalt love the Lord, Thy God... and thou shalt love thy neighbor." Mk. 12:30,31.

With this mandate as a foundation, the Mission Society endures and overcomes the trials and difficulties with a firm resolve to be faithful in the work as declared in the dedicatory statement of the Constitution. The organization presses forward with strength and spiritual power, striving to fulfill the requirements of the Lord, under the banner of love, and challenged by the motto, "In the name of Christ."

Acknowledgements: Clara Kaufman - "Twenty-five years of service"

Much appreciation to
Anna Kaufman for helping
structure this history.

Mrs. Delmar Voran

A
SERVICE OF ORDINATION
FOR
HAROLD MILLER

Kingman Mennonite Church Kingman, Kansas

June 17, 1979

Prelude - Carla Voran, Organ; Ruth Unruh, Piano

 "Thanks Be To Thee" - Handel

 "I Know Whom I Have Believed" - McGranshan

Hymn No. 13 - "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee"

Scripture Reading and Prayer - Bill Stucky

Charge to Pastor - Jim Gingerich

Worship Music - Benetta Voran

Charge to Congregation - Richard Tschetter

Worship Music - Men's Chorus

Service of Ordination - Frank Keller

 The Charge

 Congregational Response - No. 730

 Laying on of Hands

 Prayer of Ordination

Response - Harold Miller

Hymn No. 388 - "Pour Out Thy Spirit From On High"

Benediction - Bill Stucky

* * * * *

(Fellowship to follow in basement)

MERGER PRINCIPLES

For the combined purpose of assuring that there be a Mennonite Church in the Kingman area, and to strengthen its out-reach, the Committee moves unanimously that the Bethany and Zion Churches unite and organize the Kingman Mennonite Church and a Day Care Center for a local community service and out-reach.

The following are suggested procedures for implementation:

1. That the meeting place of the united church be at the present location of the Bethany Church and that the Day Care Center be established in the Zion Church building and that office space be provided in the Zion building for the minister's study and for counseling purposes.
2. That all the officers and committee members will be terminated and that new officers and committees be elected by the united group. This is to include all church, Sunday School officers, teachers and other auxiliary organizations.
3. That the terms of the ministers be considered expired as of January 1, 1974 and that the call to a minister be made by the united church.
4. That all assets and liabilities be combined in the new organization.
5. That all members now belonging to both congregations will automatically be transferred to the united church. If there are those who wish to transfer to other congregations, they shall be granted their request and wish them God's blessing in their new relationship.
6. That the date for the beginning of the new church organization shall be January 1, 1974, but joint services, elections, etc., shall take place as soon as it is agreeable to the combined group.
7. That a committee be elected to begin making detailed plans and structures for the new church and

come with tentative workable plans for the implementation of these plans.