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## FOREWARD

Each issue of our Historical Magazine brings together an assortment of information pertaining to the history of the Moravian Church in Western Canada. This issue spans the time spectrum, from the early beginnings to the present. We are particularly grateful to Betty Hempstock and the Rev. Ray Schultz who prepared material that is included in this issue.

The article about the history of the Hobbema congregation has the editor stumped. This article was found in the Archives, written in German. Dr. Kurt Vitt kindly translated it, but the author of the article is unknown to us. If you can shed any light on this puzzle, please let us know.

Most of those who have an interest in the beginnings of the Moravian Church in western Canada know that the founding pastor of the work was the Rev. Clement Hoyler. The article about his life included in this issue contains details about his personal life that may be of interest, as well as insights into his personal feelings about life on the frontier. Most of the material written by Rev. Clement Hoyler is official in nature. This article contains personal glimpses of this man who figured so prominently in the history of the Moravian Church in western Canada.

The Moravian Church in Alberta came into being in a most extraordinary fashion. It was founded through the initiative of the settlers. Usually new congregations came into being through the initiative of the denomination, through the church's extension efforts. The Leibert Report, which is reprinted in this issue, reveals how the Provincial Elders' Conference Board of the

Moravian Church in Bethlehem, Pa. had to struggle with how to respond to the organizers of the two new "Moravian" congregations, which had been established by the settlers at Bruderfeld and Bruderheim. It seems evident that the financial resources of the church, which were available to support new work, were already taxed to the limit. To establish two new congregations on the frontier in western Canada required not only pastoral leadership, but also money for materials to build church buildings. The Moravian Church did respond quickly with an outstanding young pastor (Clement Hoyler) and with the funds to get the two congregations started. The funds came from a special appeal that was made throughout the congregations in the northern province. To a very real extent, the Moravian Church in western Canada owes its origin to the leadership of the church at the time and to the generosity of the members of the day who gave over and beyond their regular budgets to make this possible. The rest of what happened is our history.

In later years, when Rev. Clement Hoyler was looking back at how the Moravian Church fared in western Canada, he wrote an article entitled, "Did It Pay?" In this article he reviewed the results which flowed from the founding of the two first Moravian churches at Bruderheim and Bruderfeld. We will include this article in a subsequent issue along with an article based on research work done by Dr. Kurt Vitt on service to the Moravian Church by members from the Canadian District.

Wm. G. Brese,  
Editor

## **ALBERTA CHRISTMAS STARCRAFT MEMORIES**

By Betty Hempstock, March 26, 1999

Canadian Moravian Historical Society Annual Meeting

Good evening. Before I start my story on the history of the Alberta Christmas Starcraft (ASC) over the past years, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Historical Society for their kindness and generosity in planning this special evening for the Starcraft workers. It is always nice to be remembered.

In 1971, the Rev. Alfred T. Weiss took his last one thousand dollars and started Alberta Plastic Christmas Starcraft. At first Pastor Weiss and his wife, Annamarie, did all the work by themselves both working many long hours at their home to fulfill their dream. When orders for more stars came in faster than the Weiss's could make, Pastor Weiss began to seek help starting first with people from the Edmonton Moravian Church and then branching out. By November of that year, ASC was in full swing with approximately 12 to 16 volunteer seniors meeting in the Edmonton Moravian church basement Thursday mornings to cut, crease, fold, glue, assemble stars or get them ready for mailing.

As the years have come and gone so did many of the Starcraft workers as people got older, sicker, and passed away. Today, there are only about 5 to 6 people working on the stars.

Once ASC got underway, Pastor Weiss approached Mr. Don Laverty, then President of the Canadian District Executive Board (CDEB), and asked that the district take ASC under their wing. The CDEB agreed to take ultimate responsibility for the operation of ASC with the understanding that the ASC would have their own independence as well as be guided and managed by its own Board of Directors. A Board of Directors was set up by Pastor Weiss and

consisted of: Pastor Weiss, Mrs. Daisy Dreger, Mrs. Elsie Stebner, Mr. Ray Prochnau, Mr. Bill Brese, and Mr. Peter Redberger. Later on in the 1990's Mr. Alvin Harke, Mr. Ben Adam, and Mrs. Betty Hempstock were added as Mr. Bill Brese and Mrs. Elsie Stebner retired from the board. During this time Pastor Weiss and Mr. Peter Redberger passed away as did Mr. Reg Hennig who had only been on the Board for a few months.

After Pastor Weiss passed away, Mr. Alvin Harke took over the job of cutting and creasing the points for the 12 different sizes of stars (in 26 or 50 points) that we made. Mr. Ben Adam helped us out by purchasing all the electrical materials and by making the electrical cords for the stars. As well Ben picked up the sheets of colored plastic and made the bigger cardboard boxes for mailing the sanctuary stars. Ben and his wife, Meta, also made and assembled stars at the church and at their home.

Mrs. Daisy Dreger made sure the star orders were filled, packaged, and mailed out. Daisy also took home materials to cut and pound the collars for the points. Anything that couldn't be finished on Thursday morning, Daisy took home to do. Daisy also counted out and packaged all the fasteners for stars that were unassembled. Mrs. Pat Hennig and Mrs. Margaret Prochnau were kind enough to take stars home and assemble them for us, too. Betty Hempstock took star orders, billed customers, advertised to sell the stars, and kept the accounting books for ASC and will continue to do so until the stock is depleted.

Although sales continue to be in demand, our donations to different causes have been less than in previous years. This is because materials rise in cost, but we felt no need to increase the cost to our customers. The goal of the ASC was to make the stars, keep only money for materials, and donate the rest to charities. To

help with our sales, we continue to advertise in the MORAVIAN magazine, do mail outs to the United States and of course by word of mouth. In 1995 a brochure was printed up outlining what the Moravian Star represents, about our volunteer workers, and the sizes of stars made. These brochures along with an order form and price list were sent to all the Moravian churches in the U.S.A. as well as to anyone who requested one. We have had a good response to this.

Over the years ASC has mailed stars wherever they have been requested. We have mailed to England, Alaska, St. Kitts, India, Bermuda, Jamaica, as well as across the United States and Canada. In recording the number of stars sold or donated these past 27-28 years, Alberta Christmas Starcraft volunteers have made approximately 10,217 Christmas Advent Stars. Again in recording the monies that ASC has raised for charities—as well as sponsoring up to six foster children in Rajpur at different times—we have donated approximately \$170,000.00.

On Friday, November 15, 1996 at the Edmonton Moravian Church, a Silver Anniversary Luncheon was held in honor of all past and present Starcraft volunteer workers for the last 25 years. After a delicious lunch the group took a trip down memory lane with a recap of events by chairman, Mr. Bill Brese. Bill also read letters of congratulations from Rev. Gordon Sommers, President of the Provincial Elders' Conference; Mr. Hampton Morgan, Jr., Executive Director for the Board of World Missions; and our sister congregations. The Rev. David Glasser from Good News Moravian Church in Sherwood Park was guest speaker and Mrs. Ruth Humphreys, President of the CDEB presented a wall plaque to the ASC in appreciation for all the monies donated to missions. This plaque now hangs in the sanctuary at the Edmonton Church. Even after all this the ASC workers and guests were treated to a

little TV fame when a cameraman from CFRN-TV came and video taped us and interviewed Bill Brese on behalf of the ASC. Taped footage was shown on TV; this was a great boost for viewers who have never heard of ASC or our stars. It was a great time for all and the ASC workers enjoyed and appreciated being recognized.

In April 1998 at our annual Board meeting it was decided that the ASC would quit as a group and try to find another person or group to take over. With the input of the workers, a complete package of what was involved in the making of the stars was sent out to interested parties. By the end of April we should know what the future of ASC will be. We ask our Lord and Saviour to guide us as we make our decision. Please keep us in your prayers.

In closing, I would like to say that it has been my sincere pleasure to have been involved with all the Starcraft workers over the years, and I wish them all the best as they retire for the second time. Thank you all for your hard work and faithfulness in keeping Pastor Weiss's dream alive. **GOD BLESS YOU ALL!** Thank you.

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## HISTORICAL REPORT

By Raymond E. Schultz

Having received God's call to the ministry and having obtained our Student Visas from the American Consul, Wilfred Dreger and I boarded the train in Edmonton and started on our journey for Bethlehem, Pa. Our first stop was in Calgary at Wilfred's aunt's place, Mrs. Tarn, whose gracious hospitality we really appreciated. Mrs. Tarn took us to the mountains which we had not seen before. It was a breath-taking sight all the way. She kept saying, you haven't seen anything yet! We shall never forget that trip. Our next stop was in Toronto, again to visit with Wilfred's relatives, and we appreciated this break in our travels.

We arrived in Bethlehem, took a taxi, and told the driver to take us to Moravian College. He dropped us off in front of Comenius Hall, the administration building. We arrived at last. We registered, were assigned our dormitory rooms, and were given an orientation of the campus. So began our college career.

After our freshman year we got the regular summer break. I was able to hitchhike rides home to Edmonton. I should mention here a very unusual experience on my way home. In Wisconsin, I was hitchhiking a ride at the edge of town. A very wealthy lady stopped to pick me up. She dropped me off on the highway at the entrance to her driveway. It was in the country and her house was set almost a quarter of a mile in from the highway. At that point the highway began a long slope downward and cars just didn't stop going at downhill speed. It was late afternoon when this lady dropped me off to continue my journey. I stood on the highway hitchhiking until it got dark, but no car stopped for me. I then went up to her house to explain the situation and asked if she would take me in and give me a place to sleep for the night. She

welcomed me and gave me a hearty meal and showed me to the guest room that also had a private bath. Such luxury I had not experienced before. In the morning she gave me a full course breakfast that would keep me all day and sent me happy on my way. Again I stood on the highway hitchhiking all morning with no success. However, near noon a car went swiftly by but stopped a good pace down the road. I quickly ran after the car, carrying my heavy suitcase. When I got to the car the driver looked at me and said "Oh, we thought you were someone else or we would not have stopped, but get in we'll take you as far as we are going." I tell you this to show you how God provided for me not only in this difficult situation but in my entire journey home.

There were other trying times such as when I had to walk across the international border and the officer on duty asked, "How are you entering Canada?" I replied, "Walking," for the people I was riding with would not take me across into Canada lest they would be held responsible for bringing me into Canada. Being then in Canada, I could not get a ride at the border and spent the night there in a motel. However I did get a ride the next morning. This is how God provided for me again and again. God always provides for His own if we will pray and ask Him for his help, for He has promised, " *Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.*" (I Pet. 5:7)

It took about a week to get home and I was able to get a summer job and earn some money to go back to college in the fall.

During our sophomore year, the United States entered World War II. We therefore needed to get military deferments both from Canada and from the United States with an additional requirement of having to go to college during the 12 months of the year. Moravian College ran summer sessions not only for us but also for

government military training programs. We were able to get full time jobs while going to school full time. However, since we were aliens from Canada we were not allowed to work at the Bethlehem Steel Plant which worked on military government war programs. Therefore, we worked at the Laros Silk Mills in Bethlehem at about half the wages. The college administrators allowed us to work and were aware of the strain this put upon us. I worked from 3:00 p.m. until 11:00 p.m. and Wilfred Dreger came on the shift and worked from 11:00 p.m. until 7:00 a.m. We needed to be at class at 8:00 a.m. I can still hear Dr. W. N. Schwarze, then President of the College and a teacher of some courses and who previously had been a pastor in the Canadian District during the time when Brother Clement Hoyler was getting the Canadian District established, say to Wilfred, "Mr. Dreger, please try to keep awake." However the Lord adequately provided for all our needs during those busy college years for which we give Him the praise and glory with thanksgiving.

We attended summer session classes for four summers. This brought us to our graduation from the Seminary two years ahead of schedule. Instead of graduating in the spring of 1947, we graduated in the fall of 1945. World War II had just ended. Upon graduation from the Seminary, I received a telegram of congratulations from Br. Samuel Wedman, the District President on behalf of the Canadian District Executive Board. He not only sent congratulations but also gave me the admonition to "Preach Christ and Him Crucified". These words made a great impression on me, and I have remembered them during all the years of my ministry.

During my Seminary Senior year, Br. Wedman came to Bethlehem to attend the meetings of the Provincial Elders' Conference. He also met with me to discuss my future ministry. I agreed to come

and serve in the Canadian District. He said that he would arrange a call to ministry for me that I would need to accept upon graduation and be ordained into the ministry in Bethlehem before I returned to Canada. Since there was no residing Bishop in the Canadian District, Wilfred Dreger and I agreed that having come to College and Seminary together, we would also be ordained into the ministry at the same service with Bishop Vivian Moses officiating at this service of Ordination. Wilfred had agreed to serve in Central America, namely in Nicaragua. I had received my call to serve in the Canadian District.

Bishop Moses was also the Dean of the Seminary at that time and also our spiritual mentor. After meeting with Bishop Moses, he agreed to the ordination service and we were ordained into the Moravian and Christian ministry in the College Hill Moravian Church in Bethlehem, the church that we both attended during our College and Seminary years. It was indeed a memorable service, one that we will not forget as long as we live.

Mrs. Elizabeth Albrecht, widow of the Rev. Charles A. Albrecht, had served at the Bruderheim congregation with her husband in those early years. She could not speak German when she first came to Bruderheim. My mother, who had worked in Minnesota for sometime before coming to Canada, could speak English. My mother was the only one in the congregation with whom Mrs. Albrecht could communicate. This had meant much to her and she had told me about it and how she appreciated to be able to talk to someone in the congregation. Mrs. Albrecht who was now living in the Widows House in Bethlehem attended not only the College and Seminary graduation exercises but also our ordination service and presented some nice useful gifts to me. We had no relatives or family members come to these services for travel was restricted due to the war years.

Having completed my College and Seminary training, I packed my bags and took the train home to Edmonton. Not having had a vacation for four years, I took a month of vacation and spent that time with my parents in their retirement home in Bruderheim from which I had left just five years earlier.

My call to the Canadian District stipulated that I would serve the Edmonton-Heimtal parish. Edmonton would supply housing for me. The parsonage had been rented during the war years. Even though the war was now over you could not evict a renter. Therefore, the congregation rented a large room for me at the home of Bert and Sally Adam Potter, and I arranged for my Board as well. After about a year we were able to evict the renter in the upstairs apartment in the parsonage, and I was able to move into this apartment next to the church making it much more convenient. The call also stated that I would conduct a worship service and preach in the German language each Sunday--first in the Edmonton Moravian Church in the morning and at Heimtal church in the afternoon. Each Sunday Edmonton would also have an English evening service. This arrangement lasted for two and one half years. Because I found preparing a German message and preaching in the German language each week very difficult, when the time came for a change I opted to move and accept the call to the Heimtal-Westlock parish. Heimtal now would have a German service each Sunday morning with one Sunday per month in English. I also needed to travel to Westlock twice a month and conduct an English service in the afternoon at the Gus & Mary Schwanke home. The District Executive Board had hoped this arrangement would lead to the establishment of a new congregation, but this was not to be for there was not sufficient interest nor response.

This new arrangement meant that I needed to move to Heimtal. The parsonage had not been lived in for about 8 years ever since the Rev. & Mrs. Herman Schulze retired from the Heimtal congregation. Therefore the house needed extensive work and repairs, which the congregation agreed to do. The house was completely insulated and refurbished inside. However there was no electricity or indoor water supply. So we reverted back to pioneering days. We set up a movable stoker heater in the living room that heated the whole house downstairs and upstairs. The kitchen of course had a wood coal stove. Water was brought into the house from the outside well. For the winter the house had to be banked up with dirt from the nearby garden area. This kept our produce and canned goods in the cellar from freezing. However, during the coldest part of the winter any water remaining in the water bucket would be frozen in the morning. In the winter months before we could get any water from the pump outside, we would need to heat some water in the teakettle and prime the pump with hot water to get it unstuck and pumping. Our only toilet facility was an outdoor shanty and at 40 and 50 below zero F. this was rather cold, so we didn't spend much time out there.

There was also an old barn on the yard which the Schulze's had used for their horse and cow and poultry. We used it for the storage of wood and coal. The congregation also agreed to build a new garage for my car. It was done with all volunteer labor. At the same time the old barn was taken down. This indeed was a big improvement and was much appreciated. At about the same time the municipality brought in their elevator machines and built up our roads to the highway and put gravel on the roads. What a great improvement this was over the low dirt roads we had to travel both summer and winter, with big ruts in summer and heavy snow drifts in winter.

Not long after the road project had been completed the municipality brought in the rural electrification program. This was the long awaited improvement project we had patiently and anxiously waited for. Not only did the parsonage need electricity but the church building as well. This was a rather large undertaking, however, the congregation responded very well to this financial need. Eventually all the homes in the congregation received electrification, too.

The next big event in my life and in the life of the congregation was my marriage to Lydia Getzinger on May 16, 1951. Lydia's church affiliation was St. Matthews Lutheran Church in Spruce Grove just south of Edmonton. Our wedding service was held in the Heimtal Moravian Church where I was the pastor. The Rev. Samuel Wedman, District President, officiated at our marriage service. At the beginning of the service Br. Wedman received Lydia as a member of the Heimtal Moravian Church and then performed the wedding ceremony. The reception was held at Lydia's parents place on the farm at Spruce Grove. For our honeymoon we spent one week in Banff. On our return to Heimtal, the congregation gave us a big Welcome Home with a noisy chivaree and reception with many gifts. It was truly a happy time.

We were pleased to come home to a parsonage with electricity. Our daughter, Heather, was born on August 3, 1953 and survived through two cold winters. Lydia was happy to have a hot plate on which to heat Heather's feeding bottle when she woke up in the night and needed to be fed as well as being able to flip a switch and turn on the light instead of having to light a lamp. The church board pursued the possibility of building a new parsonage but since Heimtal was not a self-supporting congregation, the District Board did not approve this project. Instead the District Board issued a

call to me to the Jasper Place-Hobbema parish. After much prayer and deliberation the Lord led me to accept this call giving me a number of signs that this was His will for me at this time. I had thought that I would spend many more years at Heimtal and after I had some regrets about leaving, the Lord spoke to me very specifically through the Daily Text Book not to look back but look ahead and trust Him for the future, which we did. We packed our belongings with much emotion as we prepared for our move to Jasper Place and into a lovely modern new home with many new conveniences. We left Heimtal with a heavy heart after ten full and happy years of ministry but taking with us a very unique experience of not having had a funeral and very little illness in the congregation during these 10 years of ministry there. Thus came to a close an important chapter of our lives and ministry.

I need to mention here that from the start to the finish of my ministry in the Canadian District, I was also given the position of treasurer for the camping program at Camp Van Es. It was also at Camp Van Es that I was ordained a Presbyter in the Moravian ministry by Bishop Carl Helmich. It was at a Synod held at Camp Van Es that I was elected to the Canadian District Executive Board for a four-year term of service during which time I served as secretary of the Board. Being treasurer of Camp Van Es not only involved taking care of the finances of the camp and making sure that we operated in the black but also enlisting the head cook for the camp which through the majority of the years was Emma Henkelman. She and I would decide what groceries we needed to purchase, what donations to ask for, and what we could expect to receive. We depended heavily on donations of food--garden produce, canned and baked goods. All of our kitchen staff, dining room, and camp program staff were volunteers, otherwise we could not have operated in the black. Our plea for volunteer staff



and help never went unheeded. The Lord always provided all we needed.

The Lord also provided for the spiritual needs of the Camping program through the anointed leadership of the Rev. Elmer Stelter, Dean of the Camp, the District Board and the other clergy in the District. As well, outside evangelical leaders challenged the campers to receive Jesus as Saviour and Lord of their lives and that resulted in a great spiritual awakening throughout the District and the dedication of many young people to full time Christian service and to spiritual leadership in the churches. I was pleased to have had a part and for the blessings and spiritual growth I experienced in the Camping program through the years of my ministry in the Canadian District.

When we left Heimtal to accept the call to the Jasper Place-Hobbema parish, I had completed 10 years of German preaching. It had been a transition time from the German to the English. It was a difficult time for the older members of the congregation. It was as Brother Ludwig Wolfram said to me a number of times-- he could understand the English but he got so much more and a much greater blessing from the German service.

I now began a new phase of ministry, namely an all English ministry. Jasper Place had a morning worship service every Sunday and Hobbema had an afternoon service twice a month. This arrangement worked very well as I did not need to drive through the city as previously. Jasper Place was the District's new work in church extension, so a lot of work and prayer was put into it. However the people did not respond to our effort to establish a church there and the work was eventually closed after I had left.

Seminary graduates had requested to serve in the Canadian District. After the Rev. Paul Seltzer died in York, Pa., the Rev. Dr. F. P. Stocker, President of the Eastern District Executive Board issued a call to me to the Bethany-Olivet parish in York, Pa. After much prayer, we decided to accept this call to York and leave the Canadian District. The call was to be effective as of May 1, 1958 a year after the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration of the founding of the Moravian Church. It was not an easy move as family said, "why must you move so far away?" My mother thought I should go to Minnesota where she had worked for a time before coming to Bruderheim but that was not to be. The Lord called us to serve in the Eastern District of the Moravian Church and this was the right move for us. Preparation for the move was somewhat difficult as the P.E.C. asked us to sell all our heavy furnishings and buy new things in York. We did not hold a sale but sold what we could privately, including our car. Obtaining our Resident Visa from the American Consul was a long drawn out affair, but eventually we were successful in getting all of the papers that were needed to take up permanent residence in the U.S.A. Again, with a heavy heart we bade farewell to Jasper Place and the Canadian District on a bright and beautiful morning trusting that God also had a bright and blessed future for us in the years to come. Thus we closed 12 ½ years of blessed ministry in the Canadian District of the Moravian Church. Truly hitherto hath the Lord helped us. To God we give all the praise and glory for giving us the wonderful privilege of being able to serve Him "for such a time as this" that made for spiritual enrichment in our own lives and in the life of the church throughout the District.

Agape and GOD BLESS YOU ALL!!

Raymond E. Schultz

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## BRIEF SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF CLEMENT HOYLER

By Clement Hoyler, December 15, 1949

*(Prepared for my children and based in part on the Sketch  
written for the Custodian of the Church Museum,  
Old McDougall Church, at Edmonton, Alberta, Canada,  
To accompany my Portrait in said Museum)*

Born May 12, 1872, in Laketown, Carver County, Minnesota, in a log house in a part of the so-called "Big Woods" of Minnesota, about two miles from the western end of picturesque Lake Minnetonka, I spent the first seven years of my life amid pioneer conditions. Our house, as I learned later, stood just 1000 feet above sea level.

I was the youngest of four children—three boys and one girl—born to Jacob and Emilie (Rupprecht) Hoyler, natives of Wuerttemberg, Germany. My parents, who learned to know each other in this country, were married in Palmyra, New Jersey, by the Rev. Philip Gapp, of the Moravian Church of that place. They united with his congregation.

My parents came to Minnesota for my father's health sake in the spring of 1868 at the invitation of the Rev. Clement Reinke (later consecrated a Bishop), then pastor of the Moravian congregation in Chaska, Carver County, Minnesota. My oldest brother, Emanuel, and my sister, Elizabeth, later the wife of the Rev. Wm. Stohmeier, were born in New Jersey.

On June 23, 1872, just six weeks after my birth, I was baptized in the Chaska Church by the Reverend David Zeisberger Smith, at one time a missionary among the Sioux Indians of Minnesota, and now minister of the Chaska congregation. When I was born my

father drew a Bible verse for me from the little package of texts which were very generally used in those days. My text was Titus 3:5, "Not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the working of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

In later years I felt that this text was almost prophetic, as it was literally fulfilled when God gave me a second birthday "by the working of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." The great Bible doctrine, "All of Grace," became in very truth the motto of my life and the keynote of my pulpit ministry, to which my parents had dedicated me.

My father was ordained about a year after my birth. Both before and after his ordination he served two rural missions which were affiliated with the parent congregation at Chaska, namely Laketown and Zoar. Even before coming west he had, I believed, done Christian work in New Jersey and in Philadelphia in the service of the American Tract Society, and as an occasional leader of prayer meetings in Palmyra.

In 1879 my parents moved to Watertown, Wisconsin, where my father became the minister of the Moravian congregation. That pleasant little city became my home for about twelve years. I attended its city schools and also was a student for one year at the Lutheran College located there.

During an eight month sick-leave granted my father while pastor at Watertown, we lived in the Ephrata House, Nazareth, Pennsylvania, and, with my two-year older brother, Nathaniel, attended the Moravian Parochial school at Nazareth for several months. After our return to Watertown I was confirmed by my father in 1886. That fall I entered Moravian College in Bethlehem,

Pennsylvania, and after taking the six-year course of preparation for the ministry, prescribed at that time, I graduated from the Seminary in 1892. A few days later our entire class, consisting of nine men, received ordination at the hands of Bishop J. Mortimer Levering. We entered upon our respective charges soon after, some in the East and some in the West.

My first charge was Elizabeth, New Jersey, where I served for not quite three and one-half years. My father had died in 1890 and my brother Nathaniel a few months earlier—the latter of pneumonia, the former of appendicitis, called inflammation of the bowels at the time, and my mother came east to keep house for me.

In January, 1896, I was sent to Alberta, Canada, to serve as the first home missionary among the Moravian immigrants who were coming to the Canadian West. My first Canadian home was in Bruderfeld, Alberta, eight miles Southeast of South Edmonton, where a parsonage was erected early in 1896, my mother joining me in June of that year. From there I served the other settlement, Bruderheim, located about eighteen miles East of Fort Saskatchewan. Churches were built at both places. Additional congregations were subsequently organized, further churches and parsonages erected and several more ministers appointed, the first one being the Rev. W. N. Schwarze, who came to Alberta later in 1896 and made his home for the next two years with us at Bruderfeld.

On August 20, 1902, I was married at Laketown by the Reverend H. A. Gerdson, D.D., to his sister, Miss Mary C. Gerdson, a childhood playmate, whose parents were early Minnesota pioneers and belonged to my father's congregation. Together we served at Bruderfeld for seven years, my own term in that congregation lasting nearly thirteen years. In August, 1909, we were transferred

to the neighboring province of Saskatchewan, where during the next few years four congregations were organized—Dundurn, Pleasant Point, Watrous and Esk. One of our children, Cyril, was born in Alberta, the other, Mabel, in Saskatchewan.

Meanwhile, in 1903, the Canadian congregations had been created to a separate District of the Northern Province of the American Moravian Church, first as the Fifth District and then as the Canadian District. At the first District Synod, held in Bruderfeld in 1904, I became the President of the Canadian District Executive Board, which was incorporated in 1909 by Act of the Dominion Parliament in Ottawa.

On September 13, 1908, I was consecrated as a Bishop of the Moravian Church, together with the Rev. Morris W. Leibert, of the Eastern District, and the Rev. Carl A. Mueller of the Western District, it being deemed wise at the time that the executive heads of the various Boards in the three districts should be clothed with episcopal honors, to which the Provincial Synod which convened at Lititz, Pennsylvania, elected us that month. We were consecrated in the church at Lititz on the day mentioned by the Bishops.

In consequence of this election the three railroads granted me annual passes over their lines, which stood me in good stead in visiting our various churches and mission stations in the four Western Provinces of Canada. In 1914, after I was elected delegate to the General Synod in Herrnhut, Saxony, (I was elected again in 1931), I was called to the pastorate at South Edmonton (then called Strathcona) in the Province of Alberta. A new house was built for us at Strathcona on eighty-fourth Avenue, and this became the headquarters of our Church in the Canadian District.

In August, 1925, on account of the health of Mrs. Hoyler, we were obliged to return to the United States, to a lower altitude above sea-level, and after spending a year at Ephraim, which I served at interim for a year, I was called to the West Side congregation in Green Bay, Wisconsin, where we remained for 21 years. My wife died there on August 31, 1945, after an illness of a little over half a year, her mortal remains being laid to rest in the family plot in the Lake Auburn Moravian Cemetery near the little brick church built during my father's pastorate there. For 43 years she had been used of God in our church service at Bruderfeld, Dundurn, Strathcona and the many missions in the Canadian field, as well as in Ephraim and Green Bay West in the Western District. In August, 1947, after an active ministry of over 55 years, I retired and made my home, together with my daughter, in Northfield, Minnesota, thus returning, after 68 years, to live again in my native state.

About thirty years, or more than half of my ministry, were spent in home missionary work in the Canadian West, chiefly in Alberta. In many ways this was the happiest period of my life, though spent amid humble and, at times, primitive surroundings. As the first of our home missionaries to labor in the Canadian West and as the one who lived there longest, at least in the early years when automobile travel was unknown, I endured all the hardships of bad roads by summer and winter. My horses had to undergo all the discomforts of travel through mudholes and snow drifts, yet by the grace of God their owner outlasted them all. With my first horse, faithful Jack, I covered at least forty thousand miles or fully once and a half times around the world. Altogether I wore out four or five horses, three buggies, one road cart and two sleighs.

Yet the years spent in Canada were memorable in our lives, and if Mrs. Hoyler's health had held out we would probably have remained there till the end of our days. It was there that our

household was established. It was there that we met with the greatest appreciation on the part of people who themselves were going through the hardships of pioneer life. It was there that Mrs. Hoyler especially endeared herself to young and old by her sympathetic helpfulness.

To me, personally, life in the untouched west, rich in interesting plant and wild life and the amazing development agriculturally and industrially, proved exceedingly fascinating. I became interested at once in astronomy, assisted by a good three-inch glass manufactured by the French makers Bardou & Sons in Paris; early became an observer with the Canadian Meteorological Bureau, especially Northern Lights, Rainstorms, Precipitation in general, and Phenology; made collections of wild flowers and insects; made studies of birds and animals and the geology of the country, both at home and in places more remote from my house. These studies were facilitated by my extensive trips and outdoor life in the early years. An outgrowth of these studies were a series of lectures and addresses on Astronomy, Botany, Entomology, Northern Lights, and Ornithology, given at scores of places, especially after our return to the United States.

But the spiritual aspect of home missionary work in Canada proved especially interesting to us, and even more impressive. The church was the big thing in the life of the people during those early years. God gave us many seasons of revival and spiritual refreshing. Scores of people, young and old, were born again to a lively hope through the power of the Gospel. A good many young people, even in the earlier years and many more during more recent decades after we left Canada, have dedicated themselves to full-time service in the Moravian Church and are found today in the home ministry in Canada or the United States, and in the mission



fields of Alaska and Central America, or are at present preparing for such service in our College and Seminary in Bethlehem.

The first Canadian candidate for the ministry, Ferdinand Drebert, whom I ordained after I was consecrated a Bishop in 1908, went to Alaska in 1912 and is still (1949) working there among the Eskimos of the Kuskokwim District, speaking their difficult language more fluently than his own original mother tongue.

While serving in Canada I was made a life member of the British and Foreign Bible Society and for a number of years was on the Edmonton Board of Directors. During my time a Bible House was acquired for the Edmonton branch of the Society, and the son of a former Moravian minister is now the Secretary of the local Society and as such frequently visits our congregations in the interest of his work as collector of funds and for dissemination of information of the parent society in London.

Twice I was privileged to attend the General Synod of our Church held at Herrnhut, Saxony, once from Canada in 1914 shortly before the first World War, and again in 1931 from the United States. In 1943 my Alma Mater honored me by bestowing the honorary degree of D.D. on me, and on the occasion of my celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of my ordination to the Moravian ministry on June, 1942, my congregation in Green Bay West and my colleagues in the Western District remembered me in a signal fashion.

Since my retirement in 1947 I have been permitted off and on to occupy pulpits at various places. Indeed, three months were spent in Texas in connection with a preaching mission among the churches of the Czech-Moravian Brethren of that state. On July 31, 1949, while conducting the union service in one of the

Northfield churches, I collapsed at the close of the sermon and had to be taken to the local hospital, where I spent ten days. Although I had a fair recovery, my children will excuse the numerous writing mistakes in this brief and incomplete sketch of my life. I commend them and all my loved ones to the Lord, and trust that I will not become a burden to any of them. Of direct descendants I leave only my two children, Cyril and Mabel, Ethel, the wife of the former, to whom he was married in June 1934, and their three children, Carl, Robert and David Hoyler.

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**BRUEDERFELD and BRUEDERHEIM**  
**Moravian Settlements of German Russians in Alberta, Canada**

*EXTRACTS from THE REPORT OF AN OFFICIAL  
 VISITATION,*

*November 4 to December 3, 1895*

*By The Rev. Morris W. Leibert*

*Bethlehem, PA, Moravian Publication Concern 1896*

**Preparatory Note**

Excepting a few verbal changes, the following account is identical with the extracts from the report as they originally appeared.

Breaks in the narrative, gaps in detail, and fragmentary form are owing to the omission in type of purely personal, or business, or problematical matters which were submitted in the complete manuscript, and of still other facts and incidents that could be conveyed only orally.

First and last, let it be understood that, all other conditions being favorable and fulfilled, the key to the situation—the one essential to be complied with—is controlled colonization.

Published by order of the Provincial Elders' Conference, and of the Provincial Board of Church Extension, containing their action in the case, and supplemented with their call for support, these pages, which, had time permitted, might have been tenfold more voluminous, bear no private impressions merely, but have official character.

The object of the pamphlet is to furnish the information and to awaken the interest, which are required to secure means with which to prosecute this effort, and to unite the prayers of the Church for the guidance of the enterprise to a successful issue.

M.W.L.

#### BRUEDERFELD AND BRUEDERHEIM

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At the request of my colleagues in the Provincial Elders' Conference and in the Provincial Board of Church Extension, and with the cordial assent of my colleague in the pastorate—my kind associates assuming routine duties reluctantly dropped—I set out on the 4<sup>th</sup> of November, 1895, for an official inspection of our recently organized work in the Edmonton district, Alberta, Western Canada. It was felt, not only, that personal acquaintance was requisite for an intelligent control of the course of affairs there, it was deemed wise, also, to investigate matters at a season which would give the most correct idea of actual conditions, of present prospects and of possible demands. The item of expense offered a serious drawback, but on mature deliberation was regarded as fully

warranted by the exigencies of the case. Thirty days were given to the visitation; of these, three were spent at Winnipeg, two at Edmonton, five at Bruederfeld, five at Bruederheim, and fifteen in travel. Ten interviews were had with Government officials, eight board meetings and church councils and ten public religious services were held, the celebration of the Holy Communion, at each place, being the closing occasion, and thirty calls upon members were made. Going, the route led by way of Montreal; returning, it lay through St. Paul. The entire distance covered was 5,855 miles.

The problem submitted for solution contained several factors. The first was this: Here is a stream of German emigration proceeding from Russian territory, settling on Canadian soil, claiming the brotherhood of the Moravian Church in the United States—what relationship, holding in ecclesiastical and international law, can be established between us? The second was this: These colonists, relinquishing their homes because of their attachment to the Moravian Church, many of them assisted by the Dominion Government and by Transportation Companies because of their Moravian name, some reaching their free farms empty-handed and as Moravians becoming objects of charity among other denominations—what obligations, as members of the same household of faith, rest upon us? A third was this: Our Church authorities having long corresponded with them, counseled them, recognized them, approved of their organization, received their signatures to sanctioned rules and regulations, could now not ignore or disregard them, nor could they allow them without knowledge of their characters, motives, ability or loyalty to drift into the fold hap-hazard, expend money in their behalf at random, and after the lapse of perhaps a decade realize that the project was ill advised, and ought to be abandoned, if only such a thing were possible—what definite action, what decisive step shall now be

taken by our Boards? And a fourth was this: What reasons exist in Russia for this emigration, and is it likely to continue or to increase? What inducements in Canada are attracting the current of colonization thither, and are they sound and permanent? What forces have guided the movement hitherto—and what power shall direct events hereafter?

Let us find answers to these latter questions, before we enter upon an examination of the earlier queries.

More than a century ago there began to flow from Germany to Poland, out of sections of country long inhabited and over-peopled into a region whose name indicates its special fitness for agriculture, a tide of emigration encouraged by concessions as liberal as it lay within the power of papist princes to grant to Protestant peasants. In turn, and for like reasons, under the advocacy of adherents of the Greek Church, but more especially after the abolition of serfdom which left vast tracts without laborers, a similar movement set in from the crowded portions of Russians Poland toward its neighboring, heavily timbered Province of Volhynia—a word implying the prosperity of its people. Land which owing to political misfortunes had been lying there untilled for generations was leased to these German colonists from Poland at advantageous rates on twelve year terms. Populous villages speedily sprang up where forests had stood, and immense sections of this Russian Province became almost exclusively German. At the expiration of the first twelve years, the leases for lands brought under cultivation and improved, and containing the results of the settlers' thrift, were renewable at a smart advance, with prospects for purchase still in view. The course of colonization from Poland, Prussia and Silesia continued, and with the increased agricultural population there arose a demand for mechanics and artisans and for the establishment of industries. This drew into the on-flowing,

ever-widening current members of the Moravian Diaspora in those countries whence the exodus was proceeding.

About 1815 spiritual experiences were made by many of the German colonists in Poland, through the instrumentality of several earnest workers of the Moravian Church, which developed into a deep religious awakening. By the blessing of the Lord upon the devoted labors of several consecrated lay brethren a revival of the inner life was fostered in a great number of German towns throughout Poland, from which, for the last thirty years or more, awakened families emigrated to the adjacent district of Volhynia. With their temporal belongings and worldly goods, they took also their newness of life, the spiritual aims and the religious activities to which they had become habituated; yet they never constituted, while settled in Volhynia, a regular charge in our Diaspora field. But as in Poland, one of the original Provinces of the Moravian Church, there were several centers of Diaspora activity under the management and supervision of our Church, so there arose in Volhynia a number of village groups in which members of the Diaspora, engaged in secular pursuits, but under no official appointment, and without support of either Conference or Synod, sought to infuse that life into the ossified belief of their countrymen, which by the grace of God had been implanted in them; in which laudable and singularly successful effort they were cheered through occasional visits by leaders of the Polish Diaspora work.

With the increase of the number benefited, with the growth of the groups, with the introduction of regular meetings, with the circulation of Moravian literature and with the establishment of the Moravian type of life and character, came dissatisfaction with their merely nominal church membership, and the desire to form congregations of the Moravian Church. This resulted, in 1884, in

the formal severance of a large number of families from the German Established Church, and their organization into two Moravian congregations; one at Kremenka, the other at Schadura. The machinations of the clergy of the State Church, a single pastor of which in that country frequently has sole spiritual supervision of from 40,000 to 60,000 souls, soon caused the heavy hand of the Government to be laid on the churches, which resulted in the abandonment of the first named effort after a few months' trial, and which led to the emigration to Brazil of many families of the other, in 1886. At the same time, inquiries were being made into the possibility of colonizing others in a body in some part of the United States. This project proved futile.

In the meanwhile, too, the Russian Government was scheming at reducing the strength of the German population, for reasons purely political. Great difficulties had always attended the purchase by German colonists of the lands cultivated, and rendered profitable by them. Now, unless the Greek faith is accepted it is impossible to secure title to any real estate. Indeed, upon the expiration of his twelve year lease, a German may now only renew it after adoption of the Russian religion. He may lease in some distant region, thickly wooded and thinly peopled, he may settle in some Asiatic Province, or emigrate to foreign parts, but as a German, or as an evangelical Christian, independent, self-respecting, citizenship in Volhynia expires with his present twelve years' lease. Political plotting and religious bigotry clashing with the love of liberty and with living faith as thus seen to be the expelling forces, fomenting emigration. All history teaches that a reversal need never be expected, that reconciliation cannot come. The alternatives presented are simply these: either degradation or emigration. Our interest lies with those who choose the latter.

By Governments having territory to develop, by corporations having lands to sell, by companies having passage by sail or rail to offer, the countries of Europe, crushed by the heel of the oppressor, are flooded with that peculiar advertising literature which puts people on the move in one or another direction. England is rivaling the United States in its tenders of free farms and low fares. Thus the district of Alberta, in the Dominion of Canada, and particularly the Edmonton region, was brought to the notice of many of those Moravian Germans in Russia who had come to realize that Volhynia could not much longer remain their home. During my trip, I accumulated a satchelful of maps and pamphlets, documents and general literature bearing upon the district visited; as I traveled, I interviewed men occupying high official stations, and old residents of experience and intelligence. My investigation led to pleasant acquaintance and profitable conversation with various emigration officers of the Dominion and of the Railway, with buyers of pelt from Indians and trappers, with a writer for the *Reviews*, a gentleman of wide culture and intimate knowledge of the entire Hudson Bay territory, with Dr. Bryce, ex-President of the Manitoba Presbyterian College and of the Manitoba Historical Society, who has been a resident of Winnipeg from the time that it had 400 people to the present day when its population touches 40,000, with the Rev. G. A. Turk, pastor of a Methodist church, and other ministers who have had years of contact with colonists, with Mr. T. E. Morden, city editor of the *Manitoba Free Press*, who takes a deep interest in the welfare of the once Russian, now Alberta Moravians, with Mr. R. A. Ruttan, Agent of Government lands, with Mr. H. H. Smith, Commissioner of all Dominion lands west of Ontario, with Mr. L. A. Hamilton, the Land Commissioner of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and with Governor Mackintosh, who from his capital, Regina, administers the affairs of the enormous North-West Territories of Canada, lying west and north of the Province of Manitoba—organized by partial subdivision into



the four great provisional districts of Saskatchewan, Assiniboia, Alberta and Athabasca—and I am in correspondence with the Department of the Interior at Ottawa. My visit took me out upon the fields, across prairies and through thicket and copse, into the cabins of colonists recently arrived, and over the premises of settlers well established. It is from sources such as these, and from facts obtained through personal observation, that I form whatever opinions I see fit to express regarding life and law in the land toward which a Moravian tide from Volhynia has set.

For families from central or northern Europe who are obliged to break up their homes and seek new, there is neither climate nor soil in America which will suit them better than that of Alberta. For people coming with reduced resources, there is no section which contains more favorable conditions for beginning fairly, and progressing surely, and prospering permanently, than that fertile belt, which extends, in irregular lines, northwest from the Red River to the Rocky Mountains, three hundred miles wide and a thousand miles long. Lying altogether within these borders, Alberta is bounded on the north by latitude 55.7, on the south by a part of Montana, on the west by the summit of the Rocky Mountains and the 120<sup>th</sup> degree longitude. It extends east and west some 300 miles, north and south some 500 miles. It includes within its 107,700 square miles a great variety of forest and stream, of grazing and agricultural land. In it are comprised some 45,000,000 acres of the most productive soil on the continent and some of America's best deposits of coal, minerals and petroleum.

To most persons outside of it this district is nearly if not altogether synonymous with our traditional notions about Alaska or Siberia, while the fact of the matter is that its geological formation and its geographical location are such that, although during the Winter 30 degrees below zero (Fahr.) was once reached, November 28, 1883,

the cold is not severely felt on account of the dryness of the atmosphere, and whenever the temperature is low, great calms prevail, and blizzards are not known. By the 10<sup>th</sup> of April the days are warm and bright, and seeding is well under way. By the 10<sup>th</sup> of May growth commences vigorously and continues with great rapidity. Haying begins about the middle of July, and harvest about the end of August. On the high lands frosts are not experienced until the middle of September; in the valleys or flats they may be expected a week or two earlier; but they are local, and do not disturb the older settlers. During May there is no rain. June and July are showery. Summer weather corresponds to that in the State of New York. August, September and October are dry months, giving every opportunity for fall ploughing and other outdoor occupation. The rainfall in Summer is plentiful. The snowfall in Winter is light. Snow flurries come in the middle of November. Sleighing is seldom good until December. The winter months are most enjoyable. There are few days when the farmer needs to muffle up inconveniently. The climate is most healthful. No disease peculiar to the country is known. The death rate is exceedingly low.

The soil is generally a jet black, sandy loam two to three feet in depth, with a subsoil of marly clay. Wheat threshes from 40 to 45, oats from 75 to 100, barley from 50 to 70 bushels to the acre; and 400 to 500 bushels of potatoes are readily yielded by the acre—other root crops correspondingly. Cattle and colts roam without shelter for weeks during the Winter. Grazing is good the year round. Wood for building and fuel abounds. Soft coal is dug along many of the river banks and ridges. Water may be found anywhere at a depth of from eight to thirty feet. As the Summer and Fall advance a rapid succession of wild flowers, and a great

variety of berries and of game, add beauty to the prairie and furnish delicacies for the table.

Taxes are scarcely felt. There is no obstacle to prosperity. There is no oppression of the poor. The appearance of the country, as you traverse it, is that of a natural park. Yet it is no paradise. Still, if people must leave their present homes and seek others, there is no land where hard work and intelligent attention to conditions will sooner secure a comfortable living, and in process of time a competence, than the district of Alberta. All this is attested by the carloads of settlers constantly coming over from the States, and by the shiploads of colonists steadily streaming in from Europe. The trial of the territory is completed. There is no longer any question as to its suitability for successful mixed farming and its accompanying prosperity. For the intending emigrant, the question to decide is now only one of precedence in occupancy, of still securing favorable terms, and of locating most advantageously.

Individual influence alone has hitherto been advocating the emigration of our brethren from Volhynia to Alberta. Uncertainty and hesitancy, indecision and hopelessness, have mingled with the urgent invitations sent out to those who have nothing yonder to keep them and here everything to draw them. If, then, it is imperative to leave Russia and desirable to settle in Canada, the project must henceforth receive the recognition and enjoy the supervision which may be provided only by official action.

Having thus reached the field which is being entered, we must treat of the initial experiences, the state and the prospects of those who have transferred their homes, their citizenship and their church thither.

When, early in 1894, word was had in Volhynia that it would be possible to secure that relief and that chance for which they longed in Alberta, a number of families prepared to dispose of their possessions. A few of them had titles to their farms and buildings, others could sell only personal belongings. Ready buyers were waiting to be approached. The accumulations of years of toil and thrift were parted with at a shameful sacrifice. With this money and the few effects that would stand them in good stead on their way and at their destination, the long journey was begun. Some traveled with their private means, others with borrowed funds, and others still with the aid of a government appropriation made by the Dominion. Several days by stage, and several more by train, were spent in reaching the seaport of Libau on the Baltic, four hundred miles distant from Zhitomir in Volhynia. Thence the voyage by way of Liverpool was across the Atlantic to Halifax.

Disembarked, a startling discovery was made. Every one found himself to be but half as well off as he had imagined. The Russian kopek corresponds in size and value to our cent, the smaller silver coin is likewise of corresponding form and worth. The ruble is a coin of the weight and appearance of our silver dollar. Leaving Volhynia in the fancied possession of \$100, or \$400, or \$1000 or \$4000, which sums may represent the amounts, far below the real value, realized from the sale of their properties, the emigrants, when they had exchanged their money, had but \$50, or \$200, or \$500, or \$2000, as the case might be, and yet their ruble in Russia had penny for penny the purchasing power of the dollar in America. To this ugly fact is owing much of that tremendous disappointment, discouragement and distress which prevailed among the colonists on their journey across the Dominion, and during the first part of their stay in Alberta. To be caught in the crush created by such circumstances, combined, possibly, with emigration in earlier life from the fatherland, with the endurance of

a decade of Polish poverty, with the subsequent experience of another decade of Russian rigor, succeeded finally by immigration to an entirely foreign country, all this is not conducive to any surplus of resources, either of capital or energy. About one half now here, arrived upon the scene without the means to either crop their land or build themselves a shelter. Some came inadequately acquainted with the necessities and requirements of colonization at isolated points, others came with vague ideas of assistance from the powers that be, while many, of course, came fully prepared for the struggle, but all had taken the step without the knowledge of any directing Board and under no official oversight or authorized leadership whatsoever. It was at this juncture that the connection of these emigrants with the Moravian Church in the United States began, and it was for these reasons, and others growing out of this state of affairs, that the intervention of our Boards was sought and an investigation inaugurated.

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Arrived at Edmonton, Alberta, the center of the region to which this stream of colonization has turned and the field calling for examination was placed in full view. Fort Edmonton, one of the old Hudson's Bay trading posts, around which a fine town, Edmonton, having a population of 1500, has grown up, lies on the north side of the North Saskatchewan River, 195 miles north of Calgary on the Canadian Pacific Railway—nearly 3000 miles from Bethlehem. A branch railroad, completed in 1891, brings the traveler to South Edmonton, not yet incorporated, where are located some emigrant houses, and other buildings common to such a place. The Land Office for the district lies across the river. The towns are situated on bluffs two hundred feet high. Between them in gracefully sweeping curves winds the river, clear as the blue sky overhead, and true to the meaning of the word—swift current—its channel a thousand feet wide. Communication in

Summer is by ferries, in Winter by the ice bridge. During the winter season the ice runs swiftly with the current, and the ferries can not be operated, so the traveler crosses in a rowboat handled by a lusty oarsman. South Edmonton lies up stream, westwardly from Edmonton proper. The two towns are three miles apart on the roads that must be traversed. Both have post offices and banks, hotels and stores, churches and schools, mills and private dwellings and each a newspaper, that serve to dispel all ideas of newness. By the road followed, our upper settlement is distant from South Edmonton in a northeasterly direction about 48 miles, while the lower colony is distant from South Edmonton in a southeasterly direction about 5 miles; hence the distance between the two, Bruederheim the more northerly, and Bruederfeld the more southerly, is upwards of fifty miles.

Having previously, by personal inquiry, located the nearest colony of Russian Moravians on the recently vacated Indian Reserve Papaschase, which is reached over the so-called Hay Lake Trail, I was conveyed thither, together with my luggage, on Wednesday, the 13<sup>th</sup> of November. As we jogged and jolted along on the farm wagon, following the windings of the trail, now over its smoothly worn old ruts, and again through some stretch of stumps and corduroy, closed around at times by forest and underbrush and a moment later out upon the open prairie, it was evident from the free and unreserved conversation carried on with the brethren who escorted me, that, though the trials and hardships and self-denials were not forgotten nor altogether overcome, so far as things temporal were concerned the brethren in this section had passed through the critical period, but that they were by no means satisfied with present provisions for the soul life, nor with their prospects of church connection. These latter had furnished them the motive for forsaking old associations, seeking homes distant from their own a third of the globe's circumference. Their willingness at middle life

to begin anew the struggle for that material bread which no man can do without, was based entirely on their hunger for that spiritual bread which alone can satisfy forever. There is good land for the plough, and they know that abundant harvests will reward their manual labor, but there is also a deep soul soil—and it is to this that attention is being paid by various denominations. At present services are few, but representatives are on the ground, ready to take what they can get, laying the foundations for the day when the City of Edmonton will be populous, and the adjacent country prosperous. The question is now awaiting our answer: Shall we proceed with the work we have begun, shall we organize and develop our own, our own not by birth, but by choice, and by choice made at a sacrifice, and establish here a center of Moravian Church life and activity? In all my stay and work at Bruederfeld, I observed that the single query calling for reply, which the people wish disposed of before proceeding with the development of their farms, and with the culture of their religious life, is: Shall we have, as we supposed we should when we sold our humble but well-ordered European homes and came into this waste place, shall we have here a real Moravian congregation, and a real Moravian minister? So privileged, we shall forge forward with strong hope; disappointed in this, we must drudge on hopelessly.

The congregation at Bruederfeld was organized June 27, 1895. A set of rules, sanctioned by the Provincial Elder's Conference, were on that day signed and officers elected, as the official records show. In order to become thoroughly acquainted wherever time permitted me to go, I visited fifteen families in their homes. Four business meetings with the official brethren and with the congregation were held, and five religious services were conducted, the latter on Thursday and Saturday evenings, and on Sunday morning, afternoon and evening. Our brethren at Bruederfeld at this time number about twenty families, 50

communicants and 100 souls. Each family is settled on a quarter section, i.e. 160 acres of choice land purchased at an average of \$3.25 per acre, payable in ten annual installments. They are compactly located on adjoining farms; each half a mile square, or two miles around; thus being separated only by their own intervening fields, and yet all the way from half a mile to five miles apart.

When first meeting these brethren and sisters amid those surroundings and occupations that everywhere characterize the early settler's life, there was inevitably a certain diffidence, then a brief apology for appearances, then some humorous reference to the plight each had succeeded in placing himself into, then a simple, often wondrously strong expression of Christian faith and confidence in their Lord and Saviour for immediate wants and future blessings—and after that there would follow the most frank and cordial converse on personal matters, as also on the congregation in process of formation. None could close their eyes to the fact that ample returns had rewarded their labors since their settlement a year and a half, a year, or half a year ago; and that all had occasion to render thanksgiving unto the Lord. After their arrival on the quarter section they had severally selected, the first thing that had to be done was to provide temporary shelter. This was quickly accomplished by cutting poles, and setting them up in the fashion of either a square or circular tent, and covering this frame with brush. Some of these huts still remain. By their side now stand the present dwellings of the settlers, cabins built of logs, either of the round or squared trunk, hewn or sawn, as the builder had time, taste or tools, the crevices chinked with clay. The largest dimensions are 16x24 feet, though not a few are but 12x14 feet. Some of them have a floor and ceiling of board, cut by hand from the spruce in the adjoining woods; others have but a few boards lying loose, others have clay, and still others the plain earth for the



floor. When there is a ceiling it is barely high enough to allow one to stand upright. In more cases there is no ceiling, simply the roof poles running from the sides to a slightly higher ridge pole. These were covered with hay, and this again with slabs of sod four inches thick, or with reed or straw thatch. In the center of most of these cabins there is a shallow board-covered excavation slightly suggestive of a grave; this answers temporarily the purposes of a cellar. In most of the cabins there are but two windows, in many only one, each window less than two feet square. Underneath the window at the farthest end stands a table, on either side of that, in the corners, are the bunks or beds. In a third corner there is room for a stove, alongside of which a spinning wheel may stand, the fourth being reserved for the door, which is hung on wooden hinges and closed with a wooden latch, with the traditional latchstring hanging out. Pulling the string the latch is raised, thumping on the door as it swings into the single room, the visitor is in the presence of the occupants, sometimes two—sometimes twelve. In many of the houses there are no chairs. Stools hewn of plank, a wicker trunk, or a chest, must for the present afford all seating accommodation. On the walls are a few nails for every-day clothing, for a few of the most necessary utensils, and a rack for some spoons and knives and forks, for a few plates and cups and saucers. A rifle may rest upon the rafters; a flail, or some other bit of half-finished, home-made article for use on the fields or in the house, may be stowed on some projecting beam or peg; a lamp and a pile of devotional books may find lodgment upon the other window ledge. In many instances the stable communicates directly with the cabin, there being but one entrance for the two. By day the house is deserted. All are at work upon the fields, cutting sod, burning brush, breaking new land, ploughing, sowing, reaping, digging wells, building additions and extensions, cutting timber for larger stables, gathering material for the decent house whose site

and whose arrangement are all in the mind and purpose of the settler, where he will presently *live!*

Up to this time the services have been held at the home of a brother who when he built his house did so with such occasions in view. He is a fine specimen of the better class of these settlers, an intelligent, sturdy, whole-souled, energetic man of sixty, rejoicing in fifteen years' experience of the second birth. Before the hour appointed he brings from out of doors the round blocks and rough sawn hemlock planks with which seats for the congregation are improvised. One by one the families assemble. After an hour the house is filled to suffocation. Every seat is taken. All the standing room is occupied. As they cross the threshold, the worshipers fold their hands and bow their heads in prayer. Silently the moments speed until all who may be expected are orderly arranged. A striking, impressive sight it is. Devotion, expectation, are written on every feature. The men are huddled in a heap by themselves, giving the better places to the mothers and the little ones. Remnants of Russian robes are mingled with the prevailing German garb in picturesque profusion, lending to the whole an aspect at once outlandish and decorous. Several can start and carry a tune. Members of a scattered trombone choir, twelve men strong, are among the colonists. A tune need but be indicated by its number and the proper note is instantly struck. All sing. They do it heartily and correctly. Some of our old chorales brought cheer to the hearts, and tears to the eyes of the congregation as our worship progressed. And then there prevailed a responsive touch, that grateful receptivity which ever appeals to the minister, enabling him to throw himself into his work more wholly than can ever be done when it is felt that in many a heart there is not hunger but hardness, in many another not devoutness but formality, and in many others still not Christian cordiality but cynical criticism. Across furrowed fields whose pitchy loam vies in blackness with

the darkness of the moonless, starless night, through thickets in and out of which wind the old Indian footpaths, over new roads in which upturned roots and prostrate trunks interfere sadly with safety and with speed, come the brethren and sisters with their children by their sides and with their babes wrapped in shawls. They are impelled to attend the services provided through stated lay activity or chance ministerial visit, by the spirit that led them from their native villages in a fair and dear land—noble-ruined and priest-ridden—loyalty to that Church in which they found life and peace, in which they seek usefulness and holiness. And what are these people willing to do, what can they do, towards getting what was the one purpose of their emigration—a Moravian congregation?

My brethren, I went to these people on whose history and condition I have been dwelling so long for religious and business purposes; and the business transacted, based on our common faith and aims, proceeded from several propositions that were made after a great mass of information, part of which only can here be detailed, had been gathered. These people are keen and practical, earnest and liberal. After careful consideration, and by formal vote, they agreed that should the Moravian Church in the United States decide to continue them in its connection and to develop the work in their behalf, they would do these things:

Four members at Bruederfeld will give five acres each at the point where their farms meet, which is a township cross-road in Townships 51 and 52, on Ranges 23 and 24, respectively; on which the congregation will erect a church and a parsonage, chiefly of log, to be completed in the Spring of 1896, and in connection with which a cemetery, a grove and a pasture will be laid out.

The members will buy a quarter section, a farm of 160 acres, which will be cultivated by the congregation to raise a revenue for defraying the expenses of the church establishment.

As soon as competent, they will deed the entire property, 180 acres, with all improvements they may make thereon to the Moravian Church of the United States.

Realizing the necessity of numerical strength and the desirability of immigrating at once if at all, they will encourage and assist to the utmost extent of their ability the colonization of the land in their vicinity by their relatives and fellow believers in Volhynia.

They express themselves as desirous of living out to the full the faith and practices of the Moravian Church, as its history, synods and authorities prescribe.

They changed the name of their settlement from Bruederthal to Bruederfeld, in order to avoid confusion, and will enter into negotiations with the Government for the establishment among them of a Post Office by the name of Bruederfeld.

Having secured unanimous and enthusiastic affirmations on these propositions, the opinion was ventured that the Provincial Elders' Conference and Board of Church Extension would not only in all likelihood supply them with a pastor, but also for the first year mainly provide his support.

The other congregation, Bruederheim, organized a month earlier, on May 6, 1895, was reached after a day's journey by farm wagon on Tuesday, November 19. The route taken was over the Victoria Trail which winds, after the fashion of such highways, in peculiarly pleasing lines through and around the copses, up the

hillocks and down the hollows, over the ridges and across the prairie, scarcely ever for a hundred yards ahead in sight. Much of the land on either side is held by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company at a fixed price, and by speculators waiting for a rise. Homesteaders must go farther from terminal towns, and away from the beaten track. There, while not so convenient, the land is as good, and the prospects are as fair as anywhere. Small game is plentiful along the trail, traces of bear and deer are not infrequent, which with an occasional glimpse of either a coyote or an Indian looking on the intruder with puzzled, yet harmless mien, impresses a person with a lively sense of the frontier depths to which his journey has extended, and testified to the silent force of that modern migration of nations which is welding the diverse races of the old world into the State and Church, the social and commercial life of the new world. As the night gathered more densely round us, it became an entertaining and instructive spectacle to watch far in the distance ahead or away to your side a little light, oft times the only possible light in the single window of a rude log cabin which, out of sight of all other human habitations, was to some family the dearest spot on earth, and that served, like lanterns on the buoys in harbor channels, to guide the wayfarer toward his home.

We came upon Bruederheim, the other Moravian colony, and a Post Office, eighteen miles beyond Fort Saskatchewan, the northernmost post of the Canadian mounted police. The membership, some twenty families, also aggregating 50 communicants and about 100 souls, live in the two adjoining Townships 55 and 56, on Range 20, each on a quarter section, or 160 acres of land, from half a mile to five miles apart. These brethren have entered as homesteaders, and after three years' residence and cultivation will receive full title deeds to their property. The families were nearly all visited in their homes. It

required thirty miles of traveling to call on 15 households. Many of these we found in poorer circumstances than those at Bruederfeld. Almost all of these brethren have enjoyed the aid of the Canadian Government. Their present surroundings and their experiences are of the same sort as those of the brethren at Bruederfeld. Impoverished and empty-handed, through Russian oppression, they came prepared to undergo both suffering and reverses, but trusting eventually to form a Moravian congregation, and therein to worship their Lord in the manner that was dear to their hearts. Everywhere the one lament was voiced—if only we be not cut off from the Moravian Church, if only we may here grow into such a congregation as we once thought within our reach in Volhynia, when the bigotry of the Church, and the Tyranny of the State crushed out its life. For the sweet ways and holy joys, for the blissful fellowship and the spiritual help of the Brethren's Church, we came hither. We pray God we may not be doomed to disappointment after all this sacrifice, all this journey, and all this hardship. As at Bruederfeld, so five services were held at Bruederheim, on Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday evenings and on Sunday morning and afternoon. Four meetings with the officials and the membership for the transaction of business were also held. Not only the services, the observations also, the experiences, the work and the results had at the settlement first visited were duplicated at Bruederheim. The propositions adopted by the congregation at Bruederfeld were communicated and most cordially endorsed. With only such modifications as their circumstances called for, the membership unanimously agreed to the same things their brethren had pledged. That is, briefly rehearsing:

The members at Bruederheim will secure the forty acres appropriated by Government from Homestead land to every

congregation requesting it, for the uses of a church, a parsonage, a cemetery, a grove and a pasture.

They will erect thereon a church of hewn logs, of such size and style as shall be submitted by the authorities—if provided with those things which they have not the cash to purchase—such as hardware, windows, and shingles.

They will secure a quarter section of land, 160 acres, place it under cultivation to raise a revenue for the expenses of the church establishment, and as soon as competent will deed all property intended for church purposes to the proper corporation.

They will submit to whatever arrangement may be proposed for their direction, and for their development into a Moravian congregation, and they heartily and unanimously agree to foster emigration on the part of acquaintances and others with a view insuring numerical strength and permanence for their organization.

Doing this, it was intimated to them, also, as likely that the Provincial Elders' Conference and the Church Extension Board would mainly support in their colony for one year at least the best pastoral supply that could be secured.

This intimation about the first year's support is merely a personal opinion. It has no official value. Should friends of Church Extension ask: Where are the means to come from? I answer: Directly from the pockets of the people who love the Lord. If the sorrowful experience is impending that down at the bottom of those pockets there is no more money—not a cent—and that there are no means available which may be used to enter these opened doors, then I am prepared to advocate some radical measures—desperate, they may seem. When I think of the Home Mission

fields, not a few, that we have been cultivating for a score of years, nay, nursing these two score years, when I recall some which for years on years have been drawing support from the general treasury--when I remember some churches having a voice in Synod who are keeping their heads above water only by forcing their minister's under--when I reflect upon pastors consecrated to the proclamation of Truth who will sooner request a change or a dismissal than assume the responsibility of testifying to the death either by accident or murder of the charge they are serving—I tell you, my soul waxes wroth within me. The Moravian Church is not slow to enter upon new, difficult, expensive work—on the contrary we are enterprising, sometimes daring, even reckless in beginning projects; but we are too set in the face of failure; we are stubbornly disinclined to acknowledge mistakes. We are not ready enough to discern a blunder, not wise, often not manly, enough to retire, to surrender, when we are played out or beaten, when we stand no show, or are not wanted. We must abandon this dogged perseverance. We must discard the fallacy that we are destined—though we act as if we were doomed—to go only to the destitute, or to take up only with forlorn hopes. We must put ourselves into positions in which we may both grow larger and get stronger, that we may do greater and better things in the Kingdom. I ask you, has not the day come to discontinue the operations which are yielding us no returns and to find and furnish fields in which we have a living chance? Is it not time for some one to act as church coroner, to impanel a jury and to render a verdict on the fact and cause of the death of some congregations whose bodies may still be intact, but whose life has gone, whose spirit has flown? If— if—the Church really can not do more than it is doing, then— then—I say, let us have a funeral, a tearless funeral or several, somewhere, and soon. Certainly nothing, especially not corpses calling for an inquest, nothing should prevent the Church from entering upon a territory where it is yearned for, where there is



room, where there is prospect. Properly cultivated, I see in these Canadian colonies the nucleus of an additional district of the American Moravian Church, I would call it the Alberta District. In twenty-five years, for the settlement of this continent is proceeding more rapidly now than was the case a century ago, we may have there as strong a Moravian center, as we now have in Wisconsin, or in Ohio, or in New York, or in North Carolina, or in Pennsylvania, excepting only the endowments. Having spent a month on this subject exclusively, my mind is made up. I say this, and I say it to my colleagues in office, I say it to my congregation, I say it to the Provinces of the Church concerned, I say it in the pulpit and in the papers, publicly and privately: Colonize along the valley of the North Saskatchewan with Moravians such as have come from Volhynia; place an energetic, efficient minister in charge of the work there at once, and wait on the Lord—wait, I say, on the Lord. Wonders will be wrought!

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The official report of the visit to Alberta by the Rev. Morris W. Leibert was received by the Provincial Elders' Conference and by the Provincial Board of Church Extension, at whose request this important visitation was made, on December 7, 1895. A wide field of usefulness and activity is presented to the Moravian Church among the Volhynian colonists in Canada, and the duty of endeavoring to develop the same is imperative. In accordance with previous action taken by the Boards the following resolutions were adopted on December 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> by the Provincial Elders' Conference and the Provincial Board of Church Extension:

1. *Resolved*, That, having assumed the care of the Moravians in Alberta, we will develop the work as a special enterprise of the American Province under the following regulations:

- a. The churches organized will have no representation at any Synod until formally accepted as congregations of this Province by the next Provincial Synod, to which the Provincial Elders' Conference may invite their pastor, if such action be justified by the progress of the work;
  - b. Though not entitled, as yet, to the same privileges as given to other churches of this Province, they accept the decision of the Provincial Church authorities as binding on them, and require every new member to subscribe to the Brotherly Agreement and Rules and Regulations of the several congregations, as has been done by the present membership;
  - c. The members of these churches shall faithfully carry out the plan agreed upon for building churches and parsonages, and providing and cultivating land for the support of their church establishment, and make it their aim to become self-supporting as soon as possible;
  - d. The funds needed for the support of this enterprise shall be raised by special solicitation addressed to our churches in all the Provinces of the Unity, any surplus over and above the assistance required by the Alberta congregations being used to enable other needy Moravians in Volhynia to join their brethren in Canada;
  - e. After this work shall have become self-supporting, any balance remaining on hand shall be applied to the establishment of Moravian churches at other points in the Dominion of Canada, or donated to the work of Church Extension elsewhere.
2. *Resolved*, That a pastor be appointed to the charge of the work in Alberta as speedily as possible, and the Church Extension Board will advance whatever funds may be needed.

3. *Resolved*, That the report of Bro. Leibert's visitation be published in pamphlet form, and be distributed as widely as possible, with the action of the Provincial Elders' Conference and of the Board of Church Extension, as also a brief appeal for donations appended.
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It is perfectly plain to all that there are rather too many causes in the Moravian Church clamoring for help. But it will not be denied that the claims of Bruederfeld and Bruederheim, in Alberta, at this time presented, can as little be disregarded as they might have been hastened on, or as they may be deferred.

Many persons are laboring under obligations which will prevent them, willing as they otherwise are, from lending a hand in this work. Others may be able to render but little towards its support. Yet there are good people enough who by combining their resources and placing them at the disposal of the Provincial Boards, which have taken charge of this enterprise, will make it possible to begin operations forthwith.

We ask all who see the advisability of seizing the present opportunity, and who are in a position to help this cause without harm to other objects, to be both liberal and prompt. If cheerful, generous givers will this year by special effort raise two thousand dollars, they will provide the impetus needed for beginning this new work which to all appearance is so full of promise. Let those who propose doing anything do something now. Sums so given may not be as large as it is desirable to make them. More may easily be given later. Let those who can vote an appropriation, or those who can hand over a cash amount without much personal inconvenience, or with a considerable degree of satisfaction to themselves, do so without delay.

The funds thus received will not be devoted to the promotion of ecclesiastical pauperism. Under the blessing of God they will go to help those who are helping themselves. Our Church colonists in Canada provide the land, erect the buildings, encourage emigration, organize activities—and we simply step to their side and say” “Brethren, we will give you whatever you, well nigh submerged in early settlers’ struggles, cannot afford, roofing, hardware, furniture and the like; we will see to it that for a year or two, at least, the pastor sent you will be assured a suitable salary; we will place in his possession the means he may require to traverse this field of labor, and to serve the membership.”

It is for the Moravian Church to indicate whether this shall be done; and to determine whether it shall be done immediately, enthusiastically, and thoroughly. The case is fully before the Church. Either let there be a silence that may be felt, or let there be a ringing response, sharp and strong, swift and sweet. The people are the pilot. Let the signal be: “Go ahead!”

The Provincial Elders’ Conference requests that all gifts for Bruederfeld and Bruederheim may be sent to the Rev. Robert de Schweinitz, *Treasurer*, Bethlehem, Pa.

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It only remains to announce the fact that the Rev. Clement Hoyler has accepted appointment as pastor of the congregations at Bruederfeld and Bruederheim. Severing his pastoral relations at Elizabeth, N.J., on January 12, he will be in full charge of the Alberta work by the middle of February, 1896. In this new and wide field of activity, Br. Andreas Lilge, licensed to preach, will serve as pastor’s assistant.

**HISTORY OF THE MORAVIAN CONGREGATION,  
HOBBEMA, ALBERTA, CANADA**  
**Laying of the Cornerstone of the Church**

Around the year 1920<sup>1</sup> some land was again sold by the Erminskin Indian Reserve<sup>2</sup> west of Hobbema, Alberta, Canada. A number of younger people from the Bruderfeld congregation began to settle here among other German speaking people. The ministers of the Moravian churches in northern Alberta continued to serve them, attending to their spiritual needs, visiting them from time to time and holding services, first in the Manito School and later in the homes of the people.

On Ascension Day May 17, 1928 people gathered at the home of Br. & Sr. Emil Neumann<sup>3</sup> for a service and to vote on organizing a congregation under the chairmanship of Br. Charles A. Gutensohn, the president of the Canadian District of the Moravian Church in America.

At the time the following people belonged to the Hobbema Moravian Church: Br. & Sr. (Alma) David Fenske with their children Kenneth and Lloyd, Br. & Sr. (Martha) Helmund Fenske with their daughter Phyllis, Br. & Sr. Emil Neumann<sup>3</sup> with their children Otto, Edwin, Albert, Walter, Oskar<sup>4</sup> and Leander, Br. & Sr. (Martha) Wilhelm Rentz with their children Glen, Elmer, Harvey and Elwin<sup>5</sup>, Br. & Sr. Emil Hobke with their children Erika and Hedwig, Br. & Sr. (Mary) Louis Riewe<sup>6</sup> with their children Alice, Ernst, Sam and Wilbert, also brethren August Walscheske<sup>7</sup>, Emil and Alexander Vogel, Ludwig Kolke and Reinhold Fenske.

At this meeting Br. Friedrich Schmidt with his children Lillie, Zenta and Richard, Br. Fred Walscheske<sup>7</sup> and Br. & Sr. Rudolf

Raatz with their children Arthur and Heinz were received into the congregation.

Thus the congregation started with 26 communicants and 19 children at the time of its organization.

The people there all declared themselves in favor of organizing a congregation, and elected Br. Friedrich Schmidt as elder and Br. August Walscheske<sup>7</sup> and Emil Neumann<sup>3</sup> as trustees and Br. Helmund Fenske as Treasurer.

At the same time the building of a church was discussed, but no definite decision was reached.

The newly organized congregation was committed to the charge of the minister at Heimtal, Br. Hermann Schulze, with the understanding that he visit it regularly every two weeks. The minister at Heimtal took up his work here on June 3, 1928 as the congregation assembled for the service at the home of Emil Neumann<sup>3</sup>. At this occasion also Br. Danneberger of Nicaragua, the missionary of the Canadian District, was present and extended best wishes to the newly organized congregation in his address. He then reported of his work in Nicaragua through a slide presentation.

Services continued to be held in the home of families until Oct. 18, 1928, when after a church council session, during a conversation between the pastor and Br. Emil Neumann<sup>3</sup> the latter offered his granary to hold services in. This fact was reported to the brethren present for consideration. During a discussion after a meeting on Nov. 4, at Riewe's<sup>6</sup> home they decided to take advantage of Br. Neumann's<sup>3</sup> willingness to have his granary used and arranged as a place of worship. On Sunday, Nov. 18, 1928 this building was

dedicated to God's service as a place of worship and was made full use of. In the years following, the services were held there regularly. Only the Christmas programs, for which more participants were hoped for than this "small church" could hold, were still held in the Neumann's<sup>3</sup> home, who gladly accommodated them each time.

The desire for their own "real" House of God remained until the Church Council on Jan. 18, 1932 decided to go ahead with the building of a church.

Already in 1931 a ½ acre land was bought from Br. Rudolph Raatz for a cemetery and with the funeral service of Sr. Elsa Walscheske<sup>7</sup> it was dedicated and used.

At the time one acre of land was purchased from Br. Friedrich Schmidt on which to build a church. The brethren, one with the other, promised their support for a certain sum and declared themselves willing to help in the building whenever possible under the leadership of an architect. The hope and wish was expressed that support would be gotten from the other congregations in the district and from the District Board. Mr. Schacht was procured as leader of the building plan and as architect. Lumber was ordered but delivery was delayed by the owner of the mill until the summer, due to rain and washed out roads. The building begun on Monday July 4, 1932 and on Thursday July 14, 1932 the cornerstone was laid.

Since the organization of the congregation, Br. Ephraim Martin with his son, Gordon, were added to the list of members, Elsa Walscheske<sup>7</sup> and Lydia Vogel were received, Lilian Martin was baptized as an adult member, Zenta Schmidt was confirmed, and the children Clifford Fenske, Ivy Rentz, Raymond and Georgina

Vogel, Melvin and Milton Fenske, Mabel and Wilma Riewe<sup>6</sup>, Gerald Fenske, Herbert and Erick Kolke, Bernice Fenske, Ursula Raatz and Roger Martin were baptized. Also Elsa Walscheske<sup>7</sup> and the children, Herbert Kolke and Elvin Rentz have been called home to eternity.

That is the membership of the congregation on the day the cornerstone was laid, 29 communicants and 33 children.

With the laying of the cornerstone, a sample copy of the "Bruderlieder" was laid with it which had been used for the services till then, a Daily Text for the year 1932, a Catechism of the Moravian Church used for the instruction of confirmands, a copy of the Bruderbotschafter, a copy of the English paper "The Ponoka Herald", a copy of the German paper "Der Courier" and this original copy of the history of the congregation until the cornerstone laying.

The pastor of the congregation is Br. Hermann Schulze. The members of the board are Br. Friedrich Schmidt as elder, the brethren, Louis Riewes<sup>6</sup> and Reinhold Fenske as trustees, and Helmund Fenske as treasurer. The members of the Canadian District Board are Br. Charles A. Gutensohn, president, Br. Wm. Wensel, Br. Edw. Kittlitz and Br. Adolf Hoppe. The members of the Provincial Elders' Conference are the brethren S. H. Gapp, Joseph Weinland and Karl A. Muller. The members of the Unity Directorate of the Brethren's Church, Br. Kenneth Pohl of Herrnhut, Br. A. Ward of London and Br. ? of Waterton.

The Premier of the Province of Alberta is the Hon. J. E. Brownlee, the Governor, the Hon. Walsh. The Prime Minister of the Dominion of Canada is Rt. Hon. R. B. Bennett, and the Governor General is Lord Rossborough. The Prime Minister of Great Britain



is Sir Ramsey MacDonald and the King of Great Britain is His Majesty King George 5th.

Thus, the cornerstone was laid in its place on a solemn occasion on Thursday, July 14, 1932 in the name of the Triune God with the upward look to God, with the prayer for help, refuge and blessing in the further building of the church, and with the prayer that when it be His holy will that the church be finally completed and that in the future God's Word be proclaimed there. He may bestow His divine assistance with the aid of the Holy Spirit, so that in this House of God souls may be blest and be brought to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls, and find the way to everlasting bliss to which He may help us through His grace. May God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost guide us to that end, Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> Actual year 1923 according to the local history book of Ponoka area

<sup>2</sup> Actually the Samson Indian Reserve No. 137. Most of the original settlers on surrendered Indian Reserve land only referred to the land as surrendered Indian Reserve. The Ermineskin Reserve is just north of where the Newman farm was located. Since few Samson Indians lived west of the CPR Rail line they may have ascertained that they were on Surrendered Ermineskin Reserve.

<sup>3</sup> Original German spelling Neumann was Anglicized to Newman.

<sup>4</sup> Anglicized to Oscar Newman.

<sup>5</sup> Possibly

<sup>6</sup> Original German spelling Riewe changed to Reeves.

<sup>7</sup> Original German spelling Walscheske changed to Walcheske.