

## A HISTORY OF CANADIAN MORAVIAN MISSIONARY INVOLVEMENT IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

*This paper was commissioned by the Canadian Moravian Historical Society to recognize the tremendous contributions that Canadians have made to Moravian mission work in Central America and the Caribbean. The author, the Rev. Wilfred L. Dreger, and his wife, Lorraine, spent the majority of their lives as missionaries in Nicaragua and the Caribbean.*

The Moravian Church in the Twentieth Century has continued active development of the mission work it began so humbly in 1732. The denomination is still sending missionaries and workers to Central America, the Caribbean, Alaska, Labrador, and Africa. This paper will look at the large number of those workers who went out from Canada.

The Moravians came to western Canada in 1894 from Volhynia, Russia, now a part of the Ukraine. German Moravians had first settled in Russia in 1765, at the invitation of Catherine the Great, but by the late 1800s the Russian government would no longer allow the Moravians to establish independent churches. The Volhynian Moravians were seeking religious freedom in a land where there was no state church, where the government granted full liberty of conscience to all creeds, and where Moravians could freely found churches of their own.

They found such a place in western Canada. The Canadian government was seeking immigrants to settle there, and granted the new colony a block of land about 45 miles northeast of Edmonton, Alberta. The first settlers, numbering over 225 souls, arrived in early 1894. The first Moravian congregation in western Canada was organized May 6, 1895, and called Bruederheim. A settlement near Edmonton was called Bruederfeld, and was organized as a congregation on June 27, 1895. The Provincial Elders' Conference in Bethlehem called a home missionary, the Rev. Clement Hoyler, to serve the settlements in December, 1895.<sup>1</sup>

### **Motivation for Mission Service**

The majority of the early members of the Canadian District were always interested in the spread of the Gospel. Some of them told how, back in Volhynia, they used to take up collections for Moravian missions at their monthly Diaspora gatherings. Some of the leaders used to show Rev.

Hoyler old receipts of monies sent to the Mission Board at Herrnhut, Germany.

After the work had become established in Alberta it was not difficult to continue this missionary interest. Monthly missionary meetings were introduced and held regularly for many years. The first annual mission festival was observed at Bruederfeld in June 1904 in connection with the first Synod of the Canadian District. That year the offering amounted to \$276 and the following year the offering was \$436. The sum was repeatedly exceeded, and shortly before 1920, Bruederheim held the record with over \$900, gathered in a single day for foreign missions. This tremendous amount of money represented sacrificial giving when one realizes that people received only a few cents for a dozen eggs or a bushel of grain, and only \$25 to \$50 a year for working as a hired hand. According to the statistical table published for 1920, the Canadian District gave nearly \$3000 to foreign missions and ranked highest in its per capita contribution for foreign work.

The Canadian churches were among the first in the American Province to adopt the plan of supporting their "Own Missionary," under which the District provided for the support of a personal missionary representative on the mission field. In 1905 the Rev. Theodore Reinke of Nicaragua was assigned to them. His portrait and a brief sketch of his life were placed in every home of the district. The plan resulted in greatly increased interest in, and contributions for, the mission cause. The principle of adopting a personal worker in the field was taken up also by the Christian Endeavor Union and the Sunday Schools in Alberta.<sup>2</sup>

One of the greatest sources of missionaries proved to be programs the Canadian District developed for its young people. In 1914, when the first Canadian Moravian Young Peoples' Society was organized, little did anyone realize what the future years were to hold. On that special occasion a *Jugend Tag* (Youth Day) was held at one of the churches in the district. Each successive year, the *Jugend Tag* was observed with many young people coming from near and far in their horse-drawn lumber wagons or buggies, and later, Model T's, to gather for a time of Christian fellowship and spiritual enrichment.

Gradually, a need was felt to lengthen the one-day rallies to several days. Finally in 1937, a three-day conference was held in New Sarepta. The Silver Jubilee of the young peoples' work in the Canadian District in July, 1939, marked the first five-day conference. The host congregations in the beginning willingly accepted the responsibility of caring for the physical needs of a hundred or more conferees each year. But with the lengthening of the program, it was becoming a difficult task, and serving the needs of so many became a problem. In 1940, a camp designated for larger gatherings was rented at Gull Lake, Alberta, from the Prairie Bible Institute.

In the fall of 1939, a five acre plot of wooded land at South Cooking Lake, 25 miles east of Edmonton, was offered to the Moravians. This plot would fill the needs of the Canadian Moravian Church very well. It was centrally located, approximately between the congregations of Bruederheim, Edmonton, Heimtal, Bruederfeld and New Sarepta. By the end of 1940, the Moravian Young People of the Canadian District were the proud owners of what was then the only Moravian-owned camp in America.

Camp VanEs, as it was called (after the first letters of the Latin inscription on the seal of the Moravian Church: *Vicit Agnus Noster, Eum Sequamur*—Our Lamb Has Conquered, Let Us Follow Him) was the site of annual youth conferences beginning in July, 1941. Between conferences, during the year, "Rally Days" were held in some congregations, which helped to rekindle the camp spirit, to renew friendships and spiritual fervor, and to promote Christian fellowship and spiritual enrichment. It was through such rallies and conferences that full-time workers for Christ and the Church were inspired.

Another influence that molded the spiritual temperament of the Canadian District were the Bible schools, especially the Three Hills Bible School, in which the evangelical and missionary spirit was very strong. This Bible School, also known as the Prairie Bible Institute, and others in Alberta and Saskatchewan, have helped some of the pastors in their spiritual life and have trained others to work in the local churches as Sunday School teachers and young people's leaders. Several men who later went into the ministry or

became missionaries were students in Bible Schools, where they obtained a good Christian foundation before going to College and Seminary. This evangelical spirit influenced the Canadian Church for years to come.<sup>3</sup>

### **Canadian Moravian Missionary Involvement**

Given the history of mission interest and emphasis that many of the immigrants had before coming to Canada, and living in a religious and evangelical atmosphere, it is only natural that many would be strongly influenced to volunteer for mission service. Such was the case. Over the next three-quarters of a century there was a long line of stalwart souls who said with Isaiah, "Here am I, send me." There were many who volunteered for service in Alaska as well as other places, but this work will be confined to our missionary involvement in Central America and the Caribbean.

#### ***Samuel Wedman***

The missionary work in Nicaragua from its inception in 1849 had been staffed, financed and directed from Herrnhut, Germany. During World War I normal connections with Herrnhut ceased, both in terms of finance and manpower. But as early as September, 1914, emergency arrangements for carrying on missions were worked out between the international board at Herrnhut and the provincial executives. Accordingly, Moravian work in Alaska, California, and Nicaragua was entrusted in large measure to Americans. The Society for Propogating the Gospel (S.P.G.) became the administrative board for these fields, and a new era began.<sup>4</sup>

It was at this time that Samuel Wedman, the first of many Canadian Moravians, volunteered for missionary service in Nicaragua. Samuel's father, Michael, was born August 29, 1848 in Gurka, Warschau, Poland and his mother, Louise, was born in 1852 in Volhynia. They were married in 1871. Upon their immigration to Canada in 1892, Michael, Louise and family applied for homestead status. Michael and Louise were charter members of the Heimtal Moravian Church organized in 1896.

Samuel, the last of seven children, was the only one born in Canada, on June 16, 1893. We do not have any informa-

tion about Samuel's early and formative years. However, he must have been present at the evangelical services held in Heimtal. In addition, having the portrait of their "Own Missionary," the Rev. Theodore Reinke of Nicaragua, in his own home must have made a profound impression on a lad 12 or 13 years of age.

Samuel studied at Moravian College and Theological Seminary and was ordained a Deacon April 21, 1918, by the Rt. Rev. J. Taylor Hamilton. He married Alice Steininger of Coopersburg, Pennsylvania. On September 27, 1918, they began their missionary service in Nicaragua. A good portion of their ministry was at Sang Sang Ta on the upper Rio Coco or Wangks River.

Unfortunately, Mrs. Wedman suffered poor health and in September, 1921 they returned to the United States and went to Winston-Salem, North Carolina, for medical treatment. It quickly became evident that the treatment would take some time, so Samuel proposed to spend that time making a survey of the church in an effort to increase giving to the mission budget. By March of 1922, Mrs. Wedman felt that she could not return because her condition had not improved, and they asked to be released from mission service.

The field in Nicaragua was experiencing an acute shortage of missionaries because some of the German missionaries had been sent home during World War I and there had been no replacements. In view of this shortage, Rev. Cruckshank, Superintendent of the Moravian Mission in Nicaragua, pleaded for the return of Bro. Wedman, even without his wife. Help was desperately needed to keep the Junior High School in Bluefields from closing. Even though the S.P.G. had given the Wedmans a call to Calgary, Alberta, they revoked it and urged Samuel to go back to Nicaragua. In September of 1922 Samuel left to serve in Bluefields and Mrs. Wedman followed shortly. By March of 1923, it became apparent that Mrs. Wedman's poor health would not permit them further service in Nicaragua and so they tendered their resignation. They returned to the United States on May 3, 1923.

### ***Dorothy Stoltz Weingarth***

It was nearly 16 years before the next representative from the Canadian District entered Moravian missionary service in Nicaragua, in the person of Dorothy Elizabeth Stoltz, a member of the Edmonton congregation. Dorothy trained at the Royal Alexandra Hospital School of Nursing, graduating with an R.N. degree in April, 1938.

While she was in school, Dorothy met James Gordon Weingarth, a student at Moravian College and Theological Seminary. James visited Edmonton during several summer vacations to promote the Palm and Pine Missionary Society. While there he met Dorothy and their friendship blossomed. They were married in Edmonton on December 28, 1938.

James developed an intense interest in foreign missions during his College and Seminary years, so it was only natural that they should volunteer for service in Nicaragua. They sailed for Bluefields January 29, 1939, where James would work as pastor of the English-speaking Bluefields congregation.

At this time malaria was still rampant in Nicaragua, especially on the East Coast. The usual method of treatment was by administering quinine. Unfortunately, James had an enlarged spleen as a result of an accident in Canada, and Dorothy was allergic to quinine. Before they left for Nicaragua both were told that extensive use of quinine could have serious side effects. As fate would have it, by August, both suffered such severe attacks of malaria that it was necessary to charter a plane to take them to a hospital in Managua. On being informed of their health problems, the S.P.G. granted permission for them to return home immediately and reservations were made to sail August 26. However, because of their love for the work and the shortage of workers, they cancelled the reservations and wrote the S.P.G. that they would stay until a new recruit arrived. The Provincial Board did not consider this action wise, and fearing further health complications, persuaded them to return home without delay. The Weingarths very reluctantly sailed from Bluefields October 14, 1939.

### *John and Violet Befus*

God leads in marvelous and mysterious ways, often leading by closing doors as much as by opening them. Such was the case with John Befus, born in Calgary, Alberta, January 29, 1913. His home congregation was Didsbury, 60 miles north of Calgary. He writes, "During my boyhood days, I often wondered about the type of work I might eventually be doing . . . I knew it would not be the ministry, for the ministry had absolutely no appeal to me. I think this was partly true because I was aware of some of the difficulties encountered by several of the ministers I knew. However, in my late teens, following a personal encounter with Christ at which time I accepted Him as my personal Saviour, it was my privilege to attend a Mission Conference at the Prairie Bible Institute at Three Hills near my home. I greatly enjoyed the speakers of the day, but the thing that impressed me most was the chorus, 'I will make you fishers of men.' "

"Driving home that night, a distance of about 60 miles, that chorus kept ringing in my mind. As I awoke the following morning and went to milk the cows, that chorus continued to ring in my mind. It was then that I began to experience a strong conviction that God was asking me to leave the farm and enter His service. This impression, or voice, seemed so definite that despite my inner fears about finances to continue my schooling, I told the Lord I would obey Him if He provided the finances for the necessary schooling. This he did! Having made this decision, a deep peace settled over my life."

Upon entering Prairie Bible Institute, the conviction became quite clear that the Lord was calling John to China to serve under the China Inland Mission (C.I.M.). After graduation in 1937 he applied, but was told to wait one year because of the China-Japan war. It was suggested that he get another year's experience in the homeland and then apply again.

It happened that the Edmonton Moravian Church was without a pastor, so the Canadian District Board requested that John serve the congregation for one year. Completing his service at Edmonton in August, 1938, John re-applied to the C.I.M.. but the war situation had not changed.

However, the mission representative suggested that John's place of service was with the Moravian Church, a feeling shared by others of the C.I.M.

Acting upon this advice, John volunteered for service with the Moravian Church and applied for enrollment at the Moravian Seminary in Bethlehem. He completed a special 2-year course at Moravian, graduating in May 1940. It was while at Seminary that John volunteered for work in Nicaragua. He was ordained a Deacon on May 26, 1940, in the Borhek Memorial Chapel of Moravian College and Seminary by Bishop J. Kenneth Pfohl.

John sailed from New Orleans on September 18, 1940, landing in Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua. After spending about six months studying the Miskito language in Bilwaskarma and several months studying Spanish in the mining town of Bonanza, he received a call to La Luz, another mining town in the region. La Luz was a rather new missionary outreach post. The dwelling (it would be a misnomer to call it a parsonage) for the first two and a half years, while he was single, was a split bamboo shack with dirt floors. During that time he built a church, a fairly large schoolhouse, a chapel, and made the initial preparations for the construction of a parsonage. In June, 1943 he returned to Canada for a wife and helpmate in the person of Violet E. Stelter, a member of the Bruederheim Moravian Church.

The romance leading to their marriage began back in 1937, at the first three-day Young Peoples' Conference held at New Sarepta, when John's eyes were drawn to Violet during a game of softball. John was the catcher for the South and Violet played first base for the North. Their relationship developed during the year that John served the Edmonton Congregation. It flourished steadily over the years and was nurtured by occasional visits from John, but mostly by correspondence.

Violet was born May 14, 1921, in Lamont, Alberta. She received her public education in Lamont. The Bruederheim Church provided most of her social and meaningful activities. Of some of those activities she writes, "In 1933 a spiritual revival swept through our Moravian Church in Bruederheim, spearheaded by the Rev. Fred Anhorn. Old and young sat spellbound as he pleaded with lost souls. The

Holy Spirit knocked on my heart's door and Jesus became my Saviour. Confirmation instruction under the Rev. Fred Wolff was a very meaningful period in my life. Then each summer the challenging Youth Conference helped mold my life. It was at the Didsbury Youth Conference in 1938 that I dedicated my life for full time mission service."

"All this time the Palm and Pine Mission Society was growing in each church as the young people learned more about missions. My goal was to become a missionary nurse in Nicaragua, so I began a Scrap Book which contained pictures and articles about Nicaragua and our Mission Hospital at Bilwaskarma. Nurses' training began in 1940 at the Lamont Nurses' School and at the end of three years I was on my way to Nicaragua. However, in the meantime the Lord pointed me to my life's partner, so I wasn't going as a missionary nurse. I was going as the wife of missionary John Befus, who had pioneered alone in La Luz for two and one half years."

John and Vi were married in the Bruederheim Moravian Church on September 4, 1943. After outfitting themselves for their new home and work abroad, they left November 1, 1943. John returned to the work he loved and Vi entered into a whole new world of activities and experiences. In reminiscing about them she writes, "What changes were before me! Some seemed almost insurmountable. How I thanked God for my Christian parents, friends and dear ones back home in Alberta. They helped pray me over the rough spots."

The trauma of change, emotionally and culturally, can be almost overwhelming at times. Just coping with housekeeping or learning to cook on a tiny wood-burning stove can be a difficult and trying experience. On one occasion the Rev. and Mrs. Adolf Danneberger came with Frank Jones, a photographer from Winston-Salem, to make a movie entitled "Parsen Wita." All the meals were cooked on this little stove and Vi did the best with what there was. All went well until the second evening when she was trying to coax the smoking wet wood to burn—but to no avail. As she was placing new kindling and paper to make another start, some tears of frustration dropped on the paper and then she realized that she wasn't alone. Bro. Danneberger

put his arm on her shoulder and said, "*Marta, Marta, du machst dir so viel sorgen.*" (Martha, Martha, you are concerned over many things.) Then the tears really flowed and he comforted her as a father would. Things went better after that.

There were many joys those first years in the little house, even though it consisted of four small rooms whose floor boards were far enough apart so that one didn't need a dustpan when sweeping the floor. After their daughter Ruth joined the family, October 13, 1945, the pain of loneliness disappeared when John would have to be away any length of time.

John had full responsibility for the work at La Luz. There was supervising the construction of the mission house, done by workers not too skilled at the carpentry trade. On a Sunday there was an early Sunday School class to be taught in Miskito Town, a mile's walk away, followed by English Sunday School at the church. A Miskito worship service was held at 3 p.m. and then an English service at 6:30 p.m. There were mid-week services and catechetical instruction in both languages, plus board meetings and Christian Endeavor. John was also director of the day school. Every quarter a pastoral visit was made to the outstations of El Salto and La Loca, a day's walk or mule ride of about 22 miles through the mountains. The trips were not easy. But it was so very satisfying to hear the hearty singing of the worshippers without benefit of an organ and to know that the visit was appreciated. With such a full schedule one can see that John did not have time to get lonesome.

After eighteen months of building, they finally were able to move into their new and spacious home. Now Vi needed a dustpan when she swept the floor and she didn't have to shove a lot of things under the bed for lack of storage space. Six months later a call was received from the Provincial Board requesting them to move to Bilwaskarma. John was to be pastor of the congregation and, yes, to build another mission house. The move took place in June 1947.

Besides the pastoral work, John also had the responsibility of the Instituto Biblico (Bible School) since the Rev. and Mrs. Howard Stortz, who were in charge of the Instituto, were going on furlough. As the Stortzes packed up their

belongings, the Befuses unpacked theirs in the old mission house—which had wide cracks between the floor boards and peep holes in the walls. The night before the Stortzes left, Vi had her first introduction to a long-legged hairy tarantula. Such is life in Nicaragua!

Bilwaskarma also had happy memories. Vi's days were filled with housekeeping, teaching in the mission day school, teaching the Instituto boys melodies in the hymn-book as well as teaching some of them to play the organ. Lay pastors' wives were also taught to sew and some to read. The Befuses served at Bilwaskarma from 1947 to May 1954. It was while they were on furlough during this period that Gerald joined the family, born June 28, 1948, at Lamont, Alberta.

John and Vi returned to Alberta for their regular furlough of one year in May, 1954. The next month the arrival of Timothy, born June 19, at Lamont, completed the family. In a turn of events, however, they were requested to forego their furlough and to help to relieve an acute shortage of ministers in the Canadian District. Following the two-year pastorate at the Bruederheim Moravian Church, the Befuses returned to Nicaragua in July of 1956.

Puerto Cabezas, their next parish, was full of challenges because it was bi-lingual, English and Miskito, in every phase of church life. Since Puerto Cabezas had several large buildings in which to house the mission day school, it also became the logical place to hold Young Peoples' Conferences, with attendances of over 250. Providing classroom space, sleeping quarters and feeding so many was indeed a challenge. It was also the site of many Synods through the years. These were always extremely busy and exciting times for the missionary family.

One event that stands out in a special way was the visit by President Luis Somoza. Many elaborate plans were made by the American Colony to receive and entertain him at a reception—complete with "States-Side Turkey." President Somoza also visited the Moravian School for a brief reception. During all this time the President was most gracious in posing for pictures. John and Vi took several pictures of each other with the President, only to find later that not one of them turned out. They did find some consolation

later, however, when John said, "The Lord knew that we couldn't handle the pride that these pictures would have encouraged."

In due time John and Vi became aware that Tim was having a learning problem, serious enough to seek professional help. They returned to Canada in June, 1959, where John was called to serve as pastor of the Moravian Church in Vancouver, B.C. Tests determined that Tim had "expressive aphasia," a learning disability. Though this was a heavy blow to them, the compelling desire for continued missionary service persisted. Being armed with renewed hope and faith that they could cope with Tim's condition, they again returned to Puerto Cabezas in the latter part of 1962 to take up the work they loved so dearly.

For a time it appeared that Vi could successfully continue teaching Tim, but after several years progress slowed. The Befuses were advised to return home where special education facilities would be available for Timothy. They left Nicaragua in mid 1966 and assumed the pastorate at Philadelphia Third Moravian Church on November 6, 1966.

Of their ministry in Nicaragua they write, "We spent the best years of our lives in Nicaragua. They were happy years. So many beautiful people touched our lives. The Lord led each step of the way for over 20 years. We feel well rewarded for our efforts and are thankful to God for the wonderful privilege and opportunity He granted us. We only wish we could have done more."

### *Wilfred Dreger*

The writer, Wilfred Lawrence Dreger, was born January 29, 1921, at Edmonton, Alberta. Even in my grade school years while ploughing the fields I would often dream of going to far away places. But I quit school half-way through grade nine because I had decided to be a farmer.

Our pastor at the Bruederfeld Moravian Church was the Rev. Samuel Wedman, the former missionary to Nicaragua, who frequently told of his experiences there and of the need for others to serve in this day. In the summer of 1937, shortly after I had quit school, the first three-day Young Peoples' Conference was held at New Sarepta. At the consecration service in the church, the activities, the thoughts

and the quiet working of the Holy Spirit during the week culminated in my decision to serve the Lord. The call was very specific; to serve in Nicaragua. Later the next year I returned to school.

It was during my years at Moravian College and Theological Seminary that I met my wife-to-be, Lorraine A. Roth from Nazareth, Pa., a student nurse at St. Luke's Hospital in Bethlehem. The occasion for our meeting was a Nurses' Graduation exercise at which the College and Seminary quartet sang. When we parted that night neither of us expected to see the other again, but Divine Providence brought us together. In due time we were married, but not before my determining that she would be willing to go to Nicaragua with me.

During the latter years at school, and as further preparation for service in Nicaragua, I studied the Miskito language under Bishop Kenneth G. Hamilton who had served there many years earlier. I graduated from Seminary in early September, 1945, and was ordained a Deacon by Bishop Vivian Moses on September 9. Lorraine graduated with a nursing degree in early November. On November 21, 1945, we were married. We left that same night by train for Edmonton so that I could introduce Lorraine to my family and friends before going to far-away Nicaragua.

The two months in Canada and the next two months in Nazareth were spent outfitting ourselves for work and life in Nicaragua. The Rev. and Mrs. A. O. Danneberger were home on furlough at the time. Since we were scheduled to work among the Miskito Indians, they instructed us to take mostly cotton clothes, kerosene lamps, old-fashioned irons and many other items for use in areas where there was no electricity.

The original plan for us had been to work among the Miskito Indians in Northern Nicaragua. But because of the illness of Bro. Theodore Reinke and his imminent return to the United States, we assisted in Bluefields for seven months until Bro. and Sr. Danneberger returned from furlough.

Our shipment of personal effects arrived after several months of waiting. One trunk in which we had packed some of the more valuable items had been broken into and our

hearts sank thinking that possibly the set of silverware (almost impossible to buy at the end of the war), which my parents had bought for our wedding gift, had been stolen. Upon opening the trunk we discovered that everything had been gone through, our much sought for umbrellas and rain-coats had been taken, but fortunately the silverware set was complete. God was good!

It was also here that we were introduced to life and living in Nicaragua; electricity from 6-10 p.m., no refrigeration, buying meat, fish, fowl and other perishables each morning, cockroaches, rats, termites, leaf-cutting ants which can strip a tree of its leaves overnight, sending out laundry which was washed in a creek and hung on barbed wire fences to dry, tropical heat and humidity, storing rain water in wooden tanks and boiling it for drinking purposes, sleeping under mosquito nets and taking every precaution to avoid contracting malaria. But we also saw beautiful sunrises over the lagoon and spectacular sunsets among the coconut trees. We met people who were not so nice, who stole and swore and suffered from alcoholism. But we also met many beautiful and loving people whose friendship we cherish forty years later. We met many of the most devout Christians you will find anywhere, whose faithfulness and devotion are still in evidence today.

In January of 1947 we went to the gold mining town of Bonanza to fill in during the last months of the Rev. Robert Iobst's furlough. It was our first solo charge. To hold services in English and Miskito and to be confronted with Spanish on occasion was a bit overwhelming. It was, however, a perfect preview and preparation for what was to follow.

In May we moved a short distance to another gold mining town, La Luz, Siuna, where John and Vi Befus had pioneered a work for six years. The dual language and multiplicity of services as described by the Befuses continued and the pace even quickened when the Alamicamba parish was added. This required quarterly visits to those congregations as well as administering the sacraments, flying to Alamicamba and then visiting the outstations by paddle boat (pit pan) up and down the Prinzapolka River. On one such flight I was kidding the pilots, who were transporting diesel fuel at the

time, what an easy job they had—flying 20 minutes and then sitting around for an hour or two while the plane was being loaded or unloaded. On these trips the pilots would carry just enough aviation fuel to make a round trip so that they could carry a bigger payload. As we were approaching Alamicamba on this flight, the weather closed in very suddenly and we could not find the dirt airstrip, which resembled so many other open spaces in the savannah. After darting here and there at tree top level, we finally reached the Prinzapolka River. The pilots knew that going up the river and passing over the town of Alamicamba, the air strip would be just to the right. And so it was. As we took a hard right, the Lord opened up a cloud, and we dove in for a landing. After the landing the pilot came to me somewhat nervously and said, "See what an easy job we pilots have, and what's more, we have only about 10 minutes of gas left!"

While serving at La Luz, our older son, Will Jr. was born in Bilwaskarma, May 5, 1948. Being the firstborn, he was the joy of our life. He was also very popular with the school children. Alice Hooker, a teacher at the day school who roomed with us, often took him to classes where he learned his first ABC's at the tender age of one year.

While we were at La Luz I developed symptoms of ulcers and began to question whether this was the role for which I was best suited. There was a restless feeling. I did not feel a joy in the work which I knew I should be experiencing; nor did I feel fulfilled. I knew what I would like to do and what I believe I had been preparing for from my earliest days on the farm. Quite simply it was to serve as Warden of the Mission in Nicaragua. From the first days of arriving in Bluefields and seeing the need for major repairs to buildings and for a full-time treasurer, I had felt that here was a niche I might fill. This conviction became so compelling that I finally requested Bro. Howard Stortz, the Superintendent, to come to discuss the matter. Imagine my surprise to learn that, without my knowledge, the Mission Board had already selected me for the position of Warden. From that point on I never doubted that I was doing exactly what God wanted me to do.

I was challenged by my new job in many ways. The construction of the new Colegio Moravo, a 10-classroom, two-story reinforced concrete building, was already in progress with about 60 workers on the payroll. I had not been formally trained in bookkeeping, but with the patient help of Miss Elizabeth Marx, the former Warden, and with learning the subject by teaching accounting to a high school class, it did not take long to get into the full swing of the Warden's work. This was being all things to all people—repair and construction of buildings, purchasing agent, bookstore manager, accountant, electrician, plumber, mechanic, welder, stewardship program developer, church worker, etc., etc.

There was always more than enough to do. Though these were happy years, I was torn between family and work. Our second son, Dennis, was born December 27, 1950. I frequently returned to work after the boys' bedtime in an effort to fulfill both responsibilities.

In the earlier years it was most difficult to buy certain things in the more remote areas, so pastors would often ask the Warden to purchase items for them. Many were the times when we would buy shoes according to the size of the foot outlined on a piece of paper or cardboard. For those who needed simple reading glasses, a set of about eight different magnification strengths was circulated around the field. They would try different strengths until they found the one best suited and then order a pair of glasses by number. It worked!

During those years Lorraine was a tremendous help to me. At a time when having secretarial help was unheard of, she saved me hours and hours of work writing out monthly statements for all the missionaries, pastors, lay pastors and congregations. At the peak seasons of opening of school and Christmas she helped clerk in the bookstore. Though she never served officially as a nurse in Nicaragua, she virtually had her own practice attending to many Indians from Rama Cay, an island ten miles down the lagoon from Bluefields, as well as older members of the Bluefields congregation. Lorraine loves people. It was only natural that she was involved in Sunday School, Women's Fellowship and Vacation Bible School, especially on Rama Cay.

Though there weren't too many opportunities for recreation, both of us liked to go fishing out to sea in our cedar dugout (dori) powered by an outboard motor. We didn't have to make up stories of all the big fish that got away. There were trips when we brought home up to 40 Spanish mackerel and several yellow-tailed jack, enough to give many away and still have plenty left to fillet, cure and smoke for our own use. That was living! It was well worth getting sea sick, which I did many times. And I can't resist telling of catching an 85 pound tarpon, measuring six feet long, on a hand line. The scales measured three inches across. We couldn't land it in the dori, so we beached it instead.

In March of 1949, the Moravian Mission in Nicaragua celebrated the 100th Anniversary of its founding. For this occasion, General Mission Conference was held in Bluefields where the first missionaries landed. The Mission Conference felt that we should begin thinking about becoming an independent Province of the Unity. Ten-year goals were established whereby we could attain the ultimate goal of being a self-supporting, a self-governing and a self-propagating work by 1980.

It was an exciting time to be involved in Missions, being part of the steady march and progress toward reaching the 10-year goals—so many more national ministers and fewer missionaries, more participation by nationals on various boards and less by missionaries, more of the provincial budget raised on the field and less subsidy from Mission Board. By the mid 70's we were well on the way to achieving the goals set before us with the exception of the financial, because of the extremely poor economic situation on the East Coast. Yet even here remarkable progress was being made due to the faithful and sacrificial giving of our members.

At this juncture the Moravian Mission in Nicaragua became a Province of the Unity and the mission was incorporated as Iglesia Morava en Nicaragua. I severed my ties with the church, organizationally, to become the business representative of the Board of World Mission.

In September of 1978 Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, editor of the opposition newspaper *La Prensa*, was assassinated

by the Somoza regime and the political situation in Nicaragua became very tense and volatile. The Rev. and Mrs. Gary Harke in Managua, Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Frack in Puerto Cabezas and we in Bluefields were the only Moravian missionaries remaining in Nicaragua. Our good friend, Col. Fritz Halsall, then Administrator of Customs in Managua, started sending us messages that we should be ready to leave by boat from Bluefields on short notice. In March, 33 years of service in Nicaragua, well over half our lifetime, came to a close. We arrived in Miami on March 15, 1979.

Our leaving was not without mixed feelings. We were obviously sad to leave the people of Nicaragua whom we had grown to love and appreciate. And while we almost felt like family, it was also obvious that we would never really learn all about their culture. How thankful we were that by the time we had to leave, the work of the church had been placed completely into the hands of the nationals, who had several years of leadership experience to their credit.

During our furlough-time in Bethlehem, Pa. we received a call to serve a three-year term on the Island of St. John in the U.S. Virgin Islands, beginning November 1, 1979. This was a dual charge with one congregation at Emmaus on the East end of the island and the other at Bethany on the West end. These charges were separated by about 10 miles of mountainous roads. Both congregations had been without a resident pastor for several years. Emmaus, where we would reside, was described to us as a dying congregation. A little more hope was held out for Bethany, closer to the town of Cruz Bay. That description didn't sound like a very exciting prospect for the next three years, but we went, accepting the call as a challenge from the Lord.

From the first day when we arrived at Emmaus and saw the dilapidated and unused manse, we determined that this was one building that we would like to see restored to its original use and purpose. We soon learned that recently several attempts had been made to draw up restoration plans and to raise money for the project, but nothing had come of it. Not to be daunted by this, we began in earnest talking to government agencies, Moravian Church Boards, architects, or anyone who might give us directions on how to

get the task of restoration underway. Armed with lists of foundations that might provide grants for such an undertaking, Lorraine began writing to dozens of them. Laurence Rockefeller, who had visited Emmaus with some friends a year earlier, responded with a gift of \$20,000. Another family which winters on St. John each year gave \$6,000 in a matching gift, and with many, many other contributions she raised about \$100,000. The V. I. Conference of the Moravian Church pledged \$125,000. Together with money the congregation had raised earlier, there was enough to cover the estimated restoration cost of \$225,000.

The work progressed slowly. It was not without many difficulties in securing the proper materials and skilled workmen. But each week we moved a little closer to its completion. Much like Moses seeing the Promised Land but not being able to enter it, so we saw the manse 95% completed but never had the pleasure of living in it before we left on April 15, 1983 for Winston-Salem. The restored manse was dedicated 3 months later.

Our missionary service came to a close in the area where Moravian Missions began over 250 years ago. Our brief service at Emmaus and Bethany in the Virgin Islands was like icing on the cake of our 38 years of missionary involvement. The beauty of the islands and the privilege of working with a very loving and lovable people, made our labor there a most enjoyable experience. Even after five years of retirement we still have those moments of homesickness for our people in the Islands and Nicaragua. The friendships and personal ties of over half a lifetime cannot be forgotten so quickly. Our prayer is that God will continue to bless the work and those with whom we labored for so many years, even as our lives were blessed and enriched by our sojourn among them.

## Missionary Service Extends to Honduras

### *Jane Wedman*

The influence which parents exert upon their children has been well documented throughout history. Such was the case with Jane Elizabeth Wedman, the elder daughter of Samuel and Alice Wedman, former missionaries to Nicaragua. Jane was born at Lamont, Alberta, August 30, 1926. She received her grade school education at the Colchester School two miles East of the Bruederfeld Moravian Church where her parents were serving at the time. She attended Strathcona High School in Edmonton, graduating in 1944. Jane then enrolled at the Edmonton General Hospital School of Nursing, graduated in 1948 and received her nursing degree from the Alberta Department of Education.

The Rev. Samuel Wedman was a great advocate of missions, not only through his preaching, but also through his contacts with young people at their weekly meetings and conferences. The recounting of his personal experiences and his quiet winsome manner of presenting the challenge of missions profoundly influenced many. It therefore is not surprising that Jane volunteered to follow in her parents' footsteps.

Jane accepted a call from Mission Board to serve on the staff of Hospital Ruth C. S. Thaeler in Bilwaskarma, Nicaragua, on January 19, 1949. She arrived at Bilwaskarma March 30. Here she worked for the better part of a year, which provided a splendid opportunity for becoming accustomed to life and work in the tropics and prepared for her greater responsibility. On February 20, 1950 she left for Honduras, having been appointed the sole nurse at a small clinic in Cauquira, a small village on the East Coast of Honduras. This post afforded her a wonderful opportunity for dedicated service, though often under very trying and frustrating conditions. At times she and the clinic were not equipped to handle some of the difficult cases which had to be referred to Ahuas or Siguatepecue. In April, 1952, having completed her 3-year tour of service, she returned to the United States.

### *Grace Hoppe Marx*

The parsonage and church of the Bruederfeld Moravian Congregation are situated only a quarter of a mile from the Adolf Hoppe home, so it was only natural that pastors would visit there frequently. One pastor insisted that he could smell the fragrance of their potato pancakes frying all the way to the parsonage. Visiting missionaries at the church almost always enjoyed a meal or two at the Hoppe home. These were some of the earliest childhood memories of Helen Catherine Grace Hoppe, whose parents were active in all church affairs: Sunday School, choir, governing boards and young peoples' activities. Her mother, Catherine Stoltz, had trained to be a missionary, and though she was prevented from going into mission service due to illness, nevertheless she was a most avid home missionary.

Grace was born April 13, 1920 at Edmonton, Alberta. She attended the rural grade schools of Millwoods and Colchester and subsequently lived in Edmonton with her relatives while attending Strathcona High, graduating in 1939.

Summer camp and Young Peoples' Conference for 11 consecutive years played a major role in the direction of Grace's life. She says, "There life-long friendships were made; in fact I met my husband-to-be at Camp VanEs. There also the veneer and superficiality of relationship with Christ were stripped away and the basics were emphasized. In 1937 at New Sarepta, I made a personal commitment to the Lord. Again, several years later, at Camp VanEs, I felt a definite call to foreign mission work as a nurse. The Holy Spirit did a great work in many hearts during those camp experiences."

Two pastors especially were influential in Grace's life. The Rev. Robert Kreitlow required a three-year confirmation study course, which proved invaluable to her in later years. The Rev. Samuel Wedman answered many of her questions, often encouraging her and pointing her in the right direction. When asked what she wanted to be when she grew up, Grace always had the same answer: "I want to be a nurse and maybe a missionary nurse." In 1939 she entered the University of Alberta School of Nursing. Taking

the five-year course, she was able to get her R.N. diploma as well as her Bachelor of Science degree in nursing in 1945.

The Lord led in wondrous ways as her path and that of her future husband, Sam Marx, converged. Sam was born to missionary parents at Poo, Bashahr State, India, November 25, 1918. At the age of one the family came to the United States. While Sam was studying for the ministry at Moravian Theological Seminary, Bishop H. S. Gapp made known the urgent need for additional missionaries to serve in Nicaragua and Honduras, an option which he kept in mind. After earning his Bachelor of Divinity degree from the Seminary in 1942, Sam served as pastor of the Moravian Church in Vancouver, British Columbia for two years. Sam's brother, Werner, who was serving in Nicaragua at the time, urged him to consider coming to Central America not only as a missionary, but as a doctor. This Sam did. He enrolled in the medical school at McGill University, Montreal, Quebec.

Sam and Grace were married at the end of Sam's first year of medical study, after Grace finished her study at the University of Alberta, on June 16, 1945 at Bruederfeld by the Rev. Samuel Wedman and Bishop Clement Hoyler. Sam continued his medical studies at McGill University, earning his M.D. in 1948.

On April 29, 1949, Sam and Grace sailed from New Orleans in answer to a call from Mission Board to serve at the Thaeler Hospital in Bilwaskarma. Later they acted as Superintendent of the hospital while Dr. and Mrs. Thaeler took a well earned furlough. After serving two years there, Sam and Grace began their medical work in Ahuas, a very remote village in La Mosquitia on the East Coast of Honduras. Little did they know that for the next 30 years their hearts and lives would be entwined with those of the Miskito people of Honduras and Nicaragua.

The Marxes began work in 1951 in a two-room thatched clinic, assisted by one nurse. After about four years a new clinic was constructed. Later the clinic was expanded to a large modern building, housing an operating room with air conditioning, a laboratory, four examining rooms, pharmacy, two X-ray machines and with a staff of 15. There were many changes in their lives at first, but two in

particular stand out: learning two languages (Miskito and Spanish) at the same time, and striving to win the confidence of the Miskito people who never before had an American or white doctor.

Grace often worked with her husband, but with a family of five children to care for and a household to keep running smoothly, it was not always possible to do so. Rick had arrived in Montreal in 1947, Steve made his appearance in Reading, Pa. in 1949 while Sam was interning there. In 1951 in Bilwaskarma Benno arrived. Cathy was born in Ahuas in 1953 and then later in 1957 Julie completed the family.

As the children grew up and went off to school, Grace spent more and more time in the clinic—doing lab work or helping in the pharmacy. Later she was in charge of the operating room and central supply, along with being hostess in their home to many and varied visitors. This latter responsibility was an enriching one, for the Lord sent some wonderful people to the “end of the earth” in Ahuas. A count in the guest book revealed that Grace and Sam had provided hospitality to over 100 visitors in 1972.

Numerous volunteer workers came out to help in various ways. Periodically doctors and specialists came for a week or two to give of themselves and their special expertise. Medical students from at least a dozen medical schools sat at their table and often discussed things of the Lord. Nurses from various countries became part of the family. Peace Corps singles or groups shared their table. World Relief personnel visited many times and Miskito and Spanish people came to the home daily. Mission Aviation Fellowship built two houses and two hangers before they left in 1984. Their families, too, became dear friends.

Back in the 50's before there were many well-maintained airstrips, one pilot radioed that he had no brakes (Sam was a passenger on that plane) and instructed Grace to run out to the airfield to mark a large hole with a white sheet. The pilot was able to miss the hole and to stop the plane before it hit the bushes at the end of the airstrip.

In 1952, one of their tests of faith was so great that it still is most vivid in Grace's memory. She relates, “Our youngest son, Benno, at 15 months, became deathly ill with bacillary dysentery. Sam had given him the last parenteral

fluids he had available. Benno had been vomiting and had severe diarrhea for two days and nights and everything humanly possible had been done for him. But we prayed. Several months previously we had been told that the M.A.F. would send out a plane with a radio sometime but we had no clue when that would be. Well, that afternoon about 4:30 p.m. we heard a motor. The pilot, Don Berry, came in with the radio technician, Red Brown. We rushed out to tell him about Benno and after a season of prayer, the pilot decided that the best plan would be to fly Benno to the Siguatepeque hospital at dawn. We all prayed much that night and though Benno hardly responded in the morning, he and I flew to the hospital. There they had the necessary I.V. fluids and medicines and our prayers were answered."

In the late 50's there was a border dispute and warfare between Honduras and Nicaragua over the area of La Mosquitia. At this time Sam made a trip upriver to do medical and pastoral work. A contingent of the Honduran army was camped close to the clinic fence and the M.A.F. airstrip. The day that Sam was to return, Grace suddenly became aware of soldiers standing around the house and clinic and especially at the gate where Sam would enter coming from the river. When Sam got near the clinic the soldiers stopped him, searched one of his rubberized duffel bags and then allowed him to enter the house. The Honduran government, hearing that the Marxes had worked in Nicaragua previously, placed Sam under suspicion because Sam had travelled in the disrupted area.

Another time while Grace was alone with the children, they all went to church on a Sunday morning. Upon their return at noon she was astounded that the electric generator was running. No one was at home. All doors were locked. Then she saw the culprit. They had a parrot, Lorita, that loved to walk on the wires between the house and the generator building. The remote starter button was in the kitchen, and when Lorita chewed the insulation off these wires, they were shorted, causing the generator to start. Life in Ahuas produced many surprises!

Sending their children off to school was the most difficult experience for the Marxes. At first there was boarding grade school at Siguatepeque in the western part of Honduras.

From there the children had to continue high school studies in the United States. These were heart-rending experiences. Through all the years Sam and Grace tried to write weekly letters to their five children. During the last years in Honduras they were able to have "ham radio" contacts with the children frequently.

Grace concludes, "The Lord has been so good. Only with His help, His wisdom and guidance, were we able to function as we did. Our constant prayer is that new hearts and hands will continue to come forward to do this special work for Him."

### *Lorraine Sampert*

Lamont, Alberta, was the birthplace of Lorraine Shirley Sampert, born July 7, 1928. She was a member of the Bruederheim congregation and received her high school education in Bruederheim, graduating in 1946. Moving to Edmonton, she studied for one year at the Christian Training Institute, completing the course in 1947. Later that year Lorraine enrolled at the General Hospital School for Nursing, receiving her degree of R.N. in 1950. For the next two years following graduation she worked at the Charles Camsell Hospital for Indians and Eskimos in Edmonton.

While no individual person influenced Lorraine to enter mission service, missionaries who came to speak at church and at Camp VanEs did create much interest in missions. Her involvement with the Indians and Eskimos at the Charles Camsell Hospital especially instilled a sincere desire in her to serve the Miskito people in Honduras as a nurse. At about this time the need for a nurse at the Ahuas Clinic came to Lorraine's attention. She made application, and to her delight was accepted for service there.

Lorraine arrived in Honduras August 16, 1952. She spent the first month on a crash course in the Miskito language before going to the Moravian clinic at Ahuas.

Experiences of missionaries run the gamut from the ridiculous to the sublime and from abject sadness to sheer joy and hilarity. Lorraine likes to relate one experience, "One Sunday morning Austria Allen, my Miskito Indian helper, and I were on our way to attend the morning service. The narrow log bridge over the creek was wet that

morning and in spite of stepping very carefully, I slipped off and fell into the mud below. Austria began to laugh and I realized how amusing I must have looked with my white skirt and shoes covered with mud. Too stubborn to walk all the way back home to change clothes, I merely cleaned up in the creek water and proceeded to church. There were grins on the faces of the people as we walked into church."

Lorraine says, "I feel so privileged to have lived amongst the Miskito Indian people. I shall always remember their joyous singing and their deep faith. I gave so little of myself, compared to all I received from these warm, friendly people of God."

Lorraine returned to Canada October 7, 1955, having completed her three year term of service in Honduras.

### ***Lorenz and Nora Adam***

Lorenz William Adam was born February 20, 1925. He grew up on a farm ten miles south of Edmonton. The Heimtal Moravian Church was his home congregation. The Lord was an integral part of his life for as long as he can remember, and at about 13 years of age he made a personal commitment to Christ.

Influencing his call to Christian service was an active youth organization as well as former missionary, Samuel Wedman, who was Lorenz's pastor in his later teens. The annual mission festivals intrigued him with the possibility of foreign mission service. Camp VanEs and the active youth program of the Canadian District strongly influenced his life, and for that he is ever grateful.

There was a strong possibility that Lorenz would have to enter military service, but the Second World War ended before he was called to report for duty. He took a short Normal School course and then taught 24 children in grades 1 through 8 in a one room rural school in North Central Alberta for five months. Following this he attended Moravian College from 1945 to 1949, during which time he decided to prepare for mission service. Lorenz took his first year of seminary at St. Stephen's College in Edmonton, serving as student pastor at Hobbema and Bruederfeld during this time. He studied the remaining two years at Moravian Theological Seminary, graduating in 1952. He was

ordained a Deacon July 6, 1952, at Camp VanEs by the Rt. Rev. I. R. Mewaldt.

The Lord was good in providing for Lorenz a wife who was also committed to becoming a missionary. She was Nora Irene Moffat, born November 28, 1931, at Edmonton. Her interest in missions began in her childhood when missionaries came to speak at her church. It was at a Lutheran Bible Camp that she accepted Christ as her personal Saviour, and a year later she confirmed her faith in the Augustana Lutheran Church in Edmonton. While in Junior and Senior High School her faith was nurtured by the church's pastor, the Rev. Vikman, by youth group activities, the youth advisor, summer camp and the annual young peoples' conventions.

In 1949 Nora went into nurses' training in preparation for becoming a missionary nurse to India under the auspices of the Lutheran Church. She enrolled in the Misericordia Hospital School of Nursing, graduating in 1952 with a degree of R.N. and receiving an award for the highest average in theory and for general proficiency.

Lorenz and Nora met during the summer before their final year of educational preparation. The Moravian young people of the Edmonton area sponsored an outdoor get-together to welcome home the students from Moravian College and Seminary. As part of the evening's entertainment, a nurses' trio, of which Nora was a member, had been invited to sing. Lorenz and Nora met briefly that evening. A few days later Lorenz asked her for a date and that was the beginning of their courtship, most of which had to be done by correspondence after he returned to seminary. Though Nora knew after that first date that someday Lorenz would be her husband, it took him a little longer to come to that same conclusion. Now, instead of going to India, she was willing to go to the Indians of Nicaragua. Shortly after graduation Lorenz and Nora were married on August 29, 1952, in the Edmonton Moravian Church by the Rev. Samuel Wedman.

They arrived in Bluefields October 30, 1952. Lorenz and Nora served there for nine months and then went to the gold mining town of La Luz to continue their service. After three months of living with Joe and Lahoma Gray in order to learn some Miskito and to become familiar with the

various ramifications of the work, the Grays left for furlough and the Adams were now on their own.

In August of 1953, Murray was born at the Thaler Memorial Hospital in Bilwaskarma. Brian joined the family in November of 1954. When Brian was only a year and a half old, he almost died of typhoid fever and malaria. They were thankful for the excellent medical attention he received at the Baptist Hospital in Managua.

In 1959 they were called to Puerto Cabezas. This pastorate presented them with many more joys than sorrows. The two and a half years spent there were hectic because of the many responsibilities associated with being pastor of large English and Miskito congregations in town, visiting outstations, being administrator of the day school with 500 students and also doing shopping for numerous pastors living in remote areas. The Cuban Invasion (Bay of Pigs) was launched from "Port" with shiploads of men heading for Cuba. Large cargo planes were bringing in supplies around the clock at the newly refurbished airstrip. This happened the week that a Synod was being held in Port and all the delegates were held "incommunicado" until the strike had been completed. It was a tense time for all.

Mission Board moved Lorenz and Nora from Nicaragua to Brus Laguna, Honduras, in 1961. Lorenz originally had been called to serve in the area of Christian Education and as Treasurer for the Province. But as they were enroute to Honduras he was informed that he also would be the Superintendent. To this was added the administration of the boarding school and the supervision of a house under construction.

Lorenz and Nora had only a few days with Werner and Martha Marx before they returned to the U.S., which meant that their orientation was very sketchy. Martha tried to write down information concerning the boarding school, especially with regard to the purchase of staple food supplies, but in recording how much rice to buy, she made the error of writing 300 sacks instead of 30. Not taking time to calculate how much rice this might be in pounds per student, Lorenz asked the people to bring all the rice they could because it would be needed for the school. The rice crop was good so the people were happy for a buyer. When about

100 sacks, or about 10,000 pounds, of rice had been bought and they had run out of sacks and storage space, Lorenz stopped to calculate how much rice really would be needed and then discovered that error. It was much too much rice, but it turned out to be a blessing in disguise. The next year there were floods and rice was scarce. They were able to sell the surplus back to the people for seed.

Lorenz served as superintendent and in the other capacities for four years. In 1966 Lorenz, Nora and family returned to the United States where Lorenz accepted a call to Minnesota. Here he served two congregations, Lake Auburn first and then Northfield Moravian, during the next nine years. Their sons, Murray and Brian, who had been born in Nicaragua, were now in Junior High School and needed to be in the States to continue their education. With all of the unrest among the youth during those years, they believed that it was important to be with their children.

But their service to foreign missions was not yet over. In 1975 they received a call to Honduras. Lorenz was appointed administrator of the medical clinic in Ahuas and also provincial treasurer. Nora worked as a nurse at the clinic. Soon after their arrival, Joe Gray, the superintendent, became ill and was advised to return to the United States. Lorenz then assumed his responsibilities along with those he already had. Taxing as it was, Lorenz enjoyed the variety of work which these positions entailed.

During the first year in Ahuas they faced serious difficulties with a Honduran doctor in the employ of the clinic. As administrator, it fell to Lorenz to request that the doctor resign his post. He refused to do so. It was a very trying experience, even though Lorenz had the backing of the Honduran Provincial Board and the support of the Miskito people.

After many unpleasant exchanges the doctor left, but the clinic, the main medical center for 25,000 people, was now without a resident doctor. Nora and a number of capable nurses from Nicaragua and Honduras, graduates of Thaeler Memorial Hospital in Bilwaskarma, provided the primary nursing care. During those two years not one patient died for lack of a resident doctor. Patients needing emergency surgery were sent by M.A.F. plane to another medical

facility. What a joy and relief it was when Dr. Sam and Grace Marx returned to Honduras in 1978!

During this time, it became evident that the Honduras Church needed a Provincial Board which was entirely national. Lorenz was instrumental in writing to Mission Board with suggestions about how this might be done. With some adjustments, this plan was gradually carried out and the Rev. Navarro Allen, a Honduran, was appointed to become the first president of the Provincial Board. At the next "Asamblea" (Synod) he was officially elected by the church. A Honduran was also appointed to take over some of the treasurer's work.

During these changes Lorenz became an ex-officio member of the Board. He attended meetings but gradually let go of most of the responsibilities. It was a good feeling watching his Honduran brethren grow in their leadership ability, making their own decisions and then seeing them being carried out.

In August 1981, they returned to the U.S. but in March of 1985 Lorenz and Nora were requested to return to Honduras for a three month assignment to help facilitate the merger of the Nicaraguan Moravian refugee congregations with the Honduran Moravian congregations into one organized Church body. This meant visiting many of the refugee congregations, talking with the leaders, meeting with the Honduras Provincial Board and helping to prepare the program for the biennial "Asemblea" where the merger would take place. Having worked with many of these individuals in Nicaragua made it much easier to relate and interact with the Miskito and Sumu Moravians to bring this merger about. It was a moving experience when on May 8 the Nicaraguans unanimously accepted the invitation of the Hondurans to join with them to become one Honduran Moravian Church. Lorenz felt privileged and thankful to have had a small part in bringing this union about.

Looking back on their years of Mission service, Nora writes, "It has been a real privilege to have lived and served the Lord for 20 years in Central America. My life has been enriched in many ways by my brothers and sisters in Christ in Nicaragua and Honduras."

### *Irene Prochnau*

The birth of Irene Martha Prochnau took place at Bruederheim, Alberta, August 15, 1930. She received her public school education in Bruederheim and Fort Saskatchewan. For Irene, a strong influence to enter mission service came at an early age through the very active youth group at the Bruederheim Moravian Church. A similar influence was the summer camping program at Camp VanEs. Following her graduation from high school in 1950, she enrolled at the Archer Memorial Nursing School, Lamont, Alberta, receiving her degree of R.N. in 1953. Since this facility was an arm of the United Church of Canada, a continued focus on mission service was presented by the medical staff. In further preparation for missions Irene took a three month post-graduate course in obstetrical nursing at the University of Alberta, obtaining a Certificate in Advanced Obstetrics in December of 1953. She then returned to her alma mater at Lamont to teach O.D. nursing for one year.

On June 20, 1955, Irene arrived at Thaeler Memorial Hospital in Bilwaskarma to teach courses at the Hospital School of Nursing. She served in this capacity under Mission Board for one year, after which she was transferred to the Moravian clinic in Ahuas. She worked here for two years and then returned to Canada. She subsequently married Alfred Harke of the Bruederfeld Congregation. He served for several years as the Canadian District representative on the Board of World Mission.

Although Irene did not feel led to continue her mission service, she feels that she did influence her sister Lily to go to Honduras for a three year term, and years later, influenced her son Stephen Harke to spend one year in Ahuas in general maintenance and 18 months in Zaire, Africa, as an aircraft mechanic apprentice. Her brother, Norman, also served as a missionary in the Caribbean.

Twenty-five years after Irene left the field, she and her husband Alfred had the unique opportunity to return to Ahuas to visit with Stephen and also Dr. Sam and Grace Marx. It was like a home-coming experience for her, but to have their son meet them at the airplane was another kind of heart-warming experience. There were a number of changes, especially the advanced responsibility which

the nationals had assumed. It made her realize how much the role of present day missionaries has changed as well. New buildings and fully grown trees were evidence of the seeds that had been planted by those with whom she had worked years earlier.

Of her experience in Central America Irene writes, "I have been aware of the everyday comforts we so often take for granted. An abundant water supply, health services, bountiful supply of produce of every kind and description, good communications and many household conveniences are but a few to be mentioned. We have so much to be thankful for in a land of plenty! May we be more willing to give of ourselves through our gifts, services and prayers for those in need—in this way we all can be partners in missionary service for our Lord. He has been good to us!"

## **Widening the Field of Service to the Caribbean**

### ***Marvin and Wilma Henkelmann***

On March 5, 1928, Marvin Rubin Henkelmann was born in Edmonton. At the time the family was living in the Heimtal area. In the early 30's, they moved to a farm several miles north of the Bruederfeld Moravian Church. Marvin grew up attending the Bruederfeld church and received his high school education at East Edmonton (Wye Road) school. He took his final year of high school at Strathcona High in Edmonton.

There is no doubt in Marvin's mind that the Christian atmosphere in his home, the warm spiritual presence within the church, and the influence of a strong youth movement throughout the Canadian District of the Moravian Church, strongly influenced his life toward a calling to full time ministry. The importance of the camping experience at VanEs during those early years cannot be overemphasized.

In preparation for this ministry, Marvin enrolled at Moravian College in 1946 and graduated with a B.A. in 1950. He then entered Moravian Theological Seminary for one year. However, due to a shortage of pastors in the Canadian District, he took his middler year at St. Stephen's College and the University of Alberta in Edmonton so that he could fill the vacancies at the Hobbema and New Sarepta congrega-

tions. It was during this school term that Marvin was united in marriage with Wilma Catherine Stoltz, also born in Edmonton on the same date as Marvin, March 5, 1928. The wedding took place in Edmonton on July 17, 1951, officiated by the Rev. Samuel Wedman. For the final year of theological studies they returned to the seminary in Bethlehem. Marvin was ordained a Deacon at Camp VanEs July 12, 1953 by the Rt. Rev. Carl J. Helmich. His first charge was that of assistant pastor at Central Church in Bethlehem from August 9, 1952 to July 31, 1955.

Marvin recalls, "The exposure of visiting missionaries no doubt played a part in my ultimate decision to serve overseas, but that sense of 'missionary service' was not strong early in my life. That was fostered at Seminary and in my early ministry through missionaries and leaders of the church."

With the seed having been planted, it was only waiting to spring forth in due time and under the right conditions. This happened when Marvin and Wilma received a call from the Mission Board in 1955 to serve at Memorial Church on the Island of St. Thomas. They were the first North American couple (Canadian, to be specific) to serve in the West Indies Province after the Board of World Mission took over the administrative responsibility from the British Province.

Cultural, living, and administrative adjustments were dramatic, but the Christian love and fervor of the people made the ministry rewarding and enjoyable. During the eight years of service here their second son, Brian Gordon, was born on December 22, 1956. Marvin was consecrated a Presbyterian at Memorial Church on June 28, 1959 by Bishop Peter M. Gubi. They returned to the United States in June of 1963, where they continued to serve the church.

### ***Gordon Wolfram***

Gordon H. Wolfram was born at Vancouver, British Columbia, May 2, 1923. He received his grade school education at Mitchell Public School and his high school at Richmond High during the years 1929-1940. He attended the University of British Columbia from 1943-1948, graduating with a B.Sc. degree in civil engineering.

Immediately following he studied at the Prairie Bible Institute in Three Hills, Alberta from 1948-1951.

Gordon accepted a call to become the treasurer of the Moravian Mission in Honduras and began Spanish language studies in Costa Rica May 1, 1958. Early in January of 1959 he moved to Honduras to assume the duties of Treasurer of the Province. On February 1, 1960, he was united in marriage to Dorothy Holland of the staff of the evangelical radio station HCJB, Quito, Ecuador, whereupon he resigned from Moravian Mission service and joined the staff of HCJB along with his wife.

### ***Gordon Sommers***

Edmonton was the birthplace of Gordon Lawrence Henry Sommers, born January 18, 1935. His family lived some distance southeast of Edmonton and were members of the Bruederfeld Moravian Church. His parents encouraged a strong commitment to Christ and the Church. Their significant involvement in the life of the congregation and district affairs set a positive tone for his own involvement. His mother spoke to him early about the call to ministry. With Gordon being the only son, it was difficult for his father to realize that Gordon would not be a farmer and take over the farm he worked so hard to develop. However, he never sought to dissuade Gordon from his intended goal, but encouraged Gordon to follow the Lord's leading.

Gordon received his high school education at Strathcona High in Edmonton, graduating in 1953. Having definitely perceived the call to ministry and in preparation for it, he enrolled at Moravian College and graduated with a B.A. in 1957. That same fall Gordon entered Moravian Theological Seminary. He was "eased" into mission service by Bishop Edwin Kortz who encouraged him to do a three-month stint at Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua, during the summer vacation of 1958. The next school year was again spent at Moravian pursuing his theological studies. On May 30, 1959, he was united in marriage to Carol Losensky of Lititz by Bishop Carl J. Helmich. The newly married couple then went to Nicaragua where Gordon served a one year internship as assistant pastor at Bluefields. Returning to Bethlehem, he completed his senior year at Seminary, graduating in 1961 with a B.D. degree.

Gordon was ordained a Deacon of the Moravian Church at Camp VanEs on July 30, 1961, by the Rt. Rev. Carl J. Helmich. On August 19 he entered mission service in British Guyana to serve as Treasurer of the Province and pastor of the Queenstown Moravian Church. From 1965 to 1971, in addition to serving pastorates, he was also Superintendent of the Province.

The intermediate steps of service in Nicaragua on two occasions helped Gordon to understand the significance of crossing cultural barriers with the Gospel of Christ. While attempting to serve as a missionary in a particular culture, he also had to develop the craft of being a professional church leader. Of this he writes, "It was in Guyana that the significance of missionary service came home to me most clearly. The context for my ministry included the significant changes in that country during my ministry as it moved from a colonial territory to independence. It was thrilling to be a part of that transformation and to attempt to relate the Gospel to the changes taking place. I also learned to develop my ecumenical awareness because churches were compelled by force of secular events to cooperate with one another. I value that experience. Equally important was my work in church administration since the Guyana Province was a small one. That experience has helped me in my present responsibilities on the P.E.C. of the Northern Province."

In reflecting upon those years of service, Gordon feels that the most profound experience of being a missionary was not so much what he contributed, but what was given to him and his family. There abides an overwhelming sense of privilege and gratitude for the opportunity to spend more than eleven years in the service of Christ and the Church in Nicaragua and Guyana. Even more, he feels most grateful for experiencing the warm and evangelical piety which shaped his life and churchmanship while growing up in Canada. These were powerful forces and they continue to influence his leadership of the entire Northern Province with an impact that belies the modest size of the Moravian witness in Canada.

### ***Norman Prochnau***

With so many of our Moravian Congregations located in rural areas, it was only natural that most of the candidates for the ministry would come from families engaged in farming. Norman Eric Prochnau, born at Bruederheim February 19, 1934, was no exception. He, too, grew up on a farm in Bruederheim, Alberta, the 8th child of 15 children. His was a close family.

Norman grew up in a community where the church was a vital part of his life. Their home was one in which the Christian faith was real and God was honored. The church activities such as Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Sunday Worship, etc., had great influence on his life as a child. Sunday School superintendents, the Revds. Jacob Redberger, Samuel Wedman and Elmer Stelter, were among those who touched his life along the way. After being confirmed, he was active in youth fellowship, sang in the church choir, attended Canadian District Youth Rallies, work days at Camp VanEs and some youth camps. Obviously, the church and family influenced his faith pilgrimage considerably during those early years in his life.

Norman first felt the call to the ministry when he was in grade eight. But he never gave this any real thought until his older brother was killed. He tried to find a definite answer to his question, "Lord, what really do you want me to do with my life?" He decided to leave the door open and continue to trust God for direction, especially regarding the ministry.

After his senior year at high school, he decided that he would have to work for a year if he were to attend Moravian College. He was fortunate to get employment in the audit office at the Legislature building of the Provincial Government of Alberta, which he enjoyed very much, and where his superior encouraged him to consider becoming a Certified Public Accountant. He was also active in the Edmonton Moravian Youth Fellowship, sang in the church choir and attended worship services regularly. It was a rewarding year for him in so many ways. But it was also a year of searching. He had to make up his mind whether to stay with a job he was enjoying and in which he had opportunity for advancement, or to apply at Moravian for

the ministry. After much thought and prayer he applied at Moravian and was accepted. What a relief! A whole new world of experience was to unfold before him.

While Norman was employed as manager at Camp VanEs during the summer of 1960, he received a letter from Mission Board requesting him to consider taking a year out of seminary to serve as student pastor at Midlands Moravian Church, St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands. It was a difficult decision to make, but he did agree to accept this appointment. It turned out to be one of the most exciting and rewarding experiences in his life, and possibly the happiest experience in his parish ministry. Good things happened at Midlands Church that year; loving and grateful people responded enthusiastically to new programs, activities and to a new leader.

The assignment for the year was to evaluate the congregation. It had not had a resident pastor for many years. The buildings were in a deplorable condition and the morale of the members was low. The congregation seemed to be dying. After initiating programs that might spark new life in the church, it was discovered that the potential of the congregation was much greater than the Conference had assumed. Midlands became the talk of the community and once more it stood out in the valley as God's house. This experience at Midlands helped Norman to appreciate his senior year in Seminary and enabled him to relate better to subjects like pastoral care and church administration.

Immediately following graduation from Seminary, Norman was ordained a Deacon at Bruederheim on June 10, 1962, by the Rt. Rev. Fredrick Wolff. He then returned to the Virgin Islands to serve as interim pastor at the Nisky and New Hernnhut congregations on St. Thomas. Though this was a brief assignment, it provided the opportunity to serve as an ordained minister this time and to develop wonderful personal relationships with the members of both congregations.

While on St. Thomas, Norman received and accepted the call to become pastor of the Palmyra Moravian Church in Cinnaminson, New Jersey. Upon returning to the United States, he was married to Maria Galati on July 13, 1963, in the Old Chapel at Bethlehem. They served this congrega-

tion until the fall of 1967 when he accepted the call to become pastor of the Memorial Moravian congregation on St. Thomas. One son, Peter, was born May 3, 1965, in Riverside, N.J. and the second son, Timothy, was born October 8, 1969, on St. Thomas.

This was also a time of significant change in the world wide Moravian Church. In the summer of 1967, the Moravian Unity Synod in Czechoslovakia granted all mission provinces full Unity status, which meant that there was a new and different relationship with the American Board of World Mission and among the provinces of the Unity. It was now one of partnership. At the East West Indies Provincial Synod in 1968, the first Provincial Elders' Conference was elected. For the first time decisions and policies would be determined by nationals.

With the emergence of this new situation, Norman saw his role as pastor, helping the people grow in their awareness that they were truly an indigenous church. This meant they were no longer on the receiving end for financial assistance from the Mission Board, and would eventually have to assume full responsibility of meeting their obligations to the Conference and the Province. This included having to recruit and train nationals for the ministry and staffing the entire Province.

During the course of Norman's ministry at Memorial Moravian Church, there were opportunities to become involved in many other activities. He sang in the local Community Chorale which Maria accompanied for four years and directed for two years. He was appointed by the Governor to the Social Welfare Board of the Virgin Islands for a two year term. Periodically Norman was invited to offer prayer at the opening of Senate sessions or to give the invocation or the benediction at government sponsored banquets. He played in a handbell choir, was an active member of the ministerial association, the Council of Churches, appeared on TV and radio with religious programs, served as director and counselor at Moravian Junior and Senior High Youth Camps on St. Croix and on St. John and served on the Executive Board of the Virgin Islands Conference.

Norman concluded his ministry on St. Thomas May 1, 1974. Reminiscing of his years of service in the Virgin

Islands, Norman says, "My family and I are most grateful for those years and we had the privilege to share in ministry and life in that remote but beautiful spot in the Caribbean known as tropical paradise by many tourists, with its lovely beaches, beautiful sights, and heavenly breezes—St. Thomas. It was great to be with a warm-hearted people. Our lives are richer for those years we lived there and shared in the joys, the struggles and life of God's people. What a privilege to have lived for a few years where the first Moravian missionaries landed in 1732, and to be given that rare opportunity to serve the same church which they had planted long ago, and which continues to be a shining beacon for the Lord Jesus Christ in the present."

## **Trend Toward Short Term Workers**

### ***Lily Prochnau***

Lily Margaret Prochnau was born October 8, 1935, in Bruederheim, Alberta. After completing her grade school education in Bruederheim, she went to Fort Saskatchewan for her Junior and Senior High School. She received her training at the Medicine Hat Municipal Hospital where she earned her R.N. degree in 1958. Following graduation, she served on the staff at the Alberta University Hospital for one year. Lily then studied two years at the Camrose Canadian Lutheran Bible Institute and did part-time nursing at St. Mary's Hospital, also in Camrose, Alberta.

Being a member of the Bruederheim Moravian congregation, Lily remembers always having a real desire to be involved in the church program, including Sunday School, Young Peoples' Fellowship, youth conferences, choir and Camp VanEs. Coming from a large family with Christian parents, she was inspired very early in her childhood by the deep convictions of various family members, particularly her sister Violet, who daily lived out her faith being mother's helper with the many household duties.

Receiving her sister Irene's letters when she served in Nicaragua and Honduras and then living with her upon her return made Lily very aware that the task would not be easy. She applied to the Moravian Mission Board and responded to a call to serve in Honduras, arriving at the Language

School at San Jose, Costa Rica, in August, 1961, for four months of Spanish language study. After completion of the course, she went to Honduras a few days before Christmas and then flew out to the Moravian Clinic at Ahuas on January 1, 1962.

Her years of service were both rich and rewarding in ministering to the physical and spiritual needs of our brothers and sisters in Honduras. What a happy experience it was when a sick patient was restored to health. How satisfying it was to see souls won for Christ through the healing of bodily ailments or through the teaching and preaching of the Word. Lily returned to Canada when her three year term of service was completed in December, 1964.

In June, 1965, she was united in marriage at the Edmonton Moravian Church to Ralph Kernich from Adelaide, South Australia. Ralph had served two terms of service with the Lutheran Mission to the Aborigines in Central Australia. Since their marriage they find joy in the service of their Lord through the Lutheran Church of Australia. Currently Ralph is bursar at one of the Lutheran Secondary Colleges at Walla Walla, New South Wales. As family commitments have allowed, Lily has done part-time geriatric nursing and presently is nursing at the Lutheran Rest Home at Albury, New South Wales.

### ***Ethel Seutter***

Edmonton, Alberta, was the birthplace of Ethel Edith Seutter on April 16, 1936. She received her grade school education at Colchester School, southeast of Edmonton. Then she attended Strathcona High in Edmonton and Salsbury High School, southeast of Edmonton, to complete her public school education.

Godly parents had a great influence on Ethel's early life. Their interest in missions, joyful giving to and prayerful support of missions resulted in missionary friends frequently visiting in their home. How well she remembers their stories and fascinating accounts of work in Cuba, Peru and Africa.

Mission festivals were highlights for Ethel as the family visited churches in the district on those occasions. She remembers especially challenging messages from our own

Moravian missionaries in Nicaragua. So her childhood desire and interest was kindled and fanned into a flame when as a teenager she dedicated her life to Christ. Camp VanEs and youth rallies challenged and encouraged her spiritual growth. While teaching Daily Vacation Bible School at New Sarepta, The Rev. Eric Schulze was looking at lamp shades made by his class. He then sang the following words which seemed directed to her very heart: "Shall we, whose hearts are lighted with wisdom from on high, Shall we, to men benighted, the lamp of life deny?" She knew then that a childhood desire had become God's call to her.

Further education prepared her for eventual missionary service. In 1958 she graduated from the Royal Alexandra Hospital School of Nursing with a R.N. Degree and then studied at the Prairie Bible Institute, Three Hills, Alberta, completing a special two-year course in 1960. During those years her interest became focused on Central America and finally the Lord's leading became clear that it would be in the Republic of Honduras where the Lord wanted her.

As it now was standard policy, Ethel studied Spanish for three and a half months at the Language School in Costa Rica, beginning January 2, 1962. On April 13, 1962, she went to Tegucigalpa, Honduras, where she was met by the M.A.F. pilots to take her to Siguatepcque. On this flight Don Berry introduced her to M.A.F.'s "Upperware," a clean oil can within reach under the seat in case air turbulence should upset her gastrointestinal tract!

At last, the day arrived for the last leg of the M.A.F. flight to La Mosquitia. As they crossed the Iguan Valley and over the thick jungle, the pilot took great delight in informing them that they'd reached "the point of no return." She remembers well the endless hand shaking at the Brus airstrip where they left a passenger and then moved on to Ahuas where the welcome was equally warm. Dr. Ian and Ruth Cook were so loving, thoughtful and helpful in easing her into her new home, culture and work. In a few months Dr. Sam and Grace Marx and their children arrived and were equally helpful tutors in the Miskito language.

Not infrequently a clinic helper would ask, "What is she trying to say?" Late one Saturday night, while Ethel was doing a brief stint at the Moravian Clinic in Cauquirá, a very

anxious looking man called her to see a patient. She understood that the patient had sustained a gunshot wound in the head. Walking toward the clinic to see the patient, she was mentally reviewing signs and symptoms of possible brain injury. Much to her relief the patient was a horse with a superficial wound near the mouth.

Learning a new language can be formidable, but learning two new languages is devastating. An innocent slip-of-tongue in a large hardware store in Tegucigalpa made a courteous young man lose his composure when she asked for non-toxic *pecho* (chest) paint instead of *techo* (roof) paint. Anyone who made a trip to Tegucigalpa went with long interesting shopping lists. Some of the items were wedding rings, material for bridesmaids' dresses, an eight foot rip saw and "Goliath." This last item on the list was puzzling until, with imagination fully unleashed, she sounded it out and bought Kool-Aid.

There were remarkable recoveries which made Ethel very aware of God's power through answered prayer. One case, early in her Ahuas career, stands out. A hemorrhaging patient was brought from a distant village a week after the delivery of a stillborn infant. A ruptured uterus was removed in an emergency operation, but the hemorrhaging persisted. Blood transfusions didn't seem to be helping. The anxious husband could not find any more donors, so Dr. Sam, Grace and Ethel were the emergency blood bank. Late that night they gathered around the patient's bed as Dr. Sam committed her to the Lord. Everyone was exhausted. Ethel awoke the next morning thinking she hadn't been called because the family knew nothing more could be done and that the patient had died. She ran to the clinic and was amazed to be greeted by a smiling, much improved patient. O ye of little faith!

Looking back over her service in Honduras, Ethel says, "There are so many good memories of seeing the Lord's Kingdom grow. I was challenged and encouraged by the lives and the ministries of national pastors and believers. I am thankful to the Lord for the privilege of serving Him in Honduras and to co-workers who made me feel very much a part of their families as well as national believers who taught me so much about living."

On March 1, 1973, after 11 years of service, she returned from Mission service in Honduras to take up residence again in Canada.

### *Alan Taylor*

Alan Howard Taylor was born July 11, 1936 at Simcoe, Ontario, Canada. He received his public school education at his birthplace, but then moved to Edmonton where he became a member of the Edmonton Moravian Church. He attended Moravian College, graduating in 1959, and then continued his studies at Moravian Theological Seminary. On August 19, 1960 he was joined in Holy Matrimony with Loraine Dale Stewart of Bethlehem.

Alan was a student pastor at Center Valley, Pennsylvania, during his Seminary years and was ordained a Deacon by the Rt. Rev. A. W. Schattschneider several months before graduating from Seminary in 1962. He then served a Moravian congregation in Calgary a little over four years and Didsbury for one year. On May 10, 1966 he entered mission service in Puerto Cabezas where he was pastor of the English speaking congregation until November 10, 1969, when he and his family returned to Canada and again took a pastorate in Calgary.

### *Eric and Connie Schulze*

Eric John Schulze, the fifth son of Emilie (Guenther) and Hermann Schulze, pastor at Heimtal, was born near Edmonton, Alberta, on June 17, 1927. Hermann's parents were missionaries sent by the Moravian Church in Germany to Labrador, and Emilie's parents had been sent to South Africa, the third generation of missionaries to that country. In those days the children of missionaries were sent back to Germany for education in a school provided especially for them. After education at the boarding school and the Seminary, Hermann came to Canada in 1910, Emilie in 1911.

After initial education in Alberta, Eric graduated from Moravian College and Theological Seminary and began service in Canadian District Moravian congregations in 1953.

Edmonton, Alberta, was the birthplace of Constance Hazel Marie Fenske, born September 10, 1932. She was the third daughter of Helmund and Martha (Rentz) Fenske. The Fenske and Rentz families were members of the Bruederfeld Moravian Church, having come to Canada in 1898 from Russia, where they were part of the Moravian Diaspora fellowship. After Helmund and Martha were married in Bruederfeld they moved to Hobbema, where they were charter members of the Moravian congregation and farmed until 1952.

Connie is a 1954 graduate from the Royal Alexandra School of Nursing. She and Eric were married at Camp VanEs on June 3, 1954, the first wedding there.

The greatest factor influencing Eric's decision to enter the ministry was parental example and witness. He regarded his mother as a sincerely devoted Christian. While his parents did not express verbally their wish that Eric should enter the ministry, he knew they had high regard for those who did and upheld the ministry as a high calling of the Lord.

Eric felt the call to the ministry during his first year in college. A strong commitment to Christ had already been made in connection with confirmation and Camp VanEs experiences. He entered college in a general program. Although many already thought he was a pre-theological student, he was not yet sure of his life work. In November of his first year in college he entered a week of intentional prayer for the Lord's clear direction regarding life work. This brought the needs of the ministry before him and he made his decision. Of this he says, "I remember very vividly going into President Hauptert's office to declare my intention and receiving an affirming handshake from him."

Connie and Eric had inclinations towards missionary work even before marriage. Connie had considered service in Labrador as a nurse, and Eric had thought of Alaska as a possibility. But needs in the Canadian District were a priority at that time. Eric was ordained by the Rt. Rev. Carl Helmich at Camp VanEs on July 12, 1953 and served several Canadian Moravian congregations.

During their ministry in the Canadian District the missionary interest did not lessen for Connie and Eric. In the

mid 1960's the need of the West Indies Moravian Mission work was laid before them and they accepted that call to begin service at the Spring Gardens Moravian Church in Antigua on June 15, 1967. At that time their four children ranged in age from 5 to 11.

They served in Antigua until October of 1967, and then at the Friedensburg congregation on St. Croix, until August 1968. One of the striking experiences in the West Indies for Eric was the way the people responded to warm friendliness in the pastor. He says, "I was not the authoritarian figure the people seemed to be used to. This is the first time that I sensed a focus on a particular gift in ministry, although I did not grasp it more fully until two units of Clinical Pastoral Education helped me identify and develop it. The awareness of these gifts grew in subsequent years of congregational pastoral ministry. For this growth I am extremely grateful to God."

For both Connie and Eric it was a rich experience to have served on Antigua, an early mission field of the Moravian Church. Several times the Church sexton at Spring Gardens drew their attention to the large Sand Box tree not too far from the parsonage with the comment, "Under that tree the missionaries first preached the gospel to our forefathers, the slaves."

### ***Harvey Prochnau***

Harvey Kenneth Prochnau was born March 14, 1945 at Lamont, Alberta. He received his high school education at Fort Saskatchewan and then attended the University of Alberta where he earned his B.A. in 1966. While attending the University and living in Edmonton, he became a member of the Edmonton Moravian Church. He enrolled at Moravian Theological Seminary in the fall of 1966. While in Seminary he was married to Judith Lynn Martinson on July 24, 1968 in Midale, Saskatchewan. Harvey graduated from the Seminary in 1969 and was ordained a Deacon July 13, 1969 by the Rt. Rev. Percival R. Henkelman. They entered mission service July 16, to minister to a Moravian congregation in Betewerwagting, Guyana, and served there until August 26, 1970, when they accepted a call for further service in the Western District.

### ***Gerry and Brenda Befus***

Lamont, Alberta, the birthplace of several other missionaries, was that also of Gerald John Befus, born June 25, 1948. Being the son of active missionaries, John and Violet Befus, he received his grade school education in Nicaragua, taught by his mother. As was the case with children of earlier missionaries, Gerry returned to his homeland for his high school education, attending Prairie High School at Three Hills, Alberta. He then went to the University of Alberta where he received his B.A. in 1969. It was while attending the University that he became a member of the Rio Terrace Congregation in Edmonton.

Gerry took up his studies for the ministry at Moravian Theological Seminary in the fall of 1969. During the following summer vacation, he was united in marriage to Brenda Noske on August 14, 1970 in Edmonton by his father, the Rev. John Befus, and the Rev. Edward Ulrich. He continued his Theological studies at Moravian, graduating with the degree of Master of Divinity in 1972. The Rt. Rev. Percival R. Henkelman ordained Gerry a Deacon on July 30, 1972.

One month later, September 1, 1972, Gerry and Brenda began an extended course of Spanish study at the Language School in Costa Rica. On the completion of this course, they went to Puerto Cabezas on April 1, 1973 where Gerry began his ministry, primarily in the English speaking congregation. He also became much involved in the youth work of the Puerto Cabezas congregation and of other churches in the general area. June 1, 1975 they were called to Managua to serve a growing congregation comprised mainly of members from various Moravian congregations on the East Coast. They worked here until April 1, 1976, when they returned to Canada.

### **Special Assignments**

#### ***Stephen Harke***

There have been several Canadians who were involved in mission in Central America and the Caribbean for periods shorter than the normal three year term. One such person is Stephen Siegfried Harke, born September 4, 1962 in

Edmonton, Alberta, to Alfred and Irene (Prochnau) Harke. His home church was Bruederfeld, now relocated and renamed Millwoods Moravian Church. He attended Salsbury Composite High School at Sherwood Park, graduating in 1980.

While in high school, Stephen became interested in aircraft maintenance and began to envision becoming involved in the mission field. His parents received Mission Aviation Fellowship newsletters, and through their accounts a desire grew for him to serve the Lord overseas, using the technical abilities God had given him. He wanted to be a M.A.F. pilot.

Right after graduating from high school, Stephen enrolled at Southern Alberta Institute of Technology in Calgary, Alberta, in September 1980, where he studied aircraft maintenance. After graduating with a diploma in aircraft maintenance engineering technology in March of 1982, he needed to serve as an apprentice before he could obtain his license. With the depressed state of the economy at that time, aircraft maintenance jobs were nearly impossible to find.

Dr. Sam Marx, while visiting the Edmonton area on furlough, was made aware of Stephen's predicament. Upon returning to Ahuas, Sam discussed the problem with Milton Maly (clinic administrator and Provincial church treasurer) and the M.A.F. pilots. As a result Stephen was offered the position of maintenance staff at the Ahuas Clinic with freedom to assist M.A.F. in the servicing and maintenance of their aircraft when required.

Stephen left for Honduras on October 8, 1982. It was while he was serving in Ahuas that he became convinced that the mission field was where the Lord wanted him. Of this experience he says, "One of the most important lessons I learned in Ahuas was that we were there for the people. No matter what things we gave them, or built for them, our lives and our friendships were by far the most important. We needed to become involved in their lives. We had to share Jesus Christ with them and demonstrate how to live Christ-like lives."

Since leaving Ahuas on August 18, 1983, Stephen has served 14 months with M.A.F. in Zaire, Africa. He has obtained his aircraft maintenance license and attended Brier-

crest Bible College for two years where he met his wife, Irene Carol Young, a Registered Nursing Assistant. They were married September 19, 1987. They are planning to return to the mission field and are looking forward to serving wherever the Lord directs.

### *Janice Steinbeck*

Janice Steinbeck is from Edmonton and though she had not considered going into mission service earlier, her interest to do so was kindled in 1981 when she met Ray Griggs, a member of the Unity of the Brethren Church in Texas, who had been in Nicaragua in 1979. Ray was planning to serve a three year term as an agriculturalist in Honduras. Working in Honduras sounded like a challenging adventure. So after she graduated from the University of Alberta in April of 1983, Janice accepted a teaching position in Ahuas. Her job description was to teach the children of Milton and Jean Maly and to work with the wives of Instituto Biblico students.

The situation and conditions in La Mosquitia turned out to be very different from what Janice had expected. But she soon came to love the Miskito people, and learning their language opened many doors to happy friendships and rewarding experiences. She was very fortunate to be able to attend a Miskito language course taught by Sam Gray in February, 1984. Having acquired that basic knowledge, she decided to live with a family in Ahuas for a month to improve her Miskito. After working one and a half years in Ahuas, she spent eight months at home, eagerly looking forward to returning to Honduras.

### *Brenda Lange*

Brenda Lange grew up in the Heimtal Moravian congregation. All during her youth she remembers presentations by different speakers and reading letters from missionaries with whom her mother corresponded, especially at Christmas time. To her, going to serve God in another country seemed to be a special and joyous experience.

For a period of time the Rev. Kurt Vitt was pastor of the Heimtal congregation and instructed her for confirmation. During this time as well as during her university years, Brenda was struggling to discern God's particular calling

for her. Through counselling with the Rev. Blair Couch she felt guided to become an elementary school teacher. For five years Brenda taught almost every subject with grades 1-5. She taught kindergarten and for ten months taught English as a second language to new Canadians. She also worked part-time in a church.

God deemed that now was the time for her to serve in Honduras. From the day she spoke to the Rev. Ted Wilde (Director of the Board of World Mission) at Convo '85 in Wisconsin, until she was ready to go to Honduras, only two short months elapsed. On September 6 she had a special leave of absence from her school board, her visa arranged, household possessions and car in storage, her bags packed and was on her way to Honduras to work in all these areas in which she had gained experience in previous years. Brenda had only a nine month contract, but of that experience she writes, "Each day was one of challenge, joy and peace in serving God. I thank God especially for the strong prayer support of family and friends."

### *Hazel Schattschneider*

Hazel Schattschneider's interest in the church's program and outreach began as a young child growing up in the Canadian Moravian Church. Early in her life she knew she wanted to be a part of the broader world ministry of the church. During the time of her nursing education, she considered the options for service and felt a call to service in the North. Therefore, upon graduation, she went to Bethel, Alaska, to work as a nurse with the Alaska Native Health Hospital and to be a part of the ministry of the Moravian Church there.

Since then Hazel has maintained an interest and involvement in the world mission of our church in a variety of ways. Her involvement for six weeks in 1981 was in assisting in the development of a community clinic at the Moravian Church of the Redeemer in Kingston, Jamaica. The clinic is an outreach of the congregation into the surrounding community. The Moravian Church in Canada has shared in that ministry through funding from the Canadian Mission Development Fund.

Hazel served on the Board of World Mission from 1982 to 1985. The experience enabled her to see world mission in new ways, particularly as the relationship with affiliated

provinces throughout the world is developed. She sums up her feelings, "My relationship with people from other parts of the world, and from other parts of the body of Christ's Church, has assisted in expanding my view of the Church as a global Church. Together we continue to seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness."

### Observations

When the Moravians first came to Canada, they were ardently on fire for the Lord and wanted to share His love with others. They were very evangelical and mission minded. Their motives were simple and straightforward: having experienced the saving Love and Grace of God through Jesus Christ, they took as a mandate Matthew 28:19, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."

In Canada, the strong evangelical preaching, the outpouring of God's Spirit at frequent evangelistic meetings, the spiritual renewals that occurred periodically, the missionary emphasis provided by annual Mission Festivals and challenges presented at weekly Youth Fellowships and Young Peoples' Conferences were most influential and responsible for the large number of volunteers, not only for Christian service in general, but for Mission service in particular. These were the wonder-working events of God preparing the hearts of people and laying the groundwork for spiritual harvests.

The autobiographies which the missionaries have presented at best give us only vague glimpses of life on the mission field. Their stories tell of a commitment to Christ's call and of faith in His abiding presence which enabled them to persevere and to carry out that commitment courageously and effectively, regardless of circumstances or conditions.

The tremendous influence exerted upon them by Christian parents, the pastor, the mission festivals and the youth programs is a recurring theme of what motivated our many Canadians to become missionaries. In fact, most of the decisions for Christ and subsequent service in mission were the result of very specific calls and experiences received in the youth program. In view of that, I make the strongest

plea possible for continued emphasis on the youth and camping programs in our Canadian Churches. If, as a result of this historical review, we in this generation can regain the sense of urgency and commitment to Mission that our forebears had, then my efforts will have been amply rewarded.

## Appendix

A list of 28 missionaries, with dates and places where they served, is printed below. It is nothing short of a miracle that God was able to raise up such a host of witnesses from the relatively small membership of the Moravian Church in Canada. But then, with God all things are possible!

### Canadian Moravians who Entered Mission Service in Central America and the Caribbean

Samuel Wedman	1913-1923	Nicaragua
Dorothy Weingarh	1939	Nicaragua
John and Violet Befus	1940-1959	Nicaragua
	1962-1966	Nicaragua
Wilfred Dreger	1946-1979	Nicaragua
	1979-1983	Virgin Islands
Jane Wedman	1949-1950	Nicaragua
	1950-1952	Honduras
Grace Marx	1949-1974	Nicaragua
	1979-1984	Honduras
Lorraine Sampert	1952-1955	Honduras
Lorenz and Nora Adam	1952-1961	Nicaragua
	1961-1966	Honduras
	1975-1981	Honduras
Irene Prochnau	1955-1958	Honduras
Marvin and Wilma Henkelmann	1955-1963	Virgin Islands
Gordon Wolfram	1958-1960	Honduras
Gordon Sommers	1958-1960	Nicaragua
	1961-1971	Guyana
Norman Prochnau	1960-1961	Virgin Islands
	1967-1974	Virgin Islands
Lily Prochnau	1961-1964	Honduras
Ethel Seutter	1962-1973	Honduras
	and other	short periods
Alan Taylor	1966-1969	Nicaragua
Eric and Connie Schulze	1967	Antigua
	1967-1968	St. Croix
Harvey Prochnau	1969-1970	Guyana
Gerald and Brenda Befus	1972-1976	Nicaragua
Stephen Harke	1982-1983	Honduras
Janice Steinbeck	1983-1985	Honduras
Brenda Lange	1985-1986	Honduras
Hazel Schattschneider	1981	Jamaica

### Notes

1. For a detailed history of the early Moravian Church in Russia and Canada, as well as more expanded descriptions of the missionaries' stories, contact the Canadian Moravian Historical Society, 2304 38 St., Edmonton, Alberta T6L 4K9 Canada.
2. Clement Hoyler, "The Canadian District" in *Moravian Missionary*, June 1921.
3. Wilton Schwanke, *The Moravian Church in Canada* (unpublished thesis), pp. 53-60.
4. Kenneth G. Hamilton, *History of the Moravian Church*, pp. 31ff.

### Thanks

The author wishes to thank the missionaries who shared accounts of their work and experiences on the field with him, and to express his appreciation for their assistance.

He also wishes to thank the Rev. Theodore E. Wilde, Executive Director of the Board of World Mission, for granting him access to the biographical summaries which the board kept at the office and also limited access to records held in the Archives of the Northern Province in Bethlehem, Pa.

Thanks also go to William G. Brese, former President of the Canadian Moravian Historical Society, for his editorial help and encouragement along the way, and to Dennis C. Dreger, the author's son, for his many helpful suggestions.

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