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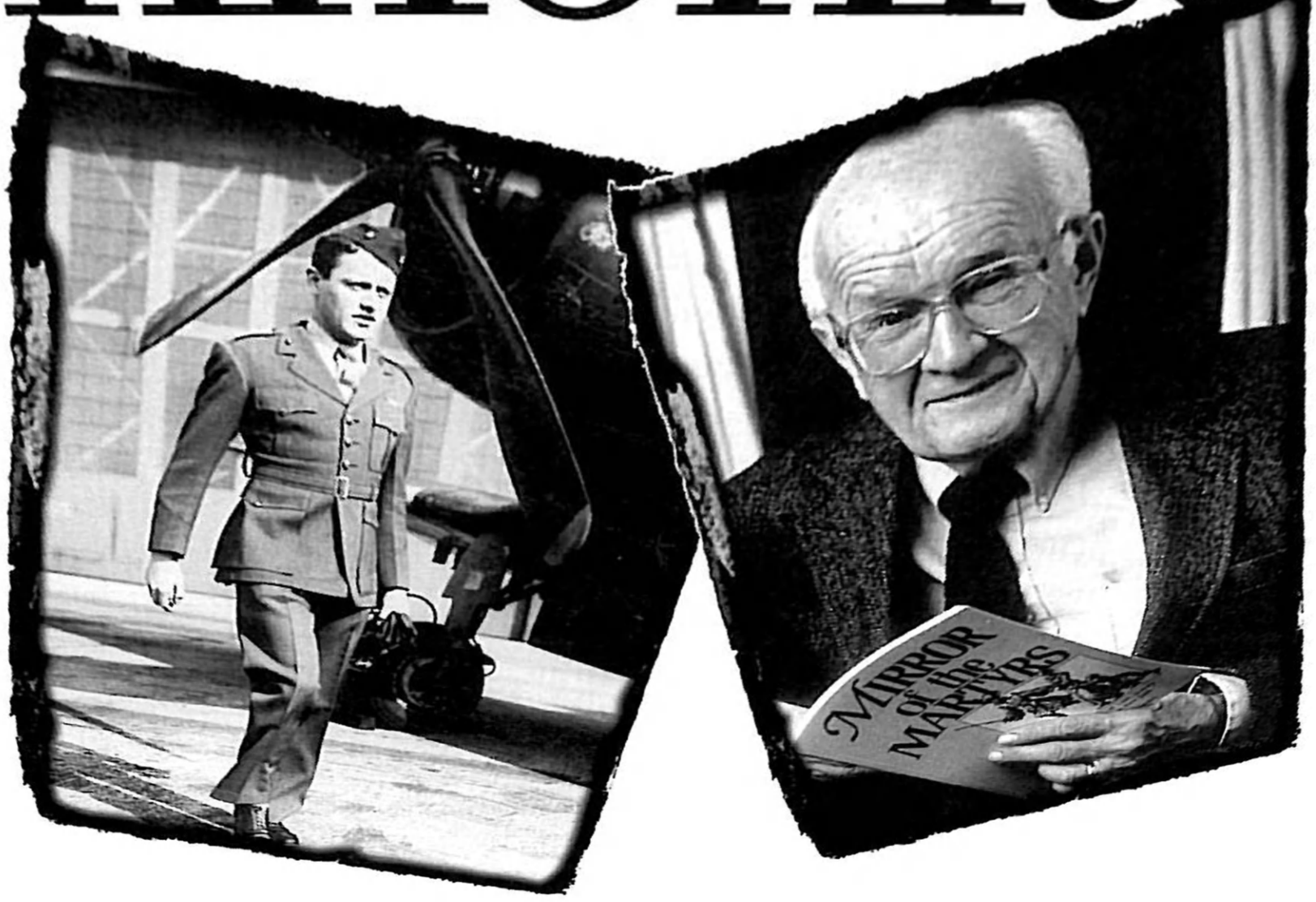

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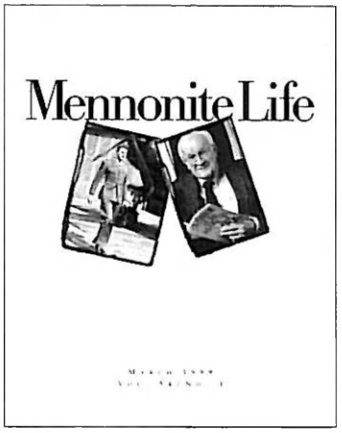

On November 19-21, 1998, Bethel College hosted the symposium "Walls and Windows: Creating and Nurturing Viable Community" in honor of Robert Kreider, Mennonite historian, educator, peace maker, and statesman. This issue of *Mennonite Life* provides in printed form several of the presentations at the symposium. Most of the presentations retain the character of their original oral presentation.

Probably the most moving story told was that of David Kliewer, a retired physician from Corvallis, Oregon. Kliewer and Kreider graduated from high school together in Bluffton, Ohio, but from there their paths diverged and, late in life, have converged again. Kliewer tells his story of military participation in World War II and pilgrimage back to an embrace of the Mennonite peace position.

Rachel Waltner Goossen, chair of the history department at Goshen College, exemplifies the power of personal life stories in the form of an account of a German woman from youth in post-World War II Europe to older adulthood in a U. S. academic community.

Accounts by Atlee Beechy, Albert Keim, Calvin Redekop, and J. Richard Weaver were part of a panel discussion on "Wartime Experiences as Preparation for Community Building." Beechy is professor emeritus of psychology and peace studies at Goshen College. Keim is professor of history at Eastern Mennonite University. Redekop, an anthropologist and sociologist, is retired in Harrisonburg, Virginia. Weaver is professor emeritus of chemistry at Bluffton College.

One of the concluding presentations of the symposium was a slide show by the Kreider children on the life of their father. We bring you a few of the delightful photos from that presentation.

The issue concludes, as usual, with a book review.

Photo credits: David Kliewer, front cover, 4-9; Calvin Redekop, 28, 30; Robert Kreider, front cover, 36-44.

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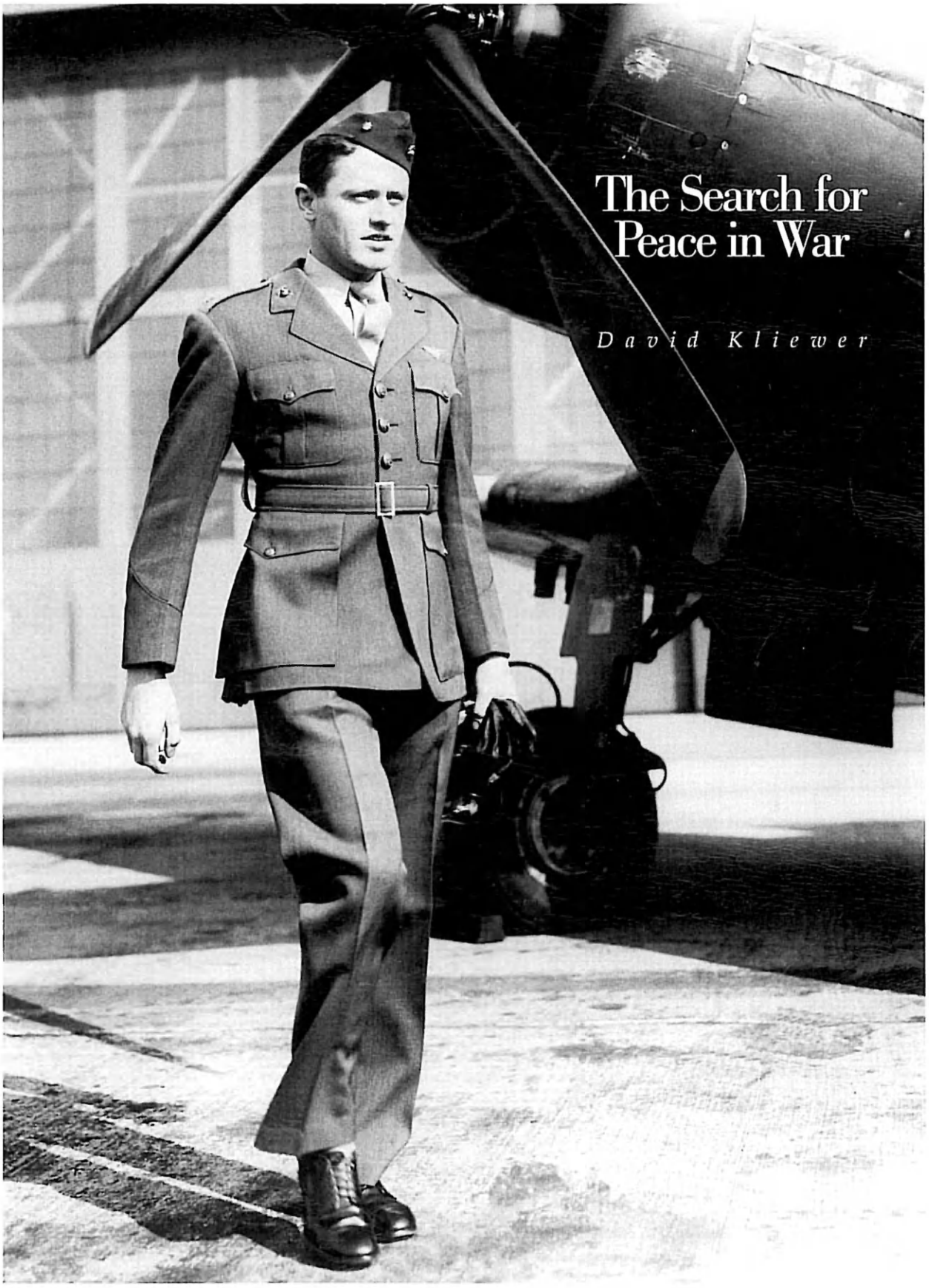

The Search for Peace in War
David Kliewer

Greetings from Oregon! Coming here to Bethel College is in many ways a homecoming for me. My father, Peter, and my mother, Katherine, attended Bethel College in 1908 just before they went to the Mennonite mission station on the Northern Cheyenne and Crow Indian reservations in Montana where I was born and spent the early part of my life.

I feel a great unease as I tell you my story. For some years since World War II, I have carried the burden of my war-time experiences and only after a long journey of repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation have I been able to lay down that burden. None of us can undo what we have done or relive a life already recorded. But I have learned that the future can redeem the past.

Let me tell you the tale of two monks on a journey through the mountains of northern Italy. As they struggled up the trail, the elder abbot was taking this opportunity to instruct the young novice in the ways of their order. In the distance, they could hear the roar of a mountain stream and as they rounded a bend, there beside the stream was a beautiful young maiden, weeping because she was unable to cross the rapidly moving water to the other side. Without hesitation the elderly abbot picked the maiden up in his arms and carried her across the stream, depositing her safely on the other side.

The two monks journeyed on and later in the day as they rested, the novice said to his abbot, "Father, how is it that you carried that beautiful maiden in your arms? Our order says that we are never to touch a woman." "My young son," said the abbot, "I left the maiden at the far shore. You, you still carry her in your mind."

For some years since World War II, I have carried the burden of my war-time experiences: the violence, the killing, and the hate. For so long I have attempted to resolve those feelings by suppressing them. As a result, I have rarely spoken of those days and resisted writing about them, even though they were the most important time of my life. A time when I began the journey back home on the path of love and nonviolence.

I was a U. S. Marine Corps fighter pilot during World War II and after participating in the defense of Wake Island, was a POW in Japan for nearly four years.

Nine years ago in early October, I was on my way to Japan to attend the 9th Congress of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, to be held in Hiroshima where the first atomic bomb had been dropped on a civilian population. This would be my first return to Japan since I had been a POW there 44 years before. Until that time I had never felt the need to go back, and actually resisted the idea, for I believed I had fairly well resolved my feelings about my war-time experiences: the killings, the hand-to-hand combat, the abuse, the starvation, the cold, and the humiliation. But as I sat in the San

—According to a news item in the Bluffton News, Mr. David Kliewer, a graduate of Wheaton College, and son of Rev. P. A. Kliewer, pastor of the Ebenezer Church near Bluffton, Ohio, has enlisted in the air force of the United States Navy. Throughout the country young men, and some women as well, are enlisting feeling that they receive valuable training and serving the country as well. The situation with our Mennonite young people, however, is somewhat different, they have a peace history of 400 years behind them which shows that their forefathers suffered persecution and even death rather than to have anything to do with the military machine. We need to instruct our young people in the Biblical fundamentals of peace and pray with them and for them that they might remain true to the Mennonite faith.—S. J. G.

Paragraph from *The Mennonite*, January 9, 1940, mentioning Kliewer's enlistment

David Kliewer on the south shore of Wake Island in March 1998. Rusted remnants of beached Japanese destroyer or landing craft still rest on the coral heads. This was in front of Kliewer's combat post.

Francisco airport, I realized that my feelings of guilt and hate were still deep inside me and that I was returning to find reconciliation with my past.

As I waited in the airport that day for our takeoff, the Japanese clerk at the ticket counter would frequently issue instructions and orders over the loudspeaker in sharp staccato Japanese. As I closed my eyes, my mind drifted back 48 years to December 1941 on Wake Island, a very small coral atoll in mid-Pacific, far west of Hawaii. The fierce aerial and hand-to-hand combat was over; the Japanese had finally overwhelmed us in their second landing attempt since Pearl Harbor. A shiver went up my spine as the airport clerk's voice now seemed to change to that of the Japanese general standing on a table before us as we were huddled completely naked on the wind-swept airstrip of Wake Island. As the general waved his huge samurai sword above our heads, he shouted in that same foreign language, "Not all of you will be punished with death." Now as I aroused in the San Francisco airport, some of that same fear gripped me as I was about to leave for Japan again.

The flight from San Francisco to Tokyo seemed to be much longer than the 10 hours that it took. As I drifted off and on into sleep, my thoughts again went back to the past. At the half way point in mid-Pacific, just beyond the International Date Line, I realized we were just north of Wake Island. I agonized about the Japanese submarine I had sunk with all those men now at the bottom of the ocean and the bombers that had been shot down. Then my thoughts drifted back to the two days before Christmas 1941. All our fighter planes had been lost in the bombings and the aerial combat and I was now a marine infantry man with my combat post on the north beach where the Japanese would land in the darkness of night. It is difficult to talk of that time for in the intense battle I had killed two Japanese in hand-to-hand combat. Forever seared in my memory are the eyes of one as he looked up at me as he died. Many things I have reconciled but for that I am still searching for God's forgiveness.

In January 1942 we were transferred from Wake to Tokyo in the cargo hold of the *Nitta Maru*. A difficult journey; for among the many dangers we faced, six Marines were beheaded just for talking.

"It is difficult to talk of that time for in the intense battle I had killed two Japanese in hand-to-hand combat. Forever seared in my memory are the eyes of one as he looked up at me as he died. Many things I have reconciled but for that I am still searching for God's forgiveness."

My future was in doubt as twelve of us were taken from the ship in Yokohama for intense abusive interrogation. My faith and hope nearly gave out but we did survive.

You may now wonder how it all began; how a Mennonite youth had strayed so far from his Mennonite-Anabaptist heritage of love,

compassion, and nonviolence. Bob Kreider and I had common beginnings. His father, Amos, was the pastor of the First Mennonite Church in Bluffton and my father, Peter, was the pastor of the Ebenezer Mennonite Church in the country west of Bluffton. Bob and I were classmates in Bluffton High School, graduating in 1935. There our paths diverged on separate courses that could not have been more different. Bob Kreider's life you know; mine was the U. S. Marine Corps. Not until 50 years later, on the occasion of our 50th high school reunion, did we meet again. The circle had closed as I returned to a way of love and nonviolence. And Bob in our frequent correspondence has been a wonderful friend in my journey back home. Both of us are fascinated by this tale and marvel at the power of our Mennonite heritage.

After high school I went on to Wheaton College and was joined there by my brother Paul. Over the years we had forged the closest bonds of friendship, sharing in a variety of adventures and dangers from riding the rods across country, to being thrown in jail for vagrancy, to climbing Mount Hood in sneakers. At Wheaton we shared a vision of becoming physicians. During those depression years our resources were limited so we decided that one of us would work to enable the other to go on to medical school. On graduation day, I remember it well, as we sat on the lawn in front of Tower Hall overlooking the town of Wheaton. We flipped a coin and I lost. I chose the U. S. Marine Corps to obtain flight training so I could go on to becoming a commercial airline pilot. During my four years in a Japanese prison camp my assigned salary financed Paul's training at Northwestern Medical School.

This coin flip set a major turning point in my life. Even now, looking back, I cannot explain the course I took, for I had such a great heritage and community in my past to guide me. But in the end I am grateful that they did make a difference.

In late November 1941, just days before the war began, as my fighter squadron was sailing to Wake Island aboard the aircraft carrier USS *Enterprise*, I finally realized that I had become a cog in a war machine. As I look back on those days, I think of

David Kliewer viewing the south beach of Wake Island, March 6, 1998, where Japanese landed Dec. 23, 1941, and where Kliewer's combat post was on the beach.

an episode in the Broadway musical *Hair*. The play, as you may recall, is about the Vietnam War days of the 1960s. One young man says to his friend who is on his way to an induction center to enter the Army, "You're a nice kind of person, who loves life, loves people. You know what they are going to do to you. They are going to make you into a killer."

Often in remembering the past, we tend to remember some of the good times and the bad times fade into the background. When we arrived in Yokohama harbor from Wake Island, twelve of us were taken off the ship. We were quite unique since we were the first American POWs in Japan. We were displayed in public all over Yokohama and Tokyo. We marched through the streets and were on display in parks, often before school children. They invariably asked us to sing and the most frequent request was "Home on the Range." My fellow prisoners were fairly good singers, but I seemed to be the star. I could never carry a tune so my off-key singing sounded very Japanese and I was a hit.

Then came the four years of abuse, cold, starvation, and humiliation, but it was the intense battlefield experience that changed my life. It

awakened me and compelled me to examine my life and my beliefs. I had taken someone else's life—I thought of it often—it haunted me and left me with the intense need for forgiveness and reconciliation with my God. I traded some cigarettes for a Bible thinking it might have an answer. I must have read the Bible cover to cover seventeen times. My experiences resonated with what I read in the Old Testament: the wars, the killings, and the vengeance. But in the end I always returned to the teachings of Jesus, especially the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus said, "You have heard that it was said an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." He was speaking of retaliation and revenge. Jesus changed that to love your enemy, do not retaliate, turn the other cheek. The law was changed to love, the core of my Anabaptist heritage.

Loving your enemy in prison camp was not easy, but there were some experiences of kindness and compassion and I began to realize that the Japanese were humans, too. Food was very short and deficiencies severe. We lived from meal to meal; a small cup of rice and some sea weed soup. Any occasional soy beans we found in the soup were taken out and meticulously counted so each would get his share. Eventually we were able to convince the camp commander to let us raise rabbits to improve the protein content of our diet,

"The road back has not been a conversion on the road to Damascus but a gradual evolution to the teachings of Jesus."

which was near zero. Since I had raised rabbits as a boy, I was put in charge of the project. We made the cages out of bamboo which the rabbits ate almost as fast as we could build them. I sent out daily work parties to pull the grass and weeds from the sides of the rice paddy fields. The rabbits thrived and we had rabbits in our sea weed soup 1 to 2 times a month. The Japanese began to consider me an expert in rabbitry and before long

David Kliewer and Isao Matsuda, former commandant of POW camp, Rokuroshi, Japan, October 1989, in front of the only remaining building from POW days, the Japanese officer PX.

they were taking me out of camp to consult on rabbit problems that some of the local farmers were experiencing.

One of the assistant camp commanders usually took me out—Lt. Hositani. He had been an English teacher before the war. One spring day he said to me as we walked out of the camp, "Today we do not see rabbits; we go to the sea." We walked on the beaches of the beautiful Inland Sea and talked—about war, about our families, about music, about violence and peace. There were several other visits. We began to realize that we were both victims of political nationalistic institutions that sought violence as a solution to problems. It was then that I began to realize that the teachings of Jesus are central to my Mennonite heritage which I had abandoned.

The road back has not been a conversion on the road to Damascus but a gradual evolution to the teachings of Jesus. After the war Gandhi's teachings of love and nonviolence in the search for justice had great impact on me. But it was Martin

Luther King, Jr., and the civil rights movement in the 1950s that changed my life forever. I recall so vividly his sermon in 1957 from Montgomery jail. "Send your hooded perpetrators of violence into our communities at the midnight hour and beat us half to dead and we shall still love you." Gandhi said, "If we remain nonviolent, hatred will die as everything does from non-use." He added that, "The path of nonviolence is not easy. It may be dangerous and requires a commitment that you might even face death."

In prison camp I eventually had three books: my Bible, a calculus book, and a Grey's *Anatomy*. The Psalms gave my great comfort, especially Psalm 91: "He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust." The calculus book kept my mind busy, but the Grey's *Anatomy* book gave me purpose and with my renewed relationship with my God I had hope and a vision for the future even when reason said there was no future. The anatomy book I memorized from cover to cover. I set my sights high: Harvard Medical School. Of the several letters we were able to send from the POW camp, I sent one to Harvard, applying for admission. You can imagine the excitement I created in the Dean's office, three years later, when I showed up and announced that I was the David Kliewer who had applied for admission from the Japanese POW camp. I naively had arrived with only my college transcript and no letters of recommendation. That I was accepted on the spot still amazes me.

My medical education was interrupted on three occasions by the recurrence of the tuberculosis I had acquired in prison camp. The nearly two and a half years spent in hospitals and sanitariums gave me further time to reflect on my past and come to a reconciliation with the war years. But it was not until October 1989 on our trip to the International Peace Conference in Hiroshima that I began to have full reconciliation.

After the conference, Jean and I visited the two places where I had been a POW during World War II. Zentsuji is on a southern island about 70 miles from Hiroshima and Rokuroshi is north in the Japanese Alps where the snow reaches 15 to 20 feet in the winter. Our camp in Zentsuji had been replaced by a modern high school. There I met Mrs. Masako Tada who as an 18-year old had worked as a clerk in the prison camp office. We knew it was a time for reconciliation for both of us as we embraced. To my surprise she remembered me; I was always in the office. I guess that even then I was an activist and a trouble-maker. She recalled how I had been in charge of rabbit raising as well as the many times I was in solitary confinement. I was extremely disappointed that I would not meet my friend Lt. Hositani, for he had died two months earlier at the age of eighty.

Then by train to Rokuroshi, a small mountain village in the Japanese Alps west of Tokyo, where I had been when the war ended. When we arrived, it was raining softly and it was quiet and warm.

Jean and David Kliewer

at Hiroshima memorial, October 1989.

There was a special damp smell of the mountain mist mixed with the odors of the Orient that brought back memories of 44 years before, when I had first arrived in Rokuroshi in the springtime of 1945. I could feel a great uncertainty and anxiety as we were getting ready to visit Rokuroshi again in the morning.

The camp at Rokuroshi was now a ski resort. I still recognized the rocky hillsides where we had attempted to raise sweet potatoes and the much steeper hills where we had searched for herbs and plants for our soup. Beside the fireplace in the ski lodge I sat with Matsuda Isao, who had been second in command of the POW camp. He was now living the peaceful life of a farmer. It was a special step in reconciliation as we embraced and talked about the war and the struggle for peace and nonviolence. We seemed so close in our recognition that we were both victims of a war culture of horrible violences, revenge, and retaliation. In the next year Matsuda Isao erected a peace monument at the site to commemorate our meeting.

My final journey in search of peace came last March when the U. S. Navy flew me with my wife, Jean, and my sons David and Peter to Wake Island, my first return since December 1941. Wake Island is a tiny coral atoll, a thousand miles from anywhere and 2500 miles west of Hawaii. The highest point is 14 feet above sea level. Jean, David, Peter, and I walked the south shore several times where my battle post had been when the Japanese had landed. At low tide we could still identify the rusted fragments of the destroyers and landing craft that floundered on the reef opposite my post. The sound of the pounding surf, the smell of the salty sea air on the southwesterly wind, the cries of the many sooty terns overhead, and the dense brush on shore was just as it had been those December days fifty-six years ago. As my pace down the shore slowed and I found a place on a coral boulder washed ashore by some past storm or hurricane, my memories that I had so well suppressed over the years surfaced and again I thought of those mothers in Japan whose sons had died at my hands. There again I saw my beheaded comrades on the beach. Again I saw those of us who survived shivering on the airstrip without clothes and Japanese machine guns all around. Then I realized the miracle of Psalm 91, "A thousand shall fall at thy side and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee."

This was my final reconciliation. On our second walk down the south shore where the Japanese had landed, a symbolic event occurred. I could clearly recognize where my hand-to-hand combat had taken place. As I paused there to commune with God, my son Peter found a large glass ball perched on a coral head on the edge of the surf. It was as though it had just been placed there and the next wave would send it crashing to the coral rocks below, had Peter not quickly plucked it from danger. For me it was an omen of closure, for I so marveled at the beauty of the glass ball that my past memories faded. My God had forgiven me and the hate was gone. I am finally at peace.

In my last letter home from the concentration camp, in an attempt to bypass the Japanese censor, I wrote a cryptic message referring to Joshua's siege of Jericho. I wrote, "I have the scarlet thread, you folks do the shouting and the blowing of the trumpets." Like the harlot Rahab, I was finally rescued and shall never forget the thrill of the U. S. Army Band playing "California Here I Come" as we piled out of every window of the train that had brought us from the Japanese Alps to Yokohama. There my first telegram to my parents: "Thank God, I'm free at last." But now I am thankful that God has given me time to find my way back to a nonviolent way of life. I have returned home to the windows and walls of my Mennonite heritage. And I like to think that with these windows and walls there are also doors to the outside world community. Through which doors we are able to reach out and become involved in the cultural, political, and social life of our wider community, for the world needs to know the way of love, nonviolence, simplicity, and compassion. I wish to pay tribute to my friend Robert who has opened that door for so many of us.

Beckoning Stories: Maria's Gifts

Rachel Waltner Goossen

"Their story, yours, mine–it's what we all carry with us on this trip we take and we owe it to each other to respect our stories and learn from them." – William Carlos Williams[1]

I have been invited to speak about the insights of family, community, and social history. Since the 1960s, social history has influenced the discipline of history by highlighting the experiences of ordinary people rather than individual leaders or elite groups. Social history challenges us to consider the cultural fabric of a period in history, rather than, say, a single military or political *event*. Unlike more conventional modes of history, social history focuses on everyday activities and patterns of behavior. For at least a generation now, social historians have been generating new topics and examining sources (the accounts of women and children, for example), that in an earlier day might have been overlooked. One of the greatest contributions of social history is that, by emphasizing the long view, it can help us to detect process and patterns in the interplay between human beings and our environment, over time.

Here I want to focus on the life story of a German woman, Maria, born to a Lutheran family in Lübeck in 1925, who survived the Second World War and eventually moved to the United States. In this country she built a new life, but to this day retains connections to her family in northern Germany and carries painful memories of the war. When she first recounted her story, immediately I thought of other women who had written memoirs and commentary on war – Vera Brittain's classic, *Testament of Youth*, on the Great War's ravaging a whole generation of British and European young men; or, from the World War II era, Margaret Sams' memoir on being an interned American in the Philippines and the breakup of her family. Alas, Maria was not, she told me, interested in *writing* her life story, though she admitted that "many people have told me that I should." But *tell* it? That she has been willing to do, and those hearing it, I think, will find elements of pathos, love, irony, fortitude, wisdom. In it is the paradox of social history: on one level, it is an extraordinary account of survival and grit. On another, it is an *ordinary* account, considering Maria's nationality, age, gender, and family background. From it we can draw at least some tentative conclusions about not just one life but the lives of a whole generation.

Maria herself pointed this out, suggesting that for context, I read Hildegard Knef's *The Gift Horse*. I didn't know the book, but Maria directed me to the public library, where I found a 1971 English translation with a claim by the publisher, McGraw-Hill, on the inside cover that this German actress's memoir had been a publishing phenomenon, "indeed, one of the major autobiographies of

our time."[2] Who was Hildegard Knef? I read on, from the inside of the book jacket: "Her fellow Germans knew her as their first big postwar star . . . . In filing this report Hildegard Knef has summed up the civilian history of an entire generation. . . . [C]ompelling. . . . Childhood in the thirties, in a working class neighborhood where her family had a shoe repair shop; an unprecedented picture of what life in Hitler's Germany was like for ordinary, unpolitical people. A first marriage, foredoomed . . . illness, poverty . . . . Then a new career . . . and the serenity of a new love and happy marriage. Life, 'the gift horse,' gave her a thousand reasons to exchange her sense of humor for self-pity; but if she ever succumbed, her unsentimental and witty narrative never reflects it."[3]

> "It just poured out one afternoon while she was sitting in our small living room, after she had dropped by to visit."

That description sounds a lot like Maria's story! But it's hers, not Hildegard's, that I want to tell this morning!

In Charles Kuralt's last book chronicling his wanderlust, a homecoming to his beloved New York City is the culminating chapter. Laconically, Kuralt wrote: "People from elsewhere in the country . . . say, 'I don't see how you can live in a place like New York.' Well, I don't. Nobody does. We live in our neighborhoods . . . [where] we say hello to our neighbors on the street, including their dogs and cats."[4] When I read Kuralt's book in 1995 I was struck by his comment – I thought of myself as someone who enjoyed *visiting* the city but "wouldn't want to live there." My certainty on that point, though, began to evaporate in July 1997 when our family had the chance to live, for one year, across the Charles River from Boston, in a residential neighborhood touching Harvard University. This is an area where at least a few of *you* have lived, and doubtless even more of you have traveled. We lived in the Irving Street/St. Francis Street area of Cambridge, within a couple of blocks of the Harvard Divinity School.

This is not a story about researching in the archives – rewarding though that activity often is. At Harvard I lived just blocks away from the most celebrated archives of women's history in the United States; but found Maria's nuanced account of a life – and insight into a generation's misery – even closer to home. A friendship developed between Maria and me, beginning with a chance sidewalk encounter. In September 1997, just after Labor Day, my daughter Elsa and I were walking near our brick apartment complex when I saw a woman I did not know raking leaves. She stopped what she was doing and struck up a conversation (rare in Cambridge where, oddly to our midwestern way of thinking, strangers usually do not make eye contact with each other while passing on the sidewalk). Maria was tall, not stooped; she seemed a regal figure. I thought she might be in her early sixties but later learned she was closer to seventy-five. She smiled at my daughter and told me that she'd been cleaning out her house and had a playpen she would like to give away. Were there any neighbors in our building I knew of who might be able to use it? Well, I said, a young Harvard student who lived above our family had a baby boy; they might. We decided that I'd leave this other mother a note that she could call Maria if she was interested.

Several days later, Maria was at our door with a sack of old puzzles and books and blocks for Elsa and her brother Ben; Maria reported that the young woman who lived above us *had* come to get the playpen. She thanked me for solving her problem and showered my children with used but quality toys that her two granddaughters had outgrown.

Over the next several months I came to regard Maria, inwardly, as "our benefactress." Often there'd be a phone call in the morning, "Are you home?" and "Will you answer your door in a minute – I have something for the children." Inevitably, this was a collection of items from her house: ("I'm always, always cleaning things out; trying to get rid of things we don't need.") Such as: packets of stamps for Ben from Germany,

China, and New Zealand, and occasionally from other countries. A little coin purse full of Chinese coins of all description: "These are *not* valuable," she told me. Packages of *M&Ms*. Personal care kits with combs, toothbrushes, and toothpaste (all with Chinese writing on them), gathered up but never used during past trips to China. In short, it was stuff my kids *loved* – they adored her and rewarded her many times through the year with drawings, homemade cards, and hugs.

Maria's husband was a New Zealand-born professor at Harvard, not yet retired, a scholar of Chinese literature. During our year in Cambridge the children and I never learned to know him; he was very busy! But Maria, we did. Her story I first heard in November. It just poured out one afternoon while she was sitting in our small living room, after she had dropped by to visit. She told about the war, about losing her first husband, of nearly dying of typhoid, of losing her baby, having no will to live, not knowing what was happening to her brother in the German army; of the occupation in 1945 when British soldiers invaded the house she shared with her parents and younger sister and took everything. *Everything*. Four years later, in 1949, as a twenty-four-year-old widow, she went to England to escape unwelcome pressure to marry her brother-in-law. Possessing some English language skills, she signed on with about 180 other young German women who had been recruited to work as nurse aides in hospitals in England and Scotland. For two years she worked on the maternity ward of a hospital south of London. "It was quite an experience being the first Germans in the neighborhood," she says. "There was a lot of anti-German feeling, as you can imagine. . . . There was even a movie called "Would You Take Frieda Into Your House?" Which means, would you let a German girl into your house?"[5] And then, eventually, her life took another turn with remarriage, this time to a young academic. . . . Later, after coming to the United States, there was the burden of a Nazi-tinged past, even though she and her parents and siblings had not wished to be supportive of the Nazis. On political issues she was outspoken; expressing contempt for the U.S. government's duplicity in war-mongering in recent years. ("German authorities don't have a monopoly on that!" she commented.) Maria described her anger at the buildup of American troops in Vietnam during the 1960s – and how she had taken part in antiwar demonstrations and marches on the Stanford University campus as a faculty wife there – her motivations stemming from her horrendous earlier experiences as a sister and wife of World War II German conscripts.

She had this to say: "I remember when they sent more and more troops, I was very upset. And when they started bombing, what I couldn't understand is how Americans could be so naive to believe their leaders' assurances that the bombs only meet the target. I know the bombs don't meet the target all the time. In fact, half of them go stray, and I've seen the result of it over, and over, and over again. And that is what upset me and that is why, having had the experiences I had during the war – I was in Hamburg during the thousand bomber raids, and I have seen parts of children's bodies all over the place, and mainly I have smelled it. . . . People have no idea. . . . And I felt my duty to mention it. But people pooh-poohed it. They said, oh, this is a different age, and so on. Well, when people came with petitions, I signed everything. They had peace marches. I walked with every peach march that was there. And I did everything I possibly could. Sadly, people get so manipulated, I think, that all the opposition didn't really make much difference, did it?"[6]

Well, her outpouring led to some self-revelation on my part. I told her that I had a lot of interest in what she had lived through; I am a historian of women, of World War II. Oh? Maria took in the information that I'd been recording women's stories from the 1940s – only these were Americans, far from the front, and furthermore, they'd been opposed in various degrees to the war. Some of them had been married to conscientious objectors who'd been drafted but did not wish to serve. Her response was one of surprise. There were *camps* in the United States for these conscientious objectors? She had never

heard that. Like concentration camps? No, not at all like that. But these people – and the churches to which they belonged – had negotiated with the U.S. government to do humanitarian service as a substitute for military involvement. Some of these Americans had even worked in hospitals as aides, I told her, like she herself had done in England in the late 1940s.

Some months later, she agreed to tell *her* story again, this time with a tape recorder in the room, and she spoke in more detail about her life as a child in Lübeck, for which she had photographs ready to show me: "It's . . . on the Baltic – a very beautiful, beautiful old town with lots of sixteenth century buildings that are still standing. Although the center of town," she added, "was badly damaged during bombing in 1942."

Maria's father, Ernst, had served in the German army during the First World War: "My father was 17, he was drafted, and he fought in Flanders, and he tells us, he has one photograph where he sits

"He said he vividly remembered the Christmases, both Christmases he was there. There would be a truce then and they would sort of shake hands with the British and than they would go back to their foxholes or whatever they had then and the next day shoot each other again."

there holding a loaf of bread, about to cut off a piece, and under it was a sign, *So leben wir alle Tage*, which means, we live like this every day. And he said that was brought in for the photograph, and then it was taken away again. In reality they didn't have anything to eat most of the time. Not officially, you know, they had to fend for themselves. . . . He said he vividly remembered the Christmases, both Christmases he was there. There would be a truce then and they would sort of shake hands with the British and then they would go back to their foxholes or whatever they had then and the next day shoot each other again. And he said, as a young person, he just couldn't understand how there could be such respect at one minute and the next minute you were supposed to shoot."

At the time her parents married in 1923, she told me, they had been engaged for "quite a long time, sort of the old fashioned way, saving up – you know, to have money when you get married. But of course, all that was lost when they had the big inflation after the first World War, so they were very poor. And my father was a clerk in an office, and my mother had been working as a saleswoman in a local dress shop. Of course, when I was born, she stopped working. And they lived . . . in a very poor area, a low-income area. And they were very poor, as was everybody else because of the depression in Germany. Although, compared to others, we were well off. I mean, I always had shoes. . . . "

Maria was the oldest of four children; her two brothers were born in 1926 and 1928. When she was six, her family moved to a better neighborhood and her father switched jobs, began working as a manager for the city. Her parents were Social Democrats, and her father had been active in a union before Hitler's rise to power in 1933. She described her schooling:

"In Germany in those days, up to age 10 you all go to school together. They are neighborhood schools. And . . . if your parents could pay, you went to *Gymnasium*. You also at age 10 had to join the Hitler Youth. Otherwise, I don't know what they would have done. Everybody did. . . . The girls were called *Bund Deutscher Mädchen* and the boys were called *Hitler Jugend*, and that was at age 10.

". . . . What people here don't realize was how terrible conditions were in Germany. You know, with unemployment and hunger, hunger, oh, you can't believe. . . . Grown men would come and sing at your door because they weren't allowed to beg. They would come to your door, knock, and then they would sing a folk song. And my mother would give them a coin or what they preferred was a sandwich. And many of them would put it in their pocket for their children because *they* had nothing to eat.

"[I attended the *Gymnasium*], and Saturday was the day when we had deeds, what they called

duty, and I hated it, because you had to march. I hated all this sort of organized activity. But sometimes they even provided food. I tried to miss it as much as I could. I had a terrible time. . . . It was usually in the playground of the school, and that's where they would do the marching. . . . When you went to the *Gymnasium* for girls, the way I did, you were more or less expected to be the leader for the other common folk down there that didn't go to *Gymnasium*.

"The *Gymnasium* was where I started learning English. . . . [But then] there was hardly any school after I was 14. My school was occupied right away. My school was made into a hospital, and we had to walk almost an hour to the local barracks, and we had to be there by 12. And from 12 to 2 we had classes while the soldiers had lunch time and rest because there were no buildings. . . . What do you learn in two hours? Nothing. You were tired by the time you got there. . . . And we weren't allowed to use buses because we weren't war important. So we had to walk. We had to walk there and walk back. And the irony is that at once we had rationing, and we got one pair of shoes a year. So you can imagine what our shoes looked like. But that's the way it was.

" . . . . When my brother was 16 in 1942, they were made soldiers. The whole class was taken, put a sort of uniform on them, and they were anti-aircraft outside my hometown. . . . And he was sent to Hamburg to build the bunker where the U-boats would be hidden. And then a year later, when he was 18, he was drafted to be a soldier and promptly – I think he was only a soldier three months – he was taken prisoner, when the British made an invasion by air.

"We weren't told anything at all. The only reason we knew this was that mail would come back with a stamp on it that said "missing," and that's all. And my mother wrote a letter to his unit commander, because when you write to them you didn't know where they were. And she got the stupidest letter back . . . that sort of said don't be such a silly goose worrying about your son. You're only sharing the fate of thousands of others. You should be proud of your son. We didn't know whether he was alive or dead for 18 months, when we had a 25-word postcard from him from England. And then, [two weeks later] . . . my mother and I were sitting on the bed mending underwear for the umpteenth – we were mending the mends. We hadn't had any clothes in over five years, and your underwear gets holes after awhile. And we were darning away, and my mother said, "Look at that, look at that. That looked like Peter." And sure enough, it was my brother – arrived, walking past the window and had an English soldier's coat on . . . and that's how he came home. . . . He was on the very first boat that came back from England; he had been chosen to go home because he had TB. He had TB very badly. And wasn't 20 years old yet. He was 20 that August, and this was in May 1946."

During the time that Peter had been missing, Maria had left school to begin working in a bank. And she met a man, an older, twenty-three-year-old soldier, who had been hurt quite badly in the left arm and thought he'd never be sent to the front again. Anna recalls, "he couldn't really hold a rifle properly. And I married him; I was 19. He was a wonderful man. But anyway, he was killed on the 19th of February, 1945. Unfortunately, [by that time the German authorities] would take anyone that would stand up. He, unfortunately, had been sent to the eastern front. And he died east of Berlin, somewhere in Prussia, East Prussia. . . ."

Maria was pregnant when he died, a twenty-year-old living with her parents and younger sister in Lübeck. During that spring, 1945, British soldiers came through her town, she says, to get to Berlin: "We had quite a bit of lawlessness because they had no sort of superstructure there, no military police . . . . What they had done is, they had German prisoners. And near where we lived there were huge meadows, and usually cows would graze there. And they had driven people – German soldiers – there, maybe thousands of them. And then they surrounded it with, every now and then there would be people with machine guns and guard these soldiers. But these meadows were wet and dank, and we would look with field glasses – we could see they were not getting any food at all. And

neighbors came to me, and of course everybody had somebody in the war. Everybody had a brother, sister, whatever. And they said, 'They get nothing to eat. What shall we do? We should do something.' And they came to me because I was one of the few people that could speak English. So we decided we all made some coffee and we took our last blankets (Lord bless us), bottles of wine, whatever we could carry, and we walked – we were supposed to all walk down to this machine gun, close there, and ask them could we feed the soldiers. So guess who was walking there alone the last hundred yards? Me. I didn't care. Really, I didn't care at that point whether they shot me or not. He pointed the machine gun straight around at me, but here I was with my pail of hot drink and tea and whatever I had, and I had a blanket over my shoulder, because we could see with our field glasses some of the soldiers with no legs, they were on crutches. And this was cold weather. And they were out in the open day and night.

"I knew enough [English] to ask him. So he said yes, we could feed them and we could leave food there, but we were not allowed under any circumstances to take any messages back. So I went back to the lot . . . and the next morning, the whole town came. I mean, everybody came. And after two days or so, the British had enough, they fed them. They gave them soup and stuff. But in the meantime, I had asked to see the commander of the camp and asked him could the soldiers that had no legs or had one leg, could they please come into our houses and that they could sit down and lie down at night. And there were sort of barns . . . and he allowed that. He allowed the ones that had leg damage to sleep in these barns. But we had to sign; I know I signed. . . . And foolishly, what I did, they offered me a drink – coffee, and I drank it. And I think that is when I got this typhoid fever. Because low and behold, a few weeks later I got it, too. None of my family did. Only I.

"In the meantime, my son was born. What happened, when I was out there at night, I somehow or other got too cold. Anyway, the doctor thinks that was the reason. And my son was born 5-6 weeks premature. He was doing fine. Of course, we were wildly delighted it was a boy. And my in-laws lived in a town 40-50 miles away, and of course there was no phone, no mail or anything like that. I mean, this was soon after the occupation. So what we did – a currency we used was silver – we wrapped three silver teaspoons in a sort of envelope and wrote the address of my in-laws on it and wrote on it, so and so's been born, and gave it to a neighbor. She went to the Autobahn and stopped a soldier hoping he would deliver it, and he did. Because two or three days later my father-in-law came. He had walked all the way, to see the grandson.

But then, when I had typhoid, and a fever of 105, from one day to another, I couldn't feed him. . . . I mean, when you have a premature baby like that and the breast milk stops like mine did, there was no way. He would just not eat. And we didn't have all these dried things they have now . . . . My aunt would come practically every day to . . . see the baby. I never saw that baby. I mean, I never bathed him, there were always all these other women, you know, oh you don't know, you don't know. Everybody took charge.

"Suddenly I took very hot and ill, and my aunt called our family doctor, and he had to walk 45 minutes but he said he'd see my baby and me. So he came and took a throat culture, and that's the last thing I remember. And the next thing I remember I wake up and my baby was gone. He just died. We don't know. The doctor, you know, they didn't do any autopsies or anything. . . .

"When I woke up I sat up and said where's the boy, and then they told me. And they told me what they had done – you see, in Germany in those days, or everywhere else for that matter, there are no coffins or anything. Where would they come from? There's nothing gets made. . . . Nothing, no material. So what my father had done is he had given somebody he knew an old chest of drawers, and out of the drawer he made a coffin. And the family, they put the baby in and showed it to me, but I have no recollection. I can't – just can't remember. No idea. And we had no photographs. We have absolutely nothing of that child. Nothing. Absolutely nothing."

After the war, Maria lived with her family for four more years, recovering her health and contributing to the family economy, scavenging wood for fuel and working. For her, 1949 was a turning point. "I go forward," she told me. "I mean, I wouldn't be here otherwise. I didn't need a psychiatrist to tell me that I had to leave Germany. I had to leave home. And the only way I could leave home was to go to England. . . . The reason I wanted to go to England for two years was I thought my life had come to an end, really. I was never going to fall in love again. I was never going to marry again. I was going to see the world, I was going to learn English. And that would be the number one thing to know.

"In fact, when I met my husband (who was *going to be* my husband; I didn't know it at the time), my two years [of working in England] had almost finished. . . . We met – there was somebody he knew – somebody I knew through the hospital, who was giving a party, and he was there. And I saw him, and all my–my–that I would never fall in love again and never marry again was all gone overnight. Really, it was love at first sight. I never, never, never would have thought it would happen like that ever. And fortunately, the same with him."

"The reason I wanted to go to England for two years was I thought my life had come to an end, really."

Maria married him soon after, in England, in 1951. He was too young to have served for New Zealand's armed forces during the war, but his two older brothers had fought in North Africa and Italy. And one of them, Maria told me, was in the same battle where her cousin Joachim, who was exactly her age, was killed. "So my cousin was fighting on the German side and Mike, who'd eventually be my brother-in-law, was on the other side."[7]

* * * * *

Well, there's more, of course. In the telling, I've held back parts of the story, and in *her* recounting these events to me, Maria left out parts as well, for all sorts of complicated and suggestive reasons. But, we have enough here, this morning, to at least begin to absorb her words and ask what they can tell us about family, community, social history. What do we do with such a coming-of-age story, that is at once extraordinary *and* also ordinary, common, representative? What patterns are discernible?

Implicit in this story is the metaphor of gift. Bob Kreider's work has been infused with metaphoric language – both in written and oral form. One way to look at this outpouring of a story is through the metaphor of *gift*; a rich, multi-textured gift. In the beginning, a gift an older woman offered younger women – a playpen and other items to delight children; leading to more *gifts* (food and small things), leading to the *gift* of friendship with its implied reciprocity. Maria's life story is one where we see a pattern of generosity, of giving. Near the end of our interview she returned to a description of her mother's mother, who lived close by her family in Lübeck: "And I don't know if I told you. In the old days you had a big stove in the kitchen with a special sort of a pole in the back where there was always soup going. There was always a great big soup pot ready. And as soon as you came in, 'Are you hungry?' If you said yes, you got a plate of soup and a piece of bread. Anybody."[8]

The patchwork quilt fabric of a life, a woman's life. A childhood in Germany, with Nazi youth involvement. A tragic early widowhood and loss of a child. A ravaged and devastated family; then, recovery of health and a whirlwind romance with a handsome, gifted student – a love match that's lasted 50 years. (Maria told me that when she married for the second time, in England, "we had only seen each other maybe 10 times. We didn't know each other, really. But we knew. And everybody said it won't last. I mean, nobody believed it would last.")[9]

Maria became the mother of *another* son, struggled financially while her husband spent years in school, and gradually took on the role of a wife whose spouse's career came first – at prestigious academic appointments at Stanford (with Maria the architect of academic cocktail

parties right out of a good Wallace Stegner novel) and later, at Harvard. A web of friendships with Chinese students of her husband's, their wives, their children; and a lifetime of visits to her own family in Germany and in-laws in New Zealand. A web that spins out even with the serendipitous sidewalk conversation she struck up with me, an older woman in her 70s, so observant of the presence of new and momentarily friendless children in her Cambridge neighborhood.

Again, in thinking of Maria I am reminded of Bob Kreider's fascination with *women's* history. He's often observed examples from within his own family that it is *women* who are usually the "keepers of the network" – letter writers, givers of cards, diarists, recorders of the minute details of life. Maria was trained as an accountant at the hometown bank where she worked. But like many women of her generation, her responsibilities as a married women eventually tracked along the lines of child rearing and supporting a husband in *his* career. Through her adult life Maria has been a "keeper of the network," a human conduit for flowing information and for maintaining family relationships across continents and oceans.

Maria's life and the transformative identities she represents (European to American; impoverished to financially secure; literally near-death and despondent to vigorous and life-embracing), remind me of Bob's abiding interest in the

"Through her adult life, Maria has been a 'keeper of the network,' a human conduit for flowing information and for maintaining family relationships across continents and oceans."

"streams" of family and community and social history that configure our identity and make-up as human beings. My friend Maria knows who she is because she knows where she has been. She knows the richness of her own story. She knows how to draw lessons from it, and does so in her own unmistakable voice. She has been forever befriending others who are new in the community, who have less; who are short on resources, because she knew what that feels like.

"Have we become so familiar with our *own* stories (Mennonites, pacifists, American) that we have missed stories and friendships with people whose circumstances and experiences were stunningly different? What kind of balance is there to be found in seeking stories *unlike* our own to contemplate, as well as seeking out those with whom we identify closely?"

But even as I admire her I am mindful of the attention Bob Kreider gives to the "shadow" dimensions of whatever historical subject is at hand. One thing I have noticed about Bob's interpretations of the past is his effort to leaven the "glow" of achievement and goodness with, at least, *hints* of disappointments in his subjects' lives. One way to do this is to speculate on roads not taken, on failures. In her later life, Maria's own relationship with the sole younger woman in her immediate family has been a troubled one; I've wondered if I represented to her a surrogate daughter; and my children, surrogate grandchildren. This admittedly superficial psychoanalysis makes me feel as though I am treading very unsteadily, and my musings turn in other directions:

- –What do we do to atone for loss and failure in our lives?
- –What motivates a cross-generational friendship?
- –What is it like to live in a city where one has many acquaintances but no kin?
- –What is it like to be an older woman in a residential community where most people are not one's peers, but instead, graduate students in their twenties and thirties?
- –Shirley Showalter, in her keynote address last evening, prompted me to think of this in terms of the "role of elders" in our communities.

I'll conclude by venturing a guess that Maria

would likely feel at home with many people in this auditorium who *lived through* World War II but did not take part militarily in it. She abhors militarism, as her Vietnam era activism attests. But what is our response to hearing the stories of someone like Maria, whose tale is that of a civilian in a militarized Nazi Germany? Have we become so familiar with our *own* stories (Mennonites, pacifists, American) that we have missed stories and friendships with people whose circumstances and experiences were stunningly different? What kind of balance is there to be found in seeking stories *unlike* our own to contemplate, as well as seeking out those with whom we identify closely?

The well-known physician and educator Robert Coles reminds us that in looking for larger patterns of meaning there's no substitute for story, and there's plenty to be learned from our neighbors if we "listen carefully, record faithfully, comprehend as fully as possible."[10] Thanks to all of you for being listeners with me here this morning.

Notes

[1] Quoted in Robert Coles, *The Call of Stories: Teaching and the Moral Imagination* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989), 29.

I wish to acknowledge the contributions of several people. Melba Nunemaker prepared a lengthy, typed transcript from the oral history interview. Alexandra Sterling-Hellenbrand assisted with German-language phrases. Ardie S. Goering shared with me her essay on being attentive to details, published in *Mennonite Weekly Review* in January 1998, which helped in the conceptualization of this paper.

[2] *The Gift Horse: Report on a Life*, trans. David C. Palastanga (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971), inside cover.
[3] Ibid.
[4] *Charles Kuralt's America* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1995), 261.
[5] Interview with Maria, Cambridge, Mass., 6 March 1998, transcript in the author's possession.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.
[10] *Call of Stories*, 25.

Service and Community

Atlee Beechy

My reflections on service and community are rooted in John 15:5, "I am the vine you are the branches," Romans 12:5, "so we who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another," and I Cor. 4:1, "As servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries." Community is God's grace working in individuals and groups to build God's new kingdom. Marks of community are acceptance, respect, justice, trust, compassion, inclusion, embrace, and hope. The result is bonding to God and to each other.

My thesis: Service is the expression of community and community is the generator of service. Jesus was both servant and creator of community. Community develops in relationships through sharing, creating, loving, and through hoping, struggling, and suffering. I believe community develops even in coercive situations such as CPS. It flourishes in domestic and overseas service.

I begin with selective personal experiences in community and service:

I was my mother's servant boy to the elderly and sick in Berlin, Ohio.

In 1937, after four years of teaching in the peaceable kingdom of Holmes County, Ohio, I moved to Columbus, Ohio, where I taught for six years in the inner city. Culture shock was intense. While surviving my first semester I began to see the challenge of inner city teaching. I began to feel a beginning sense of community in my classroom. I felt this more clearly when taking my students out along the Olentangy river for Saturday morning breakfasts. I even sensed the beginning of community in the many hours I spent on the playground where my assignment was organizing games, stopping fights, and peacemaking.

I was assigned to the CPS camp at Sidling Hill, Pennsylvania, in September 1943. This base camp had substantial diversity in faith affiliations, education, and vocations. In our camp we had Radical Love and several others from Father Divine's group, Seventh Day Adventists, Baptists, Methodists, two professors from Ivy League universities, a Jewish lawyer, Afro-Americans, Amish and different shades of Mennonites. This diversity generated intense discussions and some conflict. Underneath I sensed a degree of movement toward community. This was tested and confirmed at a recent CPS reunion.

I finished my draft service with MCC in the Akron relief office working with Material Aid where service and community were important. In 1946 Winifred and I agreed to serve as hostess and director of the MCC European program. W spent two and a half years in this assignment. For us it was an eye and heart opening experience. We found service and community interlacing in many situations such as refugee centers

and movements, in feeding and community development programs, in serving children and in reconciling gatherings of French and German Mennonites and Dutch and German students. Community also happened in many informal and formal exchanges and in worship. Bob and Lois Kreider were deeply involved. These experiences had a profound impact on my faith, understanding of the hellish nature of war, commitment to the Church and its educational program and its service, peace, and justice outreach. A number of former CPS men and staff played important leadership roles in the MCC European program.

Winifred and I joined the Goshen College family in 1949 and served there through 1983. I experienced service and community in many Goshen College settings – worship, classes, student activities, counseling, learning, teaching, witnessing to peace and justice issues, in anti-war and violation of human rights protests, and in liberation movements. Co-leading SST units in Poland and China, and my service in Vietnam further confirmed that these two powerful spiritual and social forces operate in international exchanges and in war-torn situations. I experienced the mystery and power of both service and community in these settings, sometimes in unexpected ways and places. For a number of men, CPS and overseas service were influential factors in the choice of their vocations. In retirement we continue to experience service and community as we "seek peace and pursue it."

I lift up the RTUF, Reconstruction and Transport Unit - France, 1946-48, as an example of the interlacing relationship of service and community. Twenty-four dedicated MCC workers were involved in God's restoration work in northeast France. Seventeen of them had been in CPS. God took these men and the women volunteers who joined them, and all their motivations, diverse skills, active faith, sense of humor, and molded them into a Community of Servants. They repaired and built buildings but also built much more. They listened and comforted the mourning, brought the oil of gladness, and restored hope. They touched the hearts of the Hege family and many others. In turn they were touched by the hearts of these people. In this process they were bonded to God, to each other, to a common purpose, to the Church and to the community. Their faith, flexibility, and commitment combined to make a significant peace witness.

The life of community within the group was strong and has remained that way to this day. The boundaries of the RTUF community expanded during their service to include local Mennonites and others in the community. Since completing their service the RTUF has had twelve reunions, including one in France. These relationships have been nurtured by two-way visits.

What sent this group into European reconstruction service? Most said the CPS experience was the primary factor in their decision to volunteer. After reading unit members' powerful stories of the impact of these experiences on their lives, I wrote the following in the preface of their book of reflections:

Service
is the expression of community and community is the generator of service.

He smiled and promptly listed on his official form that my profession was "Mennonite."

What are you saying to MCC, the Church, and the world? You are saying love is central, crosses cultural and physical boundaries and finds expression in humble, reconciling service. You are saying such service is often doing ordinary work in a gracious spirit, that service is a two-way street, and if you open your heart to those you seek to serve you find wonderful riches coming back to you. Service is a universal bridge that connects and binds people together in community.

Service is rooted in your personal response to Christ's call to love and serve the human family and do so not with a sense of duty but with joy. You did this in many ways – your daily building, in keeping vehicles going, offering hospitality, recreation, in your chorus ministry, in worship, in learning from the people and in sharing your laughter and empathy. This is Kingdom building.

One evening in 1948 I came from Germany into France at Wissembourg. The custom official asked the routine questions – Where from? Where to? What is your profession? I began explaining my work. He interrupted and asked, "Are you Mennonite?" I confirmed the fact. He smiled and promptly listed on his official form that my profession was "Mennonite." That happened thanks to the life and witness of the RTUF, the staff of the children's home and the French Mennonites. Yes, service is the expression of community and community is the generator of service. Together, I believe they form the essence of our life together and our witness to a needy and violent world.

Some Memories of World War II in the Amish Community in Stark County, Ohio

A l K e i m

The warplane droned overhead, its flight lights blinking red and white against the night sky. Peering from our unlighted farmhouse windows we watched with awe as the plane disappeared behind the tall trees at the edge of our orchard. "We can be glad it wasn't a German or Japanese plane," my father remarked as he relit the oil lamp in the kitchen.

It was 1943. One of the most effective war propaganda devices of WWII—the blackout—had just been staged in our north-central Ohio community. We didn't know that neither the Germans nor the Japanese had planes which could reach Stark County, Ohio. What we did know from newspaper photos was that in some parts of the world planes were raining death and destruction on people as innocent as we were. That plane in the night sky combined with our drawn shades brought visual reality to the deeply felt terror I, as an eight-year old Amish boy, felt that night as I slept at the foot of my parents bed, too frightened to sleep upstairs in the bed I normally shared with my six-year old brother.

That airplane was only one of many ways our tranquil Amish community encountered the war. The sixty Amish families in our community were sandwiched between the booming cities of Akron and Canton, Ohio. The Goodyear Rubber Company in Akron was running three shifts in its huge factories, struggling to keep up with the enormous demands of the American war machine. In Canton the Timken ball-bearing plant was expanding quickly as demand for its products mushroomed. Like the nearby cities, the Amish economy in our community was dramatically affected by the insatiable demands of the war.

Probably half of the Amish in Stark County were vegetable farmers. The Amish community was founded in 1905 and nearly all the farms had substantial swamps as part of their acreage. Stark County had a glacial landscape with small hills and deep hollows. During endless aeons the hollows filled with debris and water, serving as huge compost pits. By the twentieth century those hollows, now swamps, contained some of the most fertile soil in the world. The ten acre swamp my grandfather cleared between 1912 and 1920 had rich black muck soil forty feet deep. With skillful tile drainage the land became incredibly productive. By the 1930s the Amish farmers were producing bumper crops of radishes, carrots, celery, lettuce, and red beets. During the harvesting season trucks gathered the produce, packed in webbed wooden baskets and crates, and delivered the vegetables to markets in Cleveland and Pittsburgh.

With the war, demand surged and prices soared. My father, who by 1940 had bought my grandfather Miller's farm with its seven acre muckland, was able to pay off the

mortgage on the farm in just a few years. In fact he made so much money—the price of a crate of celery jumped from eight or ten dollars a crate in 1940 to as much as $48.00 a crate by 1944—that he felt guilty, and did a very un-Amish thing; he made some substantial contributions to the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities as well as to MCC.

The boom in the Amish vegetable economy filtered into the Amish community generally in the form of higher wages. I remember my father bragging that he was paying some of the six or eight young Amish men and women who worked for us as much as five dollars for an eight hour work day. Only ten years earlier, he recalled, he had done the same work for a dollar a day.

The boom in the Amish vegetable economy filtered into the Amish community generally in the form of higher wages.

The wages our day laborers could command were driven by the ready employment available in our community, especially to young Amish men. Two industries in nearby Hartville, less than two miles from the center of the Amish community, were a basket factory and the Shumacher Milling plant. Numerous Amishmen daily rode their bicycles to work at those plants. Concern about Amish working at the Shumacher plant—with its production for war-related purposes—was voiced from time to time. My father was one of the vocal opponents of such employment. In fact he was so exercised by it that when Mennonite leader Harold S. Bender came to Beech Mennonite Church to talk about the issue of working in war-related industry, he made the fifteen mile two hour journey by horse and buggy to get Bender's take on the matter. Fortuitously, he took me, his eight-year old firstborn, along on the trip. Beech Mennonite had a group of men who were working at the steel mills in nearby Youngstown, and the congregational leaders hoped Bender could persuade them to give up their employment. After the meeting, on the long trip home, my father expressed strong disagreement with the argument of the young men that their employment in the steel mills contributed no more to the war effort than the wheat the Beech congregation farmers were selling to feed the soldiers.

The war impinged on the Amish community in other ways. In the early 1940s the Amish did not yet have parochial schools. So the several hundred Amish school children in our community attended public consolidated schools in the towns on the periphery of the community. Each day my brother and I boarded a yellow school bus in our front yard for the several mile trip to the Hartville Public School in town. Probably a hundred of the school's six hundred students were Amish. Not only were we painfully aware of how we stood out from the majority because of our garb, but we encountered daily reminders of our alternative status vis-à-vis the war. Our parents forbade us to salute the flag, sing the national anthem, collect bags of milkweed pods for parachute construction, watch news reels about the war, or attend assemblies which were devoted to patriotic themes. My father considered himself an advocate for the Amish children, and I recall his frequent visits to the principal's office to object when a

teacher made impositions which compromised the nonconformist practice of Amish students.

Almost certainly one consequence of the wartime experience of Amish children in Stark County public schools was the founding, in 1945, of the Lake Center Christian Day School. The Amish community linked up with Ohio and Conservative conference churches to build the school with two buildings and four rooms for the eight grades. It was the first Amish or Mennonite parochial school in Ohio, and one of only a few in the entire nation in 1945. I attended grades 5, 6, and 7 at Lake Center School.

The war had other consequences for our community as well. I remember riding to Hartville in our wagons or horse and buggy and having people come out on their porches and calling us names, and mocking our clothes and haircuts. Given the relatively close relationships the Amish had with the local community such hostility could only be explained by the tensions the war had created.

The Amish were especially frightened by the specter of the military draft. I remember being terrified that my father would be drafted. My father was 30 years old in 1942, but with three children and a thriving farm enterprise, he was readily deferred, so my fears were quite exaggerated. Many young men were drafted, however. One list includes 25 men. Two of my first cousins, Mahlon Wagler and Elmer Sommers, were drafted and went into the Civilian Public Service program.

My father, while not yet ordained, was asked to visit the CPS men from our community. As a youngster I remember my mother complaining about how hard it was to get the dirt out of my father's white shirt collars when he returned from his CPS trips. He blamed the dirt on the soot from the steam-powered trains he rode. She thought it was more likely a result of not changing his shirts often enough!

On one of those trips to visit Stark County CPS men my father took me along. It was 1945, and I was nine years old. We visited several CPS camps in Maryland, but the memorable ones which I remember were our visits to the Marlboro Unit at the New Jersey State Hospital where my cousin Elmer Sommers worked, and the Norristown State Hospital where cousin Mahlon Wagler served. For a nine-year old, the sights, sounds, and smells of the hospitals were disturbing and terrifying. I was especially horrified when, as we toured the wards, my father, who never met a stranger in his life, would stop and try to strike up a conversation with the patients. Having just listened to my cousin's stories of how belligerent some of the patients could be, I was sure my diminutive father was inviting some kind of violent reaction. It was reassuring to have cousin Mahlon's six-foot-four 225 pound bulk close at hand.

I was also awed by the spectacle of my two cousins, out of Amish garb, wearing the white clothes hospital regulations required. I was astounded at how conventionally worldly they looked. Always sensitive to inconsistencies, I remember quizzing my father about why Mahlon and Elmer were allowed to disregard the Amish

I remember riding to Hartville in our wagons or horse and buggy and having people come out on their porches and calling us names, and mocking our clothes and haircuts.

clothing regulations. To my nine-year old mind it seemed like a major transgression of church rules.

Like many rural Americans, the Amish were not much affected by the wartime rationing. I remember my parents tried to control our use of sugar, which was rationed, but it was a marginal concern. Food was always plentiful. I remember the spectacle of eight hogs, skins steaming white from having been scalded and scraped, their torsos sawed in two from head to tail, strung up on a row of tripods in my uncle's back yard. This was meat for the families of my uncles and aunts who engaged in this annual butchering orgy.

One way the rationing did affect us was that it made it more difficult to hire our Conservative Conference neighbors or the "English" to take us on trips in their cars. Tires and gasoline were rationed. So when my Miller grandparents and my two Miller uncles moved to Geauga County during the war we had to make the 50-mile trip by horse and buggy. If we left before daylight we could usually get to the Grandparents' house in time for supper. It was a long journey for a family of five children and two parents in a two-seated buggy.

The long-range effects of the World War on the Stark County Amish were several-fold. It began the process of turning the community into suburbs for commuters employed in Akron and Canton. Soon the Amish farm land became too expensive to use for farming. Some of the Amish sold their land and moved to areas where land was cheaper. In 1948 our family sold our farm and moved to cheaper land in southern Ohio.

The Amish were also assimilated or, more accurately, they gravitated to more progressive Amish Mennonite groups within the community. By 1948 there were at least five varieties of Amish and Mennonite churches vying for members in Stark County. In 1940 there had been three Old Order Amish churches. By 1980 there were only a few Amish families left, but there were six or eight flourishing Conservative Conference and Ohio Conference Mennonite congregations. The majority of the members were children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren of Amish parents.

In 1953 as a 17-year old, I returned to Stark County to live with my Amish aunt Mandy and uncle Dave, who lived on my Grandfather Stutzman's farm. By then they were no longer farming the place, their three acres of muckland no longer able to compete with the vegetable plantations in Florida. Uncle Dave, dinner pail in hand, rode his bicycle to the Shumacher plant in town, where he made far more than he could ever earn from the farm. I also got a job, a very well-paid job, not on an Amish farm, but as a bricklayer helping to build the new suburbs on what was once Amish land.

The ultimate consequence of the war, it seems to me, was to unleash economic and social forces which not only profoundly changed the Amish and Mennonite community in Stark County, but made the demise of the Old Order Amish in Stark County nearly inevitable.

The PAX Movement: A Small Contribution to the "Peaceable Community"

Calvin Redekop

Community and peace are among the most universal utopian goals, but they have personal as well as social dimensions. Hence the PAX story and its role in creating community and peace can be explored from an autobiographical as well as social dimension.[1] This article begins with a personal perspective and then expands into the social. Born in Montana during the last phase of frontier Mennonite settlements on the prairies (the Fort Peck Indian reservation had been opened for white settlement in 1912), I was nurtured in the isolated and insular culture of survival, unaware of the larger societal realities. However, in 1940 my family "returned east" to Mountain Lake, Minnesota, where I was introduced to a more established Russian Mennonite community and its culture.

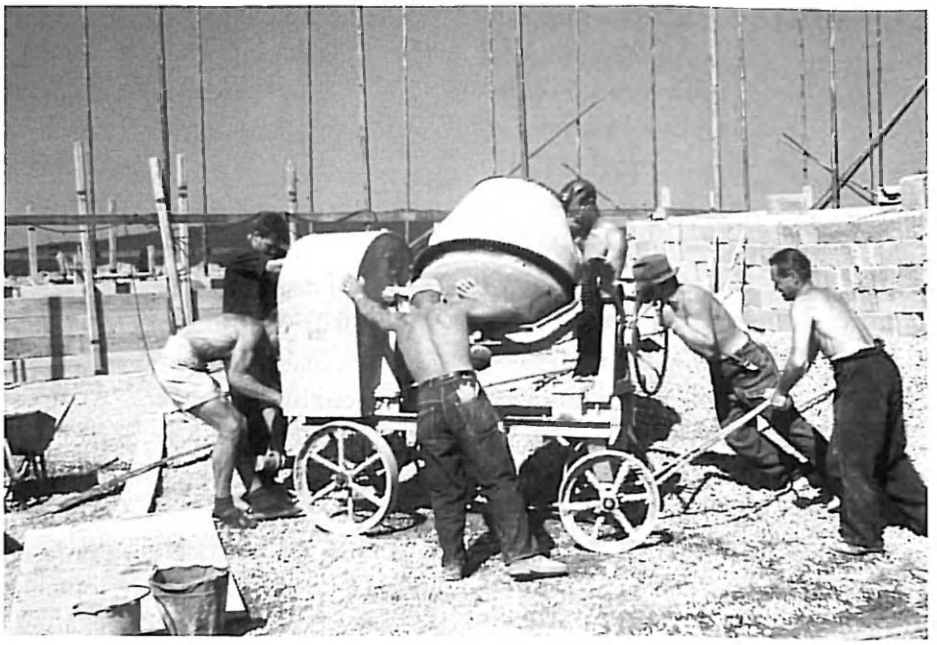
But at Mountain Lake the processes of acculturation and assimilation were moving apace, and as a member of the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren, I was socialized quickly into the revivalistic, evangelistic, and individualistic religious mainstream in the Midwest that was rapidly engulfing Mountain Lake in its tidal wave. But World War II confronted me with a basic dilemma: to which society did I belong? The sectarian Mennonite I vaguely understood or the mainline evangelical Christian? Was I a part of a tradition that stressed closed cohesive communities and peace, or was it out of date and no longer relevant? I was drafted in 1943 but failed my physical so received a service exemption, and released after the war ended in 1945.

In January of 1946, I entered Goshen College, where I was introduced to the almost overwhelming wealth of human culture, and slowly became aware of the question: how do I relate to the fact of human society and culture? Slowly, imperceptibly, I developed the conviction that my debt to human history and culture was to actively work toward achieving a cultural equivalent to war, violence, oppression, and dominance of others. This reflected my embracing the essential Anabaptist tradition which I had discovered at Goshen College.

Graduation from college forced me to begin to apply my newly achieved commitments in the real world. Fortunately an organization existed where I could express my ideals. The Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), which had proven itself as the most aggressive and challenging movement for the expression of the Christian gospel anywhere, or so it seemed to us younger people. I volunteered and was assigned to Europe where I joined a voluntary service unit which was helping refugees to move into renovated munitions bunkers in north Germany.

After several months of work, I was moved to the German MCC headquarters in Frankfurt to help direct the growing work camp

PAX men working at Backnang, Germany, 1952



movement. The Mennonite Voluntary Service program (MVS), which began in 1948 and continued for some 20 years, is an inspiring story of bringing post-war youth from all over Europe together to work at recovering from the trauma of World War II and to reconcile the animosities between the Germans and the young people from other parts of Europe. I know persons who still continue relationships with friends from around the globe.[2]

This work camp movement inspired Paul Peachey, MCC director, and me to think of this as a potential model of international reconstruction and reconciliation which would serve as an alternative to military service. "Why couldn't we get American idealistic young draftees to come to Europe to give their two years of service time working at constructive projects such as refugee housing which would fulfill the goal of service for peace?" we asked.[3] It was assumed that European youth would also be integrated into the units as feasible, reflecting the work camp model of international reconciliation and community building.

II

The idea was presented to Orie O. Miller, executive secretary of MCC, in June 1950. On December 2 of 1950 the plan was submitted to the executive committee, which finally approved it on March 15, 1951. The preparations for the experiment had obviously already been launched, for by April 6 of 1951 the first unit of 20 young men arrived in Europe. The alacrity with which this experiment was realized matches any business organization and supports my

contention of the responsiveness and experimental nature of MCC.

A most critical and significant part of the Pax story was the MCC appeal to the Selective Service System of the United States government to allow this program to be an alternative to military service on foreign soil, since Selective Service had never given alternative service credit to men serving outside the continental United States. General Lewis B. Hershey was dispatched to Germany in the summer of 1951 to investigate the program. It was with understandable pride that we escorted him through the refugee housing construction units that were in full operation, with 20 fellows hard at work with fellow refugees, not knowing whether their service would be counted in lieu of military service. He returned to the United States to give unqualified approval to the program as an alternative service to military duty.

The general profile of the Pax program can be condensed into quantifiable terms by stating that it existed from 1951 to 1975. A total of over 900 young American draftees served in a variety of projects in 39 countries, including refugee housing in Germany,[4] rural agricultural rehabilitation and development in Greece, Pakistan, Paraguay, Crete, Vietnam (to name a few), emergency reconstruction in the Netherlands, relief work in Jordan, Korea, and road building in Peru and Paraguay. The many other types of projects cannot be listed here.[5] The average term of service was around 2.5 years; multiplied by 900 would suggest that at least 2,250 man-years were donated.

III

The role Pax played in building the peaceable community can be analyzed from three dimensions: 1) the contribution through the relief, reconstruction, and rehabilitation services it rendered, 2) by the peaceable community it built through the very process of working with nationals of many countries, and 3) the development of infrastructures that resulted from the nature of many of the projects themselves.

1) There is little need for copious documentation of the well known contribution the Pax program made to individuals and communities by their material service. One personal example will illustrate. In 1995 I organized a tour of ex-Pax boys to the construction projects in Germany. My correspondence with local contacts exuded joy at the prospect of our visit. At every location we visited, the members of the settlement community organized enthusiastic "coffees" or dinners and with great emotion reminded us of the great significance of the Pax presence. At Enkenbach, for example, the mayors of the two local jurisdictions gave emotional expressions of their appreciation to what had been done for the material and social improvement of the refugee conditions, and presented us with symbolic gifts and keys to the towns.[6]

Common themes which were repeated during our entire tour were "The Pax boys gave us hope, showed us that others care, and helped us immeasurably in obtaining housing which would have been impossible

Did Pax actually help create the peaceable community by their presence and actions?

I believe

Pax men can go to any of the places in the world where Pax worked, and expect to be remembered and enthusiastically welcomed.

otherwise." The letters in files of MCC and individual MCC workers reflecting the impacts made by the Pax projects are voluminous. Even though there has probably not been any research to scientifically document how Pax contributed to community building, it can be confidently stated that helping fellow humans with homes and hope must have had an impact.

2) The building of peaceable community realized through the interaction and relationships is also almost self-evident. Accounts of the building of trust and understanding that resulted from the "living together" of Paxers and the local residents are legion. An account of one Paxman illustrates: "Let me tell you of one Paxman–Leroy Penner. He just lived with people, spent his time getting to know them. Took an Arabic name. Ate their food. Sat with them by the hour. Gained their confidence. Saw the need for a school and dropped a seed. After a while they asked if he could help them get a school. So he and an Algerian collected money from the families in the nearby mechtas. Together they build a school. Now these people are proud of their school."[7]

The longer term effects of the school are indicated by the post-script: "The Berber fathers are proud to have their sons in school and offered Dennis [another Pax boy] 'carte blanche' to provide beatings whenever they were necessary to keep the boys in line."[8] While our culture would not approve of the custom of beating to achieve compliance, the impact of the Pax actions on the local people is eloquent.

One of the most impressive examples of the building of community and peace is the Pax project in Greece. This project entailed the literal reconstruction of

Dedication

at Espelkamp, Germany, 1952

villages destroyed in World War II under German occupation and later communist civil war. Paxers proceeded to introduce animal husbandry, land cultivation, processing and preservation of food, establishment of cooperatives and schools, among many other activities.

Two incidents reflect the effectiveness of the Pax program. In a special class, a Pax man taught local women how to cut up meat. After the demonstration, the Greek interpreter asked, "Are there any questions?" A woman's hand went up. "Is Simon married?"[9] In the other episode two Pax men were "walking down the road. In the field to our left an old man was struggling with a stubborn mule. A neighbor, not seeing us, called to the old man and said, 'Just use a little Pax patience on him.'"[10]

3) Did Pax actually help create the peaceable community by their presence and actions? This is the most difficult question to answer. In part it depends upon our definition of community. If peaceable community is defined as a collectivity of people who have a sense of place, who have a sense of common history and future which results in cohesion and cooperation, and who have a primary face to face awareness of common goals and human dignity, then it is very possible to claim that Pax did just that.

Again, hard empirical evidence is not available. But this does not prove that it is not there, only that it has not been gathered. Subjective, anecdotal and informal observations and experiences need to suffice. Any Pax man who has traveled back to the project in which he worked would maintain that intimations of a peaceable community was built or encouraged as a result of the program. One of the most recent and largest was the resettlement project at Bechterdissen bei Bielefeld.

During our 1995 tour, after the lavishly served dinner and the tour of the village the Pax workers housing had created, one of the leaders, Heinrich Janzen, told us that the Pax boys had supplied the material and spiritual help to enable the emergence of a community of around 800 persons. Included in the community institutions were several thriving churches, a young people's organization, formation of an organization to assist in local schools, and active service organizations to help in local issues. Janzen assured us that "without the Pax help and inspiration, we would have remained a scattered people."

Conclusion

The significance of the "Small Pax" saga for this conference and the larger search for a peaceable community is difficult to assess. Returning to the biographical dimension of achieving community depicted in the opening paragraphs, my own experience in, and observations of the Pax experiment would strongly indicate that Pax did contribute to community building. I believe Pax men can go to any of the places in the world where Pax worked, and expect to be remembered and enthusiastically welcomed. This is not to elevate Pax above other types of service actions

At numerous Pax reunions I observed that the almost universal testimony of Pax men has been: Pax was the life transforming and defining experience of my life. I have been forever changed.

for they have been equally effective.

I can say without equivocation that the Pax experience was a life transforming experience for the Pax volunteers. At numerous Pax reunions I observed that the almost universal testimony of Pax men has been: Pax was the life transforming and defining experience of my life. I have been forever changed. The words of one Pax man express it well. "Algeria has been good to me. The experiences I had there have sharpened my philosophy of life. I no longer feel my life is my own. From a Christian point of view, I owe my life to someone else. Camus wrote 'man must make a real effort to reunite.' I'd like to say that we must make neighbors. I will come by dialogue–by being with people." If an experience can change individuals, there has to be some hope that the creation of community is possible. Clearly, Pax created some windows through which communication with strangers was nourished.

Note from the author: There are plans afoot for a 50 year anniversary celebration of Pax, probably in the Midwest, possibly the Elkhart area, during the summer of 2001. This would be both a reunion and a reflection on what its meaning and impact was.

Notes

[1] The analysis I am presenting speaks in many ways to Robert Kreider's persona and life. I am very happy to honor his life with this paper. In keeping with his perspective, I have closely linked peace with the creation of community, for it is not only his view, but seems accepted in social thought that true community is the basis for peaceful human relations. I will term this idea the peaceable community.
[2] The history of the Mennonite Voluntary Service effort still needs to be written.
[3] See Calvin Redekop, "The Invasion of Europe by an Army of Compassion" for an expanded history of the Pax program (unpublished paper, 1998), p. 8.
[4] There is no accurate record of the number of housing units built by the Pax efforts, but a very conservative guess would suggest 250 houses, each containing 4 family units totaling 1,000. With an average family size of 5, this would mean a respectable home for 5,000 persons.
[5] An exhaustive history of the Pax program remains to be written. It is possible that accurate records of all the persons serving and types of work done is not available.
[6] Pictures and text are found in *European Pax Tour: The Soldiers of Compassion Return* (Waterloo: Tourmagination, 1995), p. 19.
[7] Urie Bender, *Soldiers of Compassion* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1969), p. 177-178.
[8] Ibid., p. 179.
[9] Ibid., 68.
[10] Ibid., 89.

Community and Culture as Expressions of Values

J. Richard Weaver

My wife Margaret has just finished teaching a course in the Bluffton College Institute for Learning in Retirement. The course was Homer's *Odyssey*. It occurred to me that for those of us in our seventies and eighties, our Odyssey came with the Second World War. This is true whether we were physically uprooted and had to face new and strange situations, as Odysseus did, or whether we remained at home like Penelope, and had to adjust to the drastic changes in our way of living in a total war society.

As I reflect on the formative experiences of my life—home, college, marriage, children, teaching—what seems to stand out in my mind is the three and a half years in CPS, particularly the two years in Puerto Rico.

The mandate from MCC for the Mennonite Service Unit in Puerto Rico was simple—and breath-taking. As quoted by Justus Holsinger in his book *Serving Rural Puerto Rico* it was "to minister to the spiritual, physical, social, and mental needs of the people of Puerto Rico, in the spirit of Christian love and in the name of Christ."

Well, we have to set some context. Although there are coastal plains, most of Puerto Rico is mountainous. They aren't as high as the Rockies, or even the Appalachians, but for sheer up-and-downness they would rate with any mountains I have seen. Almost in the center of the island, surrounded by mountains, is a lush valley of perhaps a thousand acres, watered by the Rio La Plata, and called the La Plata valley. They told us that at one time it was a coffee-producing area, but one of the hurricanes destroyed the shade trees required for coffee. They turned to tobacco, an ideal cash crop, but the tobacco company that owned the land moved on, and somehow the land reverted to the federal government. Now we are in the mid thirties. Roosevelt's New Dealers, stymied in some of their plans by Congress and the Supreme Court, found a laboratory for their ideas in Puerto Rico. One of their experiments was in the La Plata valley. The land was subdivided into seven acre plots, the amount of land required to support a family. On these "parcelas" as they were called, was a concrete, hurricane-proof, four-room house, occupied by a family of four to twelve members. If my recollection is correct, centrally located was a school, a medical center, a community center with an outdoor basketball court, a store, a canning factory, a demonstration hog project, a chicken project, and a tobacco warehouse. But since the families had generally not known each other before settling in the parcelas, there was little sense of community.

"The mandate from MCC for the Mennonite Service Unit in Puerto Rico was simple—and breath-taking"

Jump to 1943. Because of shipping problems, Puerto Rico was hit by war-time shortages even worse than the States. Though they couldn't vote in national elections, Puerto Rican young men were subject to the draft. In places like La Plata there was a serious lack of leadership. The canning factory was idle. A nurse

> "Roosevelt's New Dealers, stymied in some of their plans by Congress and the Supreme Court, found a laboratory for their ideas in Puerto Rico."

came to the medical center now and then but saw few patients. The community center had little use. The tobacco warehouse was empty.

Enter the Mennonite service unit—young, dedicated, idealistic. How do you create community in this kind of setting? Our thrust was two-fold. One, the "community building program," involving organized recreation, community education, a community newspaper, activities at the community center, and finally, a church. Second, the medical program. The need for medical care was obvious. We converted the warehouse into a hospital, and on general clinic days there might be a hundred people in front of the hospital waiting for their number to be called. Later, sometime after CPS days, the hospital was moved to the town of Aibonito, and today the "hospital menonita" is a thriving institution serving a large area of central Puerto Rico.

Were we successful in creating a viable community? While we were there, with our numbers and our resources, we maintained an active program. Did we produce leaders capable of carrying it on? I will leave it to those who worked there later to answer that question. For myself, I learned an important lesson. I suppose, until Puerto Rico, I had considerable faith in the efficacy of solving problems by "improving the system." In Puerto Rico I learned that the best designed system does not work without the people to make it work.

But of much more impact in our understanding of community were the lessons we learned from a different source. Not from the community we were trying to create for the Puerto Ricans, but from our own attempts at community within our unit. Imagine thirty-nine people from nine branches of Mennonites and a few other denominations, most of us in our twenties, some of us brash and independent, living in a close communal setting, in a different culture, far from any external authority, engaged in a very ambitious program, for which, by any ordinary standards, we were probably ill-prepared. There will be

> "In Puerto Rico I learned that the best designed system does not work without the people to make it work."

personality clashes and eventually a leadership crisis. It was sufficiently serious that Mr. MCC, Orie Miller, came down to investigate and make any necessary personnel changes. Some of us were concerned that he might make a decision without having heard everyone's concerns.

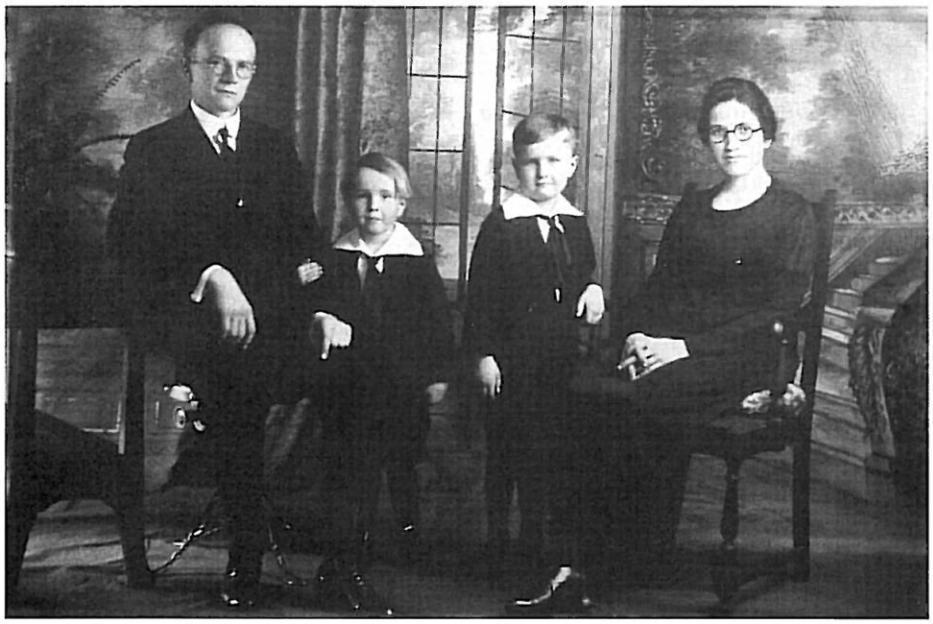
So we called a meeting. We decided to go around and have each person express his stance in the conflict and his feelings about the individuals involved. By about the fourth person the meeting was getting tense. Orie rose and said, "Brethren, this gets us nowhere." If we insisted on continuing, he would have to leave

"Orie rose and said, 'Brethren, this gets us nowhere.' If we insisted on continuing, he would have to leave the meeting. Carl Lehman, business manager of the unit, who was acting as chairman said, yes maybe that is what he should do."

the meeting. Carl Lehman, business manager of the unit, who was acting as chairman said, yes, maybe that is what he should do. So without Orie, we proceeded until everyone had spoken. Then we adjourned. I cannot say that this catharsis brought us completely together, but with some re-assignment of duties, we continued working together, eating together, and worshipping together in the sort of required intimacy that our situation demanded of us.

I believe these experiences may have made me a little wiser over the past fifty years in my understanding of how community can work, how windows can be opened, and how walls may be scaled.

Robert Kreider - Biographical Sketch in Photos



Amos and Stella
Kreider with sons
Gerald and Robert,
Goshen, Indiana, 1926.

Rollin Moser and Robert Kreider, International Voluntary Service for Peace camp, Oakengates, England, 1938.

Robert Kreider and Elmer Ediger, Civilian Public Service educational directors' conference, Akron, Pennsylvania, 1945.

Robert Kreider at a CRALOG (Council of Relief Agencies Licensed for Operation in Germany) child feeding program in Hesse, West Germany, summer 1946.

Robert and Lois (Sommer) Kreider, Berlin, Germany, 1947.

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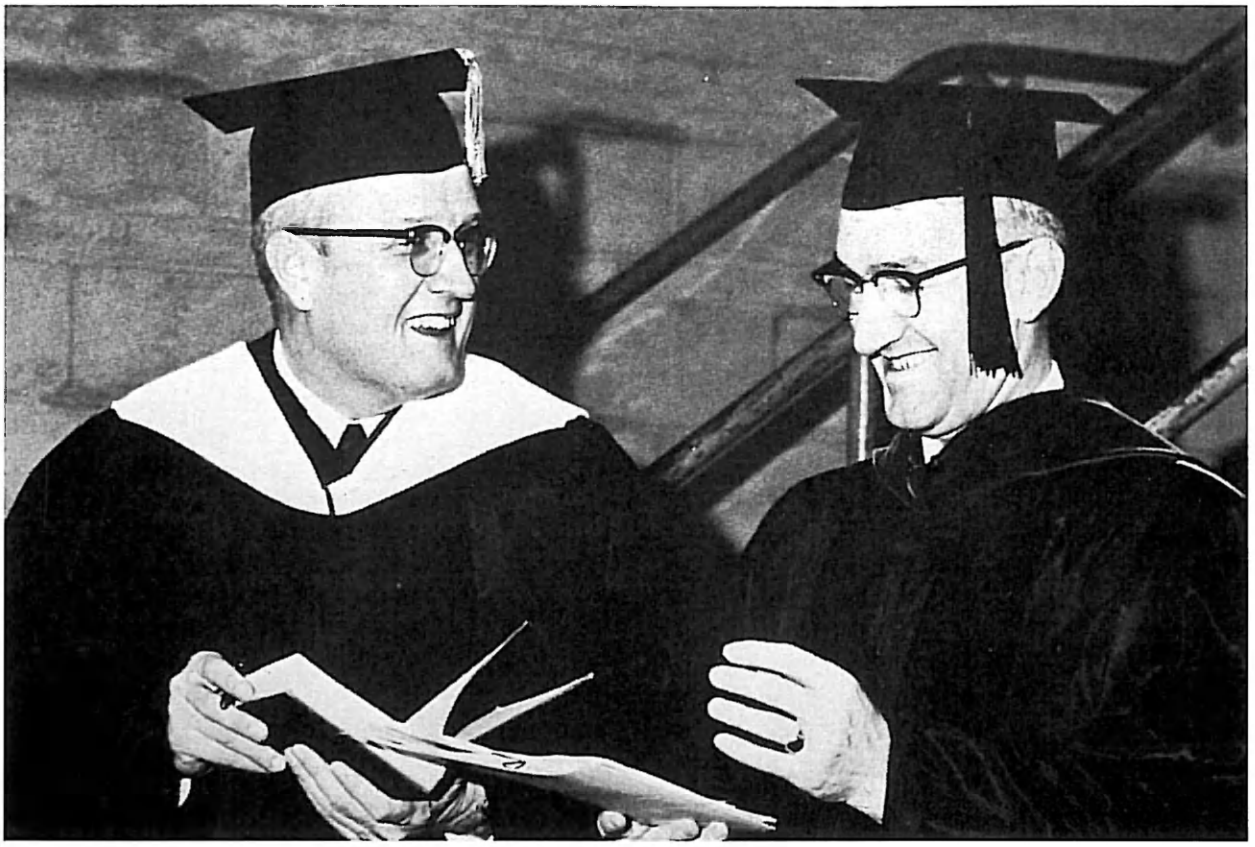
Robert Kreider, director of MCC relief program in West Germany, 1948.

Kreider at MCC children's home, Weiler, France, 1949.


Mennonite Relief Service
of
USA and CANADA

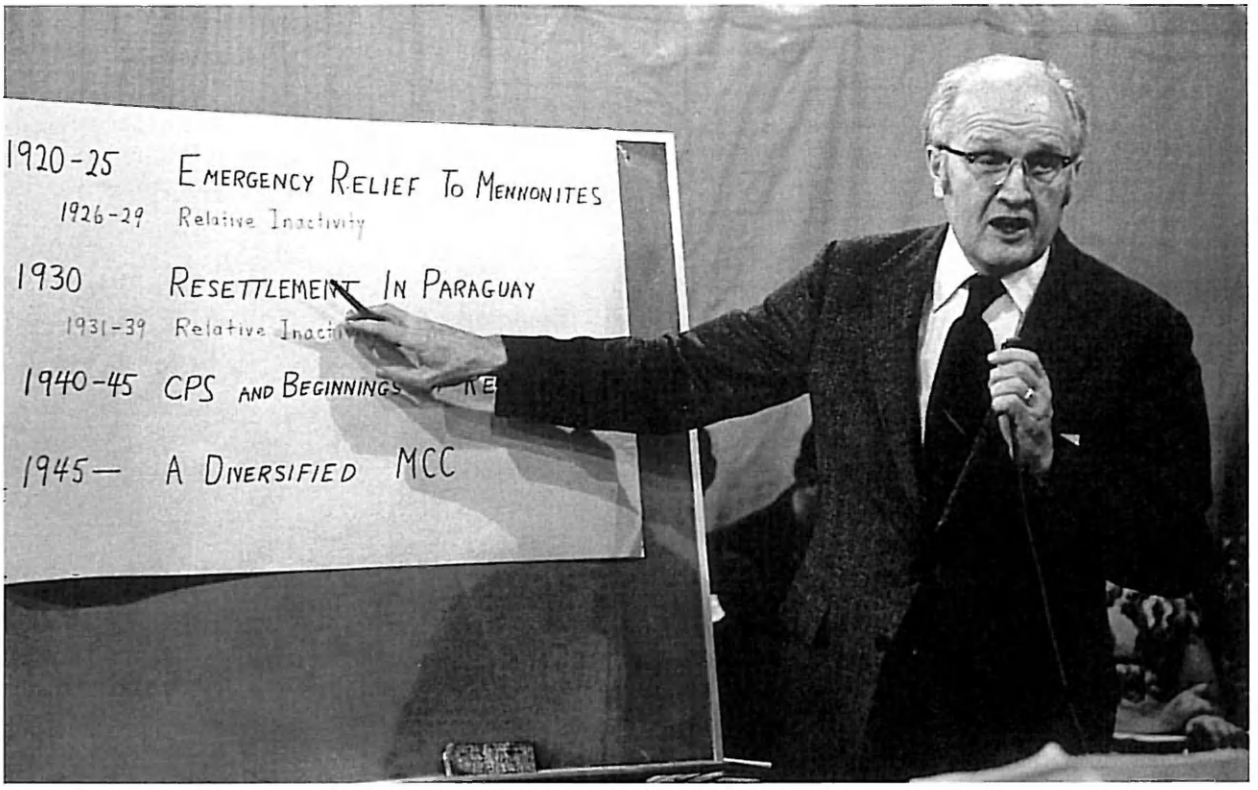
Kreider as lay pastor of Woodlawn Mennonite Church, Chicago, Illinois, 1952.

Kreider in Congo (Zaire) on investigatory trip for MCC to develop the Teachers Abroad Program, 1962



Kreider with Henry Poettcker, interim academic dean, Bluffton College, Ohio, on the occasion of Kreider's inauguration as president of Bluffton, 1965.

Kreider family, Bluffton, Ohio, 1965.


1920-25 EMERGENCY RELIEF TO MENNONITES
1926-29 Relative Inactivity
1930 RESETTLEMENT IN PARAGUAY
1940-45 CPS AND BEGINNINGS
1945— A DIVERSIFIED MCC

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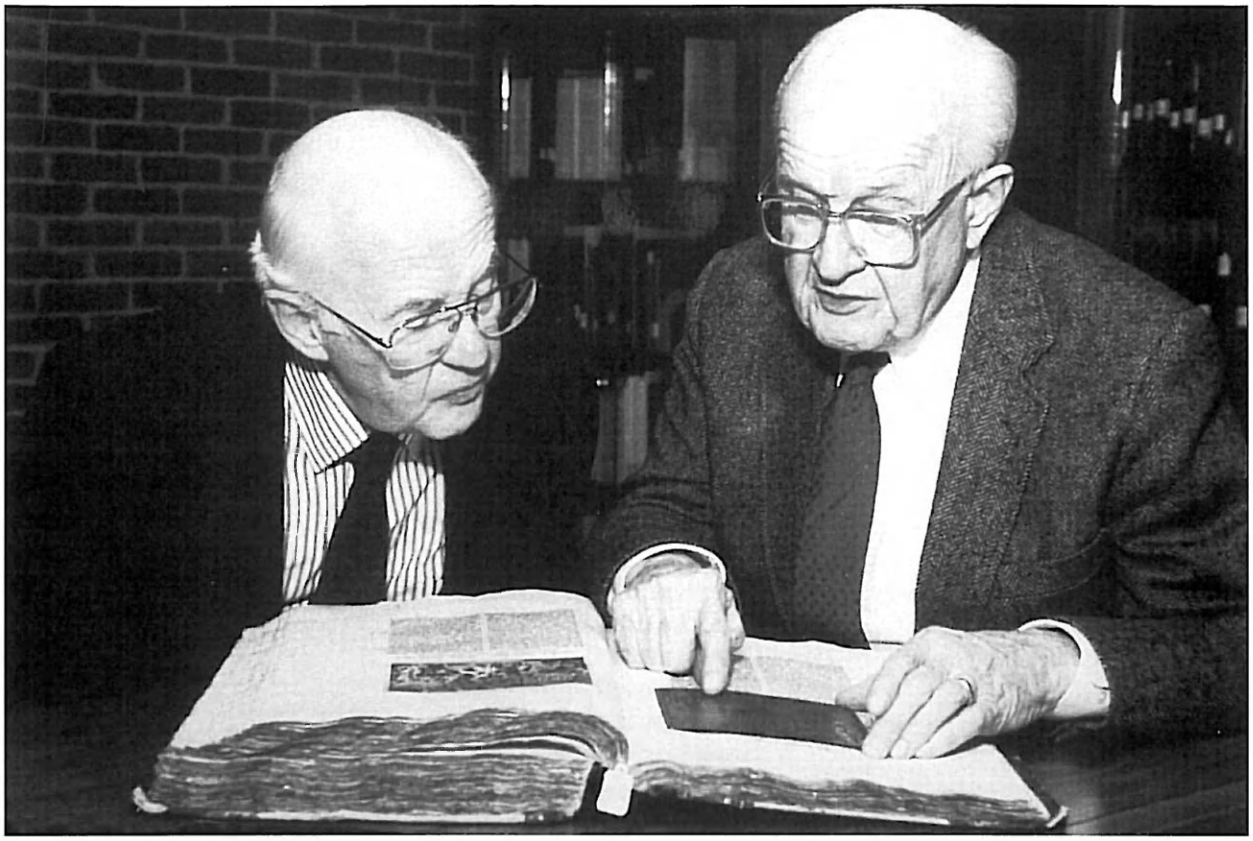
Kreider making presentation to a constituency group as director of an MCC self-study, 1973.

John S. Oyer and Robert Kreider, co-directors of the Martyrs Mirror Trust, 1991.



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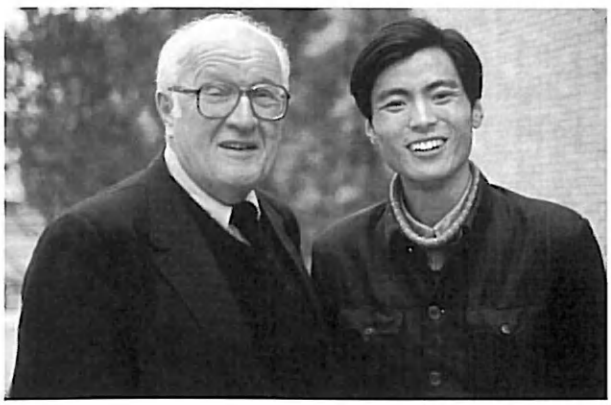
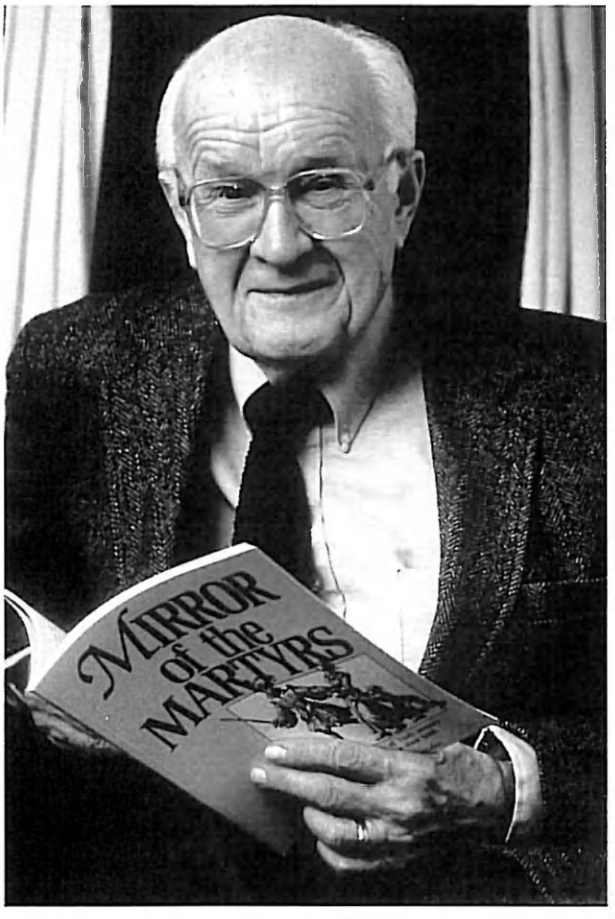
Kreider with grandchildren James and Rachel Eash at Aebersold in the Emmenthal, Switzerland, 1990.



Kreider with Guo Xu, grandson of Bethel alumnus Stephen Wang, 1998.

Kreider family, children and grandchildren on the occasion of Robert and Lois' 50th wedding anniversary, Newton, Kansas, 1995.



Robert Kreider in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 1992.

Book Review

Glen Stassen, ed., *Just Peacemaking: Ten Practices for Abolishing War*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1998. Pp. 209. ISBN 0-8298-1261-X

The world at a *Kairos* moment–a moment in history nurturing an idea whose time has come–sets the stage for *Just Peacemaking: Ten Practices for Abolishing War*. The product of a collaborative effort by twenty-three scholars from various academic disciplines and Christian traditions, *Just Peacemaking* provides an insightful guide for practical ways to work at abolishing war. But it is more than that. It demonstrates the fallacy of evaluating participation in war on a continuum with pacifism at one end and just war theory at the other. It demonstrates that if we are to wage peace, proactively solving human problems is as important as stopping overt violence. And mostly, it gives direction to those who yearn to take ownership of the anonymous comment "I wondered why somebody didn't do something for peace.... Then I realized that I am somebody."

While the ten practices for abolishing war are drafted in ways that permit them to transcend faith traditions, a specifically Christian faith perspective is set forth by the introduction's authors (Mennonite, Catholic and Baptist) as a foundation for the text organization. The book arranges just peacemaking practices by theological theme. Each of the ten chapters is devoted to a single peacemaking practice, and assigned to one of the major themes.

The first theme, *Discipleship and Peacemaking Initiatives*, includes the practices of 1) supporting non-violent direct action, 2) taking independent initiatives to reduce threat, 3) using cooperative conflict resolution, and 4) acknowledging responsibility for conflict and injustice and seeking repentance and forgiveness.

The second theme, *Advance Justice for All*, includes the practices of 5) advancing democracy, human rights and religious liberty, and 6) fostering just and sustainable economic development.

The final theme, *Love and Community: Strengthen Cooperative Forces*, includes 7) working with emerging cooperative forces in the international system, 8) strengthening the United Nations and international efforts for cooperation and human rights, 9) reducing offensive weapons and weapons trade, and 10) encouraging grassroots peacemaking groups and voluntary associations.

The late economist and peace researcher Kenneth Boulding was reported to have once quipped that "knowledge is like a multi-storied motel–with poor elevator service". This description, unfortunately, could be loosely paraphrased to depict many edited books, with the various chapters being pieces of knowledge solicited by an editor, but really standing as independent works. Happily, *Just Peacemaking* breaks that mold and hangs together with a unified presentation that enhances both its readability and its persuasiveness.

One suspects this cohesiveness is related to the manner in which the book was created. The authors met together over a period of years, exchanging ideas, observing their communities and the world, and then generating and exchanging new ideas–until they developed consensus on the ten practices for abolishing war. Thus, one gets the sense the contributors may be as much recorders and reporters as they are authors. The reader gets the benefit of multiple scholars' thinking without the senseless fragmentation so often experienced in such endeavors.

The strength of this book clearly lies with its depth. The authors' list

is a "who's who" in ethics, theology, political science, and international relations, in addition to other fields. The text is richly footnoted, leading the reader to even more extended sources. But mostly the depth appears in practices that span the range of what governments can and should do to what individuals can and should do. The focus is not just on governmental policy or on direct action. The players are not limited to political movers and shakers or to religious icons. In a sense, there is something for everyone. Yet it would be a mistake to assume this broad spectrum of peacemaking practices spreads the essence of peacemaking thin. Rather it suggests that a strength of these peacemaking practices is that they are not limited, either in their approach or in their participants.

Another strength is that the peacemaking practices are not ranked as to their usefulness or ordered as to when each should be used. Each practice has value and can be used independently of the others, and there is no order in which the practices need be employed. In fact, a person or group might legitimately focus on only one practice without ever moving to the others.

There are obvious pragmatic rationale and realistic designs for the ten peacemaking practices. Yet the authors have left some creative tasks for the reader–tasks which may make the book even more interesting in study groups. One such task is to find ways that individuals can actively participate in each of the ten practices. Some chapters, such as those promoting the use of cooperative conflict resolution and the encouragement of grassroots peacemaking groups set out in detail what individuals may do. Other practices such as strengthening of the United Nations and the reduction of offensive weapons, emphasize the role of governments more than individuals. Since policy makers will probably not be the primary audience of this book, individuals may want to find ways to participate in these practices as well. Maybe this is one area where study groups can take up the baton from the authors and extend their opportunities beyond those suggested in the book.

Readers will also be challenged to identify examples of how each of the ten peacemaking practices has been tried in conflict situations and found to be effective–both to demonstrate their practicality as well as to operationalize how each of the ten principles could be successfully used in existing conflicts. A significant ingredient of solving problems is the hope that the problems really can be solved, and examples supporting this hope are an invaluable inspiration.

Finally, readers will be challenged to explore in more depth the role of ethnic and religious groups in conflict. Recognized nation-states have historically been the key participants in wars, and nation-states may still have a monopoly on nuclear weapons–though one does not know for how long. But if the late 20th century shows any trend, it is that groups that are not delineated by national boundaries increasingly define the parameters of violent conflict. It seems apparent that peacemaking practices should apply to these groups as well as nation-states. How they apply to these groups is a more complicated question.

Overall, the book is extremely well thought-out and well written. The organization of the book lends itself admirably to a study group or Sunday School class. Each chapter is thought-provoking and challenging, and would lead study group members into further discussion about how they might use each of the just peacemaking practices in their daily lives.

While conversation and even papers on peace have circulated among churches and other organizations for a very long time, developing a more comprehensive theory about specifically what is needed for just peacemaking has been conceptually overdue. That task is not an easy one. But that is precisely what makes this book so valuable. Others may add to the list of just peacemaking practices, and some practices in this book may eventually be deemed less important. The authors have been clear that this is a work in progress. But the crucial first step has been taken of suggesting that just peacemaking is not simply a piecemeal effort of doing what ever seems good at the moment. Rather, just peacemaking efforts need to be seen as part of an overall strategy or plan, which adds proactive substance to the myriad of church denominational papers on peace, and which provides a constructive alternative to the poles of just war and pacifism.

This book belongs in every church library, and should be read by all those interested in walking the talk of peace.

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