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J. B. Frey

My Graduation from Bethel College,
And Our Fifty Year Missionary Career Since

My missionary career began on the plains of Russia, when a little girl, Maria Wedel, who became my mother, was living with her godly grandmother, and the two were hiding away daily for a secret season of prayer. In that prayer fellowship little Maria began to see through grandmother's prayers a vast missionfield with teeming multitudes of people lost and dying in their sins, and she began to pray that Jesus should make her a missionary.

Little Maria grew into womanhood, but there was no open door for her to go. So she asked her Saviour to give her a godly husband; and, if they had children, He should send one of her children in her stead. She married a godly man; children were born and growing up, and her constant prayer was that one should go in her place.

One day when I was home from college, I confided to mother that I was preparing to become a missionary. Mother wept. I said, "Mother, why are you weeping?" She said, "Because God has answered my prayer." Then she told me what I have related above and added, that before I had been born her constant prayer had been, that I should be the one to go in her place to be missionary.

That to me was an explanation of my boyhood life and my growing up experiences:

1. I was saved before I was four years old, and I knew it, and tried to live a life pleasing to God.

2. When I was five years old, I kept on praying that God should make me a missionary. I really tried to live a life pleasing to God, but was conscious of failures and I took refuge under the blood of Christ.

3. I was hungry for the word of God, so I might learn God's ways when the old folks were together I sat and listened to their discussions of the Bible and to their experiences.

4. When I had learned to read, on Saturdays I would take the Bible and follow mother in her work and read from the Bible to her.

5. When at evenings my chums would come to play with me, I insisted to read two or three Bible stories before we went out to play.

6. One day mother said, "Jacob, I wish all my children would be as obedient and well behaved as you." I answered, "Oh, Mother, I fail so often, and that makes me feel so bad." She said, "Well, you are trying to be good."

7. Often I prayed to God, if He would let me preach the gospel to the lost heathen I would not care for any property or money or anything; I just wanted to see the lost to be saved.

8. Above all I often prayed that God should help me to get all of His Word in its fullness and purity, and create in me complete faith in it; and give me the assurance that it really was His Word; and give me courage to preach all of it without fear or favor, and never deviate from it.

9. I had a girl friend I loved passionately and I often prayed that God should give her unto me as wife. We often had sweet fellowship in discussing the Scriptures. One evening I had visited her; we talked about the Scriptures and about preaching and teaching the Word of God. Then I told her that I wanted to go as missionary to some unevangelized people. She said, "I always thought you would become a missionary." It was a precious evening.

When I got home my thoughts troubled me; I had often prayed that God would give that girl to me as my life companion, but I had never said: If that were in keeping with His plan. I knelt down at my bedside, and there and then I surrendered to God what was most precious to me. I said, "If she is not your chosen one for me, or if it is Your plan that I go a single man, just take her away from me!" I was weary. The struggle was over and I had fallen asleep. When I awoke there was perfect peace; and a quiet reliance on God, and I had the assurance the matter was settled.

That evening I went to see Aganetha, to find out what God had in store for me. Soon after our conversation had started, Aganetha said, "You told me when I was ready to get married I should plan the date for the public engagement and also the wedding." And she mentioned the dates.

After we had talked over the matter with our respective parents and had received their consent and blessing, we went outside by bright moonlight and knelt down with arms around each other and with the free hands clasped in prayer, while the Night-engage from its perch at the barn, winged its way repeatedly into the sky warbling its night song, we consecrated our united lives and service to Christ Jesus, our Saviour and Lord who is the "Yes" and "Amen" to all God's promises unto the Glory of God. (2 Cor. 1: 20). We were married September 22, 1899.

Before our marriage I had taught school one year--three months German and 4 months English, and had promised to teach another year; for after that I wanted to finish my Bible course at Bethel College, which was three more years.

The pupils and parents and friends had signed a long petition that I should keep on teaching, and the Board offered to increase my salary \$26.00 monthly. I said, "No, I cannot, for the heathen are calling for the word of life."

I had finished the first two years. I was offered a job for the summer vacation selling sewing machines at a salary of \$150.00 per month and all expenses paid. When I told my father of this job he seemed much distressed. After a while he said, "If you do not make my harvest, I have no one to make it." I said, "Father, don't worry, I'll make your harvest."

The grain was ready and I hurried the work from early till after sundown. My father changed horses for me, once in the forenoon, then at noon, and again in the afternoon, which gave me five sets of fresh teams. While he changed teams I oiled the reaper, and ate the food he brought the middle of the forenoon, at dinner and at vesper. I quit at evening when it got too dark to work.

About the middle of the harvest my mother said, "Jacob, why do you send most all the food back?" I said, "I am not hungry, Mother." The fact was I had typhoid fever and did not know it. The last day of the harvest there was only one-half an acre of oats left to finish the harvest. Toward noon I got so sick I left the team hitched up and lay down behind the reaper. Father came with a fresh team and my lunch. He helped me into the buggy, unhitched the team and hastened home, and then hastened to get the doctor. The doctor said, "No hope!"

During the forepart of the harvest our church papers appealed for a missionary couple to go to the Hopi Missionfield. Missionary H. R. Voth's wife had died and he had moved his family to Newton, and the call was urgent. My dear Aganetha and I talked over the appeal with due prayer and felt lead to accept the call if the Board would give us one year to finish my Bible course at Bethel College.

Bro. J. B. Epp who had gone to Oraibi to help out, consented to stay one with his sister for another year, so the Board had accepted us. Rev. Peter Balzer, Pastor and Elder of the Alexanderwohl church and President of the Mission Board, stopped at our home on his way to the Board meeting. It happened that the doctor was there. The doctor said: "No hope!" Bro. Balzer said he would tell the Board, and they would look for another couple. Before he left he prayed for my recovery, and left.

Nobody seemed to believe I would get well. But I fully believed I would. My brother said, "What makes you think so?" I said, "I have the conviction that my Aganetha and I will work ten years on the missionfield. Beyond that I have no assurance how long."

I got well; we rented the rooms upstairs at the Gronaman House, not far from the college. I was in my classes on the day of opening.

Another test: After my graduation and ordination we went to Oraibi for 2 years, then went to Moencopi to open up a new station. We leveled the ground and terraced it; built a barn and a storehouse in which we lived while building the mission and chapel. We built up the ground so we could raise vegetables and fruit, and built three reservoirs to store water for irrigation and put in a pipeline along the bluff for domestic purposes and also irrigation.

It took quite a while to do all that work, as all was built of rock and we had to burn our own lime. It was all lime stone and had to be quarried.

While that was going on I looked after the gospel ministry and worked on the Hopi language; made a Hopi Primer to teach Hopi,

and wrote down in Hopi, Hopi history the way the old men remembered and related it; also their songs and prayers and traditions and religion, their naming of babies; their marriage ceremonies; their burial rites and initiation ceremonies, etc.

And out of all this the "Hopi language buildup", grammar, syntax, elements and verb forms, plural, dual and single forms, were systematized, and the conjugations especially; but also the declensions were written down in all their forms, and the laws of the Hopi language were established and systematized. And we found that the Hopi language is a kin to both German and Greek, and forms a triangle with them. Much of it reflected the Greek and German grammar. And the most intelligent Hopis claimed that the translations that were made by constant reference to the Greek were more clearly understood than those that were made according to the A. V.

while all this work was going on, my beloved Aganetha got very sick with spinal meningitis - evidently she had overworked. She was under the government doctor's care. we wrote our friends at Tolchaco to remember my dear wife in prayer. Mrs. Gates, a good and moneyed friend of ours, wired to Los Angeles for two nurses; finally one nurse came to be with Mrs. Frey.

In the meantime the doctor came down to the mission about sundown. when he left he told me to come out with him. we walked up two terraces and stopped. we looked down to the mission. he said to me: "Your wife's sickness is in the last stages - she cannot live; she will die tonight. If she should pull out, she would be a burden to herself and to others." The doctor went up the hill and I went down into the sick room: And what did I behold?

A Hopi, old Tom, who was our greatest opponent to the gospel ministry sat at my wife's bedside and pleaded with her, saying she should give up her desire to die; she should make up her mind to want to live. He said, "You want to leave your baby and husband and the other children; you must not do that - that is very bad!"

Mrs. Frey answered: "No Tom, it is not that I want to die, but I am ready to go if Jesus calls me. And Jesus is the only One who can heal me."

Tom, our greatest opponent to the gospel, jumped up and said: "I am going right home to pray to your Jesus to make you well." Mrs. Frey was much concerned about the Hopis; she loved them for Jesus sake; and looked after their needs lovingly and provided as best she could. She was a mother to young and old. What would the Hopis do without her. The fact that our greatest opponent came to plead with Mrs. Frey, to persuade her to want to live, and promised he would hasten home to pray to our Jesus to make Mrs. Frey well is an indication what a quiet insignificant couple, who have consecrated their united life and service to their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and carry on their ministry under the guidance and constant presence of the Holy Spirit and in keeping with God's precious and unfailing word, means.

The doctor said Mrs. Frey would die that night - there was no hope! At midnight Mrs. Frey was in great pain. She told me what to do with the baby and the rest of the family, and then said, "Goodbye!" Then she added she wished I would pray with her once more:

I told the Lord: that before our marriage we had consecrated our united life and service to Him and we were still consecrated, and He should deal with us as He pleased. If it was for His glory and the good of the Hopis if He took Mrs. Frey, He should take her; but if it were for His glory and the good of the Hopis He should make her well. When I said, "Amen" Mrs. Frey raised up in bed and said, "There is nothing the matter with me!" She was healed instantly.

That morning the Doctor supposing Mrs. Frey had died, was much surprised that she was well, and said, "God did that and not my medicine." After that, whenever there were serious cases of sickness in the village, he would stop at the mission and take me along. He would say: "Medicine is good, but with prayer it is better."

In the years that followed we carried on the language work, and kept on translating, and teaching the word of God in Hopi.

Bro. J. B. Epp, had translated the main Bible stories of the old and new Testament in story form. He dictated these stories and I typed them. Then I bought a printing press and had Hopi type made and our helpers set the type and we printed these Bible Story books and stapled them.

I had translated a part of Genesis and the Gospel account of John and Luke and a part of Acts and Romans - the first eight chapters were revised and we had them printed in Los Angeles. I also edited the Hopi Gospel songs and had them printed at Bro. J. B. Epp's expense.

Then I asked the government to give me twenty minutes every morning in the village school before the teacher started his instruction, to teach the Hopi children the word of God; and teach them to read Hopi, so they could read to the village people the translations out of the Bible. To make it interesting and give the backward children a real joy to learn to read Hopi, I translated some of their animal and bird stories and printed them, so those who were slow in learning to read would have more interest. And they thought it was the greatest fun to read those stories to the old people, who were much delighted.

Besides, I offered prizes to those children who would be first to be able to read Hopi fluently and with emphasis: The girls that mastered the Hopi reading first would receive a trunk to put their things in and lock up. And the boy who would accomplish the task first would receive a small saddle to ride the burros in style.

I had a little saddle; but I had to buy three trunks.

The Superintendent, a christian, and the Indian Commissioner were happy to grant my request. Those twenty minutes in the morning proved to be the greatest asset of the gospel ministry.

The children loved to sing gospel songs out of books in their mother tongue. And at evenings after supper when the children were at play, the playground re-echoed with Hopi gospel songs.

Ex. wo findet die Seele die Heimat die Ruh? etc. Ach, es woere zum weinen weim kein Heiland : We'll work till Jesus comes; Have you Any Room for Jesus; Jesus is Calling; Jesus, I come to Thee; Ich weis einen Strom; There is Life for a Look at the Crucified One.

Both young and old loved to come to Sunday School and sing and hear the word of God taught in Hopi without and interpreter.

An example: One mother brought her baby girl every Sunday to Sunday School in her shawl until the little girl had learned to walk; then she kept on coming, leading her by the hand till she was able to walk alone. After that they both came walking every Sunday. She would often bring the baby to our mission at breakfast time. She would sit there quietly till we were through with our morning devotion, and then get up and leave. We would invite her to eat with us; she would either say she had eaten, or breakfast was waiting for them.

She brought her little girl to Sunday School and to our devotions; she wanted her daughter to be:

1. A christian like our children.
2. We had the custom in our mission home, that each child had to say a newly learned Scripture verse in the morning. At the evening devotion, they could say verses they knew from memory. Then I read the scriptures, after which all bowed the heads and folded hands in prayer.
3. Then I prayed. The mother wanted her daughter to know how a christian acts.

There was another mother who had a baby girl; but had no nourishment for her. The mother would bring her baby daily to our mission—we had a good milch cow--so Mrs. Frey could teach her how to clean the bottle, etc. She said she would raise the child till she could work and be a help to Mrs. Frey and then she would give her daughter to Mrs. Frey. She wanted her daughter to be like our children.

One night our native evangelist had been in the village. First he was at his brother's store; there was a bunch of girls around the table reading aloud and in unison the Bible stories in Hopi, from the books we had printed on our own press. People sat all around listening with attention. On his way home he passed by the chief priest's house; there were other girls reading aloud the Bible stories in Hopi. He passed two more homes in which groups of girls were reading in unison the Hopi Bible stories, and

all seemed to listen gladly.

Frank Jenkins, the native evangelist said joyfully: "Brother Frey, we have a missionary in every home!" The girls not only read these stories, but they sang the gospel songs in which the boys helped.

Besides, Sunday school and preaching services went on in the chapel, and street preaching was not neglected. And all was in good Hopi language, reading the Scriptures from good Hopi translations.

The success was too evident and the enemy got busy: The teacher at the village would come to our mission home to visit - he did not live with his wife - and he would tell smutty stories bordering on immorality. One evening I went outside with him and told him frankly we disapproved of such talk before our family. That made him angry and he began to fight against us.

In the Tuba Boarding School where some of our Hopis attended, was also a teacher that did not live with his wife. He told our pupils that if the missionaries talked about God, they should not believe them, for there was no God. And he worked against us.

Then the government sent a supervisor of matrons, a Mrs. Rhodes, to Tuba. She was an immoral woman with government authority. When the agent of the Hopi reservation at Keams Canyon found out she was coming to his reservation, he went on the government car to meet her and sent her back. She was not allowed on his reservation, so she came to Tuba City, 2 miles north of Moencopi, our station. She with the two teachers together were planning our destruction.

When some of the wicked Hopis learned to know her character, and the collaboration of her and the two teachers, they had councils with them and told the woman I was ruining their religion, for the Hopi women and girls would not yield themselves anymore to those immoral practices that formed a part of certain ceremonies. The woman from Washington said, "Why don't you drag him off!" The wicked men said to her, "Shall we?" She said, "I do not say you shall, that's up to you."

We had a very good agent at Tuba. He had been informed that the Hopi Day School teacher was making trouble for me by stirring up the Hopis against my work. So the agent came to the School. Forty-two Hopis had collected south of the school. They had a horseback rider with a lasso to drag me off. Already they were beginning to molest the agent who was still on his car. The agent seeing he could not do anything, switched on his car and started going and the Indians had to let him go.

Then they turned on me. Two held me on each arm and others put the lasso around my neck. The man on horseback said: "Towh, are you ready?" They said, "Wait, wait!" But the horse started on a dead run. The noose was almost closed around my neck, but by a miracle it came off and just had my hat in tight grip, and the horse rider was gone.

Then they took hold of me: two on each arm; two on each foot; one on my head; and one on my coat tail, and were just milling around as though drunk. Finally they dropped me and the whole bunch fell on me and cracked three of my ribs. A Navajo policeman came along and told them to leave me alone.

The Day School teacher who saw what was going on had phoned the woman from Washington at Tuba what was happening, yet he did not interfere. Our children had gone to school at Tuba with our team and wagon. The Washington woman went and hitched up my team and came down to school with my team and wagon.

She said: "Poli, what has happened?" He said, "Just what you told us to do." Then I said, "What did she tell you to do?" He said that they should drag me off. Poli then said they had asked her: "Shall we?" She had answered, "I do not say that you shall, that is up to you."

The Indians and Mrs. Rhodes and some government witnesses gathered together in the agent's office. Just to give the outcome of that meeting: One of the middle-aged Hopis who had been in school got up and said, "The reason we don't want Mr. Frey is because he talks against our bad things, or doings." Mr. Runke said, "It would be better if you would give up your bad things."

Mr. Runke quit the government work and they sent a new agent, a Night of Columbus. On his way to Tuba he had made the statement that in less than ten days he would have the Mennonite and Presbyterian missionaries out.

The government sent out two of the highest ranking inspectors to investigate the whole matter. The new agent, the two teachers and the supervisor of matrons had been plotting with some of the wicked Hopis to ruin the mission work and the missionaries. They had even offered bribes to Hopis to testify against us, which they would not do.

The Inspectors ordered an investigation, and every statement they had made against us was proven false by the very ones who made them.

The Inspectors asked me to sign some necessary papers so they could have some eight or ten of the leaders prosecuted and sent to the penitentiary for ten years to teach them a lesson.

I told them that I would not sign any papers, that all those Hopis were my friends and I loved them all. And I pleaded with the Inspectors to leave the Hopis alone: For the whole plot had been started by the Supervisor of Matrons and the two government teachers, whom the new agent joined. Even some of the Hopis had said that the new agent was no good except that he was against the missionaries, and these were some Indians whose lives were not clean morally.

The Inspectors said to the Indians, because I would not sign the papers for their prosecution they were pardoned - but not again.

When the whole thing was over the Hopi chief came with his councilmen and apologized and said that I had told the truth all the way through but the Hopis had lied. The truth had won. And the whole affair had proven that I was a real friend to them. Now the whole village was open for me to preach anywhere.

The government dealt with the four employees: They all had to leave Tuba City. The old Hopis at Oraibi told me that when they had heard what the Hopis at Moencopi had done to me and how kindly I had treated them, they had admired me. After this affair the Moencopi Hopis were more inclined than ever to listen to our messages of God's grace which had been expressed in my dealing with them in love.

When the government friendly chief with his people, friendly to the government, staged a war in cold wintertime to drive the government hostile Hopi chief, Yukiwma, with his followers out of Oraibi, and Yukiwma and his people were driven out of their homes with scant bedding and food and camped north of the Oraibi village, women weeping and children crying and old folks groaning. Bro. J. B. Epp and field matron, Miss Kirch, worked all night to bring them some relief. The following morning they moved north and started to build the village called Hotevilla.

When later the government sent a representative to adjust the matter, he got the Oraibi friendly chief together with some of their following.

In the discussion the government representative said to the friendly chief, "Are you angry at the government hostile chief?" He said, "I am very angry. The government man said, 'Do you hate him enough to kill him?' The friendly chief said, 'Yes, I hate him enough to kill him.' The Washington man said, 'I'll give you a chance to kill him.'"

Then he asked the hostile chief, "Are you very angry at the friendly chief and his people for driving you out?" Yukiwma said, "I am not angry at the Oraibi chief or his people."

The Washington man said, "Don't you hate the Oraibi Chief enough to kill him?" Yukiwma said, "I do not hate him or anyone else; neither would I kill anyone."

The government representative said, "Are you ready then to be killed?" Yukiwma stepped up a little on the sand dune and put his hand upon his heart, and smiled gently and said, "I am ready!"

This was the lesson he had learned from my action at Moencopi. The folks still speak about it; to them such action was wonderful.

At the Beatrice Conference a minister asked me on the Conference floor, "Bro. Frey, are you trying to make Mennonites of the Hopis?" I answered, "I am absolutely not; I am trying to get them to become real, genuine Bible Christians, and they will be the best Mennonites." Later on an old minister said to me, "You gave the best answer."

The Hopis say again and again that Yukiwma left a testimony. This consisted in his action. People do not say he left a statement of doctrine.

If Bro. H. R. Voth and his daughter, Frieda, had not taught my dear wife and me the Hopi language during my last year at college, and if we had not studied hard to get it and practiced it daily so that on our arrival at Oraibi we spoke Hopi quite well, the following could not have happened:

Youkiwma, the noble Hopi chief, hostile to the government, because he had been disillusioned as to government white men in the government service, who were really wicked, more wicked than the wicked Hopis. But with my knowledge of the Hopi language, and knowing the Scriptures in regard to heathen life and traditions, how to trace them back to God's precious revelations, and they could experience divine light illuminating their darkened minds. Youkiwma's story of coming into the divine light and entering into God's precious truth and bring to maturity that life as expressed in the above statement, belongs to the marvels of missions.

I could weep when I think how negligent missionaries have been in learning the native tongue and pulling an interpreter along for 10, 15, even 20 years.

But here I must go back and finish what happened after the Hopis roped me to drag me off, and the Inspectors pardoned them because I would not sign the necessary papers for their prosecution. But the Inspectors gave them also to understand what would happen if they tried it again. They said they would be prosecuted without any signed papers from me, and they would be sent to the penitentiary.

The wicked Hopis felt that their religion was going to pieces; and with it some of the ceremonies, their promiscuous sexual liberties, because the women and girls would not expose themselves anymore to the degrading practices. So they said, if they killed the missionary they would go to the penitentiary. So they hired some Have-Supai Indians who lived in the bottom of the Grand Canyon. The only way to get there was a horse trail, and was only 25 miles from our mission.

A Hopi friend of ours told me what the wicked Hopis had done, and then asked me if I would flee now. I said, "We are here on business for the Lord, and until that work is finished no one will be able to take my life." Our friend said: "What, I your friend tell you of the plan to kill you and you won't flee! what is the matter with you?" I said, "Nothing is the matter with me."

The following Sunday night I went to the street preaching. Our little boy was very sick. My dear wife had said to me, "Never will I let you go alone to the street meeting again. The presence of women may keep them from violence; but our boy being so very sick I'll stay at home; and I will stand in the chapel door where I can hear the boy if he calls; and I can hear you speak and I will pray for you."

I said, "That is good, I am glad to know your plan!" and I went to the street. I sang a Hopi gospel song by flashlight; then read my Hopi scripture text and gave them in Hopi, of course without an interpreter, a talk on God's superabounding grace in Christ Jesus, who died for our sins on calvary's cross. And by simple faith acceptance they could be saved. I prayed and went home. Nothing happened.

The following Monday I went to the village to find out what they had gotten out of my message, and explain things they might not have understood.

On the way to the village I met the same man who had told me of the plot to have me murdered; and another man was with him. My informant said, "My friend, who were all the people with you at the street preaching last night?" I said, "There were no people with me the night before; I was alone because our boy was very sick and even my wife had not been with me."

He said, "Why are you lying to us? We saw ^{them} with our own eyes. They made a great circle all around you; and how you did sing. But the people around you all had different clothes on than you wear." I said, "No, there were no people around me." He then said, "What did we see then?"

I did not tell Mrs. Frey what the Hopi friend had told me about the murder plot. I had the absolute assurance that no one would or could kill me, and I did not want to trouble my loved one. But she had sensed the danger, and the interceding wife and mother stood between a very sick child and the hired murderers that no doubt were present at that street meeting, else why would our blessed and glorious Lord send the heavenly bodyguard? A few passages like Col. 2:9,10; 2 Cor. 1:18-22; Rom. 8:28,29 is enough security for me.

This happened three Sunday nights in succession, and every time when I went to the village to follow up my preaching I met different groups of men, who all related the same visions: There were very many people around me, who wore different clothes than we wear; and we sang wonderfully. The only thing I noticed was that my voice seemed to have been split up like many strings on an instrument.

The Hopis had the proof that we had a real God, Who was able to protect us; and we have their love and confidence like no one else.

When the flu struck MoneCopi, the Hopis were very sick. The government sent nurses and special doctors to moenCopi. I had just returned from taking care of the Hopis and missionaries. The doctors and field matron were sick, and the doctor gave me the key to the dispensary and instructed me what medicines to give to certain patients. Frank Jenkins, our native evngelist was dying with double pneumonia.

The night before he died, he pleaded I should let him preach once more to his people. I said, "Frank, you are dying with double

pneumonia - you can't." He wept. I said, "All right, you put your arms around my neck and I will put my arm under your arm, and you can give your last message." We went to the street. His message was pleading with them to accept Jesus as their Saviour. We went in, and he fell asleep. He woke up at 4:00 A. M. And he prayed for the Hopi people to be saved--a long prayer. Then he mentioned my name, and he asked the Lord to so fill me with the Holy Spirit that I could not do otherwise than make every effort to lead his Hopis to Christ. Then he was tired and fell asleep.

The afternoon on that day Frank said: "It makes me so happy that soon my feet shall walk on the golden streets of New Jerusalem!" And he fell asleep in Jesus.

The government made the coffin; I dug the grave and we had the service by the graveside and we buried him. We could not get any help. Sister Elizabeth Schmidt started to help me dig but the orphan children called and she had to leave.