

A GOODLY HERITAGE  
OUR GIFT  
to the  
FUTURE



May 1, 1996

# INTEREST

P.O. Box 190, Wheaton, IL 60189

Dear friend of INTEREST Ministries:

As you look back on life, do you remember times when you were faced with the need to make a major change? It may have been giving up that beloved old vehicle that served you well for 15 years or moving out of a house that was home for a generation or more. This kind of change is never easy. The deeper the sense of stability and security, the deeper the grief and loss when separation takes place. The Lord, facing the reality of being separated from His Father for the first time in eternity, said "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" (Matthew 26:38). The deeper the love, the deeper the sorrow in separation.

The time has come for us to announce some major changes at INTEREST Ministries. For some, it will be as painless as trading in a car every year. For others, it may be as painful as saying good-bye to a life-long friend. We understand that, and if it were possible, we would avoid causing any pain at all. Many of us have been through enough pain in recent years to last a lifetime.

For the past eighteen months particularly, the Board of IM has had to wrestle with the realities of the times in which we live. After much consultation from mature and godly men we have reached the following conclusions:

1. It is time to end an era of publishing INTEREST Magazine as most of us know it. While the recipients of the magazine have never fully paid the cost, in recent years the annual donations in the US and subscriptions in Canada have covered only about 25% of the cost of production and distribution. It should not be expected that anyone continue subsidizing that kind of red ink. Consistently, our surveys tell us that the News and Notices section is the most widely read. So, beginning with the July/August issue, only that section will be published in a newsletter format to provide the connectedness that many have enjoyed and still desire. Those who are currently receiving the magazine will receive this monthly publication through December 1996. Some time in the fall of this year each recipient will be given the opportunity to subscribe on an annual basis for continuing service for 1997.

2. It is also time to end the ministry of serving as a conduit for financial gifts to commended workers. It has been a joy to serve in this capacity for many years and many have been blessed. Our recommendation is that gifts be given to workers through their own commending assemblies, since that is where the accountability and responsibility actually lie. If, for some reason, that is not an acceptable alternative, we recommend that you contact the Christian Worker Fellowship Fund, PO Box 2365, Kansas City, KS 66110 or MSC, 27 Charles Street East, Toronto, ON, Canada M4Y 1R9. All gifts received at our office for this purpose after May 31, 1996 will be returned to the donor for redirection.

3. On a more positive note, INTEREST Ministries will continue to serve as the recording and publishing agency of all changes in commendations that are directed to us, and to publish the North American Missions Resource Guide.

4. Finally, the responsibility for Military Chaplains who are commended from assemblies will transfer to Stewards Ministries beginning on July 1, 1996. Retired Navy chaplain Ken Botton, current editor of INTEREST magazine, will continue to function as Endorsing Agent.

So, where is INTEREST Ministries going from here? We can't recreate the past nor perpetuate the present. However, the Board can sharpen the focus of this ministry and concentrate on those items that we do well. Due to the strife and division of the past few years, we have discovered that many commended workers and leaders are feeling lonely and isolated. They are on the front lines and in the trenches, sometimes feeling like the Lone Ranger (but without even Tonto or Silver). They are experiencing the significant and increasing challenges of reaching today's generation with the good news of Jesus Christ in a relevant way. They have a desire and need to be connected to and encouraged by brothers and sisters who identify with those challenges. God continues to burden our hearts for these men and women, and we want to direct our efforts and resources toward them.

We believe that encouraged leaders encourage followers, and encouraged leaders and followers together make healthy, growing and reproducing churches. If, on the other hand, leaders are discouraged and frustrated, the trickle down has the opposite effect. We want to encourage and help in the development of those who want to stay connected. We are not sure exactly how, but we believe God will show us as we seek His direction.

The refocusing of this vision has been a long and often difficult process, but we are confident that we are to be working in the areas of networking, encouraging and developing leaders. This clear biblically-consistent vision from the Lord has been revitalizing for us on the IM Board.

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Major downsizing takes a toll. Our staff needs your prayers. We are thankful for a group of dedicated servants who don't see their work as just a job but as a ministry. It's obviously time for that ministry to change for all of them, some more than others. We are deeply grateful for Ken Botton who stepped up to the plate in the bottom of the ninth, enabling INTEREST Ministries to go into extra innings. He has done an admirable job as administrator and editor and we commend him on both counts. Roger Bigney has served faithfully as Business Manager and we will continue looking to him as the General Manager of INTEREST Ministries. Both have been aided by the qualified and competent assistance of Debra Locklear and Larry Servin, respectively. If you have called our office lately you have also been greeted by the pleasant voice of Polly Grismore. Thank you, Polly, for brightening our day.

There is one servant who deserves special recognition. For thirty-three years Naomi Bauman has quietly and faithfully served the Lord through INTEREST Ministries. If anyone has felt the trauma of change it's Naomi, but her joyful spirit has been an encouragement to all of us. She will continue to serve INTEREST Ministries as the editor of the reformatting News & Notices newsletter and the keeper of historical records and files. It is our desire to make it possible for Naomi to be able to retire in two years if she so desires. Perhaps others would like to express their appreciation to Naomi by helping to make that a reality. To that end we are establishing a special fund and invite your participation. All contributions given for this purpose will be administered wisely to produce the greatest long-term benefit to Naomi.

Change is never easy. Yet, some changes are beneficial when seen in the light of eternity. It is our desire and prayer that eternity will reveal that these changes were of God and glorified Him. Please pray with us and for us during this crucial time in our history, that we will be wise in our deliberations and ongoing decision-making.

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*P. S. Due to the significant responsibilities that our staff will have in coming weeks, please send any responses to this letter directly to one of the above listed Board members. If you don't know any personally, write to INTEREST Ministries President, Jim Hislop. You may, of course, send notes of encouragement or appreciation to the staff at the address on the letterhead.*

## 1934-1996

1934 LETTERS OF INTEREST *from the HOME FIELD*  
1940S LETTERS *of* INTEREST

1934 WILLIAM G. MCCARTNEY, *Editor*

1961 DONALD M. TAYLOR, *Editor*

1970 C. DONALD COLE, *Editor*

1971 JAMES A. STAHR, *Editor*

1986 BILL CONARD, *Editor*

1993 MIKE HAMEL, *Editor*

1995 KEN BOTTON, *Editor*

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# INTEREST

PROMOTING NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY

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## From the Board of Directors

*While we have tried to be clear in the letter about the future of INTEREST Ministries, there are always questions that arise. This is an attempt to answer some of the more obvious ones.*

**IS MONEY THE DETERMINING FACTOR IN THE CONTINUATION OF THE MAGAZINE?** Yes, because we use money to pay the rent on our office, the electric and telephone bills, our employees' salaries and benefits, the printer and the post office. We are told the contributions given for INTEREST Magazine have never fully paid for it, it has always been subsidized in one way or another. With the heavy rise in costs in the past few years, the subsidy required has become approximately 75%. For at least five years prior to cutting our mailing list this past year, only 25% of those receiving the magazine contributed anything, even though they were given an opportunity on an annual basis.

**HOW MUCH WILL THE NEWSLETTER COST FOR 1997?** That has not been determined yet but will be by the time we provide the opportunity to subscribe. That opportunity should come sometime in October or November. It will be based on actual costs which we will know more clearly after the first few are published.

**DO I UNDERSTAND THAT ONLY THOSE WHO SUBSCRIBE WILL GET THE NEWSLETTER IN 1997?** Yes. Our thought is that by sending the new format between July and December you will have the opportunity to see what it is like before making a commitment to continue.

**WHAT IF I CONTRIBUTED FOR THIS YEAR AND DON'T WANT TO GET THE REDUCED NEWSLETTER FORMAT, CAN I GET MY MONEY BACK?**

Our fiscal year runs from July 1 through June 30. All contributions that come to us between those dates are viewed as a contribution for the magazine during that year, even if it was given late in the twelve month period. In the U.S. the contribution for the magazine is a tax deductible donation and therefore not refundable. In Canada it is a subscription, and we will be happy to refund the full amount you paid if you feel you have not received full value, even though the \$15 only pays for mailing and handling costs. Just drop us a note and we will take care of it.

**WHAT WILL THE NEWS & NOTICES NEWSLETTER CONTAIN?** Primarily the content of the current News and Notices section of the magazine which averages four pages each issue. There may be a short article at times in addition to the letters. Many have told us they turn to this section first, scan the names and catch up on the lives of those they recognize as well as become informed about what God is doing in other ways. Being connected in a disjointed world is important. This provides that connectedness.



**WHY ARE WE NO LONGER SERVING AS A CONDUIT FOR GIFTS TO COMMENDED WORKERS?** While tax accountants and attorneys disagree with each other, ours have been expressing concern for some time about this method of handling tax deductible gifts. Last year we tried to remedy the concern by asking commending assemblies to take responsibility for being accountable for their commended workers by giving us a letter that stated such. This request was met with some concern. Additionally, to handle such a process for so many is rather expensive. Our attempt to recoup expenses by utilizing 10% of the gift generated even greater misunderstanding and concern. A better way to send a tax deductible gift to a commended worker is through that worker's commending assembly.

**WHAT IF I DON'T KNOW THE COMMENDING ASSEMBLY OF A WORKER I WANT TO HELP?** IM has and will continue to publish a Resource Guide listing every commended worker and their commending assembly's name. Walterick Publishers publish a list of all commending assemblies, their addresses and usually a person to contact. A combination of these two will solve that problem.

**HOW & WHEN WILL THE IM BOARD KNOW WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS?** Each person who received the letter that is reprinted in this issue also received a questionnaire. The results of those will be considered seriously as to what the needs are and how IM can be involved in helping meet them. We are trusting God that through this process of dialog, He will make it clear to us, what aspects of ministry we should be involved in to encourage those that He has raised up to lead others. Please pray for the Board and their advisors that we will hear God's voice. We anticipate this process taking several months and look forward to sharing our decisions with those who want to stay in touch as soon as possible.

**WHY THE FOCUS ON LEADERS?** Sometimes by trying to minister to everyone you actually minister to no one. If those in leadership are actually leading, people are following, otherwise they are just out for a walk. By encouraging the leaders, he or she will in turn encourage their followers because encouragement is contagious. When you can't do everything you would like to do, you do what ultimately has the greatest impact.

**DO WE SEE ANY POSSIBILITY OF RENEWAL COMING TO THE ASSEMBLIES THAT WOULD CHANGE THE "REALITIES" OF OUR TIMES?** Historically there has never been reconciliation of any major division within this "movement." It would be wonderful to see that tradition broken. Renewal can occur, but only if there is genuine brokenness and repentance from the arrogance that not only keeps many isolated from the rest of God's Kingdom, but now isolates us from each other. Could we issue a final call to renewal? "If my people who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and will heal their land. Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place." (2 Chron 7:14-15). Some of God's people in isolated fellowships have and are experiencing revival as a result of obedience to this call, may it be so on a wider scale. ■

*If my people who are  
called by my name,  
will humble  
themselves and pray  
and seek my face and  
turn from their wicked  
ways, then will I hear  
from heaven and will  
forgive their sins and  
will heal their land.  
Now my eyes will be  
open and my ears  
attentive to the  
prayers offered in this  
place.*

*—2 Chron 7:14-15*



# A LOVING FAREWELL



Ken Botton

*Some might ask,  
“If you knew 18  
months ago that  
the magazine  
would not survive,  
would you still  
have become  
editor?” Without  
hesitation, I  
answer “Yes!”*

After 62 years, INTEREST Magazine as we know it will be no more. If final words are the ones most remembered, what can one say at a time like this? What should one say? Being the good dispensationalist that I am, I naturally asked the question “What would the Apostle Paul write?” Somehow, to a movement in turmoil, Paul’s final admonition to the Philippians (Phil 4:8) seemed very appropriate.

Now, the Apostle Paul could have closed out his epistle to the church at Philippi in a variety of ways. To some, he would have been justified in lashing out at his enemies, many of whom brought him grief in the church.

After all, even David, the man after God’s own heart, never forgot the fact that Shimei had humiliated him as he was fleeing Jerusalem from the forces of Absalom. In fact, David’s final charge to Solomon included the admonition which I have paraphrased as follows: “Get Shimei!” (See 2 Kings 2:8-10)

By contrast, the beloved Paul chose to lift his Philippian readers to a much higher plane. He wanted them to dwell on things true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report.

This is not to suggest that INTEREST has been completely free from defect in its long history. I’m sure each former editor had a mental list of things they wish they could have done better and even a few things that they wish they hadn’t done at all. My 20/20 hindsight gets clearer all the time.

Nor is this to suggest that INTEREST lacked critics. We’ve had our share—even a few “Shimei’s” thrown in for good measure. Criticism of INTEREST Magazine at one time reached “cottage industry” proportions with some publications offering line by line “correctives” to errors real or perceived. Yet, even this sad state of affairs was merely symptomatic of deeper issues that have perennially caused concern in our movement.

Defects and critics notwithstanding, INTEREST Magazine is being “decommissioned.” At this milestone of Christian history I, for one, would like to concentrate on those things that one can honestly say are of good report.

As you have already seen from the magazine cover, much of our focus for this final issue revolves around INTEREST’s great legacy from the past and its implications for the future. There is much for which we can be justifiably grateful.

## INTEREST’S LEGACY—A TREASURE CHEST OF SCRIPTURAL RICHES

Many will say that Letters of Interest from the Home Field emerged out of the “golden” age of brethrenism in North America. Indeed, the mid-1930s witnessed the planting of many new assemblies, great Bible conferences like Guelph and the early beginnings of Emmaus Bible School. Concurrent with these developments was the healing of old divisions, notably the merging of many “Grant” assemblies with other so-called “open” assemblies. INTEREST was there.

God turned the curse of World War II into a blessing as Emmaus Bible Correspondence Courses touched hearts and led to the conversion of many service men and women. When these new converts returned home they wanted to attend churches built on New Testament principles and even go to a Bible school where such principles were taught and honored. INTEREST was there.

The demand for new assemblies soon outstripped conventional resources. Visionary men, seeking to provide scriptural financial backing for local assemblies developed Stewards Foundation. Brethren hospitals were not far behind. INTEREST was there.

INTEREST documented the Call to Renewal, Decade of Promise conferences, Leadership Forums and various other church planting and leadership development activities all the while publicizing the work of commended workers and local assemblies. Not everyone agreed with these new developments. Yet, through it all, INTEREST remained a point of focus for the assemblies of North America, and a source of great encouragement for its readers.

Despite a look and feel that changed with the times (not to mention the name), some things in INTEREST never changed. Long before “plurality leadership” became fashionable in evangelical circles, INTEREST promoted this biblical concept. Additionally, the concept of the priesthood of the believer without artificial clergy/laity division always found support in INTEREST’s pages. Moreover, as opposed



to the view found in some denominational groups, INTEREST steadfastly advocated the independent, autonomous assembly, beholden to none but Christ, yet in fellowship with like minded meetings.

Most importantly, INTEREST, reflecting assembly priorities, placed supreme value in the exaltation of Christ. When I first "discovered" the assemblies for myself over 20 years ago, one of the first things that I noticed (apart from the weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper) was an incredible level of biblical literacy among the rank and file. Yet, this was no ordinary Bible knowledge. I knew from personal experience that what passed for Bible literacy in another denomination resulted in a legalistic caricature of Christianity. However, in the assemblies (at least the ones I attended) all Scripture led to Christ. The Bible was His book, the Church was His body, and we were His people.

I was hooked! The more I learned about the assemblies, the more I found out about the chief men and women of the brethren and their uncompromising passion for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Further, the assemblies constituted a church without any man-made walls. Those whom Christ accepted we accepted. What a breath of fresh, heavenly air.

In late 1994, when Bruce McNicol asked me to become the next editor of INTEREST, I felt overwhelmed by the significance and complexity of the position. Many still viewed INTEREST Magazine as the voice of the assemblies in North America. This was a 60 year old publication, representing a movement dating back to the mid-1820s, which itself recaptured principles of meeting straight out of the first century. I considered the privilege of editing INTEREST Magazine a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

At the same time, I knew that I was inheriting a magazine on "life support." I realized that divisions and disagreements within the movement had all taken their toll. The magazine would now be half its former size, and, for the sake of reconciliation, content would be restricted. I understood that some might even misinterpret our attempts at promoting reconciliation and healing. I even told some of my close friends that taking over at INTEREST Magazine felt like becoming Captain of the Titanic, AFTER it hit the iceberg!

However, who can explain the "peace of God, which passes all understanding?" Despite INTEREST's uncertain future, I felt a "settled conviction"—the "peace of God," if you will. I accepted the position with fear and trembling from a human perspective, but also with an abiding sense that God was in control of this situation.

As I look back, I have to admit that it's been quite a ride.

### THE FINAL VOYAGE

Now it is my privilege to guide this proud ship into its final harbor for decommissioning. Unlike a battleship, a "ship of the line" who makes her mark with 16 inch guns blazing, INTEREST magazine was an "auxiliary" ship with a motto of "service to the fleet." Instead of providing "beans, bullets and black oil," INTEREST faithfully brought biblical nourishment, biblical encouragement and news of the brethren movement in North America to generations of readers.

The ship is at full dress for this final ceremony. Every flag waves proudly in the stiff breeze. Rows of freshly re-painted campaign ribbons festoon the bridge reminding those watching of the ship's long and honored career. Resplendent in their dress uniforms, the crew mans the rails. After the invocation, distinguished personages make speeches recalling this vessel's faithful service in war and peace.

In the final moments invited guests respectfully rise to their feet. The Quartermasters lower the ensign and the commissioning pennant. The crew snaps to attention, renders honors and files off smartly. The Boatswain Mate of the Watch dates his final entry into the logbook, 30 June 1996. He notes that the rudder is amidship and the machinery jacking gear has been engaged for the last time.

Once busy decks are now vacant. And, as the "Amen" from the Chaplain's benediction touches the ears and then vanishes, the good ship INTEREST passes into history.

It is with a mixture of sorrow and joy, humility and gratitude that we present to you this final issue of INTEREST Magazine. INTEREST represents a goodly heritage. I trust that you will accept this heritage as our gift for your future.

... IF THERE BE ANY VIRTUE, AND IF THERE BE ANY PRAISE, THINK ON THESE THINGS.

In Christ,



*Finally, brethren,  
whatsoever things  
are true, whatsoever  
things are honest,  
whatsoever things  
are just, whatsoever  
things are pure,  
whatsoever things  
are lovely, whatsoever  
things are of good  
report; if there be any  
virtue, and if there be  
any praise, think on  
these things.*

*—Philippians 4:8*



# REFLECTIONS, REMINISCENCE

## APPEALING to the NEXT GENERATION

*The time has come not to alter any principles, but to apply them in a newly relevant way.*



Keith Price

retain that which characterized the last 2,000 years (live in the past).

With this issue, INTEREST reaches a major milestone in the marathon. The time has come not to alter any principles, but to apply them in a newly relevant way.

It seems it takes about three generations to blunt the cutting edge of most ecclesiastical traditions. By this time many adherents find they are unable to differentiate between unchanging principles and years of habit. What was done in past generations becomes sacrosanct and is often only

In these days of rapid change it has been so good to have the stability and consistency of decades of INTEREST. Throughout its changes in leadership it has maintained a faithful witness to the unchanging values of the gospel.

But whereas the principles of Scripture are unchanging, each generation must be on the lookout for relevant ways to express those principles. In relationships and communication, we must live in and address our own age (i.e. live in the present). In our planning we must anticipate change so that our vision will put us on the leading edge of new evangelistic thrusts (live in the future). But in our doctrinal belief and biblical principles, we simply must

changed at the terrible cost of church splits.

We are living in such a time.

The movement that God has used out of all proportion to its size has, in many places, stagnated. It struggles even to maintain the status quo and seems to have completely lost sight of its original purpose. Clubs abound. Their members are too ingrown and habit-bound to change very much. They are faithful to everything except a relevant, vibrant witness in the world. Attempts to induce change are usually futile.

Such persons need comfort and encouragement to at least keep running the race to the degree they still can. To maintain informational and devotional input to their lives will require some facets of our current INTEREST which a new group with financial backing may need to pick up. Let's pray for them, for God may well give them further vision and new ideas.

But to look ahead, be on the cutting edge of mission and appeal to the next generation with our principles will require the courage and new ideas of our young people. There will be enough of the older generation who still think young so as to back them financially. I am confident such young initiative will emerge and I, for one, will encourage it while fully expecting that (at my age) I will not see eye to eye with everything.

We need grace to minister encouragement to both groups. This does not mean however that we should dilute the efforts of either group by trying to address both in the same publication. They do indeed need to be kept separate, yet with that kind of understanding and tolerance which will encourage both and continue to express the unity of the Body of Christ.

I want to thank the Board and staff of INTEREST, past and present, for their untiring efforts to keep us both stimulated and informed. May their tribe increase!

—Keith Price, *Commended worker and Minister-at-Large, Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, Victoria, British Columbia*

## LOSING a FRIEND

I am sad to see INTEREST Magazine in its final days. It is like losing a close friend. However, the years of ministry to individuals and local churches should not be easily lost or forgotten. For me it was the continued focus on the development of a group of churches passionate for seeing people won to Christ, desirous of developing tomorrow's church leaders and the planting of new churches that I enjoyed most. During the years of this magazine, these three goals were constantly sought after and accomplished. My hope is that this legacy will continue into the future with new means of communication and media.

—Andy Holloman, *former IM Director of Church Planting, Global Steel, Inc., Colorado Springs, Colorado*



# EXPERIENCES and a FEW REGRETS

*Was the magazine perfect? No! Am I going to miss it? Yes, tearfully and regretfully!—Hugo*

## A TIME for EVERYTHING

**T**here is a time for everything and a season for every activity under heaven. "For me, this is a time to reflect on the one magazine that I always read immediately from cover to cover. I followed with great interest the development of the magazine over the years when it reported the

various ministries of commended workers. How delighted I was, as a young believer, to meet these workers whose names I had seen in the pages of Letters of Interest.

I remember reading articles long ago that reported the number of assemblies in each of the States. I was shocked at how few there were. This article and a host of other influences were the push I needed to begin serious thinking and study regarding the New Testament Church, church planting, renewal, etc.

The Call to Renewal came as the breath of the Holy Spirit—challenging, moving, inspiring. How could one be complacent after such a call? INTEREST Magazine took on a new dynamic as I continued to read month by month. The message of the Call to Renewal permeated its pages. I was thrilled. At last the "brethren" seemed like they were on the move. Behind it all, encouraging, giving timely ministry articles, was INTEREST Magazine.

Was the magazine perfect? No! Am I going to miss it? Yes, tearfully and regretfully! To the editors of INTEREST and its staff, Well done! Perhaps another Call to Renewal, preceded by a Call to Repentance, will be what we need to relight the torch of INTEREST once again. Count me in!

—Hugo Santucci, fulltime worker, Moraga, California

**A**s a child whose grandparents came into eternal life through devoted followers of Jesus in the Brethren movement, I remember a small magazine called Letters of Interest. Fifty years later my youngest child, Peter Santucci, became assistant editor. His passion, as a Christian journalist, was to see this magazine become increasingly relevant in its communication, pictorially and otherwise, more able to grab the attention of sleepy disciples and stimulate response to the urgent obedience call to disciple the ethnic nations among us and to those across the oceans.

In time its name was abbreviated to INTEREST. Perhaps, as Paul Gullans recently noted in a letter to INTEREST, an anointing seems to be missing in the Brethren assemblies. Is that why INTEREST has become dis-Interest? James Stahr endeavored to awaken us from interest (a very un-energetic, unenthusiastic, passionless word) to aliveness and renewal by the fire of the Holy Spirit...pleading for the anointing. Perhaps INTEREST must die so that the Lampstand can be relit. "When Christ comes, will He find faith on the earth?"

I was sad to see the men of vision who established Interest Ministries be redirected elsewhere. "Without vision (the KJV says) the people perish." Valiant people took up the torch to keep the passion of vision alive. I, personally, thank them for trying. I thank the Lord for the godly men associated with the Brethren movement who inspired me with a passion to discover, know and love God. My husband, Hugo, is grateful for the open door into preaching and teaching that was given him.

I thank all my esteemed brothers and sisters who have given themselves to be that communication link among Brethren assemblies. Your hearts belong to our Lord and His "well done" is your greatest thank you and will follow you wherever He leads you.

—Kathleen Santucci, Moraga, California



Hugo & Kathleen Santucci

*Perhaps  
INTEREST  
must die so that  
the lamp-stand  
can be relit.*

—Kathleen





Harold Barrington

*We will thank God  
for all its reporting,  
its insights, its  
challenges and its  
encouragement  
through the years.*

## MISSSED, BUT NOT MOURNED

**G**od, in His infinite wisdom and according to His perfect timetable, brings His servants on stage to fill their role in the Church, and then moves them off when it is completed. With their passing there is often a deep sense of loss, but it is tempered with thoughts of gratitude and victory for faithful service rendered and missions accomplished. These are my sentiments as I reflect on the sixty-plus years of Letters of Interest/INTEREST Magazine.

This publication was in my parents' home when I was a boy, and then continually in our own home. It was "drop-everything" reading at each monthly arrival. All but its earliest editors (whom I did not know) I count as my personal friends and am indebted to them. It has been a privilege to contribute articles from time to time, but I've received far more than I've given.

As with the passing of a valued Christian friend, whose life has counted for God, INTEREST Magazine will be missed, but not mourned. Rather, we will thank God for all its reporting, its insights, its challenges and its encouragement through the years. May those who have staffed and served diligently during those years find deep satisfaction in the knowledge that they have been God's instruments for blessing to His people, and may they be guided clearly by the Spirit into further fruitful service. A big "thank you," in the Lord's name to you all! "You know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain" (2 Cor 15:58).

—Harold Barrington, fulltime worker, Mesa, Arizona

## THREE GUSTS of FRESH AIR

**F**irst. "How to Know God's Will," by William Anderson. His articles on that subject, printed in the late sixties, were a great relief to me! I had committed my life to Christ but was puzzled and bewildered by the concept of knowing God's will. I gave a copy of the article to another struggler just last week!

Second. The Serious Call to Renewal. What a great day it was when men of experience and stature were able to say unitedly, "We are in trouble and need to do something about it." Willingness to admit to a problem can go a long way.

Third. The "let's-go-for-it" years with Bruce McNicol and Bill Conard. They may have made mistakes, like all of us do, but they went all out to bring vigorous fresh thinking to people who needed it, and they did it with a lot of grace.

—Gord Martin, Vision Ministries Canada, Waterloo, Ontario



Gord Martin

*Willingness  
to admit to a  
problem can  
go a long way.*



George Verwer

## THE WORKINGS of GOD

*When will we all  
understand the  
wide range of  
ways that God  
works?*

**F**or many years I have had the joy of not only reading INTEREST but of also distributing it to many friends. Only eternity will show how God has used it. When will we all understand the wide range of ways that God works?

—George Verwer, International Director, Operation Mobilization, Kent, England



## REFLECTIONS

I remember the first time I walked into the Stewards Foundation/Letters of Interest office. It was 1956. The office was at 127 S. Wacker Drive in Chicago. I climbed the stairs and opened the door. Don Taylor and Bob Mojonnier were standing in the middle of the room discussing the layout of the next magazine.

Don and Bob loved the assemblies and they were open to ideas that would advance the cause of New Testament church principles. Don Taylor, in his quiet way, often said many profound things. He understood trends. He thought carefully about the future and made many wise decisions to enhance assembly life all across the country.

Bob Mojonnier was outgoing, and he told it like it was. He loved people and encouraged many younger men. Both men influenced my life with their wise counsel, encouragement and willingness to challenge the status quo. Other men followed in their trail, and the ministry of INTEREST continued through many advancements and retrenchments.

In 1980 I was asked to be on the Call to Renewal Committee. There were intense discussions, periods of prayer and bold future castings. Not everybody agreed with all that was proposed, but the openness to change and the willingness to evaluate were refreshing.

INTEREST spearheaded finding solutions to many of the challenges that the Call to Renewal Committee had raised. Bruce McNicol became president to help bring a younger generation into our church life. Don Cole stirred the pot for a while as editor. He was a change agent constantly asking the hard questions, but never deviating from sound biblical teaching. Jim Stahr carried the flag for many years. Bill Conard kept challenging us to fresh approaches as he drew us

into evaluating both the good and bad of our heritage. Mike Hamel brought innovative and fresh ideas to us in his editorship. Recently, Ken Botton has used his editorial skills to keep the magazine moving forward.

There were many other wonderful men and women behind the scenes: board members, executives, administrative assistants, finance and program personnel. God has profoundly used the ministry of INTEREST over the years to glorify His name.

My heart resounds with a big thank you to all who have shared their life and ministry with us. In the midst of all this change, some assemblies have grown and flourished seeing many come to Christ. Hundreds of others have faded and declined.

Now another change is upon us. It is comforting to know that God is bigger than our churches, organizations and groups. Jesus said, "I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it." Our confidence is unquestionably rooted in that promise, so we give praise to His powerful name.

—Kevin Dyer, Founder, International Teams, Prospect Heights, IL

*It is comforting to know that God is bigger than our churches, organizations and groups.*



Kevin Dyer

## A PART of the WHOLE

INTEREST magazine came into our home in Ontario when I was a teenager. I certainly didn't read it from cover to cover in those years, but it was the beginning of my awareness of the magazine. For forty-five years I have been a regular reader!

The magazine, with its distinctive editors, various emphases and stylistic changes, has been a positive influence in my life. Many articles encouraged and inspired me; the news and letters kept me in contact with many friends in the U.S. and Canada; and there was a sense of association with others moving in a similar direction.

INTEREST was not my only input. As a Bible school, college and seminary student I had to read widely. There are dozens of maga-

zines and hundreds of books that have helped to shape my life and challenge me in Christian ministry since 1961. But INTEREST Magazine has been a part of the whole. I thank God, and the many people who have labored hard and long, for that input in my life. No doubt hundreds of others will echo my gratitude.

I'm sorry to see INTEREST Magazine end its long career. It has been a useful tool in God's kingdom. Fresh breezes were blowing for several years. Fortunately, God's Word and work in the church are published widely today. Inspiration, instruction and encouragement will continue to come from other sources.

—Abner Bauman, fulltime worker, Arlington Countryside Church, Prospect Heights, IL

*There was a sense of association with others...*



Abner Bauman



# OPENED DOOR

Carol Porter

Since 1987 God has used INTEREST Ministries to make me more dependent on Him and rely less on my own abilities. It all began one warm evening in Los Angeles when Bruce McNicol invited my husband, Mark, to join with the team in Chicago to assist in church planting and helping existing churches to grow. While Bruce and Mark were out walking and talking about the possibilities of potential problems in the ministry, the Holy Spirit led me verse by verse through Romans 12, asking whether I was willing to serve Him with all my heart, use every gift He would give me and learn to love others unreservedly. In His power I responded with a whole-hearted "yes." I had very little idea what that yes would mean.

It did not mean a move to Chicago; we could serve from our home in California. It meant meeting and teaching, training and deeply caring for many hundreds of people across the country. It meant learning to write. I remember the day Bill Conard called and asked if I would write an article for the magazine. With a sense of awe I sat at the then-unfamiliar word processor and began to write. The Spirit moved, the words flowed. I read a finished article that came from the Lord, not from myself. I learned I could trust God in an area where I had no natural abilities.

Eventually article writing and ministry travel led to spearheading and editing the Women's Ministry Handbook. Published in 1992, it is still helping women in churches to be more effective in their ministry to the Lord. I knew God was at work in a remarkable way. I learned to lean hard on Him as Mike Hamel and I edited paragraph after paragraph often late into the night. From IM came a tool that is changing lives across the world. And God was willing to use me—the girl whose high school English teacher had told her she would never learn to write!

IM has opened the door for me to life-changing friendships. People far too numerous to mention have contributed to my life. I will be forever grateful for the opportunity to serve God with these people. Ministries change, people grow and develop. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. What He began in each of us He will complete—perhaps using new organizations and more enriching relationships.

—Carol Porter, Women's Ministries leader, Pleasanton, California

# THANKS for the COMMITMENT

As INTEREST Magazine concludes its years of effective and fruitful service, I want to say thank you.

Thank you for your commitment to the primacy and foundation of biblical orthodoxy. You will be remembered for your high regard for Scripture.

Thank you for your commitment to servanthood. Through the years you have served with humility, generosity and sacrifice. Full-time workers, local churches and individual believers have all been greatly encouraged by your assistance.

Thank you for your commitment to prayer. INTEREST Magazine has been a great tool in encouraging and facilitating prayer for the work of God.

Thank you for your commitment to promoting the essential role of the local Church in mission. Your respect for the autonomy of the local church has been evident.

Thank you for your commitment to evangelism. Only eternity will reveal how many people have come to Christ because of the stimulation and practical help received through articles written on how to share the Gospel of Christ.

Thank you for your commitment to tackling the tough issues. The Christian life is filled with all sorts of potential landmines. You didn't shy away from dealing with these issues head on.

Thank you for your commitment to excellence. The quality of the writing and the production of the magazine have demonstrated your desire to do all things well.

Thank you for your commitment in seeking to reflect the unity of the body of Christ. In spite of our diversity Jesus called us to be one, so that the world might know Him. Thank you for pointing us to this high calling.

As INTEREST Magazine now writes its final chapter, we recognize we will miss this "old friend." However, we celebrate with you the contribution it has made to the advancement of God's kingdom.

—Geoff Tunncliffe, President, International Teams of Canada, Burnaby, British Columbia



Geoff Tunncliffe

# DISTINCTIVE and RELEVANT

Through the years INTEREST Magazine has been our means of discovering what is happening among Brethren assemblies. It has provided informative and inspirational articles on a variety of subjects. I was especially pleased with the revised approach that appeared a few years ago, but which



Melvin Banks

was reduced in content in more recent issues.

INTEREST Magazine projected to both insiders and the Christian community at large that the Brethren assemblies' tradition was distinctive and relevant. I regret that it must be discontinued. Perhaps in the not too distant future we may again see the re-emergence of the publication for both its historic and ministry purposes. —Melvin Banks, Chairman and CEO, Urban Ministries, Chicago, IL



# CREATIVITY *without* COMPROMISE

Growing up in the assemblies, I came to greatly appreciate INTEREST Magazine and its people. During the past fourteen years as I've served with International Teams, I have benefitted from the wisdom and leadership given by the writers of the magazine.

I've appreciated the emphasis and help given to the assemblies on issues of vibrant worship and authentic witness. I've admired their creativity as they sought to instruct us on more contemporary styles of worship without compromising scriptural principles.

INTEREST Magazine's concern for the lost has been seen in articles on how to reach our unchurched neighbors and how to witness through our everyday life experiences. Only in heaven will we find out how many people have come to trust Christ as a result of the exhortation provided by INTEREST Magazine.

Most importantly, however, I have been personally impacted by the men and women who have helped write and produce the magazine. They are godly people who have sought to do their best and poured their hearts out for the sake of God's kingdom. Often they received little reward and, in some cases, a lot of criticism. Yet they remained faithful to God and rose above the problems in order for the glory to be given to Jesus. We have all been blessed by these servants of the Lord and His vehicle, INTEREST Magazine.

—Mark Dyer, Associate International Director, International Teams, Prospect Heights, IL



Mark Dyer

## A TRUE LANDMARK

Forty-two years ago my wife and I were graciously welcomed into the fellowship of Christians in Wheaton, Illinois. A few years later we were farmed out to Warrenville, a nearby community, to help in the planting of an expansion assembly in that city. One of our benefits was becoming closely associated with two gifted servants of the Lord, William G. McCartney and Donald Taylor.

Bill McCartney was a man of action. He had visionary ideas and the courage to put them to work. He loved the Lord and His people, and was the originator of "Letters of Interest," which later became INTEREST. Don Taylor was a kind man with an unusual ability to understand and to communicate with people. He could work with the most noted of men, or with the humblest of his fellows, all to the glory of God and the betterment of those with whom he had contact. Don was the editor of INTEREST. He put the magazine together in a readable fashion in the early days and drew "letters of interest" from theologians and from friends at the grass roots level.

To us, the magazine was a true landmark—the kind that we really should not destroy. It provided factual and personal infor-

mation from every area in which the assemblies were engaged in the work of spreading the Gospel. It provided profitable ministry, practical suggestions, warnings about things to avoid, and especially simple thoughts from other simple people like ourselves, which came from personal experience.

But few religious publications have been able to survive many years or many changes in editorial direction—and INTEREST seems to have finally lost its ability to be of "interest" to its readers. I, for one, will miss it. In parting, I want to offer a sincere "thank you" to the memory of Bill McCartney and Don Taylor, both with the Lord in Glory, and to the many workers, editors, trustees and friends that have been faithfully involved down through the years. All of you together have faithfully added to my appreciation of the Lord, His Word, His people and His work.

—Robert W. Mojonner, (former Director of Interest Ministries), Park of the Palms, Keystone Heights, Florida

*To us, INTEREST was a true landmark—the kind that we really should not destroy.*

Robert W. Mojonner

## LIVES TOUCHED

We at the National Coalition for Pioneering Black America regret that this is the last issue of INTEREST Magazine. We praise God for the great number of lives that have been touched through this written ministry. We will miss the stimulating articles and timely information the magazine has provided for us all.

—Donovan Case, President, National Coalition for Pioneering Black America, Wentzville, Missouri



Donovan Case



# FELLOWSHIP *and* ENCOURAGEMENT

**I** was saved at age 20 through the witness of a young Christian woman who later became my wife. Recently we celebrated our 43rd anniversary. She was raised in an assembly in Sturgis, Michigan. Since getting saved I've been actively involved in a Brethren type of ministry in the inner city of Chicago. My work has been church planting, youth camp [Circle Y Ranch] and conferences and professional Christian counseling.

I have been a long time follower of Interest Ministries and INTEREST Magazine—it used to be called Letters of Interest. I was privileged to serve on the board for many years and was blessed to have fellowship with some wonderful and godly men and women on the INTEREST staff.

I was especially blessed and helped by the fact that INTEREST included urban minorities, the interests of women and produced special conferences such as Decade of Promise. I feel that we have lost a vital connection of fellowship and encouragement in the work of ministry in the body of Christ.

—Leroy L. Yates, Sr., fulltime worker and elder, Westlawn Gospel Chapel, Chicago, Illinois



Leroy L. Yates

*Recent events leading to the discontinuation of INTEREST Magazine have saddened me.*

## THANKS INTEREST MAGAZINE

*INTEREST has helped to maintain a warm fellowship and contact with people ... whose ministry has challenged our thinking and sustained our concerns ...*

**V**ery often we find new friends on the pages of books and magazines. The Gutenberg revolution opened the door for wide contact with the world outside our small geographic locations. Through the years INTEREST has helped to maintain a warm fellowship and contact with people we may know only by reputation, but whose ministry has challenged our thinking and sustained our concerns about life through their varying ministries. We have found many of those who write like the "men of Issachar" (1 Chron 12:32), men and women who know what to do when this world presses in upon us.

We often think of people in illiterate societies, and of our ancient forbearers who communicated only by story and personal contacts. Our horizons have been expanded by monthly visits from people who are in touch with God, and who give us a dose of realism or maybe a comforting spiritual back rub, and sometimes even a needed dose of castor oil. They have simply reflected the Scriptures which are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. They have particularized the Christian life in many ways.

We rejoiced with those who rejoice in God's blessing in the ministry and empathized with those who found their ministry assaulted by the enemy. As informed Christians we became more effective prayer warriors.

Thank you for enriching our lives by increasing our knowledge of God's work in many places.

—Chuck and Winnie Christensen, elder and women's Bible studies leader, Alpine Chapel, Lake Zurich, Illinois



Chuck and Winnie Christensen

## AVISION *of* SERVICE

**M**y father had a profound influence on my life. He was committed to serving the Lord he loved and to the servants who ministered in the fields of harvest. It was this vision of service that was common among the founders of Letters of Interest and was a driving force in Charlie's life as he served in various leadership positions in Letters of Interest. We live in a world of change; and while change may be uncomfortable for many of us, we have an unchanging God. The future is in His hands, and I am thankful for the many people over the years who have made the ministry of INTEREST a ministry of service.

—C. William Pollard, ServiceMaster Corporation, Wheaton, Illinois



# DON TAYLOR REMEMBERED

I have, of course, a lot of memories of my father, Donald M. Taylor, but the ones I especially treasure, and which are most vivid in my mind, are of incidents which provided a momentary, unexpected glimpse into his very special character, his habits of thought and action.

My father had the habit of sitting and thinking, frequently with an open Bible in his lap. When he was lost in thought (my mother called it “meditating”), he could be hard to reach. I can remember more than once, as a child playing on the floor of the living room, calling out “daddy” to get his attention, giving up and going back to my play, whereupon, five or ten minutes later, my call having been put on hold, so to speak, by the brain, he would complete his train of thought and surface with a “hmm?” By then I probably would have forgotten the original question.

Though I got up fairly early for school, my father was up earlier and out the door to catch the local Chicago & Northwestern commuter train from Wheaton into Chicago, where the offices of Stewards Foundation and Interest were then located. One morning I was up early for some reason and, coming down the stairs in the pre-dawn darkness, found out how he spent his early mornings, on his knees in prayer.

When you're growing up in a family you have no perspective on the uniqueness of your family; it's all you know until you get out and see how other families act. I never saw my parents argue or heard them raise their voices to each other. That that was anything other than ordinary I didn't suspect until much later. Only once can I remember my mother becoming momentarily upset at something my father had said, and then, what stands out in my mind is how quickly he moved to show his concern for her, to apologize and to reassure her of his love and support. It was over in seconds, but the memory is indelible. The lesson remains too: when tensions arise, you set the issues aside and work to restore the relationship. With a unified relationship based on love and mutual respect, problems can be dealt with together and probably solved.

The final memory I want to relate is from a later period, after my father's retirement, when my parents were living on the West Coast. Thinking back on his years with Stewards Foundation and INTEREST, my father told me that he had been in the habit for

years of asking the Lord, each day before going to work, to allow him to be of service to the Lord's people that day. He added that that was a prayer the Lord had always been pleased to answer.

Four brief memories of a man. Yet a lot is revealed in them, I think. If there was a secret to my father's effectiveness, other than innate gifts, perhaps it was in taking the principles of God's Word seriously and putting them into practice in his life and in his work. Seeing them actually modeled in someone makes us realize that the experience is both normal and somewhat rare. The result, in his case I think, was a rather curious combination of both spiritual and practical insight and wisdom.

Donald Francis Tovey, the British musicologist, quotes Dr. Samuel Johnson as saying that after having his eyes examined by an ophthalmologist, he was congratulated on having normal vision and told that it was very rare. I think that Donald M. Taylor had something to normal spiritual vision.

—Marshall Taylor, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Marshall Taylor

*When tensions arise, you set the issues aside and work to restore the relationship.*

## A KERNEL of WHEAT

My involvement in INTEREST Ministries from 1987 to 1992 was one of the most exciting ventures in ministry I have experienced. It was a bold vision to implement the recommendations of “The Call Committee.” We saw scores of assemblies rejuvenated and set on a growth track that impacted their communities for the Kingdom of God. The effort was, in the words of one Call Committee member, “The last great hope for Brethren assemblies.”



Mark Porter

*...It remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.*

Of course, there was a cost and a painful one. Was it worth it? Amen! The new life and vision which so many assemblies have experienced was indeed worth the bursting of the old wine skins to bring new life out of death.

In a very real sense, the words of Jesus in John 12:24 are true of INTEREST Ministries: “I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.”

—Mark Porter, full-time worker, Valley Bible Church, Pleasanton, California



# UNDERSTANDING *the* BRETHREN MOVEMENT

**L**etters of Interest was the vehicle most used by God to give me an understanding of the Brethren movement in Canada and the U.S. It helped me learn workers' names and something of their area of labor. I was thrilled to read of evangelistic efforts by Lester Wilson, followed by teaching and pastoral ministry by Harold Mackay. Schools, camps, prison ministries, missions, His Mansion, etc., all broadened my world.



Paul Fletcher

The articles dealing with issues that I was facing in ministry are still in my files today. They covered everything from Divorce and Remarriage to Homosexuality. Most challenging of all was the Call to Renewal, followed by scores of articles that helped me know the difference between theology and methodology. The need to adjust our methods, but also "how" and "to what" became "must" reading. I waited eagerly for each new copy. Whatever lies in the future for the assemblies, I am filled with very happy memories from the ministry of INTEREST.

—Paul Fletcher, fulltime worker, Woodside Bible Fellowship, Elmira, Ontario

*Most challenging of all was the Call to Renewal, followed by articles that helped me know the difference between theology and methodology.*

## FOOTPRINTS *in the* SAND

*The editorial baton was passed from Bill to Don to Don to Jim to Bill to Mike and to Ken. The names were different, the vision the same.*

**I** understand that INTEREST Magazine is closing down. The end of an era? Not at all. While many, many will miss the unique contributions of this assembly serving magazine, its capable efforts for over 60 years to encourage, inform and assist new generations of believers will not be forgotten.

Through written and spoken words, by selfless acts of vision, by caring ministries to the needy and voiceless, by encouraging small and hurting assemblies, assisting growing assemblies, providing helps to elders and workers, informing of the work of dedicated assembly commended workers, calling for prayers for needs, rejoicing in answered prayers and in a multitude of quiet ministries known only to the recipients, the devoted work has gone on.

The editorial baton was passed from Bill to Don to Don to Jim to Bill to Mike and to Ken. The names were different, the vision the same. Glorifying the name of the Lord through ministries to all the assemblies. Thousands and thousands have read the magazine and been touched for good through the encouraging, enabling, visionary pages.

Yes, some may forget. That's true. But what really matters is the fact that, as has been said, "The tide will come in and wash the footprints from the sand, but God will know they walked there." That's what really matters.

—Neil Glass, former President, INTEREST Ministries, Sarasota, Florida



Neil Glass



Beth & Rick Knox

## A 25 YEAR CONNECTION

**I**NTEREST has been an important part of our connection to the Brethren movement since we were married 25 years ago. We've appreciated the opportunity to learn how God is using various of His servants and to identify new ways of serving and knowing Him through the pages of INTEREST. That we will miss the magazine is certain; more importantly—and sadly—its loss will leave a giant gap in the web of relationships among Christians of good will in our movement.

—Beth and Rick Knox, fulltime workers, Alpine Chapel, Lake Zurich, Illinois



# SEEDS: PAST, PRESENT *and* FUTURE

**W**hen my sisters were younger, they wanted what most little girls in our church had—a fake gold necklace with a dangling glass ball that encased a mustard seed. They pestered mother with requests for the necklace and mustard seed ball until she finally relented and, even before their birthdays bought them each what they wanted.

For weeks my sisters wore their necklaces and seeds every Sunday. But then styles changed, no other girls were wearing their necklace and seed, and the fake gold chains and glass-encased seeds languished, forgotten in the bottom of dresser drawers.

We moved a few years later. As the girls cleaned out their dresser drawers they found the necklaces (tarnished and ugly) and the glass-encased seeds (perfect but sterile).

This morning I thought about that childhood memory, and I wondered, “What are mustard seeds for—to be encased in glass and to remain sterile forever, or for something else, something riskier but with infinitely greater potential?”

Mustard seed faith is a glorious thing.

To some people “faith” is the act of believing in God in heaven. To others, it is a body of doctrine, a harmonious arrangement of teachings about God, the ultimate answers, and the purpose for life. To others faith is stepping out to do something impossible in which you will fail and be publicly embarrassed unless God does the miraculous and gets you the money or the people or the opportunities.

I think mustard seed faith is all three. And especially, it is the third—the willing-to-risk-it-all and desperately-hope-that-God-will-help-you.

That’s what the early brethren and “sistren” had. That was before they split over personality differences or lopsided emphases or control or money. They were believing in the God of heaven. They were discovering a trinity-honoring body of doctrines, and practices that uniquely fit their culture and their times. And most of all, they were recklessly casting themselves into the teeth of failure and embarrassment, hoping against hope that God would prosper their weak, inexperienced efforts and give them success.

“The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field...and [it] becometh a tree” (Mat 13:31-32). “If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed...nothing shall be impossible unto you” (Mat 17:20). “Behold, a sower went forth to sow...seeds fell by the way side...upon stony places...among thorns...but other fell into good ground” (Mat 13:3-8).

This evening I wonder, “Will the sons and daughters of the Brethren pioneers keep their mustard seed encased in glass—perfect but sterile—or will they faithfully risk their seed by planting it in dirty, worldly soil? (Outside the glass there are worms and viruses and creepy things and storms and possible drought and we can’t control-it-and...)”

But what is a mustard seed for?

—Bill Conard, former editor, *INTEREST* Magazine. Bill helps raise prayer and financial support for the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. He and Ruth live in Maple Grove, Minnesota, and are members of Woodridge Church (Baptist General Conference).

*“What are mustard seeds for—to be encased in glass and to remain sterile forever, or for something else, something riskier but with infinitely greater potential?”*



Bill Conard

## A COMMUNICATION BRIDGE



Clifford S. Ice

**W**hen I was in college it was always good to hear from home. The letters and calls were the communication bridge that afforded me the chance to compare and to share my journey with the journey of those at home. Likewise, the *INTEREST* magazine told me something about the journey of others as it recorded the working of God in the life of fellow believers for whom Christ died. I was challenged, inspired and even disappointed at various times by the views of some, but I did hear from them and that was good.

Well, the communication bridge is too hard to maintain now, and when this happens, it is time to dismantle the beams and planks and prepare for demolition. Maybe somebody else will build another bridge one day in its place.

—Clifford S. Ice, fulltime worker and elder, Community Bible Chapel, Atlanta, Georgia



# INTEREST HAS SERVED US WELL

*Our thanks to  
all past and  
present board  
members,  
officers, editors  
and staff.*

For 62 years INTEREST Magazine has provided excellent Christian ministry to readers. The editors have kept the magazine biblical, Christ-centered and practical. Sometimes writers suggested different methods for church operation, but this was always within the bounds of biblical principles. And they reminded us not to confuse human tradition with divine truth in our Christian faith and practice.

We're going to miss INTEREST Magazine! For the past 25 years we have joyfully anticipated the news, teachings and blessings from each issue. Like a life completed in faithful service for Christ, so INTEREST Magazine has served well the Lord's people. It has been the foremost Christian magazine for many people inside and outside the brethren assemblies.

Reports in INTEREST from Christian workers informed us about Christ's work through His people in many other places. We enjoyed meeting other Christian servants through the pages of INTEREST, though some we never met in person.

Our thanks to all past and present board members, officers, editors and staff. Through the Lord's wisdom and strength you made INTEREST Magazine serve us well. May this promise be your portion: "For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints" (Heb 6:10).  
—Henry W. Holloman, Prof. of Systematic Theology, Talbot School of Theology, La Mirada, California



Henry W. Holloman

## A STRONG COMMITMENT

I remember with joy and sorrow our years of ministry with INTEREST. I felt very honored to be invited in 1982 to meet with the ad hoc group which would eventually issue the Call to Renewal in INTEREST Magazine. As the youngest member of this group I was impressed with the wisdom and years of experience represented by my older brethren. I said to my wife, "If this group cannot lead the assemblies into renewal, then probably no one can."

Soon I was invited to join the Board. I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to serve for ten years, and to take my turn as Chairman. Board meetings were always stimulating and the fellowship was warm. I miss the good friends I made on the Board.

It was a pleasure to work with those who served on the staff of INTEREST during that time. Jim Stahr modeled strong commitment to the Lord and our assemblies. He encouraged me to write and published my articles on church growth which later grew into a book.

Bruce McNicol graciously but firmly led us into a new era with an expanded mandate. He assembled a creative energetic staff in Bill Conard, Andy Holloman and Mike Hamel (along with excellent support staff). These men were always thinking on the cutting edge. They wanted the best for the assemblies. There was a strong commitment to planting new churches, training young leaders and providing resources for many believers. I believe they formed one of the best young leadership teams among North American evangelicals. How ironic that they received so much criticism from those they sought to serve.

Our two high quality Decade of Promise conferences were special highlights. What marvelous teaching, worship and fellowship we all enjoyed. I felt great regret this past December as I thought of the third conference that might have been held in 1995.

I am proud of those who served so well at INTEREST. I feel great sorrow as I realize that some misguided men caused this most effective ministry to founder. What a tragedy that many assemblies never realized the tremendous resources that INTEREST provided. I feel sorrow, yet I count it a privilege to have served alongside such faithful servants. Mistakes were made, I am certain, by all of us. Yet God judges the thoughts and intents of the heart—and I believe He will commend those who served so faithfully at INTEREST.

—Nelson Annan, Pastor, Bayview Glen Church, Thornhill, Ontario

*God judges the  
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INTEREST.*



Nelson Annan



# RETURNING to FIRST THINGS

**F**ine magazines, like good people, typically serve their generation only. For example, 13 U.S. presidents and ten Canadian prime ministers directed their countries during INTEREST's 62 year tenure—not that all these served their generation! Hundreds of secular and Christian magazines came and went during INTEREST's extended tenure.

Why did INTEREST flourish for so long? Largely because INTEREST found two needs close to God's heart and kept filling them right through the mid 90s. First, INTEREST deeply encouraged pioneering church planters and other workers. The periodical challenged Christians to pray, give and write to these workers. I observed INTEREST constantly spurring on both



Bruce McNicol

planters and supporters during the 80s and 90s when INTEREST Ministries helped to establish over 100 new churches.

The magazine also filled a second need by faithfully teaching Bible and doctrine to Christians from many backgrounds. Several denominational leaders ranked INTEREST high among "church group" periodicals. Thousands treasured the magazine

as it continued to thoughtfully teach the Word and publish news that made a difference.

Sustaining ministry to these two needs required a string of godly and gifted servants. I knew six of the seven editors and

worked with four of them. They fit this description.

INTEREST now retires. Why? Several reasons exist, including one classic explanation: Christian magazines usually serve God only in their generation. Then, God raises up fresh resources. Numerous ministries from the larger body of Christ can now provide INTEREST's readers with outstanding resources for pioneer church planting, Bible study, growing in Christ, local church ministry, etc. Even commended workers, who ten years ago relied on assembly magazines to release their views and teaching, can now afford desktop publishing. Credit the current INTEREST Ministries directors for understanding their times.

Here's the good news. Next month INTEREST returns to its forte: news. During much of the past 25 years, over 70% of the constituency read News and Notices, making it one of the most read departments of the magazine and the one that comprised the whole magazine when Bill McCartney and others first published Letters of Interest from the Home Field. I wish these current directors well. I thank God for the significant influence of INTEREST over the decades and I look forward to News of INTEREST.

—Bruce McNicol, President, Leadership Catalyst, former President, INTEREST Ministries, Phoenix, Arizona

*Thousands treasured the magazine as it continued to thoughtfully teach the Word and publish news that made a difference.*

## TIMELESS TRUTHS

*[The Brethren] always have—and always will—feel the tension of communicating timeless truths in timely ways.*

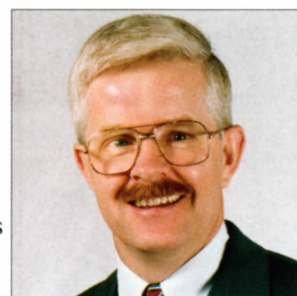
**W**hether you've been an INTEREST reader for a few years or several decades you're no doubt aware that the magazine has often been the center of controversy. Every editor, including myself, has heard cries of concern from his contemporaries over everything from worldly graphics to doctrinal drift. For some readers the magazine went too far, for others not far enough. But that's to be expected given our constituency. Think about it.

The Brethren are a people of conviction, zealous for the Lord, committed to the Book and concerned for the lost. They always have—and always will—feel the tension of communicating timeless truths in timely ways. INTEREST has served as a public forum for the ongoing debate between reverence and relevancy. Such dialogue produces sparks, and I believe more light has been generated than heat.

As we look back over the long and fruitful ministry of INTEREST magazine we should follow Paul's advice to the Philippians. "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."

Remember what was good, forgive what wasn't and thank God for all He has accomplished through INTEREST.

—Mike Hamel, former editor INTEREST Magazine, Colorado Springs, Colorado



Mike Hamel



# NO MORE INTEREST

Solomon says "There is a time for everything." Would he say this is the time to shut down INTEREST Magazine? I don't know. But Solomon was a practical chap, except where women were concerned, and he would accept the inevitable. He might say, "Whatever is has already been, and what will be has been before; and God will call the past to account."

INTEREST is not the first good Brethren periodical to shut down. My great-grandfather Donald Ross started a few magazines (e.g. *The Barley Cake*, *Our Record*). They were useful in their time, but they no longer exist and nobody misses them. *The Harvester* and *The Witness*, two excellent British periodicals that ministered to us when we lived in Angola, are no longer published. As long as they were published, they were vehicles for the superb teaching of good men and women with whom we had no other contact. Now, nobody misses them.

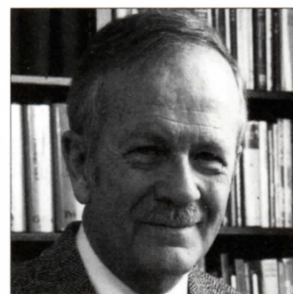
I shall remember INTEREST lovingly, especially the contact with board members. They were the excellent of the earth: Don Taylor, Wilson McCracken, Neil Glass, Bob Mojonnier, John McCallum, Walt Liefeld...I stop, lest I overlook the names of other deeply revered colleagues. There

were many others in addition to those just named, all good men and women who served God in their generation as faithfully as David served the Lord in his generation. I remember them with deepest love and respect.

I also remember Naomi Bauman. If Paul were writing a letter to America, such as the Epistle to the Romans, he would say something special about Naomi Bauman and her work at INTEREST. In the 16th chapter, he might say, "Greet Naomi who worked hard in the Lord."

There is a time for everything, but some occasions are painful. The shutting down of INTEREST is, for me, a painful event.

—Don Cole, former editor INTEREST Magazine, Bloomington, Illinois



Don Cole

*I shall remember  
INTEREST lovingly,  
especially the contact  
with board members.*

## A BAROMETER

Paul Regan

I came to know Christ while still in college. The local church I was introduced to at that time was an assembly where INTEREST Magazine was the magazine to read, and read it I did. I've been reading it ever since!

For me, the greatest attraction of the magazine has always been the sense of familiarity and fellowship it conveyed. These were articles by people I had met. The news items were about workers and ministries I prayed for and supported. And the focus of every issue was always on a family of churches I knew and respected.

Perhaps one of the magazine's greatest strengths has been its ability to change with the times. Some may have viewed that as inconsistency; I understood it as a reflection of the assemblies themselves. In many ways INTEREST Magazine has served as a barometer of the Brethren Movement in North America.

As is often the case, true value is best assessed in the light of posterity. Perhaps now we'll be able to fully appreciate the critical role that INTEREST Magazine filled.

—Paul Regan, President, Stewards Ministries, Batavia, Illinois

## FELLOWSHIP & UNITY

One of my earliest memories of an awareness of the assemblies came in my first reading of a Letters of Interest magazine. I was impressed with the brief but informative reports from those who were serving the Lord in various ways and places in North America. Over the years many have been well served by the regular dissemination of these reports. This gracious ministry has also served to encourage a spirit of fellowship and unity among the Lord's people.

The same graciousness has been seen in the transmission of funds to Christian workers. We are thankful for this ministry and praise God for those who have given their lives in serving our Lord in this practical way.

On many occasions INTEREST provided a good point of communication with the Lord's people for Emmaus Bible College. Articles written—even a poem I wrote—were published and a number of informational articles and ads placed before the wide readership of the magazine.

—Daniel H. Smith, President, Emmaus Bible College, Dubuque, Iowa



Daniel H. Smith



# INTEREST and the FUTURE

**T**he brethren movement has a mission and a future! And the long ministry of INTEREST will continue to bear fruit. I say this from the perspective of almost 50 years since my awakening to spiritual worship in a small assembly in Ozone Park, NY. I have been enriched by my association with brethren assemblies here and overseas, and especially by the ministry of INTEREST. My relationship of over 30 years with this periodical, its staff and its board has meant a life of excitement, blessing, memories and strong expectations for the future.

*If INTEREST had been a narrow denominational paper it would have had an easier job of it, but would have failed to spread "brethren principles" broadly outside our circles.*

Successive editors, Donald Taylor (whose counsel influenced the direction of my life), C. Donald Cole, James Stahr, William Conard, Mike Hamel and Kenneth Botton, as well as Bruce McNicol, have all been deeply valued friends. Involvement in the "Call to Renewal," issued when Jim Stahr was editor, was an exciting experience. We saw how God could work freshly and powerfully in spite of our own human limitations. Writing the Viewpoint column for more than a decade stimulated me to listen carefully to the real questions and needs of others and to keep searching the Scriptures with open heart and mind.

What is the heritage of the Brethren and of INTEREST?

Over the years I have seen many Christians become aware of the implications of the priesthood of all believers—the last principle of the Reformation to be actualized. Many believers have dropped denominational barriers and have embraced each other in the bonds of Christ. Many pastors have discovered that what we used to call "one man ministry" is not biblical and that the true pastor will equip others so that the whole body ministers according to their individual gifts. Christians have discovered the blessing of simply meeting to remember the Lord in the bread and wine for the sole purpose of honoring Him. In short, the principles recovered by the early brethren have permeated much of evangelical Christianity today.

God has worked in and through the brethren movement in amazing ways. In the early years of my ministry I was impressed by those like Jack Wyrzten (Word of Life), C. Stacey Woods (Inter-Varsity), Theo McCully (Christian Business Men) and Alfred E Kunz (Pocket Testament League) who were in brethren assemblies but led significant non-denominational ministries. There have been other men and women like them, through whose ministry and influence many came to appreciate our simple principles. God has worked in some unusual ways, as when Christians became more aware of the brethren presence in missions through the sacrifice of Pete Fleming, Ed McCully and

Jim Elliot among the five who died in Ecuador 40 years ago. My wife, Olive, who had been married to Pete Fleming, has often commented that the way those men came from different missions to serve God together should be a model for us in Christian work at home.

In all of the diversity and cross-pollination that has increasingly taken place, INTEREST has served to keep those in brethren ministries and brethren in other ministries linked together. It has provided a means of communication in which we learned to pray for one another, to listen to one another and to offer one another encouragement. If INTEREST had been a narrow denominational paper it would have had an easier job of it, but would have failed to spread "brethren principles" broadly outside our circles. And isn't that what the brethren were all about—broadening the circle to include all believers who love the Lord Jesus, whether or not they have the same practices? That first group in the early 1800s did not come together to establish a uniform procedure but to worship and remember the Lord together with no denominational or clerical boundaries. Perhaps we could call it "worship without walls." Maybe the true successors of the early brethren will prove to be not merely an association of churches with similar practices, but rather all those who follow the biblical principles faithfully.

Once, at a seminar in the Toronto area, I was speaking on the teaching of the early brethren. Noting that Christ alone is our center and that we are simply believers meeting in His name without drawing lines of inclusion or exclusion, I said, "If we had been true to the teachings of the early brethren, perhaps by now all believers would be one with us." In the discussion that followed a man disagreed. "No," he said, "If we had been true to the teachings of the early brethren, there wouldn't be any 'us.'"

Maybe one day there won't be any "us." If so, we should rejoice that mere reproduction of brethren assemblies has given way to broad application of brethren principles. Both the growth of vital assemblies and the adoption by many other churches of the principles we proclaim would constitute a significant future for the brethren movement and a worthy heritage of INTEREST.

Perhaps there can still be some equivalent of INTEREST, addressed to contemporary churches and individuals seeking a vital application of biblical principles in worship and service. Perhaps the Internet can be a vehicle of such communication. Perhaps desktop publishing can have a part. Perhaps God will have other means. The Lord is building His church among brethren—traditional and progressive, among churches with denominational connections and among those that are totally independent. He is building His church around the world, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.

—Walter Liefeld, commended worker, former board member INTEREST Ministries, Deerfield, Illinois



Walter Liefeld



# CHANGING TIMES



James A. Stahr

*Perhaps, therefore, it became inevitable that INTEREST Magazine would cease publication. Still, it is hard to see it go.*

Ten years ago this month I stepped down as Editor of INTEREST. I held that title for almost 15 years, second in duration only to the original editor, William G. McCartney (1934-1961). I never had the privilege of working with him. When I did see him, or when he did write, he always encouraged me. Two months before the Lord called him home, I published an article he had submitted some months before.

On one occasion, Mr. McCartney sent me a rare copy of the first issue of this magazine, July 1934. I treasure it today, both for its historical value and for the man who gave it to me. The opening words of that issue, presumably written by him, tell why the magazine came into being. Pioneer evangelists, travelling from place to place to win souls and plant assemblies, were little known to the churches whose support they needed. Some faced severe hardship because of the Great Depression. It would be the function of the new magazine to publish reports of their labors and receive gifts that could be channeled to them.

## BEGINNINGS OF CHANGE

In those days, almost all home-field workers were itinerant. By the time I became editor, a slow change was underway. New full-time workers were more inclined to settle down with a single assembly. Commendations began to come, not from assemblies sending out a worker (as in Acts 13:2-4; 15:40 and 18:27), but rather from churches that invited workers to come to them. Because such invitations implied local financial responsibility, the support base of the resident worker tended to be much narrower than that of the itinerant. He did not need to write letters to a magazine letting people know where he was and what he was doing.

Today there are relatively few itinerants. With this changing situation, the original function of INTEREST became increasingly irrelevant.

Historically, INTEREST has been a mouthpiece for the principles and practices that united assemblies. Here, too, a change was taking place that undermined the usefulness of the magazine. Distinctives had often been misused to isolate assembly people from other evangelicals, but now a reaction began to the other extreme. Some called the biblical practices "baggage" that should be cast aside. They wanted to lose any distinctive identity and be as much like the main stream of evangelicalism as possible.

## LOOKING FOR MIDDLE GROUND

Many, myself included, felt a middle ground was possible. We should emphasize our distinc-

tives, not as promoting sectarianism but as making a valuable contribution to the body of Christ. We felt that every American and Canadian community had an inherent right of access to at least one local church that followed what we perceived to be a New Testament pattern of operation.

Influencing the wider body of Christ is not the only worthy motive that can rest in the hearts of God's people. The desire for soul winning and church planting arises naturally from the Great Commission. There was a time when these two motives nested together beautifully, a time when the attractiveness of biblical principles contributed to church growth. But times have changed. Audiences today are drawn more to relational teaching than to doctrine. Preachers are known more for their counseling ministry than for expository preaching of the Word. So our different priorities polarize rather than unite us. Given a choice between church growth and church principles, some choose one and some the other.

The reverse influence of the wider body of Christ further complicates the polarization. Practices once foreign to assemblies crowd in—practices like calling one man the pastor, paying salaries or pledging support to Christian workers, and using commercial methods of fund raising.

## SERVING ALL ASSEMBLIES

Today the unity of thinking and purpose so characteristic of the past has been replaced by a destructive polarization. INTEREST could survive by aligning itself with one side or the other. In its more than 60 years of existence, it has never done this, but always sought to serve all the churches that share our common roots. Perhaps, therefore, it became inevitable that INTEREST Magazine would cease publication. Still, it is hard to see it go.

## A PERSONAL NOTE

For me, these last ten years have not been without personal difficulty, including quadruple bypass heart surgery in 1992. I turned 70 this month. Though less active than in earlier years, I continue to preach and teach the Word of God as invitations come. I am thankful to God for 42 years as a commended worker. I have never regretted my decision 54 years ago to follow Jesus Christ. Nor for another decision ten years later to go into full time service among assemblies that make New Testament principles a priority in their local church life and in their missionary endeavors. His "yoke is easy and His burden is light" (Matthew 11:30).

—James A. Stahr, former editor INTEREST Magazine, Wheaton, Illinois.



# The PLYMOUTH BRETHREN MOVEMENT

**A**s a boy in a Pennsylvania assembly many years ago, I first heard the statement, "The Plymouth Brethren are a movement, not a denomination." I had only a vague idea what the words meant, but they had a nice ring!

By the time I reached high school age, I had heard many references to the "Brethren movement." The term continued to intrigue me, particularly since I had begun trying to make sense of the curious group called "assemblies" in which I had been raised. Could the fact that they were a movement help me figure them out? I decided the answer had to be "yes." Now, many years later, I am even more convinced that seeing the Brethren as a movement is a key to understanding them.

## SECULAR MOVEMENTS

In the world around us, social or political movements arise when people feel strongly that something is wrong, and decide to correct it. Such movements have often been powerful engines of change.

Consider the "anti-slavery movement." In the United States, strong sentiment against slavery existed as far back as colonial days. It took form as a movement in the early 1800s. Half a century and a devastating civil war later, this movement successfully sponsored the thirteenth amendment to the U.S. Constitution which, in 1865, banned human slavery.

The "suffrage movement" was similarly effective. After many years of struggle, it produced our nineteenth constitutional amendment in 1920, giving women the right to vote.

Movements currently active in our society concern abortion (pro and con), environmental protection, civil rights and other issues.

## MOVEMENT CHARACTERISTICS

A current dictionary defines a movement as "a diffusely organized or heterogeneous group of people or organizations tending toward a common goal." This tangle of words, when unraveled, suggests three of the characteristics of a movement.

First, a movement has a common goal. The word "common" indicates that this goal is shared by all members. The goal is the glue that holds the organism together and the compass which guides its actions. Every activity within the movement must contribute in some way to reaching the goal. The goal also sustains the morale of members and draws others into the ranks.

Second, a movement has no central control. The phrase "diffusely organized or heterogeneous" tells us this. Unlike other organizations, a movement has no single leader or central headquarters. Actions are planned and carried out at the grass roots level. While there may be organized units

within a movement, they are not the movement itself.

Without a headquarters, there are no central files, no rules and regulations, no fussy admission requirements. Since there is no formal membership, a movement has an indefinite perimeter. Those influenced by its message may choose to be secret supporters, or to join its ranks publicly.

Third, a movement is flexible. The use of the ambiguous verb "tending," in the phrase "tending toward a common goal," suggests this quality. Since a movement is not centrally orchestrated, there is often a great deal of variation in the activities that occur from time to time and in different places. I've called this quality "flexibility." It allows those on the firing line to change tactics quickly to take advantage of new situations.

There is a fourth characteristic not covered in the definition, but inherent in the name: A movement moves! There may be stagnant periods and setbacks, but ultimately there must be progress if it is to survive as a movement.

## THE EARLY CHURCH AS A MOVEMENT

The word "movement" in the sense used here is not a biblical term, nor was it in common use in New Testament times. Nevertheless a look at the history of the early church (the one we read about in the Book of Acts and the Epistles), shows us the four movement characteristics clearly displayed.

The church had a goal. This goal had two elements: first, to fulfill Christ's Great Commission, which included preaching the Gospel, baptizing, discipling and teaching converts, and second, to be guided by principles taught by the apostles.

The church had no central human control. While Christ was the invisible head of the church, there was no earthly headquarters. Local churches were independent. They served as bases for the spread of the Gospel and centers for teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayer. The apostles, who founded the first churches, acted subsequently as advisors rather than dictators.

The church was flexible in operation. Brethren scholar F. F. Bruce, wrote, "Flexibility is an essential element of spiritual liberty."<sup>1</sup> This flexibility stood in contrast to the restrictive rules under which contemporary Jewish and pagan religions labored. Under the banner of liberty, every believer was a witness. Believers were free to preach and teach in homes, public meetings, prisons and royal courts. In the local churches which sprang up everywhere, individuals exercised their spiritual gifts. These

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brethren move-  
ment is not dead,  
dying or obsolete.*

churches were not stamped out of a single mold, but were free to adapt their practices to Jewish, Greek, Roman and other ethnic cultures as appropriate.

The church moved! Undeterred by persecution, the Christian faith spread through the Roman Empire and beyond. Its impact was such that Christians were described by their opponents as people “who have turned the world upside down!” (Acts 17:6)

#### **THE COMING OF HUMAN CONTROL**

All too soon the organizers moved in! As they established centralized control, hierarchies were created and church beliefs and practices standardized. Public ministry in each church became the province of a special class of individuals called “clergy.” In this process, movement qualities vanished. As time passed, disputes erupted, spawning church divisions. This led ultimately to the many denominations we see today.

God continued to work, often mightily, within these man-made structures; however, the clear message of the Gospel often became clouded, and in some churches disappeared completely.

Through the centuries, efforts were made by concerned Christians to return to the simple, uncluttered faith of the early church. Some of these efforts died out, others ultimately organized themselves into new denominations.

Then in the 1820s a quest for spiritual renewal produced a new group of churches in the British Isles. The group not only survived, but also escaped the organizational trap. These Christians became known as the Plymouth Brethren.

#### **ENTER THE BRETHREN**

The brethren believed that Christ’s initial design for the church could be successfully followed in all subsequent generations. In emulating this design, they, like the early church, became a movement. William Kelly, a friend of Brethren founder J. N. Darby, used this term in describing the Brethren.<sup>2</sup> In 1968, Brethren historian F. Roy Coad verified that classification when he wrote, “The characteristics of the main stream of Brethren have been those of a movement rather than those of a formal denomination.”<sup>3</sup>

The brethren movement displayed the four characteristics already described. Their goal was identical to that of the early church. They established no central headquarters; each assembly was autonomous. They were flexible in operation; their assemblies expressed New Testament principles in a way suited to their environment of the 1800s. And they moved!

They presented a strong challenge to the entrenched denominationalism around them. Their assemblies recognized no clergy/laity division, and gave the Lord’s Supper a central place in their worship. They affirmed the unity of the body of Christ by accepting individuals into assembly fellowship simply as believ-

ers. As one of the founders, J. G. Bellett, put it, “All who were known to be newborn were welcome.”<sup>4</sup> (Exceptions were those holding heretical doctrines or living immoral lives.)

John Phillips has summarized their progress in these words: “The Brethren movement took rapid root in Britain and in a number of other countries....In its early days the movement made a tremendous impact on a world tired of religious formalism....In spite of [some] tragic internal struggles, such as the spiritual force of the movement that it became the predominant Christian group in countries like Italy, Egypt and Argentina. Its teachers produced libraries of useful commentaries.”<sup>5</sup>

Incidentally, the fact that a movement usually has an indefinite perimeter was true of the Brethren. Their influence extended beyond their assemblies. One result was that other believers were encouraged to establish informal, assembly-like fellowships. Many such unlabeled groups exist today.

#### **THE BRETHREN, CURRENT EDITION**

The brethren are now a worldwide faith group. We who are members of assemblies today can claim this heritage and be thankful for it.

However, in North America at least, there is a quiet but widespread concern about the current state of our assemblies. While some congregations are flourishing, many others are not. There appears to be little or no overall numerical growth. There seems to be no question that our movement has stopped moving.

If we accept a static condition as the norm, it is likely that church practices, programs and meeting schedules will become a matter of habit, and thus set and unchangeable, even when changes are desirable. The important quality of flexibility will be lost. We may also lose our will to carry out the Great Commission and our understanding of the New Testament principles which should guide us.

#### **WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?**

There is no simple formula for reversing this trend. However, we can take a first step by beginning again to think of ourselves as a movement, rather than a group of static churches.

I believe that if we regain a “movement perspective,” we will realize that the brethren movement is not dead, dying or obsolete. Movement elements are still intact, therefore the mechanism for progress is in place. That is the good news. The bad news is that, like an out-of-tune automobile, our movement is sputtering and limping along instead of running smoothly.

With the help of God’s Spirit, we can accomplish a tune-up.

First, since progress in a movement is a grass roots thing, a tune-up must start with individual assemblies, and in each assembly, with individual believers. While the encouragement of elders and preachers in an assembly is important, they cannot do the job alone. Those with the gift of leadership in the congregation must also strike the spark, and others must join in repentance and prayer for guidance.

Second, the assembly as a whole must recommit itself to the two-part “common goal” of the early church: fulfillment of the Great Commission, and adherence to New Testament principles.

*Continued on page 29*



# A MENTOR'S GUIDE to BIBLICAL ELDERSHIP

by Alex Strauch

**F**riends of ours, elders in another church, were discussing the need to train more men for eldership. As they sought suitable material for training of potential elders, one remarked, "No one ever trained us!" This assessment could be echoed by 95 percent of all elders and deacons.

## WHY TRAIN MEN FOR ELDERSHIP?

The local church is an extended family that does God's business. Like many family-owned businesses, local churches fail to train the next generation of leaders. Church leaders are often too busy with the work of the church or lack vision for training future leaders. They have seriously under-estimated both the need and their responsibility. Like flowers in spring, leaders who are ready to bless the flock will not appear without planting or preparation.

Kenneth O. Gangel, a biblically sound expert in church management and training points out, "The key to reproducing leadership is to clearly plan for it. Church leaders," exhorts Gangel, "need to produce leaders who will reproduce leaders, precisely as it is done in the family—through experience, instruction and modeling."

## THE EXAMPLE OF PAUL AND TIMOTHY

Training men for future leadership and ministry is not a novel concept to the Christian familiar with what the Bible teaches. Our Lord Jesus spent a significant part of His public ministry preparing for the future. He patiently poured His life into twelve men, training them to be the future leaders of the church. He was a master teacher and mentor.

Like his Lord, Paul was also a discipler of men. He had his Timothy's, and He expected them to train others: "The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim 2:2). Paul expected that when Timothy departed from Ephesus he would leave in place trained, faithful men who would continue the development of future teachers and leaders.

## ELDER QUALIFICATIONS

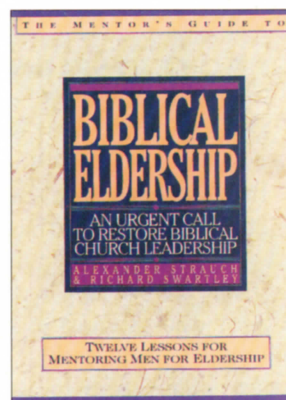
Local church elders are to be faithful men who are determined to train other faithful men. Elders must understand that the shepherding-leading task includes planning for ongoing leadership for the flock. As spiritual overseers of the congregation, elders have a special obligation to recognize, develop and establish those to whom the Spirit has given the desire to shepherd God's people.

The fact that the Spirit plants in some men the desire to shepherd does not eliminate the elders' responsibility to

prayerfully search for potential shepherd elders and to challenge, recognize, mentor and appoint such men. The Holy Spirit uses people to help others discover and develop their gifts. The Holy Spirit also requires that elders protect the church from pushy, deceived people who think they are gifted and motivated by the Spirit when in reality they are not. Such people are a detriment to the church. So, the elders must actively participate in the process of selecting, examining and training prospective elders. Whether they intend to or not, elders encourage or stifle the development of new elders.

Elder training is essential to the church's response to the great commission. Our Lord's command to go, teach and make disciples of all the nations cannot be sustained without elders. In any mission field, whether it be local or at a great distance culturally, the planting of new churches is paced by the availability of elders. The stability of those new churches and their ability to grow will be determined by the maturity of their founding elders and their training of future elders.

Alex Strauch is a commended worker, serving the Lord in Littleton, Colorado. He is the author of several books including, *Biblical Eldership*, *Agape Leadership* and *Using Your Home for Christ*.



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## ELDERSHIP TRAINING RESOURCES

*A Study Guide to Biblical Eldership* is designed primarily as a mentoring tool for training prospective new leaders. It consists of twelve lessons based on the revised and expanded edition of *Biblical Eldership*. The study guide is designed to be used by the prospective new elder under the direction of a mentoring elder.

*The Mentor's Guide to Biblical Eldership* is for the mentoring elder only. It is a leader's guide to the *Study Guide to Biblical Eldership*. Elders are busy men, and many may not have the time or adequate resources to prepare for mentoring. This guide provides them with extensive answers to all the questions in the study guide.

Both of these guides are available from Lewis and Roth Publishers, P.O. Box 569, Littleton, CO 80160. Toll free (800) 477-3239.



## EASTERN CANADA

### 33 YEARS AND STILL GOING

**N**ow in our 33rd year, we are still on the air and preaching the Gospel of our Lord Jesus. We've received news from HCJB Quito Ecuador that La Foi Vivifiante programs will be broadcast during the next six months all over Europe and Africa, reaching the largest French populations in the whole world. They will also cover North America over short waves as they have done for many years.

I have been invited by the television company that airs our TV programs on the south shore of Montreal to submit a new series for the fall. We are still waiting for approval to air our programs all through the greater Montreal area.

*Fernand and Yolande Saint Louis,  
Quebec*



**Fernand and Yolande Saint Louis**

### THE SAMARIA PRINCIPLE

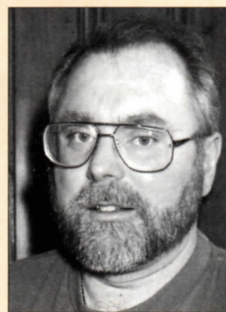
**T**he LINC program (English as a Second Language) that I manage at our church offers one class this year, but has the same enrollment as last year. My interim work at the Mississauga Chinese Christian Church continues to grow. There was a baptism at Christmas where I saw the firstfruits of this ministry.

Since December I have completed my booklet *The Samaria Principle: Reaching Newcomers to Canada*, consulted with pastors and leaders and worked on a series of regional training conferences for ethnic focus workers. I've been invited to make the book available to Ontario Theological Seminary students to use in their missions program.

Our daughter Heather leads a Christian fellowship at her high school where several kids have come to the

Lord. She is growing in her friendship with Christ.

*Brian and Sally  
Seim,  
Ontario*



**Brian Seim**

### UNITY IN CHRIST

**T**he Bible club ministry continues to grow. We presently have three active clubs and six requests for new ones in different churches in September. We are praying that I may be able to start full time so I can serve and meet the needs.

We often hear of Quebec as a dividing element in the country. It is interesting to see that the arrival of Word of Life Canada in Quebec has had a unifying effect. As this youth ministry was serving Ontario and New Brunswick, the addition of the Quebec area gave a natural boost to the ministry which is now expanding west. Clubs have already started in Winnipeg. We are united and there is no separation in Jesus Christ.

*Serge and Michele Lemee,  
Quebec*

### AMICUS MINISTRIES

**W**e are encouraged as we review what God has done since the formation of Amicus Ministries International. In May 1995 we opened administrative and counseling offices in downtown Peterborough. In September a lovely home was miraculously supplied where many have been blessed through hospitality, teaching and encouragement. More than 465 guests have crossed our threshold.

The counseling ministry continues to grow. People are being helped to honestly seek solutions to their difficult situations. We thank the Lord that He



**Claude and Marion Loney**

uses this ministry to bring encouragement to hurting people.

The summer months are approaching and some major decisions must be made. We are required to move from the Interim Retreat Centre and wonder where the Lord would have us continue. Funds are needed to complete the permanent Retreat Centre. We have volunteers and donated furnishings waiting to be utilized.

*D. Claude and Marion Loney,  
Ontario*

### FULL TIME WORKER NEEDED

**A**uburn Bible Chapel in Peterborough, Ontario, is looking for a full time worker, beginning this fall. We would welcome inquiries to Gerrit Van Essen, RR 4, Peterborough, ON K9J 6X5; Phone (705) 652-1153 or Fax (705) 742-1032

### CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

**T**his winter I had the opportunity to do some Gospel music recording and, Lord willing, everything will be complete in a few weeks. We continue with Children's Bible Clubs, Youth work and one-on-one Bible studies. We're also looking forward to our 11th summer at Aush-Bik-Koong Camp. Registrations are getting busy.

*Marlene Allyn,  
Ontario*

### TRAINING FOR LEADERSHIP

**O**ne of the highlights of the past few months has been our training school for His Mansion Ontario which included a trip to His Mansion New Hampshire. We took part in the Christian Counseling Training course taught by Rob Wynja here and then the eight days in New Hampshire were spent alongside staff and students. Our main focus was to better understand the program itself and the process of healing that God takes students through during their time here. It was wonderful to see how God uses the family unit as part of the student's healing process.

As we write, HMMO is negotiating with Horton Township regarding the township recreation centre located at the corner of our property. We're close



to having the program ready on paper and with the provision of this community center we would have the facilities necessary to provide housing for our first students.

*Dale and Melodie Shantz,  
Ontario*

## REACHING THE DOWN AND OUT

It's been a rough, draining winter at Sanctuary. A couple of our older people (30 and 42 years old) died on the streets, another came within millimetres of dying in a knife fight in a rooming house, some who we thought were beginning to really hear the good news of God's love and forgiveness have slipped back into the darkness, some of our new believers have gone through terrible struggles and children we work with are hopelessly trapped in the world of drugs and prostitution. In the downtown core of Canada's largest city, on its most famous street, the consistent evangelical witness is limited to two outposts: Yonge Street Mission's centre for street youth and Sanctuary.

Our resources are pitifully small. But we have a treasure beyond any human measurement of value. The rougher it gets and the more desperate the needs become, the more we are convinced that personal salvation through Jesus Christ is the only answer. Only the Creator can redeem His creation.

*Greg and Karen Paul,  
Ontario*

## VBS IN MARCH

The Lord gave us a good week of VBS at Scottlea Gospel Chapel, St. Catharines, Ontario, during the March break. Numbers averaged 97 and were most consistent. One girl professed faith in Christ. The theme

was "Pilgrim's Progress."

May 19-28 I will be using the model of the Tabernacle for a series of meetings at Wallenstein (ON) Bible Chapel. Presently I am preparing messages for the

Family Bible radio ministry.

Our summer is full with camp and VBS work in Ontario, New Brunswick, New Hampshire and Maine. We value prayer for us as we work with the assembly in Barrie as well as our ministry in other places.

*James and Heather Comte,  
Ontario*

## WESTERN USA

### NEW BEGINNINGS

The first and most important new beginning for us is that Amy is pregnant with our first child to be born in November. Our second new beginning is our move to a new home not far from downtown San Jose.

The ministry of DIME has also moved. It's a miracle that the machines, boxes of books and computers have been moved out of the basement and just two blocks down the street. The building is the nicest building on the block and has a reasonable price. We are amazed at how the Lord has provided.

*Pablo and Amy Dillon,  
California*

### YOUTH WORKER NEEDED

Spring Mountain Bible Church in Clackamas, Oregon, is seeking a youth worker to maintain and further develop our existing youth program. The position is full-time and will serve the leadership, pastoral and administrative needs of the Junior and Senior High School programs. If interested, write to Spring Mountain Bible Church, Youth Worker Personnel Committee, 12152 SE Mather Rd., Portland, OR 97015 or call Greg Matthews at (503) 698-2864.

### IMMANUEL MISSION

In March Ken and Helena Fleming came from Emmaus Bible College in Dubuque, Iowa, to Immanuel Mission in Teec Nos Pos, Arizona, to challenge and encourage us in an evaluation of the ministry. After sharing messages from the life of Elijah and recounting some of their own experiences, they met with us for informal discussion. Some of the questions asked were: "Why does Immanuel

Mission exist?" "What are the goals?" "How will they be accomplished?"

These helped us bring our thoughts and ideas into a central focus. A big thank you to Ken and Helena for sharing so openly of themselves and their personal experiences.

We look forward to the summer break, but many of our students have little or no Christian encouragement until school time next fall. They are often exposed to Satanic influence through ceremonies and other traditional observances. Pray for growth among those who have professed salvation.

*David and Leona Douglas,  
Arizona*

## CENTRAL USA

### FIVE MIGHTY WARRIORS

Five young men from across the country will be disciples during short term mission trips this summer. Pray that the Lord's will be done in each heart.

*Dwight Knight,  
Michigan*



**Dwight Knight**

### NEW PRESIDENT/CEO

International Teams/USA, in Prospect Heights, IL., has named a new President and CEO for this 35-year-old evangelical missions agency. Stephen Freed replaces Mark K. Dyer who becomes Associate International Director at the partnership's international office based in London, England.

International Teams is a global partnership of five national Christian organizations from Australia, Canada, the Philippines, the United Kingdom and the U.S., whose 400 staff from 15 nationalities serve in 20 countries.

Stephen Freed has traveled and worked in 92 countries. He has served as Latin American Director and Executive Vice President of Trans World Radio. He has served with Campus Crusade for Christ in the Jesus Film project and in various other ministries.



**James and Heather Comte**



## A GROWING CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Victory Christian School in St. Louis, Missouri, is growing and remaining strong. Enrollment for the 1995/96 school year was 195. If growth continues at last year's pace, we should serve over 200 students next year. In May this year the school graduated 13 seniors. We praise the Lord for His continued guidance and faithfulness.

*Steven P. Mizel, Secondary Principal,  
Missouri*

## MOVING TO ENGLAND

We are about to begin our 13th year of ministry with International Teams. Our years as missionaries in the Philippines and then on the U.S. staff have been filled with wonderful friendships, learning experiences and opportunities to make Christ known and see lives transformed.

Lord willing, this summer we move our family to London, England. Working directly with 40 leaders, I'll assist them in matching gifts and abilities on the teams with the needs of the community and country they serve in. The desire is to see them multiply their ministry and have it reproduced many times over in the lives of nationals.

*Mark and Sue Dyer,  
Illinois*



The Dyer family

## NORTHEASTERN US

### FOR HIS GLORY

During 1995 Ray began to suffer severe pain throughout his body. As the summer camp season [at Li-Lo-Li] came and went he was having problems walking. In December, after a second exploratory surgery, they found a rare bone cancer. Without treatment



Ray and Becky Blais

kept saying we gave up our spring break," said Tenish Patrick. "I don't feel like I gave up anything." The other students agreed.

*Lisa Madison,  
Iowa*

the prognosis was poor.

This began a new adventure in our walk with the Lord. At Christmas, four days after the first chemotherapy treatment, all the crippling bone pain went away and Ray was able to discontinue taking the pain killers. Tests show there is no cancer in his organs, though a lot of damage has been done and more surgery and chemotherapy may be required.

Our labor goes on administrating Camp Li-Lo-Li, working with teens in Rochester, NY, and some itinerant teaching and preaching. Numerous people have been brought our way because of this trial, giving opportunity to share the Savior's saving love and forgiveness. Thank you for your prayers.

*Ray and Becky Blais,  
New York*

## SOUTHERN US

### A BREAK TO REMEMBER

For most college students, spring break means beaches and partying. However, for 29 Emmaus Bible College students it involved raking, sewing, painting, construction work and many other miscellaneous jobs at Grace Bible Camp in St. Helena Island, South Carolina.

Grace Bible Camp has been in operation since 1952, founded by Julius Dennis and since 1992 has been directed by Ernest Singleton. At age 85, Mr. Dennis is still very active.

The students raked the five acre camp grounds, scraped and painted metal and wooden bunk beds, trimmed and roofed and installed windows in a new second story cabin and helped install a shower. Mr. Singleton hopes some of the Emmaus students will decide to come back for the summer.

"It really annoyed me when people

## ON THE RIO GRANDE

This year Rio Grande Bible Institute in Edinburg, Texas, celebrates 50 years of service training Christian leaders for Latin America. I thank God for the opportunity to serve Him in a ministry which aims to reach souls and plant churches all over the continent.

Every afternoon I talk to young people on a new radio program called Entre Amigos. It is a blessing to hear that many boys and girls in our valley listen to the program. Our goal is to encourage young people to walk with the Lord and also reach those who don't know Him yet.

*Wilson and Joy Campoverde,  
Texas*

## FOREIGN

### OPPORTUNITIES DOWN UNDER

Emmaus Bible College in Australia has two positions available, that of Principal and a lecturing position in one of the following fields: Old Testament Studies, Missiology or Christian Education. Applicants should possess post graduate theological qualifications in the relevant fields. Lecturing position commences January '97. Applications for principal close on June 30. Applications and inquiries should be marked "confidential" and addressed to The Chairman, Emmaus Bible College, P.O. Box 234, Epping, NSW 2121, Australia.

### PRINCIPAL NEEDED IN THE WEST INDIES

Midland Bible Institute in Jamaica, West Indies, needs a principal beginning in September 1996. Call or write to Dr. Joseph Wint, President, Midland Bible Institute, P.O. Box 400, May Pen, Jamaica, WI or call 809-929-0062.



## COMMENDATIONS

### FOREIGN

#### ROBERT TRIBE

**T**he elders of Plano (TX) Bible Chapel have commended Robert Tribe to the work of the Lord in Romania.

We believe the Lord has equipped and led Robert to serve Him in the ministry of evangelism and church planting. He has been a part of our fellowship for a number of years and has demonstrated faithfulness to the Lord, commitment to the local church and obedience to the Great Commission.

#### SONIA MARTINEZ

**T**he believers at Bethany Chapel Yorkdale, in Toronto, Ontario, have reaffirmed the commendation of Sonia Martinez to the work of the Lord in the Philippines. We commended her in 1987 to work with International Teams. The nature of her ministry has changed and she is no longer working through I.T.

Sonia is now ministering to people who are the products of dysfunctional and abusive homes, homosexuals and

victims of AIDS. We commend her to this field of ministry and pray that the Lord will continue to use her to His glory in the salvation of souls and the discipling of new believers.

### ADDRESSES

#### THOMAS AND LAURA EBERT

2944 N Strawberry Lane, La Porte, IN 46350-8425

#### RAY AND CAROL JONES

Box 707, Durham, ON N0G 1R0; (519) 369-2873

#### ROBERT TRIBE

764 Rostock Circle NW, Palm Bay, FL 32907

### CONFERENCES

#### CAMP LI-LO-LI

**T**here is excitement in the mountain air as summer approaches, with several great weeks of ministry planned: Family Camp, June 29-July 6 with Boyd Nicholson; Pre-Teen Weeks, July 7-27 and Teen Weeks, July 28-Aug. 10 with Dave Stiefler; Youth Camp,

Aug. 10-18 with Bill Meyers.

For more information contact Cathie Whitcomb, c/o Camp Li-Lo-Li, 8811 Sunfish Run Rd., Randolph, NY 14772; (716) 945-2747.

### WITH THE LORD

#### AGNES BOSWELL

**A** happy release for Mrs. Agnes Boswell, formerly of London, Ontario, 88, after many years of suffering with Alzheimers Disease. She went to be with the Lord she loved and served so faithfully in Portugal and then with her husband, James K. Boswell, in evangelism all over the world.

#### News of INTEREST

is looking for news.

Commended workers, correspondents and other involved Christians are encouraged to send letters and reports, conference announcements, commendations and assembly changes to:

News of INTEREST

P.O. Box 190

Wheaton, IL 60189

The Plymouth Brethren,  
*Continued from page 23*

Third, the assembly must begin functioning as part of a movement, whether or not other assemblies follow suit. This will require exercising the important quality of flexibility. Here the support of the elders is vital. The assembly must look at its own "mission field," the area where God has placed it, and decide how best to carry on an effective testimony for Christ in this environment.

Some of us as assembly members may find this process painful. While we may be comfortable with things as they are, it may be necessary to modify traditional meeting schedules, types of music and other things if we are to reach others for Christ.

In some cases, the temporary or permanent services of a full time resident worker may help. (Some of the first Brethren assemblies had resident full time workers, others did not.) However in depending on full time help we must guard against drifting into an unofficial clergy/laity relationship.

If through this process the Brethren movement in North America is again set in motion, I believe it can play a significant role in God's plan for the future. If so, to paraphrase a prayer of the Apostle Paul, we may expect that once again the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ will be glorified in us and we in Him (2 Thess 1:12). ■

I understand this article is scheduled to appear in the final issue of INTEREST. The articles and news items in INTEREST Magazine have, for many years, encouraged us and stimulated our thinking. Its support will be sorely missed.

However, the demise of this magazine can also serve to emphasize something which this article suggests: that the health and progress of our movement is not dependent on sources of encouragement, no matter how valuable. We who are members of Brethren assemblies can thank God that each of our congregations is a fully autonomous body, possessed of God-given resources. We are responsible and fully capable, under God's guidance, of charting the course for our own assembly and thus fulfilling the mission Christ has given us.

<sup>1</sup>F.F. Bruce, *In Retrospect*, 1993, Baker, Grand Rapids, MI; <sup>2</sup>William Kelly, *John Nelson Darby as I Knew Him*, 1986, Words of Truth, Belfast, Northern Ireland;

<sup>3</sup>F. Roy Coad, *A History of the Brethren Movement*, 1968, Paternoster Press, Exeter, England; <sup>4</sup>J. G. Bellett, *John Nelson Darby*, 1992, by Max S. Weremchuk, Loizeaux, Neptune, NJ; <sup>5</sup>John Phillips, *One Life*, 1995, Loizeaux, Neptune, NJ.

—Charles Coleman is a commended worker and former endorsing agent for assembly-related military chaplains. He welcomes comments on this article and the one in the May issue. Send to: Charles G. Coleman, 12123 Wilmont Turn, Bowie, MD 20715.



# DRIVEN INTO the STORM

by Carol Porter



by Carol Porter

I had driven to Lake Tahoe from my home in coastal California for a 48 hour visit with a friend. I knew winter travel in the Sierra's was risky. The trip over Donner summit at 7,000 plus feet could require tire chains. Now it was Sunday morning. While we were finishing a leisurely breakfast the Holy Spirit nudged me hard. "Get up and get out. It is time to go." Within 10 minutes I was out of the driveway and on my way home in the midst of a major rain storm with the temperature dropping fast. I was never to know the exact reason for the urgency.

I went out into the storm knowing I was driven there by God himself. The wind was blowing and the rain coming down hard. Driving demanded my entire concentration. I carefully observed other cars in the storm with me. Each was also going slower than usual. We all had our lights on. There was an eerie solemnity to the whole thing. All of us on our own individual missions. Shut away from one another, but all together. All there for a reason. It was not a day for "pleasure drives."

As I climbed Donner Summit, now shrouded in heavy fog there was the distinct sense that I was not alone. Jesus was riding co-pilot with me. I relaxed, loosening my grip on the steering wheel. My mind flashed back on an incident four years before when the Lord had so clearly shown me the reality of His presence. I had been scheduled to do an interview about the Women's

home, exhausted but knowing that God had specifically led me into and safely through that trip. What should have been 3 1/2 hours had been almost 6. The trip was a parable—of what I did not then know. I just knew the Lord had led me. That was Sunday. By Wednesday I was told I had eye cancer. My world suddenly spun out of control. A storm swirled savagely but inside the storm I found a calm center where the Holy Spirit was playing praise music on continuous cycle. By the next morning my spiritual antennae were raised, my inner ears were opened to every nuance of God's voice. Scripture jumped off the pages of my Bible and into my heart. I knew my Co-pilot was in the driver's seat. I was merely along for the ride.

The intensity of that storm was short-lived. Within a week a cancer specialist at University of San Francisco had overturned the decision of the "lower court." The eye cancer was now labeled a benign tumor. It is being watched. The storm is hovering off shore and may never make landfall again. I don't know what the future holds.

Not all storms are short and intense. Many of my friends are driving through worse storms—some are long and have no end in sight. Where is God during those storms? He is in the same place He was in mine. He is there. Only in the case of His Son Jesus did He not drive all the way through the storm. He left Jesus to finish His death-storm alone so that we would never have to complete ours isolated from our Heavenly Father.

## Woman to Woman

Ministry Manual on a Portland, Oregon, radio station. I had been told that it was to be taped. I said to myself, "Carol, that's no problem. If I make an incorrect statement they can delete it in the final broadcast." However, five minutes before I was to begin, the hostess of the show informed me that it was to be "live." I panicked and did what I always do in a panic—I visited the ladies room. Coming out several minutes later the Holy Spirit spoke so clearly He was almost audible, "Carol, this is your first live radio interview, but I have done 1,000s, don't worry." I laughed aloud at the truth of that statement. The same thought occurred on the drive home. The Holy Spirit had co-piloted many people through storms. He knows I am here. It's His job to get me safely through.

Hours later the storm abated. I arrived

Think back to one of your storms. What helped, what comforted? Second Corinthians 1 assures us that the comfort we have received is available to comfort others. As He has poured Himself into us so He will pour Himself out from us and into others. We become a living vessel. Further on in Second Corinthians Paul describes himself as a cracked vessel that has been battered by life but not fully destroyed. My battering has been for you and your battering will be for others. May God be glorified as we drive through our storms in a certain aloneness that all storms bring. May He use each of us to walk through the life-tornadoes with others.

It is my prayer for all fellow storm-travelers that you will know God's presence in ever deepening ways.



## SPIRITUALLY FLAT?

**M**any Christians struggle with a loss of spiritual vitality. Like a punctured tire, their lives have gone spiritually flat. We won't find a better standard by which to measure ourselves than Galatians 5:13-26. "The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like." Remember, Paul was writing to the churches in Galatia, not to the unchurched. A lack of the fruit of the Spirit—"love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" is not always as obvious. Does our lack of love for our fellow Christians and our lack of interest in the lost indicate our spiritual condition?

## HOW CAN WE HELP?

Restoring the spiritually flat believer requires biblical discernment. Be sensitive to God's Holy Spirit and to the individual. This approach must include love, sensitivity, gentleness, humbleness—the fruit of the Spirit!

We who seek to help others must be living honest, spiritual lives. Nothing is more convincing than the example of an authentic Spirit-filled Christian life! Pray specifically. Have you earned the right to be heard? Has a relationship of trust and respect been developed?

## ENCOURAGEMENT

What do we offer Christians who are experiencing lack of spiritual vitality? The love of Jesus Christ! Notice in the book of Ephesians, the frequency of the phrase "in Christ." Do they know who they are in Jesus Christ? Paul is writing to the "saints" at Ephesus to encourage them that they are "in Christ." Saints sometimes sin, but nevertheless, they are in Christ. All true Christians are saints and in Christ for time and eternity. Nothing will change that! Christians are like Noah and his family in the ark. When the ark was buffeted and tossed they may have fallen down in the ark but they never fell out of it. In the same manner, true Christians are in Christ for eternity.

## HONESTY

Spiritually flat individuals need to be honest with the Lord and admit to Him their true condition. The Lord knows anyway, so why do we try to hide sin, coldness of heart or whatever the situation may be? The Lord wants us to commune with Him (to converse together

intimately). Following Jacob's all night wrestle with the angel of God, he confessed his true identity, "Jacob"—"deceiver." From that day his walk was noticeably changed. He intimately experienced God! So it will be with the Christian who admits to the Lord his/her true spiritual condition.

## FORGIVENESS

Another step in the right direction is to believe God's Word. Believe Him when He says we are in Christ. Believe Him when He says we are saints (Eph 1:1); we are children of God (John 1:12); chosen of God, holy and dearly loved (Col 3:12); "fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household" (Eph 2:19). Believe Him when He says, "Your sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (never again raise against you) (Heb 8:12). "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 Jn 1:9). Our feelings may rise and fall with circumstances, but His Word remains constant. We must trust the Truth, not our circumstances or feelings.

## LOVE WITHOUT CONDEMNATION

God is actively pursuing a love relationship with each one of His own. There should be no doubt about His love for us. He settled that at Calvary and it will not change. He "does not change like shifting shadows" (James 1:17 NIV). When we accept his unconditional love, our lives will demonstrate obedience to Him. "If you love me, you will obey what I command" (Jn 14:15 NIV). When we truly love someone, we sometimes say, "Your wish is my command!" When we grasp the length, breadth and height of God's love for us we will desire to obey Him. God is love and wants His best for us. He is not waiting for us to step out of line, so He can show His wrath. God's wrath was poured out on Jesus at Calvary so that "there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom 8:1). Believe it and praise the Lord!

Let's believe His Word and develop into Christians with a sincere, warm and personal love relationship with Jesus our Saviour. This is the crux of the matter. We have allowed our relationship with our Wonderful Saviour to deteriorate to the place where we offer Him token love and allegiance. ■

# SPIRITUAL TUNE-UP TIPS: A GUIDE FOR HELPING OTHERS

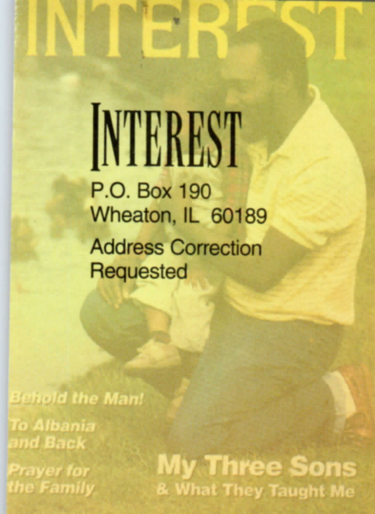


by Claude Loney

*Restoring  
spiritually flat  
believers requires  
biblical  
discernment.*

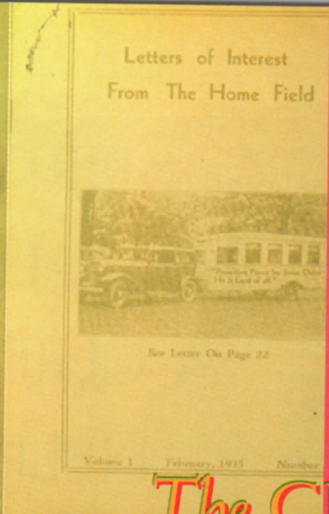
*Claude Loney is a commended worker living in Peterborough, Ontario. He is the director of Amicus Ministries, a retreat and counseling program. The Canadian Arena is produced by Vision Canada (formerly Interest Ministries Canada). It operates in Ontario as Vision Ontario.*





**INTEREST**

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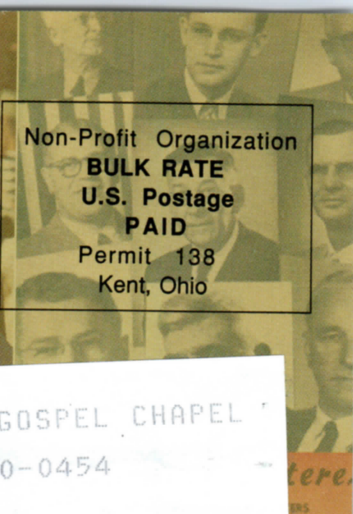
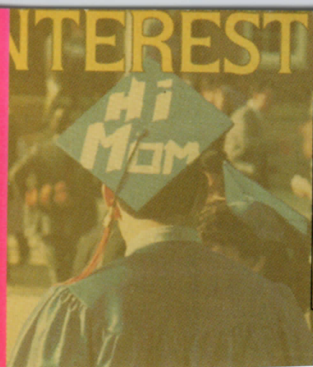


Letters of Interest  
From The Home Field



See Letter On Page 22

Volume 1 February, 1991 Number

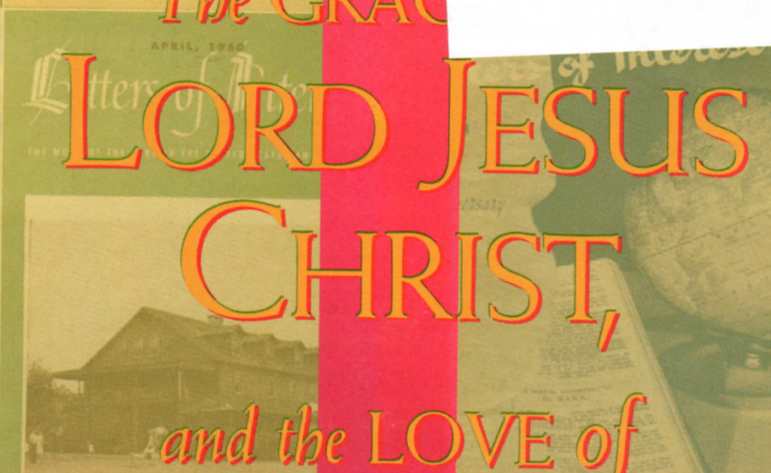


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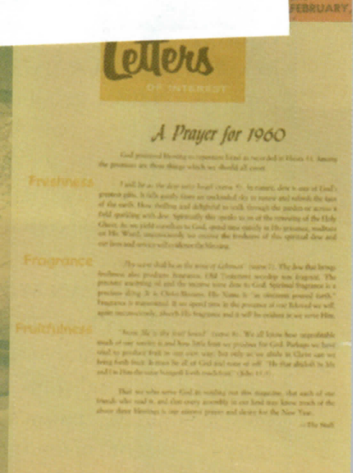
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and the LOVE of  
GOD,



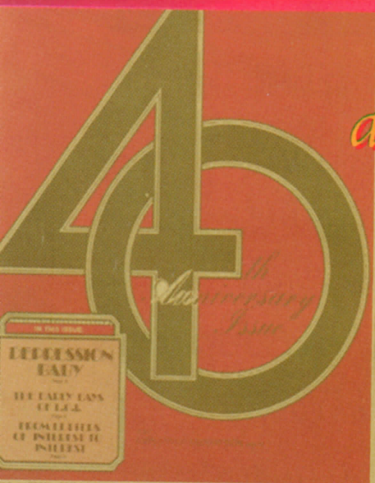
Letters  
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A Prayer for 1960

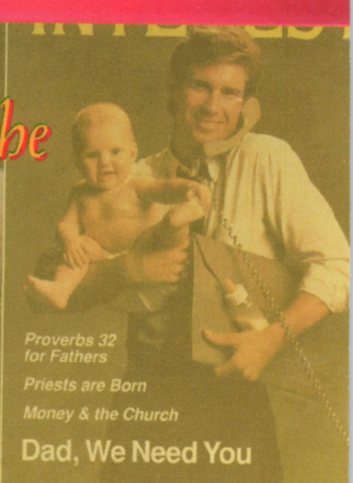
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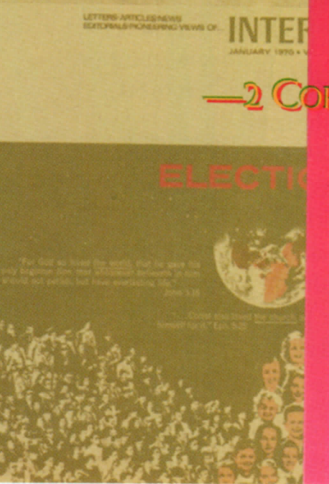
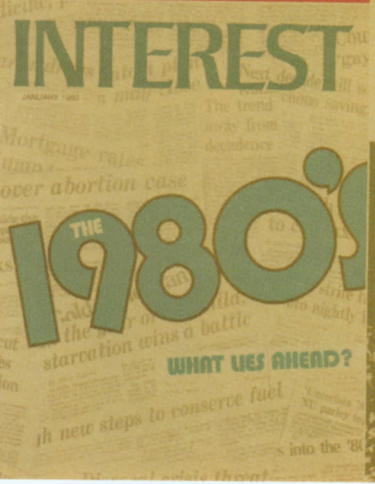
and the COMMUNION of the  
HOLY SPIRIT  
be with YOU ALL.



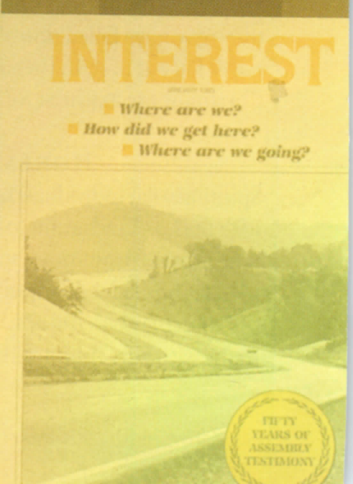
Proverbs 32  
for Fathers

Priests are Born  
Money & the Church

Dad, We Need You



—2 CORINTHIANS 13:14



**INTEREST**

Where are we?  
How did we get here?  
Where are we going?

