

DANVILLE, PA.

Feb. 6--We were to a funeral on Feb. 4, of the mother of one of our daughters-in-law. She was the wife of Russel Moyer, near Souderton, Pa. The daughter-in-law is Darlene, the wife of our second son Joe, she also contributes to the Budget.

Her death was expected, due to cancer. They had been to a clinic in New Jersey, but the disease was too far advanced, and too rapid. She was 72. Ben Eshbach, was one of the speakers, and Paul Freed was the pastor of the church where she attended.

The funeral was held at the Indian Creek Mennonite Meeting house. The same has an interesting history behind it, for it was built back in 1956, about a stones' throw from the Souderton Mennonite church. It was built by Elwood Derstine, and those who accompanied him at that time. It was built in 1879 by a group of local folks from Rock Hill and Souderton area, with 68 members at the first communion service.

In the course of time Elwood Derstine was ordained to the ministry; and things did not mesh very well, for it was at the time which is called the great awakening, which did not affect this church until about 80 years.

Mr. Derstine then claimed he and those confederate with him still held to the old confession of faith, and they ought to have the building, according to that which stands written. But what is written is subject to interpretation, and those who opposed him claimed they still held the same confession. It was taken to court, and Elwood lost the case. But undaunted he was given property by his son Lloyd and they built another building; less than a thousand feet from the old, which building is where the funeral was held.

A very beautiful building, modernly equipped, and a brick structure; holding about 300 people. Mr. Derstine and company then held services for only a few years, when most of those who originally were with him also defected, due to misunderstandings, but Elwood and at the time of his death there were 4 members left. It was also written in the annals of this building that if it should ever disband, the land shall go back to the original owners.

In the course of time, many of the folks who consorted to Elwood, were looking for a suitable location to hold services, and found one at Royersford, about 20 miles away. But when Elwood died, this closed the building for that denomination, and it so happened that the same owner that had donated the land in the first place to build the church on, still lived and the land went back to him with a nice building to boot. And he being one of those who commuted to Royersford, now had a church on his property. So the two groups who had went their separate ways because of Sunday schools and modern churchianity, at this time had the same bishop oversight; so it is only logical that they come together again, and now they meet in what is called the Indian Creek Mennonite Meeting House.

It is a member of the Eastern Pa. Mennonite Church, which began back in 1968, as a result of the Mennonite Messianic Mission,

which was born out of a concern for the young boys who were drafted for service in the Armed forces, or in lieu of that they worked at hospitals, and the M.M.M. took place to have control over these who went away from home, so they would not so easily be amalgamated into society, due to the lack of the influence of the home church.

John Renno

DANVILLE, PA.

Mar. 14--I have been visiting some of the sick and infirm. My aunt Jemima has made no change. She is from Belleville. The last time I was there she was asleep; her daughter cares for her in her home. She sometimes says she wonders why her husband does not come to see her. Her husband was Dave Renno, who has been dead for 20 years.

I visited with my uncle Emanuel Nafsinger, at the Mennonite rest home at Park City, near Lancaster. I asked him what he is doing, he says, "Just sitting here rusting away." He is 72, but is minus an arm or part of it. He also suffered some broken bones, in his legs, and arthritis has set in. He bemoans his lot in life and the time gets long for him, for he has not learned yet to submit to the inevitable.

I also visited a real old man, Aaron Esh, of Bird-In-Hand, Pa. He is 93, has been ordained to the ministry since 1924, and has just recently married the grandson of one of his early weddings. He can even read some yet without

glasses. He seems to enjoy life to the full. He is glad he has kept his baptismal vow. He said he has no bitter feelings or animosity towards anyone. But he reminisced a bit about the church split which took Tenn. John Stoltzfus to that state. This of course, happened before his time, but he is glad that his grandfather decided to stay with the conservative element, for he said "Who knows, perhaps I would have been a lawyer too, had my grandfather gone with the more liberal element." He had a saintly bearing about him.

We also visited with Titus Nolt, who has been a victim of M. S. for 10 years. He is only 59. He belongs to the team Mennonites and he is happy with his religious lot, but is going downhill rapidly physically.

The reason we were in Lancaster Co. (that is Kore Peachey, from Belleville, and I) was to attend a meeting.

There are very many plain religious folk in Lancaster Co. and very many different denominations, but in spite of all the pick and choice one could have, it does not seem to meet the needs of some people. This meeting was called for by some who sensed the great lack, and through much prayer and heart searching, set it in motion. It is currently being held in 6 consecutive weeks, on Saturday afternoons, at the Spanish Mennonite Church at New Holland.

The theme of these meetings is Recovery of the Apostolic Vision. The title suggests that this vision has been lost, and I agree, and instead of cursing the darkness, someone has lit a candle.

John Renno

DANVILLE, PA.

Apr. 18--Another one of my friends, and associates has now gone to his long home. Menno Simons Stoltzfus was a native of the Big Valley, and lived there until young manhood, then due to serious economic difficulties of his parental family, they moved to Lancaster Co. and dwelt there, with the situation somewhat alleviated. Now recently, he had another heart attack and while in the hospital, his son being with him, he saw the monitor that was registering his heart beat was getting slower, and he went for the nurse and when they came back, it had stopped altogether.

He was born in 1899, was ordained to the ministry in the Mennonite church in 1933. He served at the Millwood Menn. church (where also the funeral will be held) until recent years when the Eastern

Mennonite church withdrew from the Lancaster Conference, then he left Millwood; and at the time of his death he was a member at Simmertown. Sim's wife is still living. They had four sons, two are with the Mennonite church. Chester lives in our area, a very successful salesman.

Another one of the Sim's youth mates is still living, and he spoke about her and the family the last time I spoke to him. This was Jemima Peachey. She was married to my uncle David Renno, who died in 1952. She is still alive at this writing, but has been bedfast for some time, with weakness that goes along with old age.

I was also to see my sister Nancy, the wife of Jonas Yoder, the son of the late Bishop Noah Yoder. She is in good spirits, in spite of her condition. She has lost 70 pounds, and is but a shadow of her former self; she said she has cancer of the liver. Yes she was to some of the places where they are said to help

cancer patients, but she is somewhat like myself, if you know you are on a one-way street, and there is nothing you can do about it, just accept your portion and live with it until that is terminated. She has a hot bed outside the house where she is beginning plants for another year. She did not sit a mope about fate, she keeps busy, as long as she can go. She has a hunger for food, but cannot eat, for if she does she suffers too much pain. They have a juicer and she makes juice from things that you would normally eat, and just drinks that. This seems to work better, but nobody can live very long without solid food. She has pressure from her relatives that she should take another trip to Mexico, where they have treatments that are illegal here in the States; but she is not very much interested, since she just faces facts as they are and not as she wishes they were.

I wonder why certain treatments are illegal in America, the land that boasts of freedom of religion and freedom of speech, and the right to the pursuit of happiness, but you are not allowed certain things which were known to have aided those who took them.

John Renno

DANVILLE, PA.

Nov. 28--Some of the Fellowship church folks at McVeytown, Pa. have taken seriously the admonition to be witnesses. Some relocated to Bedford Co., about 10 families by now. I visited Henry Peight.

Also stopped at the Joe Tynal home, who hails from the Phila. area but moving to Lancaster Co. his house burned, and having received so much help from the folks at the Fellowship Church there, he decided perhaps there was something to their religion, since it produced results; he was invited to church, and came as a goodwill gesture, but was impressed by the bible teaching, and began studying for himself. Today he is quite a successful preacher.

My brother Eli from McVeytown, Pa. and I went to visit my sister Nancy. She is the wife of Jonas Yoder, the son of the late Bishop Noah Yoder, who died in 42, at the age of 51. Our sister Nancy has cancer. She is not sure where. She has been to Mexico, and she tried many of the miracle cures, but never really believed in them. She is alive and well, because she has mental balance. She does not sit around feeling sorry for herself. She does what she can. She cannot eat solid food, for it causes too much pain.

We visited with our brother Joshua, who is bishop, there for the Amish. He seems to be physically well, but the veins that carry blood to the memory part of the brain is not delivering the blood in the proper amount. He cannot remember anything, and is getting progressively worse. He did not know us nor recognize that anyone was there. He spoke to us but just as though we were around there all the time.

We visited our aunt Jemima Renno, the widow of David Renno, our uncle; she is bedfast, but was awake and claimed she knew who we were, although her mind was a bit foggy at times. She is at the Mahlon Peachey home, and cared for by her daughter Sylvia. She is Mahlon's aunt, being his father's sister.

John Renno

DANVILLE, PA.

December 19--We were to visit Norman Auker, down in Lebanon Co. He built an addition on our house back in 1971. He worked hard, not getting his rest; he's only 54. He hauled Amish sometimes starting at 2 a.m., and not getting to bed till the next morning.

He did not feel good, and his wife Maggie called the doctor, and when she described her husband's condition, the doctor said, he either has had a heart attack, or is fixing to have one, you get him to the hospital immediately. But Norm would not give up so easily. He made one more trip early, coming home at 5 a.m. Maggie got his shoes and socks on and said, "come on, you and I are going to Lancaster." They went and they put him to bed in the intensive care unit, and wired him all up to check him. By evening he got weak and his heart stopped. This showed up on the graph, and they quickly put an emergency pulsator on him and started it again. But in that time about half his heart had died for lack of blood.

He was at home again, and seemed normal, perhaps a little scared, the doctor plainly telling him they cannot help him, a by-pass would not help, for that part that is dead cannot be revived. Had he not been where he was when his heart stopped, his funeral would have been.

In this area is Clarence Zeager, the man who will not give up, he is 69, and has just had his fourth stroke. He is fully conscious, but cannot speak, and at first could swallow nothing at all, but that seems to be improving again. When you speak to him he can nod or shake his head, and he can write down what he wants to say, with large letters.

He is kept alive by a tube through his nose to his

digestive tract. He may be going home soon, but will be hard to take care of, for he cannot do anything without assistance.

His friend George Brunk from Harrisonburg, Va. was to see him, and I happened to be there, we had a very interesting discussion.

John Renno