Dr. John F. Schaefer: Compassionate Leader
by Dwight S. Busacca

This story is based on an interview Dr. Busacca and his wife Marilyn conducted with Dr. Schaefer. As mentioned in the article, Dr. Busacca is a close personal friend and former staff member of the Board of Missions under Dr. Schaefer. Additional information for this story came from an interview with Dr. Schaefer conducted by Elmer O'Brien, first director of the Center for the EUB Heritage, taped on June 11, 1981. Dr. Schaefer's son John provided the photo and additional information.

There are few persons who have given stronger leadership to the Evangelical United Brethren Church than Dr. John F. Schaefer. At the time of the merger with the Methodist Church he was the Chief Executive of the Board of Missions of the EUB Church. This body administered the work of both the National and World Mission programs of the denomination.

John Schaefer was born into a parsonage family in Washington, Illinois, in 1909. He earned his undergraduate degree from North Central College, Naperville, Illinois. Then he studied two years at the Evangelical Theological Seminary (ETS) and completed his seminary work at Garrett Biblical Institute, Chicago, Illinois. He continued his academic education at Union Theological Seminary in New York where he received his S.T.M. degree and at the University of Tübingen in Germany. His study at Tübingen coincided with the rise to power of Adolph Hitler.

After returning from Germany, Rev. Schaefer served a five-year pastorate in Mendota, Illinois, where he met his wife Marian Lang (daughter of Paul Lang an Evangelical minister). In 1940 John was assigned to First Evangelical Church (later renamed Faith Church) in Elgin, Illinois, where he served a rapidly growing parish in the heart of the city. Here he and his wife enjoyed a uniquely fruitful ministry, including the birth of three sons (John, Paul, and Mark).

In 1945, partially because of his experience living in Germany and because of his fluency in the language, Dr. Schaefer was asked to assume the major task of leading a massive relief effort to bring clothing, money, and other needed commodities to the people of Germany who had lost so much under the control of Hitler. In addition to personal human needs, there was massive destruction of church buildings, church related facilities, and family homes. John worked closely with the Church of the Brethren, also located in Elgin, Illinois, in shipping and distributing relief items to the churches in Germany. The Evangelical people and others in great need in Germany deeply appreciated this ministry of compassion and caring led by John Schaefer. Furthermore, he accomplished this humanitarian work while serving his pastorate in Elgin. In 1949 he accompanied Bishop George Epp to Europe where John witnessed firsthand some of the destruction of World War II and also received thanks from the German people.

After fifteen years at First Church in Elgin, President Harold Heininger invited Dr. Schaefer to join the faculty of ETS. As Professor of Practical Theology, John taught a variety of courses including church administration, denominational polity, social ethics, and preaching. He enjoyed his time at ETS saying they were “happy years.”

In 1959, Dr. Schaefer was invited to be the Associate General Secretary of the World Division of Missions of the EUB Church, serving under Dr. Carl Heinmiller. John and his family moved to Dayton, Ohio, to accept this appointment. Initially his area of
responsibility was Africa—Nigeria and Sierra Leone. Then in 1963 he became Executive Secretary of the Board of Missions of the EUB Church. The executive secretary was the chief executive of the Board, and as chief executive it was Dr. Schaefer’s responsibility to oversee the entire mission work of the denomination. This included mission ministries in the United States as well as mission programs around the world.

As executive secretary, Dr. Schaefer traveled frequently to witness the ministry of the church in the mission field. Soon after arriving in Dayton he and Dr. Heinmiller took a four-month tour of EUB mission work. This tour took them to Japan, the Philippines, Hong Kong, India, Europe, Africa, and London. The next year he toured the EUB work in Latin America. His willingness to visit the sites of mission activity was a great witness and was much appreciated by the EUB missionaries as well as the people to whom they ministered.

With the merger of the EUB and Methodist denominations in 1968, Dr. Schaefer became chief executive (Associate General Secretary) of the World Division of the United Methodist Church. Suddenly as John Wesley put it, “The world was his parish.” He was now responsible for mission work in scores of countries in the world. In addition he related to the National Council of Churches, the World Council of Churches, the World Methodist Council, and other ecumenical bodies. He was loved, respected, and appreciated by the many colleagues in his staff at home and overseas who worked with him.

As a staff member working under John’s supervision, I can remember a time when there were funds available to the Board. Instead of jealously trying to control these funds, he said to the staff members, “These funds are entrusted to us by the Lord. We need to ask ourselves how we feel the Lord would want us to put them to best use.”

During Dr. Schaefer’s administrative career a major change in the philosophy of mission work was taking place in the EUB and United Methodist denominations. The sending of missionaries was gradually de-emphasized and emphasis was placed on developing indigenous leadership for the churches in the areas formerly served by missionaries. If missionaries were sent it was because the churches in Africa, Asia, Latin-America, and Europe asked for them. Dr. Schaefer approved of this change and felt “privileged” to be part of this important, but controversial, change.

In 1974 following fifteen years of outstanding leadership of the mission activities of two denominations, John Schaefer retired. Shortly thereafter he and Marian decided to serve in mission in Nepal for two years. His church in Nepal (the only Protestant church in that nation) had a strong ecumenical flavor in its membership with people from many denominational backgrounds. His ministry was to government, business, and other expatriot personnel living in Nepal. When he arrived as a pastor in Nepal, the government required him to sign a paper that stated he would not intentionally evangelize the citizens of Nepal. To do so could mean imprisonment. He and his wife served the church in Nepal, preached the gospel, and remained out of prison.

After returning from Nepal, the Schaefers retired to Sarasota, Florida, where they lived until the death of Marian in 1990. Shortly thereafter Dr. Schaefer returned to Dayton where he lives today at Bethany Village.

Dr. Schaefer has not been given adequate recognition for his key leadership roles in facilitating the shipment of relief supplies to Germany in the immediate post-war years and later in his role as a key administrator in the mission efforts of the EUB and United Methodist churches. People who worked with Dr. Schaefer testify to his willingness to trust people and to give them adequate latitude to do their work while at the same time providing strong support and encouragement to them. Bishops, because of their more visible role, often gained much greater recognition than general church officers, but throughout the history of the EUB church there were many general church officers, like Dr. Schaefer, who really made the church “go” at the national and international levels.
James D. Nelson and the EUB Heritage
by Donald K. Gorrell

With the unexpected death of James D. Nelson on May 20, 2004 in Germany, where he was attending his son Timothy’s wedding, it is appropriate to recognize Jim’s longtime contributions to the preservation of the Evangelical United Brethren Heritage.

Born and Educated in the Tradition
Jim was the son and grandson of preachers of the Evangelical Church in Kansas. He received his undergraduate degree from Westmar College in Iowa and attended United Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio, where he graduated in 1959. Arthur C. Core, Professor of Church History at United, recognized Jim’s interest and love for the two German language denominations now anglicized and encouraged him to go on to graduate school. Jim enrolled at the University of Chicago Divinity School, where he received his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in church history.

At Chicago Jim’s evangelical background was expanded by studying post-Reformation Protestant Pietism in Europe and England as well as America. He became especially interested in Moravian traditions and practices and spent time among American Moravians at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and later among Moravians in Germany as well. His studies and experiences were sufficient to make him an authority on the movement, writing the article about them in the Encyclopedia Britannica. His knowledge of and interest in Pietism continued throughout his career, evidenced by his association with similarly interested James Stein and Steven O’Malley of our EUB Heritage Center Board at professional society meetings.

Teaching the Tradition
In 1963 Jim Nelson was invited to return to United Theological Seminary as Acting Librarian, which he did. Two years later he became Assistant Professor of Theology. When Arthur Core retired a few years later, Jim changed from theologian to historian, joining me in the Church History department. We were a good team, since we had varied specialties but also common interests. Both of us valued the EUB heritage as well as the Wesleyan heritage, which enabled the two of us to preserve both traditions after the 1968 union of the EUB and Methodist churches. For example, Jim taught a course on Wesleyan Doctrine, blending the theology and hymnody of John and Charles Wesley with the German Pietism of Europe and America. I taught a course on the History of the Methodist Movement that included English, German and other American influences on the merged denominations.

Preserving the Heritage
Educating seminary students to be pastors is only one of the responsibilities of preserving our EUB and Methodist heritages. There are thirteen United Methodist seminaries with denominational collections and many more colleges that have denominational collections, as well. Many Annual Conferences also have such collections, or work together to do so. There is also a General Commission on Archives and History of the United Methodist Church. In 1968 The Methodist Historical Society and the EUB Historical Society combined, and Jim Nelson and I were among its members. From 1968 to 1984 Jim served for eight years and I served twelve years, only four of the years simultaneously on the General Commission.

With church union many changes occurred. Dr. John H. Ness, a 1945 graduate of Bonebrake Seminary, who was the Director of the EUB Historical Society, became the leader of the combined UMC Commission. The historical collection of the two denominations was located at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina. Thus, the primary EUB historical collection moved from...
Dayton to Lake Junaluska. Years later the collection was transferred to a larger, better equipped new building at Drew University, Madison, New Jersey, where it is presently housed.

In light of these changes United Theological Seminary had to preserve its own EUB books, periodicals, artifacts, and manuscript sources. To assist in accomplishing this goal, UTS created the Center for the EUB Heritage with its own Advisory Board to continue the collection and to initiate other programs. One was an Oral History Project to interview EUB bishops, general church officers, seminary professors, clergy, and laity. The United Methodist General Council on Ministries awarded a $12,000 grant to this project that helped to cover the travel expenses of voluntary interviewers. Jim Nelson and I were among that group, each interviewing several persons with tapes running from 1980 to 1982. Other interviewers included Newell Wert and Fred Hill of our present Board. The project collected 89 oral interviews of unique information for our library collection. The value of such interviews was clear and when Jim chaired our EUB Center Board he created a new oral history project, focusing more on local clergy and laity than on prominent leaders. Collecting these interviews is currently underway.

In 1996 the EUB Heritage Center also sponsored a 50th Anniversary celebration of the 1946 EUB Union. It was held on the UTS campus and was well attended. Jim Nelson served on its planning committee and presented one of the seven papers, “EUB Piety and Hymnody,” which was a fitting product of his lifelong interest in Pietism and its contributions to Protestant Christianity, especially among EUBs. James Stein, Steven O’Malley, John Knecht, Mary Lou Warner, and I also presented papers at that event. The UTS Chapel was filled both days.

At the 2000 General Conference of the United Methodist Church the bicentennial of United Brethren and Evangelical beginnings in 1800 also was celebrated. Jim Nelson and Bishop Joseph Yeakel (UTS, 1952) spoke briefly to the delegates, and a twelve-minute video presentation created by the UTS staff and students for the Center for the EUB Heritage was projected on several screens.

Since the arrival of President G. Edwin Zeiders in 2000, United Theological Seminary has reviewed its total program. In this major study Jim Nelson led the group, studying the role of The Center for the EUB Heritage in the school’s future. The Center and its place in the future is secure as an integral component of UTS.

Conclusion

In April, 2003, Jim Nelson asked to be relieved of the responsibilities of Director of the Center for the EUB Heritage, although he continued to be a member of the Advisory Board. To his dying day he was an enthusiastic part of the EUB Heritage into which he had been born. His lifelong commitment and service to it have ended, but we appreciate and honor his substantial contributions. In the ongoing life of the heritage, we will miss you, Jim—friend, colleague, and man of God.

**Membership Notice**

All memberships for the EUB Center are for one year. The only exception is for life members. If you are not a life member, it is time to renew your membership. A form is printed on page 7 for your convenience. Please detach it or photocopy it and send it with your check to:

EUB Center
United Theological Seminary
1810 Harvard Boulevard
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**Editor’s Request**

Either because of a worm, a virus, or my own incompetence, several e-mail messages sent to me shortly after the publication of the last issue of the Telescope-Messenger might have been lost.

I always answer e-mail messages, so if you sent me a message (or an article) and heard no response, it was probably lost. Please resend it.
Mel Moody and the Camping Ministry
by
David and Sharron Schar and Julie Schar Lautt
with editing by Kevin Witt

Rev. Melvin Moody is well known because of his camping ministry in the EUB and the United Methodist denominations. On May 31, 2004, Camp Wanake in the East Ohio Conference recognized the work of Melvin Moody for his Christian witness primarily in the field of Christian camping. Part of the article below was published earlier this year in W.A.N.A.K.E., a publication of Camp Wanake.

Melvin A. Moody was born January 28, 1914, in the town of Phalanx, in northeast Ohio, to Erwin and Alberta Moody. With his brothers, Floyd and Carl, and sister Elva, he grew up in his father's general store in Phalanx where everything was sold from plows and farm machinery to groceries to women's dresses. Mel had many positive memories of a childhood in rural Ohio. He often spoke of the flour mill located next door that was powered by a water wheel on Eagle Creek. When he was in seventh grade, the family moved to Westerville, Ohio, to be near the United Brethren Church's Otterbein College where Mel and his siblings could get a college education.

Mel graduated from high school in 1932 and went to Otterbein College where he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1936. While in college he met Sally Roby, his wife-to-be, and they were married in 1937. Mel went from college to Bonebrake Seminary (now United Theological Seminary) where he graduated in the class of 1939.

In his autobiography, Camping Is My Life, on pages 5 and 6 Mel writes: “When I was a student at Otterbein College, I applied for the camp counselor job at the Dayton YMCA Camp Kern and was hired as a cabin counselor and a campfire director. I got my Sunday School teacher (who also worked at the camp) to lead the campfire music and I told the campers Indian stories. I had a good summer experience, and when I went to Dayton for my theological training I got a job at the YMCA because of my camp experience. I only did that a short time when the new minister of the Euclid Avenue United Brethren Church asked me to be the Youth Minister. I took the church job with a small salary. The old Christian Endeavor movement had died out. I got a few of the older youth together to see what we could do. We decided to form a “Youth Fellowship.”

This was before the denomination had a Youth Fellowship [organization]. We decided to serve refreshments each Sunday after the YF meeting. The strong fellowship we developed soon had a number of youth, both junior and senior high members, coming to the meetings.”

Mel Moody knew how to inspire people through visionary approaches to ministry and a keen interest in supporting emerging leaders. Mel was the first full-time staff person for Christian Education and Camping in the EUB denomination that merged with the Methodist Church in 1968 to become the United Methodist Church. Mel then accepted the responsibility of supporting the newly formed faith communion as the first national staff person for UM Camp and Retreat Ministry from 1970-1981. Here in the East Ohio Conference we also celebrate Mel's ministry. As an ordained elder, Mel founded a new mission church in Fairview Park near Cleveland (with eleven members in three families), now Fairview Park UM Church and led the founding of Camp Wanake.

Mel had a vibrant sense of humor and a deep faith, illustrated by this first-hand account of his earliest camping experience. “A high school junior taught my Sunday School class. He and I became good friends. He took us boys on an overnight camping trip. We camped on a farmer's land along a river. We didn’t ask the farmer if we could be there, so it was kind of scary. We put up a small pup tent to sleep under and made a fire and cooked some food. When we went to bed I hated to leave that fire. It seemed so lonely in that tent. I didn’t know what might happen along that creek. I decided all that I could do was to trust in God. So I prayed. It was a real religious experience. I never felt like that before.” A shaky beginning developed into the theme of Dr. Moody's life and career, even to the point of titling his memoirs Camping Is My Life.
Mel’s work with Camp Wanake began in 1946 when he and his family moved to Beach City. In that year he started developing Camp Wanake, a camp that would become nationally recognized as a model for church camping. In 1951 Mel, Sally, and their two daughters moved from Beach City to the “Big White House” on site at Wanake. Each summer the camp cooks lived with the Moody’s and camp staff gathered often to talk camping, to watch television, to visit, and to relax. Mel attended national training camps in the 1950s directed by Dr. L. B. Sharp, who was hired by the National Council of Christian Churches to help church camps learn about “small group decentralized camping.” Until this time church camping was “assembly” or large group “centralized” camping. Mel pioneered small group decentralized church camping in the EUB Church because this model proved so effective in teaching Christian relationships and lifestyles, while providing excellent opportunities for evangelistic outreach.

Robert “Bing” Crosby (Mel’s first paid summer staff counselor and music director) in turn carried this small group philosophy to the Methodist Church as Detroit Conference Camping Director and later as National Camping Director of the Methodist Church in Nashville.

A few highlights from Mel Moody’s many contributions to the EUB denomination:

- Served as Director of Christian Education for the East Ohio Conference, 1946-1970
- Provided leadership in the development of Camp Wanake
- Helped launch the “small group-decentralized camping” model
- Chaired the Outdoor Committee of the National Council of Churches and the Religiously Affiliated Council of the American Camping Association
- Pioneered the move from camp “caretakers” to skilled directors combining responsibilities for operational management with faith formation and programming
- Taught courses at UTS on Camp and Retreat ministries

Otterbein College also recognized Mel’s dedication and achievement on two separate occasions when he was awarded a Doctor of Divinity degree and a Distinguished Service Award.

Mel retired from the Board of Discipleship in 1981 and he (and Sally) traveled the country in an Airstream trailer serving as a chaplain at National parks. They moved from Nashville to Fort Myers, Florida, where they joined Grace UM Church in Cape Coral. Mel quickly developed a close relationship with the pastor and became Minister of Evangelism in charge of greeting and nurturing new members. Over 1,000 new members were added to this congregation in Mel’s tenure.

Melvin Moody cherished the simple opportunity to be a friend and mentor to others who wanted to make a difference by helping people grow closer to God and experience a community of love. He believed camp and retreat gatherings were a wonderful way to help fulfill that need for many youth and adults, but only if capable leaders could be equipped to provide the experiences. We will never know how many women and men were encouraged and supported by him on a personal and professional level as they entered and continued to grow as leaders in the East Ohio Conference and as camp and retreat leaders across the country. He was a strong advocate for scholarship funds to provide training for potential leaders who could not afford it. His life is a reminder that none of us become effective leaders on our own.

The last move for Mel and Sally was to Shell Point Retirement Village. Sally died on August 22, 1992. Later in the same year Mel suffered a stroke, putting an end to his favorite retirement activity—playing a mean game of tennis. Determined not to be idle, he took up watercolor painting, completing over fifty paintings. In December 2002 he was able to play a game of shuffleboard with his daughters and former camp staff. A camper to the end, Mel entertained friends and family with a rousing rendition of the campfire favorite “Lion Hunt” as part of his 89th birthday celebration. A month later in February, 2003, he died. His memorial service drew folks together for a celebration of Jesus’ love, an embrace with God, and the joy of an anticipated heavenly “camp reunion” with his wife Sally.

United Methodists and former EUBs, owe Mel an immense debt of gratitude for his foresight and consummate collaboration that forged a strong future for Camp and Retreat Ministries. His life-long dedication and his Christian love are an example of what it means to be “One in the Spirit” as a leader in the Body of Christ.
More on Bishop Heininger

As a result of the article on Bishop Heininger, two people sent me further recollections of him. I hope you will enjoy them as an addition to the article. One response appears below and the second response appears as the Anecdotage section on the back cover.

I want to share with you two experiences I had with Bishop Heininger when he presided over the European Annual Conferences of the EUB Church in 1960. I had the honor to act as his interpreter in the German South, the West Berlin, and the Swiss Annual Conferences. Bishop Heininger understood German; he was, however, reluctant to speak it.

Many of us wondered how a Bishop from America, completely unfamiliar with persons and their backgrounds, could, beyond guiding conference business, sensibly decide on personnel questions. Yet the Bishop proved his sensitivity and abilities. During the session of one of those Conferences, he discussed pastoral assignments with the Cabinet. I had the privilege for the first time in my life to be present at such a “secret” meeting as a “simple” pastor. At one point in the deliberations Bishop Heininger sensed somehow that the Superintendents had a problem with one particular assignment. He postponed the decision and then told me: “I should like to sit next to pastor ‘X’ during coffee time.” And so it “happened” that the Bishop did talk informally with the pastor concerned. Afterwards in the Cabinet, the Bishop decided differently on the assignment from what the Superintendents had proposed (and the assignment turned out well!).

Toward the end of a session of the Swiss Annual Conference, prior to announcing the list of pastoral assignments, I coached Bishop Heininger on the pronunciation of the names of the pastors and their fields of work. Time was running short, and about half way down the list we had to stop and go into the Conference. Bishop Heininger started reading the list of appointments. Then, exactly at the point where we had to interrupt the pronunciation exercise, he—the perfectionists that he was—stopped reading, pushed the list into my hands for me to read the remainder of the list!

Hermann L. Sticher, Bishop (retired)

Authors of This Issue

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David and Sharron Schar a retired UM clergy couple living in Florida. Julie Schar is their daughter and is the director of Camp Wannake.

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Anecdote

One time we were gathered in the classroom between Dr. Heininger’s office and the chapel waiting for his Systematic Theology class to start. He was late as sometimes happened as he finished his pressing presidential duties. When he walked into the room the conversations quieted only partially. After he opened his folder, he looked at the class and in his booming voice said, “Gentlemen, could I have your attention? I have a few pearls to caste.”

One of my classmates, who was always tardy in paying his bills, was assigned the pastorate of a small church some distance from Naperville. He did not have decent transportation, so he bought a new Pontiac. Shortly thereafter he parked it in front of the Seminary building where President Heininger could not avoid seeing it because his office faced in that direction. Clyde came up the front steps and President Heininger met him at the door. What was coming had to be good, so a few of us stopped in the foyer. We knew Dr. Heininger was upset for when he was aroused, his neck reddened. The two stepped into Dr. Heininger’s office and the door was not closed entirely. “Clyde, I see you have a new car.” Clyde responded, “Dr. Heininger, that isn’t my car, that’s the Lord’s car.” We imagined that Dr. Heininger’s neck was bright red at this point knowing that Clyde had bills both to the Seminary and to the bookstore. “Clyde, if the Lord could ride into Jerusalem on the back of the foal of an ass, you could ride to seminary in a used Plymouth!” The car went back to the dealer. Dr. Heininger also made a telephone call to see that “one of his boys” was not oversold again.

Paul Weinert