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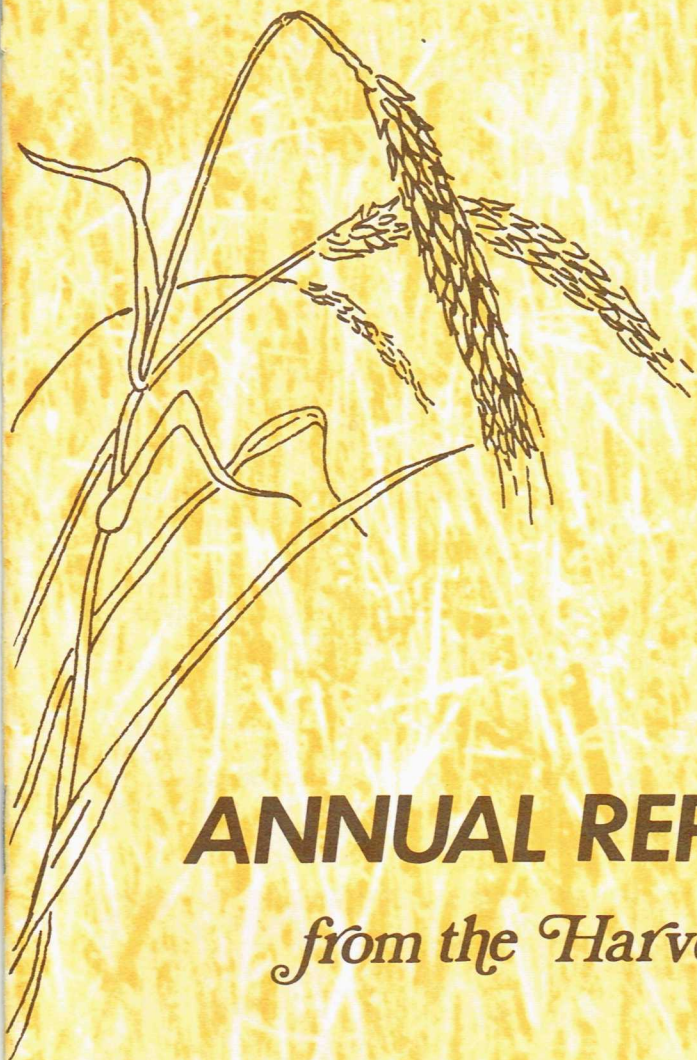
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MAY / JUNE 1976

therefore



ANNUAL REPORTS

from the Harvest Field



ANNUAL REPORTS

from the Harvest Field

When the disciples returned from their assignments they reported on their experiences. This became the occasion for evaluation and further teaching by the Master.

Reports on the work of the Brethren in Christ overseas are an interesting reflection on the variety and style of harvest fields.

Where wheat is the crop and the seed is planted in the fall, combines can work in May. But in the far north, where the seeding is done in the spring, the combines operate in September--and until snow flies. In Iowa, it's the corn harvesters which are busy after the first frosts.

But overseas there are other patterns of seed-time and harvest. Some places Easter doesn't come in the spring. There they speak of "the rains" and "plowing." The crops are different. In the larger cities of Japan life revolves more around the "company" than around the field.

An important value of a report is in what it does to the reporter. It can help the writer to evaluate the church's efforts. But for those who share in responsibility for and concern for missions, reports are also instructive. It is the nature of the church that everyone in it is concerned with the harvest field.

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Box 149, Elizabethtown, PA.

therefore

MAY / JUNE 1976

Volume IV, Number 3

In the young fields reports are usually written by the missionary. The "we" in such reports often refer to the missionary.

Sometimes it is appropriate to report and reflect on what others are doing and saying. This is one way to sharpen the perspective and enlarge the vision.

In fields where the missionary has left, reports naturally reflect on that. It is an opportunity to speak across the world to those who are still supporting but no longer physically present to manage.

The New Testament epistles illustrate this feature of reporting. There was an important body of "un-canonized" writing addressed to Paul, Peter, James, John and Jude. They were the periodic reports upon which the Apostles based their pastoral letters. This interchange of writing was an indispensable part of the development of the early church and helped to mold its character and fashion its witness.

Reports deal with what appears to be important. The life of the present-day Rhodesian church is reflected in its meetings, its new churches, and the "death of saints." It is significant that those who are carrying major concerns for the church's ministries are both young and old. ...A mother brings messages on tithing; ... a young couple pastors a church in the heart of Mashonaland; ... a retired overseer, recently widowed, teaches at Ekuphelini Bible Institute.

We don't always distinguish the truth from the illustration. In the nature of crops and harvests, there are so many different kinds of fruits and grains that there is always seeding going on and always harvesting being done. This is a profound truth which the Lord would have us understand. The missionary efforts of the Brethren in Christ are only slightly profiled in this, and the last issues of *therefore*. It is obvious that the fields are "white already to harvest" (John 4:35).

*As long as earth lasts,
sowing and reaping,
cold and heat,
summer and winter,
day and night
shall cease no more.*

(Genesis 8:22)





NIC

1975 was a very exciting year to be involved in the Brethren in Christ Mission and Churches in Nicaragua, as gigantic steps toward national church leadership developed and many persons were won to the Lord through persistent effort and prayer.

As the year began we encouraged and aided the national pastors to fulfill a more complete role as leader of their individual churches. With the aid of extension seminary courses and church leader seminars we assisted their growth and sought to answer relative problems as they worked with church boards and other leaders to establish unified, outgoing evangelistically-minded congregations. Our efforts in this field were incomplete, however, and one goal for 1976 is to have more and a better quality workshop and seminar so we can better serve our Nicaraguan brethren.

In 1975 three new churches sprang up as the Lord led and national men and women rose to fulfill the need. Our policy of using international staff to open new works was rethought. We began using Nicaraguans for this task with the missionaries being used as resource persons, cooperating with the nationals in whatever form they needed us. Working in this way we are trying to arrest the problems that arise when we as missionaries start the work and then later turn the work over to a national pastor.

During the year we cooperated with other evangelical churches in a national evangelistic crusade. It was of significant help to the evangelical community to cooperate in such a way and to see such large gatherings of those of like faith. The harvest was bountiful and we of the Brethren in Christ saw over 25 accept Christ from our various congregations.

1975 saw the development of four Social Welfare Committees, composed of community and church leaders, with the purpose of looking at the needs of the communities from the vantage point of being inside the community and thus striving to develop a self-help program that will meet some of these needs. Each committee has been sending

NICARAGUA

all or part of its members to CEPAD—sponsored training programs. Several of the committees plan to start working on their community needs in the new year.

During the closing quarter of the year illnesses were very prevalent amongst the missionary staff. We do thank the Lord for His guidance and direction during those many weeks. As the remaining staff couldn't keep all programs progressing, more and more work was turned over to our Nicaraguan brethren. It was very rewarding to watch as they rose to the occasion and are presently continuing to labor, even though we're at full staff.

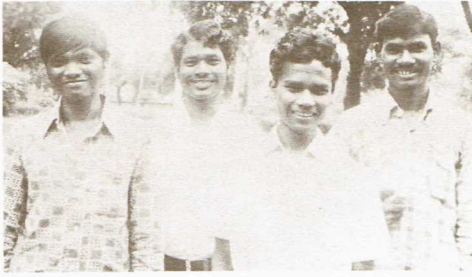
As 1976 begins, we look forward to a very exciting year in the Lord's work here in Nicaragua. The churches are already planning for our first annual General Camp Meeting from Feb. 13th-15th and we are anticipating a tremendous outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon our entire brotherhood.

We anticipate beginning two new daughter churches in 1976. Two of the more established churches (Esquipulas and Ticuantepe) are looking forward to starting new works and our prayers go out to them as they seek the Lord's will in this. As more and more works are started we must continually trust the Lord to give us new leaders and pastors to work the new communities for Him.

The progress during 1975 was steady and we were thrilled so many times to watch ones we had prayed for over many months who finally accepted Christ as Lord. Most of our progress came near the end of the year but there were nearly 40 who entered the waters of baptism and then later accepted church membership.

Lead us, therefore, O Lord our God, in 1976, to harvest as You give us increase and to follow where You would lead us, so that the church we build would be Thine and Thine alone.

BERT SIDER, Superintendent



(From left) Jiwan Kujur, Samuel Hembrom, Amos Kujur, Moses Marandi—students from North Bihar studying at Allahabad Bible Seminary in India.

North Bihar

The year 1975, for the first time in the annals of the Brethren in Christ Church in India, saw no missionary personnel involved in the church work here. We very much felt their need and cooperation in the various aspects of our church life and activities. We are very thankful to our missionary brethren who laboured with us in the Indian Church. We are grateful to our overseas churches in the United States and Canada for their prayer support and the financial assistance for the enhancement of the Lord's work in our country.

We are very thankful to God for prospering the church work. This could be seen in the fact that a number of new members were added in the Banmankhi and Purnea areas. Sunday church services, Sunday schools, Wednesday prayer meetings, young people's meetings were held regularly. Attendance in these meetings showed increase. Leadership Training Course and Bible School were held to equip the Santal and Uraon leaders with the Word of God to help out in the church services held in various centres.

Preaching tours and evangelistic camps were arranged from time to time in Banmankhi, Purnea and Baljora regions for the sake of spreading the gospel messages to those who have no knowledge of our Lord. Special spiritual meetings were conducted for the revival in the church people's lives.

The two hostels in Barjora and Purnea and the Barjora school functioned effectively with the financial aid received under "SPIC." Financial assistance was also given to the first and second division church students wishing to study in the high schools and colleges. Older girls and boys were offered opportunities to attend Homemaker's and Adult Literacy courses in Banmankhi. Literature Centre and Day School in Saharsa rendered effective ministry in the locality.

With all these good things Satan was not also less active. He tried to hinder the cause of Christ by causing the spirit of strife, conflict and discouragements; yet, on the whole, the Lord kept us victorious.

This year has been a year of many blessings and varied experience. The Holy Spirit taught us to be more dependent on God. Our Lord's adequacy and power were manifested in many places in times of difficulty and problems.

HEM K. PAUL, Secretary

The 1976 General Church Council was held at Barjora on March 18, with 72 delegates attending. Luke Murmu was elected for a two-year term as church secretary, while Hem Paul succeeds Patras Hembrone as moderator for the next two years.



*Retired
Missionary
Fund*

*Women's Missionary Prayer Circle
1976-78 Project*

Retired Missio

A generation of Brethren in Christ missionaries plans were well-developed in the brotherhood. among us. Not all of them have acute needs. E are relatively unnoticed by the church at large

Q. WHO SHOULD RESPOND TO THIS NEED?

A. General Conference has identified the local congregations, the Board of Benevolence and the Board for Missions as having a measure of responsibility. Helping to care for the needs of these retired missionaries is a church concern.

Q. HOW CAN WE RESPOND?

A. During the 1976-78 biennium, the Women's Missionary Prayer Circle is providing leadership in creating a special RETIRED MISSIONARY FUND, which will be made available to help in special needs not presently being met.

Q. HOW WILL THE FUND BE ADMINISTERED?

A. WMPC is an auxiliary of the Board for Missions. The mission board will be seeking the guidance of the Board of Administration as to the proper management of the RETIRED MISSIONARY FUND.

MISSIONARIES

60 Years & Older

Born between 1885 and 1900:—
18 MISSIONARIES—
Born between 1901 and 1905:—
14 MISSIONARIES—
Born between 1906 and 1910:—
17 MISSIONARIES—
Born between 1911 and 1915:—
21 MISSIONARIES—

Missionary Fund

missionaries ended their missions career before pension
period. These retired missionaries are now living
in various parts of the world. But some of them bear financial burdens which
are quite large.

Q. WHO WILL BENEFIT FROM THIS FUND?

A. As of the end of 1975, there were living among
us 70 missionaries who were born between 1885 and
1915. Of this number, 9 are still in active ser-
vice under the Board for Missions. Others are
active in various ministries of service across
the church. Because of their age, they are not
covered by the church's Pension Plan.

The RETIRED MISSIONARY FUND will be used to give
assistance to those retired missionaries having
special needs. The amount and extent of assist-
ance will be dependent upon the brotherhood
response to the RETIRED MISSIONARY FUND.

*The 1976-78 Biennium will be the period in which
WMPC's sponsorship will create this much-needed fund.
The denominational WMPC committee will be contacting
the local circles concerning details of the project.*

1975: 7 men and 11 women
1974: 4 men and 10 women
1973: 3 men and 14 women
1972: 5 men and 16 women

TOTAL:

70 Missionaries,
1,402 Years of Service

Women's Missionary Prayer Circle

*helping to "make things happen" on
Brethren in Christ mission fields.*

Projects have been an important part of the WMPC's ministries from its beginnings in 1946. The last ten projects demonstrate WMPC's record of being at the "cutting edge" of missions.

- 1965—WANEZI BIBLE INSTITUTE (Rhodesia)
*assisting the relocation of the Bible
School to Mtshabezi (E.B.I.)*
- 1966—PURNEA MISSIONARY RESIDENCE (India)
*placing missionaries where the church
was growing*
- 1967—NAVAJO CHAPEL (USA)
*assisting Navajos to build their
church*
- 1968—MTSHABEZI HOSPITAL DEVELOPMENT (Rhodesia)
*assisting in development of staff
housing*
- 1969—MISSIONARY RESIDENCE (Japan)
*residence for missionary in a new
location—Yamaguchi Prefecture*
- 1970—MISSIONARY RESIDENCE & CHURCH (Nicaragua)
*providing housing for the second
missionary couple*
- 1971—CHURCH IN LUSAKA (Zambia) and
VISIT OF AFRICAN WOMEN TO AMERICA
*helping a young church enlarge its
vision*
- 1972—GRANTHAM MISSIONARY HOME (USA)
making major renovations possible
- 1973-74—CAMP BROOKHAVEN (USA)
*assisting in the relocation to
Spring Lake Retreat*
- 1974-76—MONTREAL LAKE CHILDREN'S HOME (Canada)
assisting in development of the home

Brethren in Christ mission work is centered in two principal areas in Japan—the urban center of Tokyo and the more rural province of Yamaguchi.

JAPAN

TOKYO

John Graybill notes that one of the goals for 1975 was met when a new church witness was started May 18 in Kodaira, where they live. "A small group of believers and seekers have continued to meet with Mr. Hashimoto, the one mainly in charge. The Sunday School continues with an attendance of 35-50 children each week, showing signs of more growth.

"David Nagashima is the dear brother in charge of the Koku-bunji witness (the city west of Koganei), which meets in his home several times a week. The first Tuesday of the month is the ladies' cooking class; every Saturday afternoon there are Bible classes for all ages, from kindergarten to adults.

"Still further west of us is the big city of Tachikawa, where the Suzuki family is living and witnessing for the Lord. Several years ago they began a Thursday night meeting in their home. This September they started a Sunday School on Saturday afternoon with about 10-20 children attending weekly. In addition, they had a three-night special evangelism meeting on the road outside their house in July, with an attendance of between 26-45

attending each night, plus children. Mr. Suzuki has felt the call of the Lord to evangelism and quit his job so he can devote more time to study and preparation. He does retain his part-time job of making temporary cloth signs for along the road.

"Yokohama has seen the opening of a Christian witness this spring when the Oda family moved to that part of the city and soon had a Bible class begun on Thursdays. They also hope to begin a children's meeting sometime in the future.

"During the month of October we very 'lively' celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Koganei church. But perhaps the one most outstanding event this year here has been the formation of a men's fellowship which has two basic goals:

1. To create a spirit of fellowship, prayer and support among the Christian brethren, always trying to be of mutual encouragement to each other.
2. To try and witness to the 16-18 husbands of wives who come to our church but the husbands don't, and to lead them to faith in Jesus Christ."

(Continued on Page 8)

YAMAGUCHI

Marlin Zook writes of the demand placed on various church leaders and members by their secular jobs. Citing Hagi as an example, he notes:

"Mr. Okano has been promoted and now has a very responsible job teaching new personnel and evaluating efficiency within the bank. This keeps him at work until late at night. Mr. Igeta has his own business but is kept very busy. Mr. Shibati told me the other night, 'I have become too important to my company. Since the other person left, I am still more important.' He feels the only way to break this spiral of company involvement is to get out completely, and is wondering if he should give full time to the church."

Of Nagato, Marlin says, "I enjoy preaching at this church ...what is said is passed on to those who could not attend. There is sharing among the members as to the actual living of the Christian life, of putting into practice what has been taught."

Shimoneseiki "is the liveliest church when considered from the point of view of activities. The church building is used almost daily, sometimes having more than one meeting a day. Mr. Tojo, the leader, says 'Last year we built a church building; this year we must build the Church.' 1975 has seen great advances toward that goal. Six persons were baptized at Easter and there is the possibility of one or two more at Christmas."

Continuing to discuss Shimoneseiki, Marlin confesses, "It is somewhat difficult for me to



Tojo san: "Last year we built a church building; this year we must build the Church."

see how this church operates as well as it does without organization. There are no committees, no church board, and yet the church works together as one. Each person takes responsibility and so all works well together. I think that this church comes very close to the ideals that the mission had envisioned for a 'lay church.'"

The Brethren in Christ Fellowship in Yamaguchi was formed in 1971. "The leaders from the churches continue to meet the third Sunday of each month for business and fellowship. Usually there is an item of business but most of the time is spent in sharing and encouraging each other in evangelism. I praise God for each leader. The talents of each are so different but all are needed to make the church complete."

Reports from the church in Zambia had not been received at the time of this printing.

RHODESIA

The church in Rhodesia reports its activities and concerns through a number of channels. The reports were once mostly missionary reports. Now we can read with interest expressions of church concerns as seen through the eyes of Rhodesian leaders. In the absence from the church of Bishop P.M. Kumalo (studying at the School of World Mission, Pasadena, Calif.), Rev. S.N. Ndlovu writes under a number of headings. We excerpt a few:

DISTRICT MEETINGS: The four districts of the church held baptismal and council meetings successfully again this year. Travel difficulties did not greatly affect the attendance at these meetings. The meetings were a time of spiritual fellowship and the communion of saints. 283 joined the church. We are still praying for the restoration of men in the church. T.E.E. as a means of helping pastors is not meeting favourable response from the pastors for whom it is sponsored. We continue to pray for God's revelation in this area of the ministry.

NEW CHURCHES DEDICATED: The following church buildings were completed and dedicated during the course of the year: Salisbury church, Gwanda church, Dewe church, Silikwe II church and Lumene church. Rev. Elias Moyo, the first licensed minister, was appointed pastor for the Salisbury church. This church is an outstanding outreach of the Brethren in Christ church work in Mashonaland. Rev. and Mrs. Moyo have a great responsibility as they are so far away from the rest of our churches in the country as pioneers for Christ in the great city.

DEATH OF SAINTS: The death of Sibongile Moyo, daughter of Rev. and the late Mrs. Mangisi Sibandi, came at the time she was just beginning to revive the church through her messages on tithing. The worst blow to the church came when in a matter of weeks her mother, Mrs. Hannah Sibanda, left us to join her daughter before the Lord. While she worked with her husband, Mrs. Sibanda was a valuable, resourceful mother in the work of the Lord. She helped in developing and promoting women's meetings in the church as a whole. Both Sibongile and her mother died in the month of November. Sibongile died on the 6th and is survived by three children and her husband Enos Moyo. Mrs. Sibanda followed her daughter on the 27th and is survived by three sons, four girls and her husband Rev. M. Sibanda who is presently teaching at E.B.I.

A comparison of the 1975 church membership with the 1973 figures (appearing on p. 208 of the '74 General Conference Minutes) shows a 9.1% increase over the two-year period. The number of preaching appointments increased from 159 to 166. The Sunday School attendance has increased significantly over the two-year period, from an average of 5,294 to 7,335. The training of church workers continues under the Theological Education by Extension (TEE) programs. There

(continued on page 10)

RHODESIA, . . .

are now 9 centers in which 79 are enrolled compared to 7 centers with 63 enrolled, according to the report two years ago.

The work of the Ekuphileni Bible Institute is seen as of major significance in the development of the church. A statement regarding an evaluation of EBI is quoted:

Probably the most outstanding event of 1975 was the Daystar analysis of the Bible Institute. After about a year's study and research they presented their report to the Executive Board. The Theological College Administrative Committee is working jointly with the Executive Board to plan for an increasing service at the Bible Institute. Special concern is focused on the leadership training programme and the securing of more mature students for the school. We express our thanks for the financial help which was given to us for this project from America.

Bangladesh Notes

Asia Mennonite Services, which is the mission and service arm of the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches in Asia, is seeking to plant churches through service and evangelistic efforts. We have our first national missionaries, the R. S. Lemuels. They have related very well to the work in Saidpur (Bangladesh) in all of its phases. But we need more workers, specially from other Asian groups such as the Japanese and the Indonesians who are most welcome at this time. We also need your prayers that the good work just begun should be continued in larger dimensions.

P. J. Malagar, Director, MCSFI

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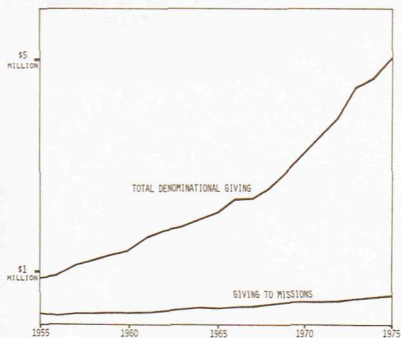
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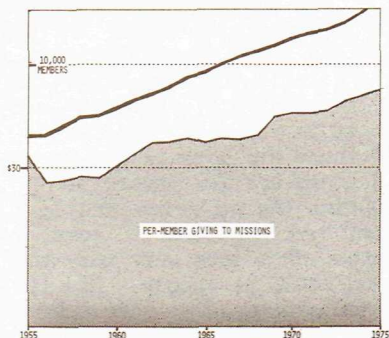
Twenty-Year Glimpse Of Missions Giving

IN THE BRETHREN IN CHRIST CHURCH (1955-75)

We thought our readers would profit from a bit of perspective on the pattern of giving to missions by the brotherhood during the past two decades. The accompanying graphs and commentary are first in a series of presentations planned for *therefore* through the next four issues. The source of the material is the 1955 through 1975 GENERAL CONFERENCE MINUTES, Statistical and Financial Reports.



Record of Denominational Giving 1955-75. TOP line shows grand total giving as reported by the congregations. BOTTOM LINE shows giving to missions as shown in the same reports.



This graph shows two things: (1) Brethren in Christ MEMBERSHIP (top line) as reported to General Conference; (2) GIVING TO MISSIONS PER MEMBER (annually) in dollars.

FACTS

- in the period 1961-65, the Brethren in Christ gave 16.5% of their total reported giving to MISSIONS. In the period 1971-75, their giving to MISSIONS was 11.3% of their total giving.
- in 1956 the "giving per member" for all church work, both at home and to brotherhood ministries, was \$133.08. In 1975 that giving per member was \$415.37, an increase of 212% over twenty years.
- in 1956 the "giving per member" to MISSIONS, as reported to General Conference by the congregations, was \$27.15. In 1975 that giving per member was \$44.50, an increase of 63.9% over 20 years.
- the Board has kept reserve funds "liquid" for transfer to the operating account when contributions do not meet current needs. The date at which such transfer of RESERVE FUNDS is necessary is a gauge on the STATE OF THE BUDGET in a given year. Recent history on these transfers: May 1976, Aug. 1975, Aug. 1974, April 1973, Jan. 1972, Feb. 1971, Feb. 1970, and March 1969.
- contributions to the 1976 Budget as of May 31 total \$138,455.01, which represents 24.55% of the Budget, which is \$564,015. This compares to \$158,834 (30.19%) in the first five months of 1975, and \$142,686 (29.12%) in 1974.

TALKING MISSIONS IN THE LOCAL CONGREGATION

In response to a request from a pastor, we are offering to send a representative to talk support of missions with your church board, Sunday school class, house group, etc. Write us and say whom you prefer—a Board for Missions member, an office person or a well-informed volunteer. *First come...first served!*

OH, JUST A LABORER!

Jesus the Great Teacher! Like the Temple Police, I say, "Never has anyone spoken like this man!" (John 7:47)

But I also have problems with Jesus' words. He doesn't give easy answers. Take His teaching about the harvest. As I read Jesus, He is saying—

- * there is the Lord of the harvest
- * there is a big harvest
- * it is ripe
- * there are lots of people around
- * there are few laborers.

During the past few years, the job market has experienced some radical changes. When jobs were easy to get, a person could be choosy. And if it was not really necessary, some didn't bother to get a job. But with changing times, finding a job is almost like winning a game—it really feels good.

Now why should there be such a problem with getting harvesters? Is it the dust and the chaff? Is it the Lord of the harvest? Or the job description?

I wonder whether there would be more interest in harvesting people for the Lord if we could be the "sower" (Jesus says the sower is the Son of man). Would there be more interest if we could be the Lord of the harvest? Jesus says He needs laborers—just LABORERS.

Apparently the Lord of the harvest is really in charge. He knows the fields. He sends the laborers. And the harvested grain is all His. We are just the laborers.

But there are some things about the harvest field that are almost universal:

- * it's hard work—the hours are long
- * it becomes almost an obsession, and is really the only thing that matters until the grain is in
- * the laborer has as much satisfaction as the Lord of the harvest.

So, knowing that the harvest field is a place for happy, busy people who are usually normal and well, I think I'll accept the job, though only as a laborer.

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