

# Fulfilling Our Heritage

AN INTERPRETATION OF  
CIVILIAN PUBLIC SERVICE  
FOR BRETHREN

*W. Harold Row*

## Brethren Camps

- Camp Lagro**, No. 6, Lagro, Indiana  
J. H. Mathis, Director
- Camp Magnolia**, No. 7, Magnolia, Arkansas  
Ora Huston, Director
- Camp Kane**, No. 16, Kane, Pennsylvania  
Levi K. Ziegler, Director
- Camp Stronach**, No. 17, Manistee, Michigan  
Lloyd C. Blickenstaff, Director
- Camp Cascade Locks**, No. 21, Cascade Locks, Oregon  
Mark Schrock, Director
- Camp Maryland**, No. 24, Unit 2, Williamsport, Md.  
Quincy A. Holsopple, Director
- Camp Crestview**, No. 27, Crestview, Florida  
Ralph Townsend, Director
- Camp Lyndhurst**, No. 29, Lyndhurst, Virginia  
Samuel A. Harley, Director
- Camp Walhalla**, No. 30, Walhalla, Michigan  
Omer B. Maphis, Director
- Camp Beltsville**, No. 34, Beltsville, Maryland  
Co-operative with Mennonites, Friends, Brethren
- Camp Santa Barbara**, No. 36, Santa Barbara, California  
D. C. Gnagy, Director

The Brethren also administer special detached units of Civilian Public Service in Porto Rico, and in mental and general hospitals in the States.

## The Brethren Service Committee

was authorized by the Annual Conference of 1941 to represent the Church of the Brethren in the area of Social Action. Its primary function is that of personal rehabilitation and social reconstruction in the name and spirit of Christ.

It engages in work among refugees and prisoners of war, general relief, war relief in Europe and China, summer work camps, rehabilitation in Mexico, South America, and rural America, and in Civilian Public Service.

Its offices are located at 22 South State Street, Elgin, Illinois, and its administrative staff is

ANDREW W. CORDIER, Chairman.

M. R. ZIGLER, Executive Secretary.

W. HAROLD ROW, Director, Civilian Public Service.

## FULFILLING OUR HERITAGE

Civilian Public Service is the logical extension of our Brethren heritage. Since the beginning of the church in Germany in 1708 no doctrine in our history has been more consistently preached. As the founding fathers searched the New Testament to discover a genuine Christian pattern for this new fellowship of believers, figuratively speaking, they were reading by the reflected light of martyrs dying at the stake in the bitter religious warfare raging up and down the Rhine Valley. The country was engaged in a long, devastating civil war. Intolerance was rife. Churches were arraigned against churches; ecclesiastics were persecuting ecclesiastics.

Out of this background emerged the Church of the Brethren. The infant church constantly felt the steel edge of Herod's sword. Our peace doctrine was not framed carelessly behind monastic walls. It was painfully wrought out by practical men on the hard anvil of human experience. It was formulated by scholarly Christians against the background of the Thirty Years' War and its aftermath of religious persecution. These founders knew well the real nature of war, but they knew also the faith and practice of the New Testament. Those in our fellowship today who feel that this is no time for our church to preach and practice its peculiar peace tenets understand, I fear, neither

the New Testament nor our church's heritage. Both the New Testament church and its 18th century revival were cradled in countries ruled by war lords.

Our church has suffered for its peace testimony. In Germany Alexander Mack lost considerable wealth and died a poor man because of his loyalty to Brethren principles. Elder John Naas was tortured, being hung from a tree by the left thumb and the right toe because he refused induction into the famed Guard of the Prussian King. Christian Libe was condemned to the galleys for two years because of his conscience against the use of force. The whole church felt the hands of bitter persecution because of its teachings on peace and non-conformity. Within a decade of its beginning this fellowship of peace seekers was forced to leave Germany and to find refuge in Holland. Persecution followed them there. Learning of Penn's colony of religious freedom in the new world, they began a wholesale migration to America in 1719.

The Brethren prospered in America. Congregations sprang up along the fertile valleys of Pennsylvania. Leaders of the movement became prominent in affairs of community and state. Then came the Revolutionary War and renewed persecution for these lovers of peace. Refusing to bear arms they were branded as Tories. Their property was confiscated, their leadership discredited and their children ridiculed. Christopher Sower the younger, one of

the colony's leading printers and journalists, was robbed of property and prestige. He was dragged shamefully through the lanes and fields of Germantown as a public example. When the war was over the Brethren were scattered throughout rural Pennsylvania. Our church became rural minded as much from necessity as by design. Its members sought the peace of the countryside, visiting the more hostile cities only on urgent business. Here developed many of the peculiar cultural patterns of the Brethren. The children were kept from school. The men shied away from civic responsibilities. Within a generation the Church of the Brethren sacrificed its community prestige, its economic independence and its educated leadership—principally because Brethren preferred peace in obscurity to the "glories" of war.

Our people were just beginning to win back the favor and confidence their fathers enjoyed in pre-Revolutionary days when war broke out between the states. A new period of persecution began. The church sacrificed much of its corporate and individual wealth to ransom her sons from military duty. Its members fell victims to intolerance and suspicion. One of our fearless leaders, Elder John Kline of Virginia, was shot from ambush and killed because he refused to fight or to sanction war, and persisted in ministering to the wounded soldiers of both gray and blue, without discrimination.

During the first world war our young men who refused to don uniforms were thrown in-

to military prisons and there suffered abuse and ridicule. The Church of the Brethren was ostracized by press, platform and pulpit for its lack of "patriotism." Our church has not only preached the doctrine of peace since its founding, but in times of war it has also suffered greatly for its peace testimony. The most convincing evidence of the truth and vitality of our teaching has been our willingness to suffer to confirm it.

The peace witness of the Church of the Brethren, as well as that of the Mennonites and Quakers, has been heroic. Pacifist leaders have been generous in their commendation of the persistent witness of the historic peace churches. But this nonviolent testimony, glorious as it was and contributing as it did to the peace mind of post-war America, has always been basically *negative*. It was a refusal to bear arms. It was a denial of the way of force, but it offered no convincing demonstration of the way of love.

This is the first time in our church's history (indeed of world history) that we have been allowed to give a *positive* testimony of our peace doctrines in time of war. The Civilian Public Service program was established by the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940 to provide those draftees who by "reason of religious training and belief" were opposed to military service an opportunity to do "work of national importance, under civilian direction." (The government first designated such work as soil

conservation and forestry service, but now new types of service, such as hospitals, farm furlough, public health, foreign relief and rehabilitation, are opening up.) It was an attempt upon the part of our government, encouraged by leaders of the historic peace churches and others, to respect conscience and to safeguard minority rights. It is our first opportunity during a war crisis to demonstrate that Brethren, who refuse to kill, love their country deeply and are willing to sacrifice for its good. Until now, for Brethren youth to be true to the peace teachings of the church meant to defy the law of the land and to go to prison, suffering the stigma of bad citizenship. Today a Brethren youth may be loyal to his church's heritage of peace and at the same time be a creative citizen.

This is something new in our development. The peace position of our church has been a succession of new insights. Each crisis in our history has advanced us toward a more positive expression of our peace conviction, and each advance has been possible only because of our accumulating heritage.

Civilian Public Service is the latest and clearest affirmation of our doctrine. It implements our peace attitude with a program of action. Hundreds of our young men are leaving homes, positions, and wages for induction into the several camps administered by the Brethren Service Committee. Here they are making a concrete witness against war and at the same time

preparing themselves through the disciplines of work, study, and fellowship for active participation in the Christian reconstruction of the local and world-wide community. Our members at home are supporting this program by gifts of food, clothing, and money.

The next advance in our Service program will be post-war reconstruction. This offers our brotherhood the greatest opportunity in its history for constructive goodwill. Already our people are studying the problem. This must proceed with increased concern and understanding. We must labor co-operatively with every group working intelligently in this crusade. It is at this point that we must turn to our Civilian Public Service camps. There is nowhere in our world a larger potential unit of reconstruction workers than in the camps operated by the Mennonites, Friends and Brethren. Here are hundreds of selected youth, representing many backgrounds of education, training, belief (one hundred and twenty-three different denominational preferences are now included), skills, and experiences, living together under a great, unifying purpose in a creative community. Many of these are eager to be doing relief and reconstruction work. They are ready to go anywhere in the world and to face any hazards. All they ask is that they not be required to destroy life nor implement the war machine. They want to begin now to build a better world, whatever the cost to themselves. These young men are now gaining the right to leadership in

this new crusade. They are doing significant work without remuneration. Their orientation is constructive rather than destructive. They have the opportunity to develop the required skills. They are day by day learning how to live together as a brotherhood. Most important of all, many of them are now dedicating their lives for this stupendous task which lies beyond "the duration."

Civilian Public Service is tremendously significant in the life of our church, as well as to our whole civilization. It is an extension of our peace testimony. It is an experiment in creative citizenship. It is a demonstration of functional democracy. It is a contribution to American Protestantism. It is an affirmation of co-operative goodwill as an instrument of international policy. It is an investment in the future leadership of the churches. And it is a technique for training men for post-war reconstruction.

This witness must go on. We must support it to the last farthing. We must undergird it with prayer and sacrifice. It may mean for all of us poverty and suffering. It certainly means sacrifice if our heritage of nearly two and one-half centuries is to continue. But let us make no mistake about our destiny. This is the opportunity for which Alexander Mack prayed, for which John Naas suffered, for which Christopher Sower lost wealth and prestige, for which John Kline died, and for which Brethren youth in 1917 went to prison. Our young men

in Civilian Public Service camps today walk in this noble procession of *peacemakers* "who shall be called the children of God." Brethren, this is no time to pity ourselves, but rather to thank God that after more than two centuries of teaching and suffering for our peace doctrine our youth may today make a constructive witness in time of war to the way of love and brotherhood.

This is a facsimile of certificate which may be obtained from your local church or from the Brethren Service Committee, 22 South State Street, Elgin, Illinois. These certificates are printed in denominations of \$5, \$10, \$25, \$50, and \$100, and are non-interest bearing and offer no return of principle. The purchase money will be used for the support of Civilian Public Service camps and other activities of the Brethren Service Committee.

\$25	N <sup>o</sup> 2070
CERTIFICATE	
Registered \$25 and 00cts	
BRETHREN SERVICE COMMITTEE	
CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN	
GENERAL ADMINISTRATION OFFICES ELGIN, ILLINOIS	
<i>This certifies that</i> _____	
has contributed the within stated sum to the Church of the Brethren to be used in Civilian Public Service, in relieving suffering, in creating good will and in making Christ known as Prince of Peace.	
Contributor's Statement of Purpose	
This contribution, made in addition to my normal giving, is in consideration of tragic world need, of the sacrifice of life and money which many are making in war and of my desire to support constructive service to humanity. This contribution is intended as an <i>alternate service</i> to war, in which my conscience does not permit me to engage. I give it voluntarily, asking neither interest nor return of principal.	
Signature _____	
In witness whereof the Brethren Service Committee of the Church of the Brethren issues this certificate on this _____ day of _____ A. D. 19 _____	
	
<i>H. Spencer Munich</i> General Financial Secretary	
Local Church Officer _____	

## **Your Help Invited**

The Church of the Brethren is indebted to the government for the use of buildings and some equipment for our Civilian Public Service camps. As a church we must bear the cost of maintaining the camps including both Brethren and men of many other denominations. The cost is \$35 per month per man. We will continue as long as we can caring for expenses of others whose support is not provided by their own denominations. We call on all our members to share sacrificially as an act of service and we invite sympathetic persons beyond our denominational borders to help us carry this responsibility.

The Brethren Service Committee is prepared to issue certificates upon request in denominations of five, ten, twenty-five, fifty, and one hundred dollars to contributors to its program. These certificates bear no interest, nor is there return of principle.

**Send Gifts to**

**BRETHREN SERVICE COMMITTEE**

**22 South State Street**

**ELGIN, ILLINOIS**

"Whosoever shall give  
... a cup of  
cold water"



After 5 days return to  
**CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN,  
MINISTRY AND EDUCATION,  
22 South State St., Elgin, Ill.  
Return Postage Guaranteed**

