

A MISSION TO BRING
**LIVING
& WATER**
TO A THIRSTY LAND



Sketches of the first 50 Years of Ministry
at the

NAVAJO
BRETHREN IN CHRIST MISSION

PAUL E. HOSTETLER



TS'AHITAH—when used with "mission," means "the mission in the sagebrush." The first dwellings were tents and were very uncomfortable during cold weather. The first mission house is in the latter stage at right.

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Dedicated to
that intrepid host of believers
in the Navajo Nation
and among all other peoples
at Ts'ahtah - the mission in the sagebrush
and the far-reaches of the continent
and around the world
who served, prayed, gave, and labored
in behalf of the Navajo Mission
in the past 50 years

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Cover design: Geoff Isley

Cover photo: John Ludwig explains a Bible passage to Lela Antonio Begay. Lela was one of the mission's most gracious neighbors during its first 25 years. John was excellent in personal contacts such as the cover depicts.

Assistance with photo selection and captions: George Bundy and Wilmer Heisey

Assistance with mission personnel pages: Ethel Bundy and Beth Melhorn

Consultant for total project: Charles Byer, Superintendent
Preparation of camera-ready copy for printer: Shelly Engle



Introduction

Soon after the Navajo Mission was launched a half century ago, its ministries caught the attention and gained the support of an ever widening circle in the Brethren in Christ Church. My wife Lela and I, along with Bishop and Mrs. E. J. Swalm, first visited the mission in 1955. We were impressed by the warm welcome and eight-year growth of the program and facilities. We were also impacted by a gut-wrenching trip across sagebrush country in a Jeep driven by Superintendent Wilmer Heisey!

In the years since, Lela and I visited the mission three more times. Our last visit, along with Bob and Winnie Woorman, was in the fall of 1996. Bob and I built kitchen cabinets for apartments to be used for the new alcoholics rehabilitation program. Winnie and Lela did extensive research for this booklet, including interviews with a number of Navajos. They also reviewed the manuscript. Their work was excellent, and I am most grateful.

I also wish to express sincere thanks to the following for their valued assistance in numerous ways: Wilmer and Velma Heisey, Marion and Rachel Heisey, George and Ethel Bundy, Charlie and Leone Byer, Beth Melhorn, Alvin Buckholder, Warren Hoffman, Shelly Engle, Geoff Isley, and Martha Long. Morris Sider, as always, was most helpful in giving wise editorial counsel.

In Bible times all inhabitants of Palestine, like the Navajos of New Mexico, lived in "a dry and thirsty land." They understood very well the vital importance of water to sustain physical life. And so when David declared, "...My soul thirsts for you [God], my body longs for you,..." those who sang his 63rd Psalm fully comprehended the metaphor. In New Testament times, when Jesus spoke of his "living water" in John 4, it again was a fitting physical/spiritual truth. It was with these factors in mind that the decision was reached to entitle this booklet *Living Water*.

As you read, you will at times notice the use of quotation marks without an indication of the source. Such quotations were taken from one of three publications: the *Evangelical Visitor*, *Navajo News*, or *Handbook of Missions*.

Choosing photographs was a time-consuming task. The quantity was large, the possible choices limited. Wilmer Heisey and George Bandy helped me greatly in making the decisions.

One frustration as I wrote was reducing a vast amount of interesting written material into relatively few pages. As some readers may know, I love to tell stories when I write, but a good story demands many words. As a result, some stories which could have been used were set aside.

Here is just one example: At least 50 children of missionaries (MKs) were an integral part of all that happened at the mission. Their interchange with the Navajo children and adults, and also with other missionaries, was of great mutual benefit. In the years since, numerous MKs have been involved in worldwide service ministries. Hopefully, future historians will have space and time to enlarge on their stories along with those of other worthy people, both Navajo and Anglo, who gave and received at the mission.

Notwithstanding reporting limitations, my "year by year" journey through the Navajo Mission's forward-moving ministries has been an exhilarating trip. It is my hope that God will be glorified, and each reader inspired as these pages are perused.

(Upon checking my dictionary to be sure of proper usage, I found that the above final word "perused" has two meanings: first, "to read through carefully," and second (a more recent meaning), "to read hastily, or more or less casually." There is, of course, at least one other undesirable option.)

...Paul Hostetler



A Half Century... ...in Yearly Sketches

Writing a college term paper is not an easy task. Part of the difficulty is selecting a topic.

The year is 1944. One can picture college senior Lynn Nicholson, with brow furrowed, bending over an encyclopedia in the library at Brulah College (later Upland College), Upland, California. Perhaps he has the N volume open to Nav..., and he's looking at a picture of a Navajo Indian. He reads the caption and article, and then ponders on his travels through Navajo territories in 1942....

When Lynn decided to write his paper on the needs of the Navajo Indians of New Mexico, his decision cast a bright institutional shadow which has lengthened for more than 50 years.

After doing his research, he captured the story on paper. In so doing, however, the story captured Lynn. He felt an increasing burden for "the salvation of this poor and needy people." As he prayed, Lynn's vision, which was first published in the February 1946 issue of the *Evangelical Visitor*, was to found a Brethren in Christ mission among the Navajos of northwestern New Mexico. He firmly stated:

It seems clear to us [perhaps including his wife Elinor] that the Lord is concerned, and mightily working, that the Navajo people might speedily hear the true Gospel, and be converted, to the end that they also may become "partakers of His Holiness," and a testimony for Christ in "these, the closing days of time."

In 1945 Lynn was ordained to the Christian ministry in the Upland Brethren in Christ Church. That same year, in response to his request, the Navajo Mission project was taken under the sponsorship of the denominational Home Mission Board.

The following year Lynn reported having visited two possible sites, one of them the location later chosen. He and his wife began formal study of the difficult language.

OPENING YEAR (1947) The Nicholsons continued their preparations while they both taught Navajo children at the Huerfano government school, 15 miles from the present mission site. Rosa Eyster joined them to care for their baby. They resigned their teaching positions there on August 1, 1947.

Some two weeks later Lynn and Elinor arrived at the Otis Trading Post with Lynn Stephen, six months old, and Rosa Eyster, who continued at the mission for 36 years. The land purchased for the mission site, on Otis Hill nearby, was (and is) about 30 miles south of Bloomfield, on the Chaco Canyon Road, two miles off Route 44, the main highway between Farmington and Albuquerque. It is strategically located in the center of five Navajo communities, with good access to the whole Navajo tribe.

On Monday, August 18, they put up tents on the mission property. It was a rainy day, and so they needed to work between showers. Lynn had purchased a thousand parachute boxes, from which buildings and furniture were soon constructed.

Water: The November Visitor reported, "At the present time we are using our spare time in digging a well." This became a long and tedious project.

(1948) In February, after enduring much snow and cold weather in their tent dwellings (elevation 7,000 feet), they moved into the new house, as yet not finished. According to the denominational *Handbook of Missions*, construction began in the spring on a combination school and meeting house.

It was a beginning year for evangelistic work: "visiting among the people and presenting the Gospel message by means of Scripture reading and hymn singing in the Navajo language and by use of Navajo...[phonograph] records."

Water: Drilling for water reached 166 feet, but without success. In the meantime, all water was hauled in from several miles away.

Typical of what happened in all the years following, sincere thanks was expressed to those who gave "of their tithes and offerings," and the

names of many people were listed who "helped us build, freely giving their time." Such reports often concluded with a request for prayer and an invitation to visit the mission at any time—and many did.

(1949) Lynn Nicholson gave the first hint of the need for a more complete medical ministry at the mission. "Frequently folks come to us [for] help in getting them to a doctor or hospital." The nearest doctor was 45 miles away, and the only satisfactory hospital, 65 miles.

Water: Giving up on previous drilling efforts, a well was started at another location, hitting water at 92 feet. However, the flow was only 15 gallons per hour. [At] "some future time when the Lord wills, perhaps we can drill deeper."

The mission school opened successfully for its first term, with 11 children enrolled. The school was operated on a 5-day week boarding basis, and had a government lunch program. Dorothy Charles was the mission school's first teacher and, according to a co-worker, was "one of the most effective missionaries I have ever met." She set a high standard for the many other competent and consecrated teachers who served in the years following.

(1950) The first annual interdenominational camp meeting was convened in 1950, and proved to be a great blessing then and in all the years following. Ruth Zercher RN arrived as the "pioneer nurse" at the mission. The medical clinic was opened, marking a forward advance.

Milk: "Our first cow, Boss, has arrived." She gave two gallons of good rich milk each day.

The year included other milestones. The Nicholsons resigned so that Lynn could begin graduate studies. Isaac and Nina Schmacker replaced them as superintendent and mission hostess. Isaac produced and edited the first issue of *Navajo News*. Volume I, Number 1 was dated September 15, 1950. The early issues were monthly, and were run on the mission's mimeograph machine.

(1951) Missions have good days and bad days. *Bad day:* Someone donated an electric power plant. Unfortunately, it didn't supply enough power for even the lights, and the engine was too expensive to run. *Good day:* A Jacobs Electric wind-driven plant, with 120 volt direct current, 3000 watt capacity, was purchased and installed. "We now

have more power than we know what to do with!" An electric pump and pressure tank were put in place, along with a 25,000 gallon reservoir. A 20 x 40 schoolhouse was built, and work was started on the 14 x 10 vegetable cellar.

Baptisms: The first group of Navajos were baptized. It was a day of great rejoicing.

Clara Meyer, RN, CM, arrived in June, to join Ruth Zercher in the increasing nursing responsibilities. Her capable ministries extended to mid-1954.

The front cover of the March *Navajo News* had a drawing of the proposed new cross-shaped mission hospital. Inside, an article launched the drive to raise funds for the facility. Construction began.

5TH ANNIVERSARY (1952) The Schmuckers said farewell; Wilmer and Velma Heisey replaced them as head of the missionary team and mission hostess.

The February issue of *Navajo News*, which had reached a circulation of 1300, had a front page picture of the hospital. However, many furnishings and supplies were still needed. The whole denomination was getting involved!

The medical files included the names of 600 people who had been treated in the clinic.

The mission's outreach was extended when regular services were started about 25 miles away, in the Chaco Canyon area. Chaco is a National Monument with well preserved ruins of the Anasazi Indians dating back more than a thousand years.

Airstrip: A Piper Cub landed on the road in front of the mission, a harbinger of a landing strip nearby.

The mission school was highly appreciated. Said one Navajo girl: "I sure like school at the Beethern (sic) in Christ School, and I like my teacher too."

At the end of the year 12 buildings stood on the 20-acre mission site. Medical files listed more than 800 names.

(1953) Navajo John Peter Yazzie, age 39 and confined to a wheelchair, joined the mission staff as interpreter. He also conducted devotions daily in the hospital, and became the pastor at Chaco Canyon. "With a song in his heart, ... [Peter] is a blessing to many."

Another Navajo, Fannie Scott, joined the staff as nurse's aide and mother to school children. She interpreted for morning worship services, and hospital staff. Fannie learned English at the Methodist Mission in Farmington. She was 82 when Winnie Worman and Lela Hostetler interviewed her in Farmington in 1996.

Milk: A Jersey-Guernsey, Dolly, was given to the mission. She served well for six years.

Another major step in mission plant development began in May with the digging and welding of a natural gas pipeline, stretching 5500 feet from the main line to the mission property.

The new hospital was dedicated on July 26, 1953. This project, begun less than two years before, progressed through the efforts, prayers, volunteer labor, and financial support of many Christian friends from coast to coast. "It is a monument to no one, but rather an institution raised to the honor and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Great Physician."

Three generations! A woman on her way to Farmington decided she couldn't get there on time, so she stopped at the mission hospital. Shortly she delivered a baby girl. The woman's mother, was admitted with an infected hand. Three days later the three returned home.

(1954) The following was written by mission Superintendent J. Wilmer Heisey.

...More and more Navajos are being employed in the Farmington area, a boom town now [1954] past 10,000 population. By all appearances the income they receive is going into two main outlets. One is a new pickup truck; the other, the cashier of the numerous liquor stores.

An ever enlarging Navajo settlement at the edge of town gives rise to social problems. Navajo boys and girls...can go uptown to witness the blessings and curses of the white man's civilization....

In the local area, of which the mission is a part, there are over 400 children of school age. Of this number only a little over 200 are in school....

The Navajo's greatest need: the stability that only faith in Christ can bring.

The Home Mission Board approved adding a second teacher to the 1954-55 school program. This made possible meeting the needs of

Navajo children through eighth grade, thus including the critical years of the early teens.

Arriving in September, Jane Monn RN carried the heavy load of Head Nurse at the hospital for more than a year until the first resident doctor arrived.

Plants: For several weeks Rosa watched as Peter Yazzie watered his Easter Lily. Imagine Rosa's surprise when Peter confirmed the fact that the "Easter Lily" was in reality an onion.

(1955) Counting blessings at the Navajo Mission was an experience to stimulate faith: Growth in Sunday School attendance...Increase in hospital ministry...Enlargement of school program...Much needed equipment for mission plant...Funds necessary to keep operational budget out of red...Fine group of laborers for harvest field...Hungry hearts opened to message of Jesus' love.

"We have lost our Apostle Paul!" This expression summed up the esteem with which Lorenzo Iashie, Navajo evangelist, was held. Lorenzo died at age 35. After spending over 20 years in sin, he gave his remaining years as a front line soldier for Christ. An evangelist, he preached powerfully at many points in Navajo country, including five annual mission camp meetings.

Water: Because increasing demands created a water shortage, new drilling began. Sand was found at 526 feet, but alas, no water. Then the equipment broke, leaving the drill bit in the hole.

(1956) Dr. Alvin Heise, the first of a series of highly qualified physicians, came to the mission to head the medical program. The state-licensed hospital now included a doctor, two full-time registered nurses, two part-time nurses, and Navajo aides.

With excellent timing, the mission at long last installed a radio-telephone for medical and other business use.

Milk: An older cow, Grandma, was bought from a nearby mission. She did well for four years. Steers, hogs, sheep, and poultry were also raised through the years.

The year included two other important developments: One was the construction (almost complete) of a large 20 x 120 educational building. Also, to meet a growing need at Chaco, a hogan type structure was built as a meeting place.

Water: The broken drill bit was retrieved. The well was then drilled to the 573 ft level, where 5,000 gallons could be pumped per day. Turbidity in the water, however, was a concern.

Attractive new signs were erected on State Route 44, guiding people to the hospital and mission a few miles away.

10TH ANNIVERSARY (1967) The mission's tenth anniversary was filled with significant forward steps.

After one year under the leadership of Dr. Heise, and increased hospital ministry was reflected in: 410 admissions, with only one death; 2399 hospital patient days; and 4452 out-patient calls. (The small medical clinic opened in 1950.)

The new Navajo Education Center was dedicated. The boarding school, opened in 1949 with 11 pupils, had reached 50. Various Navajos gave testimonies of their love for the Lord "who is no longer [only] 'the white man's God.'"

A television company built a relay tower on Huerfano Mountain, the most prominent local landmark. A weather station was installed at the mission by the U.S. Weather Bureau, part of a vast network across the nation.

Water! The drilling rig struck good and plentiful water at 843 feet, yielding over 15 gallons per minute! The new attempt was made when the previous well tapered noticeably in production.

The total cost came to \$9000. With his usual contagious enthusiasm, Alvin Burkholder recently related the following to the writer:

Our Home Mission Board had taken action to limit the drilling costs to \$7000. When the drillers reached 800 feet, the allowed funds were depleted. The Mission called Henry Ginder, Home Mission Board chair, for permission to drill deeper. He felt he needed to talk to Alvin Burkholder, another board member. But Alvin and his wife were gone for the weekend, and no one seemed to know where they were. By virtue of fervent prayer and ingenious sleuthing, Henry finally located Alvin at a motel. When he dialed the number, Alvin's first words were "How did you ever locate me?" Henry's answer was "The Lord helped." Well, the men agreed that the drilling should continue, and before long good soft water was reached in such abundance at 843 feet that it far exceeds needs to this very moment, forty years later. Hallelujah!

(1958) The mission obtained three units of surplus government housing. A 35 KVA AC power plant was also installed, replacing the overloaded 10 KW plant.

"Drunkness continues to take its toll among the Navajos. The hospital recently received two critical cases resulting from liquor. One proved fatal, while the other remains critical."

The newly created Board of Directors met at the mission in August. The board was composed of: Bishop Alvin Burkholder (chair), Bishop Henry Gindler (vice chair), Joseph Aiken (secretary), Amos Buckwalter, Henry N. Miller, Bill Bessell, Sam Minter, and Dr. Alvin Heise (mission medical director).

"Camp meetings are becoming an avenue of fellowship and evangelistic outreach for Navajo Christians. Two great camps were sponsored and conducted entirely by local Navajo leaders." These meetings have proved to be an effective answer to the square dance, a big social event which includes drinking.

Airstrip: The Standard Oil Company installed a 2500 foot airstrip 1000 feet from the mission! (Eleven planes used it in six weeks to transfer patients.)

(1959) Dr. John Kreider replaced Dr. Alvin Heise as the mission Medical Director.

The total number of hospital medical service contacts grew to 10,775, not including clinic contacts elsewhere.

A spiritual growth area--the publishing of a Christian Navajo "Prayer Challenge"--began. Some quotations: "Pray for all...who once made a decision to follow Christ...but are in a weak spot. Satan is trying to win them back.... They need our prayers. "We [also] want to reach our people who are lost."

Milk: A gift cow, Melita, was soon producing 40 pounds of milk a day. Before long she was our only cow, as was Boss in 1950.

"But the Mission family had tripled."

A fall Bible School for adults started. It continued in following years in various time frames.

(1960) The 2400 sq. ft. new hospital wing was completed and dedicated on May 15. The wing contained the expanded clinic, an emergency room, and various other urgently needed facilities.

The birth of Charlene Francisco was significant. "Her mother is Bertha Todachone, who served as a nurse's aid for seven years. Her father is Willie Francisco, one of the first students at the mission school. During the 60s we expect to see many other young families established....We do not wish to impose the white man's ideas upon our Navajo friends....It is our hope that their confidence will not be in the white man's....gadgets--only Jesus can provide security with freedom in the 60s, and for eternity."

(1961) Sunday School attendance averaged 86.32 and church attendance 103.13. In 1962 these increased to 91.54 and 108.65.

Lamb: Four mission school boys won prizes when they showed lambs at the 4-H Fat Lamb Show. In succeeding years they received more honors. Many Navajos make their living as shepherds.

For ten years the mission struggled with a succession of ever deteriorating power plants. In early 1961 a tall high-line pole with three transformers was planted on mission property. Before long, "Old Faithful," the ailing, noisy light plant was turned off and the silent REA power switched on!

Pets: Dogs just loved the mission. A new litter brought the total to ten. The solution: Pups and dogs--and even cats--were offered as prizes for perfect school attendance. (After school was out, another pup showed up. "He says he likes it here.")

Fannie Scott presented a literal translation from Navajo of 1 Corinthians 13:4-5: "Love is that which suffers long, and is kind; love is not jealous, is not proud, is not mischievous. It is not unappreciative; does not think only of itself, is not mean, does not say anything not good about another."

An addition was made to the west end of the education building, and the new shop building reached the rafter stage. Over 20 requests for admission to the mission school were denied for lack of facilities.

15TH ANNIVERSARY (1962) *Man of Yesterday* - Old Dan, confused and sick, died shortly after the winter snows came. *Man of Today* - This middle aged Chaco man who had walked in darkness has come to see the great light. *Man of Tomorrow* - Today's boy, in the mission school, learning many things, is showing great promise. (Their stories were told in *Navajo News*.)

Statistics: 450 hospital admissions, 129 babies born, 2,393 hospital patient days, 7,965 out-patient visits, 58,986 meals, 1,167 guest meals, 642 overnight guests.

School enrollment stood at 62. "The task is not to take the Navajo out of the child, but to bring the child to Christ."

(1963) Dr. LeRoy Steinbrecher joined the staff as the Medical Director, replacing Dr. John Kreider.

An aged Navajo grandmother was visited in the hospital. She shared, "One day a young Navajo woman told me about the Lord, and I accepted him, but she didn't tell me how to follow the Lord." Well, that situation soon changed.

"Evangelism is always a priority. Personal contact right in the hogans is never neglected. Camp meetings are conducted....Each fall an eight-week Bible School [serves all ages]."

A drive was launched for \$15,000 to build and furnish a new 3224 sq. ft. dormitory for 40 boys. Construction began.

Airstrip: Because the shortness of the Standard Oil landing strip created a safety hazard, the Navajo Tribe assisted in the development of a 5,000 foot airstrip running parallel to the road.

One Friday evening a large group of staff and students tackled a pickup truck load of fresh corn. As the evening progressed, 100, then 200, and the (by 12:30 a.m.) 324 quarts were in the freezer! The school children had a great evening. None would ever forget "the night we did the corn."

(1964) On Sunday, March 22, the mission experienced its worst-ever dust storm. Winds reached 68 miles an hour.

The new boys dorm was dedicated on April 18. "The boys cannot hide their delight....It is evidenced in their looks, their words, and their actions." More than 70 school children enrolled for the fall term; many were turned away.

Milk: "Princess," a gift heifer, arrived, and soon had a calf. But she had a weakness—ignoring fences. Only her good milk production saved her.

(1965) Dr. Samuel Brubaker assumed the duties of Medical Director, replacing Dr. Steinbrecher.

The office of Business Manager was established, and Earl K. Stern was the first to serve in this assignment.

"An institutional mission is subject to a whole catalogue of circumstances that could divert its main thrust. But we discover that Christ's adequacy for every circumstance in personal experience is applicable to the witness of the Mission program that seeks to minister to the broad scope of human need in Navajoland."

(1966) After 14 years of valued service, Superintendent and Mrs. Wilmer Heisey accepted another assignment. Rev. and Mrs. Marion Heisey, who perviously served at the mission in 1955-59, succeeded the Heiseys in 1968. Sam Minter gave interim leadership.

Some of Sam's observations: "During our mission's 20 years in Navajoland, many changes have taken place....These have been a blessing when used wisely. But the process of getting the right use of these into their [Navajo's] way of life is not an easy task. God alone can change the heart and life.... The warm handshake of these dear people [proves] that the Gospel has not lost its power."

A Friday evening recreational program was added to Chaco Canyon activities. It was received with enthusiasm, reflected in increased attendance at Sunday services and summer Bible Camp.

Bell: A windstorm blew down the trusty mission bell, a landmark for nearly two decades. Plans: repairs and a move to a new site.

Briefly: 77 boarding students...First summer service unit of teenagers...stronger evangelistic thrust in hospital program.

20TH ANNIVERSARY (1967) "Twenty years ago a Spirit-led band [three people] of Brethren in Christ, willing to endure hardness for the sake of the Gospel, erected a tent on Otis Hill. Today, at this same site the love of Christ is radiated by Word and deed."

With ground-breaking scheduled on April 1 for the new chapel, the building committee was finalizing plans. The congregation's building fund had reached \$1,400. The national Women's Missionary Prayer Circle's goal for the project was \$9,000, and the Junior Prayer Bands had plans to purchase the pews. Block laying was completed in May, and the cornerstone was laid in June.

On February 3 the second new wing of the hospital was occupied. The patient total continued to grow.

The Mission Sunday School placed second in the denominational Forward Enlargement campaign, with an average October attendance of 123, a gain of 64 percent.

(1968) Dr. Donald Minter arrived to replace Dr. Samuel Brubaker as the mission Medical Director.

"One hundred years have passed since the Navajo Reservation was allotted to the tribe by the U.S. government. In this barren land, these hardy people have not only survived, but greatly increased."

Culture: In the Navajo culture, the children and sheep belong to the mother, the horses to the father.

The raising of the steeple for the new chapel attracted much attention. The chapel was dedicated on April 28. "This occasion...climaxed the vision and efforts of many people, and is a landmark on the emergence of Navajo leadership."

For the third successive summer V-Sers helped at the mission. "These three groups of teens brightened our days."

The Board of Directors authorized the construction of a new residence for superintendents and their families. It was ready when Marion and Rachel Heisey, and their five children, arrived in August.

"The Mission now has three full-time Navajos on the staff: Bessie Trujillo, Peter Yazzie, and Lilly Begay."

Airstrip: A new airstrip was built when a high tension power line cut directly across the old one. "The taxiway comes within 100 yards of our hospital."

Portent of a future problem: A new government school opened just five miles from the mission.

(1969) Dr. Robert Smith arrived to replace Dr. Donald Minter as the Medical Director for one year.

The Navajos call themselves Dine (din-EH), meaning "the people." It is a fact of history that all the power of American expansionistic imperialism could not crush the spirit of the Navajos—they remain a proud people.

"Increased involvement of the Navajos in the mission program:

—A Navajo parent now serves on the School Committee.

—A Navajo Church Committee was elected and is now serving.

—A third Navajo has joined the ranks of our full time staff.

—Navajo teens have participated in out of state youth camps."

A significant shift in staff assignments came when one staff couple was assigned to full-time evangelism and literacy. The fall school enrollment was 79.

Water: "Water has been abundant since 1957, but metal deposits have been causing mechanical trouble at the bottom of the well. We are working on this."

(1970) The September-October *Navajo News* gave the sad news: "...[The] hospital and clinic are now officially closed because of the unavailability of a resident. Sandy Neyer, only remaining Registered Nurse at the mission, has entered into a contract with the U.S. Public Health to provide limited medical care for the Navajo children in this area."

Water: A new submersible pump was installed. (The old one brought up from 10 to 15 million gallons of water in the past 13 years.) With the new pump the mission could double its use of water.

The mission purchased 280 acres of land, which included the old Otis Trading Post site, and added them to the 20 acres originally bought from that same Otis property. Three out-of-service oil wells were on the acreage. It was envisioned that the oil well casings could be perforated into water wells to be used by the Navajos in crop irrigation and/or building. (Both of these possibilities are still available options as of this writing.)

(1971) In January the mission director, Dr. Marion Heisey, had good news: "We are happy to report that plans for reopening the hospital are under way. Dr. and Mrs. Charles Walters...have announced their plans for joining the staff in late summer, 1971. Dr. Walters will serve as the Medical Director...."

The mission chorus of 22 Navajo girls gave nine presentations in Southern California in February. A Navajo mother, Ernestine Chavez, went along and participated in the programs. Ben Stoner was manager of the tour and Eunice Hoover directed the chorus.

"For 14 months Navajo Hospital was without a physician...and had to close. Dr. Charles Walters is now here. His wife Sylvia is a registered nurse and also serves on the nursing staff....The hospital opened on

September 1....With four nurses on the staff by early October, the hospital will once again be able to operate at optimal levels."

25TH ANNIVERSARY (1972) "After almost five months of operation, the hospital [is]... into full swing. In this short time we have discovered that one of the severe medical problems of the Navajo is alcoholism." (A detailed explanation of treatment was given.)

The mission celebrated 25 years of successful, growing ministry among the Navajos. "For 25 years the missionaries have planned, organized, taught, ministered, visited, baptized, built, healed, and preached to the Navajos at the Brethren in Christ Mission." During those years, the Navajos became increasingly involved, participating in a growing number of ministries in various ways, thus taking on ever more responsibilities.

Did you know? The word Navajo means "place of the prickly pear cactus." And the Navajo word TS'AHTAH, when used with "mission," means "the mission among the sagebrush."

Rosa Eyster noted: "The mission has changed a lot in 25 years. It started with a tent and now there are more than 25 buildings. We had 20 acres....now [we have] nearly 300 acres....The staff started with three people, now there are 38....Our clinic has served more than 8,000 people." She mentioned outreach to Chaco and Farmington. "We do not know what the next 25 years will bring, but we commit this to God."

The superintendent agreed with Rosa, but he observed, in relation to buildings: "A plateau of growth has been reached in mission plant expansion which is likely to remain for some time."

(1973) The following major changes were made in the Mission school: Each grade had a separate teacher...Three classrooms were added...Navajo Nina Goldtooth taught the beginners...Three Navajo parents were added to the School Committee...Another Navajo parent taught bead crafts.

On August 3 the hospital closed for the second time—for the same reason as before. Dr. and Mrs. Morris Book planned to move to the mission to render service in 1974. Nurse Kathy Thuma remained on the mission staff to give limited medical service to the staff and school children.

Garden: The mission had its first successful garden in its 26-year history, with lots of squash, beans, corn, cauliflower, eggplant, pickles, cabbage, cantaloupe, and watermelons.

At their meeting in October, the Board of Directors discussed the changing role of the mission in the community.

(1974) Navajo Health Care Center was the new name given to the service which replaced the Navajo Hospital. Even though Dr. Morris Book arrived to serve as the Medical Director until 1976, the Board of Directors decided that the Navajo Hospital would not reopen as an in-patient medical service.

Developments of new programs were already unfolding early in the year. One was the psycho-educational screening of nearly a hundred Navajo children. The staff cooperated to help bring the project to completion.

The Chaco Building Committee worked on the feasibility of building another church in order to accommodate the growing congregation.

At various times during his leadership, Director Marion Heisey questioned the basic assumption that Navajos should be trained to serve in the missionary's world. He observed, "The white man is beginning to see more and more that what the Navajo needs is, not always the skill and training of the white man's world, but the empathic and understanding ministry of his own people." After developing this concern extensively in *Navajo News* articles, Dr. Heisey concluded, "As we consider our ministry to the Navajos, perhaps we should reassess our direction based on what the Navajos can do for themselves, by themselves, and of themselves."

(1975) "A special task force was appointed by the Board of Directors to study viable alternatives to the medical ministry [at the Mission]. Other medical facilities in the community are giving the care which the Navajo Hospital once provided, but other acute needs are emerging...which are not being met by any other group....[These include] alcoholism, disturbed family relations, economic turmoil, and educational deprivation. Strategies for attending to these needs are presently being studied."

For the fourth consecutive year college students came during January Term to earn credit at the Navajo Mission.

In November a curio shop was opened at the mission, with a good display of creative arts and native crafts, which were to be sold for the benefit of the Navajo people.

(1976) "Navajo Hospital (more recently known as Navajo Health Care Center) will be permanently closing on June 12. This ends an era of medical ministries among the Navajo people which spans over a quarter of a century." In addition to the medical doctors who served in previous years as indicated above, Dr. Glenn Hoffman filled in for vacation relief.

Statistics: Total hospital admissions, 56-73, 8,569; births at hospital, 56-73, 2,515; total out-patients treated, 56-76, 132,226.

In brief: The hospital maternity wing was changed to a dorm for 16 boys....The Board of Directors approved the construction of a Navajo Community Center (gym/multi-purpose building)....Navajo Cecil Werito became the pastor of the mission church.

Water: After six years of service, the submersible deep well pump gave out. The mission was on emergency water rations until a new pump could be installed.

30TH ANNIVERSARY (1977) "The mission has completed 30 years of ministering to this community. Many children who attended during the first decade of the mission school's existence are now sending their own children." They were asked for reasons. A typical response: "Because I felt the mission was like home....I know people there. I like my children to know about the Lord as their personal Savior. I like the education they are getting—it is good."

Plans went forward for construction of the large new community center. This was in keeping with the mission's growing emphasis on youth ministries. It was also among the beginnings of greater efforts to connect with community families. Another helpful way was the addition of a well-equipped laundromat in the community center. An alcohol rehabilitation program was also explored. Still another way was the purchase of property in Farmington in order to establish a ministry; Ben and Eunice Stoner were much involved in this.

(1978) The same Church Board served two congregations. The English speaking congregation met on Sunday morning, and the Navajo speaking



ABOVE: Lynn and Elinor Nicholson, founders of the Navajo Mission in 1947. Also with them were Lynn Stephen, six months old, and Rosa Eyster. BELOW: Dorothy Charles, first school teacher at the mission, teaches Shirley Werito from God's Word (God Hitzed).





ABOVE: Joan Byer Wolgast's First Grade class in 1959. Front: Nelson Elcitty, Eunice Werrito, "Miss Joan," Jackson Padilla. Back: Mary Beysie, Paul King, Nathaniel Henderson, Joe Salgado, Nancy Hisey. BELOW: Nellie Larving weaving (mother of 7 mission school children).



ABOVE: Original buildings about 1949. BELOW: The third mission water well was drilled in front of the education building (NEC) in 1957 to a depth of 843 feet.





ABOVE: Staff in 1957: Marion Heisey, Jane Moon, Martha Long, Joan Byer, Rosa Eyster, Velma Heisey, Wilmer Heisey, Alvin Heise, Maxine Heise, Charles Myers Jr., Peggy Myers, Rachel Eshleman, Dorothy Charles, Earl Wolgemuth. BELOW, L: Mission hospital, 1962. BELOW, R: 4-H lamb show in 1962.





ABOVE: Board of Directors, 1964: Dr. Robert Smith, Henry Ginder, Bill Bonwell, Joe Aiken, Alvin Burkholder, Henry N. Miller, Sam Minter, Paul Switzer, Arnon Buckwalter. BELOW: 4-H Club group, 1958: Front row: Mae Cly, Shirley Werten, Lucinda Charlie, Lorraine Dempsey, Mae Mescal. Second row: Martha Long, Nita Larvingo, Marie Bonally, Louise Trujillo, Dolly Lopez, Rose Mary Lopez. Third row: Gene Mescal, Alice Lopez, Ben Francisco, Marian Andrews, Jimmy Ignacio, John Francisco. Back row: Roy Larvingo, Marion Heisey, James Mason.



congregation on Sunday afternoon. Each had its own pastor. Once a month both groups came together for a fellowship meal.

A day school, with bussing provided, was planned for 79-80, after more than a quarter century of boarding school. The reasons: area government schools with bus routes; belief that parents should be more involved with the rearing of their children; and belief that a day school could provide the basic objectives of a Christian elementary school just as well as boarding school.

In brief: The spacious new community center was dedicated with a large crowd attending—Navajos Julia Chavez and Ernestine Chavez joined the staff.

(1979) June 16 marked a very special day for Christians throughout Navajo country: The new Navajo hymnal was dedicated. Seven years in the making, the book had 365 hymns.

The summer activities began in the new community center with parents, school children, and staff playing volleyball and other games. Fellowship and fun predominated.

Dr. Ken Crider, working for a clinic in Farmington funded by Indian Health Service, became the "Navajo staff physician as a way of contributing to the mission program."

In brief: The annual Chaco Bible School was held with almost full responsibility assumed by community people. Student enrollment at the mission was 46, with 13 being bussed.

(1980) "The mission has become a training ground for college students. Carol Gehman, a senior at Messiah College, spent three weeks at the...mission as a way of earning three hours of credit by assisting in a classroom, but more importantly, learning about another culture and people."

The English-speaking and Navajo-speaking congregations at the mission merged. Periodic meetings were planned to include Chaco, Farmington, and the mission group in a worship rally, followed by a meal in the Community Center.

The Marion Heisey family left the mission on May 30 after nearly 12 years as general director. Dr. K. B. Hoover was named Interim Director for July and August. Ben Stoner then assumed the role of "acting superintendent and pastor."

In brief: The school year began with a student body of 37, with 22 boarding and 15 bused....Three staff members were involved in making tapes of the new Navajo hymnal....Community outreach continued with the community center and the dental clinic (Dr. Phil Frey, dentist).

(1981) The Board for Missions decided to close the mission school at the end of the 80-81 school year because of declining enrollment and increasing educational opportunities nearby. Parents were encouraged to send their children to the Berean Mission School.

Water: The mission well supplied water for a wide area. In April the pump suddenly decreased its output.

George and Ethel Bandy answered the call to serve as the new director and hostess at the mission, arriving in July. They brought much experience and interest in missions to the Navajo people.

Navajo Marie Bagay joined the staff in August to help in visitation, Sunday School, camp meetings, and revivals.

When Theological Education by Extension (TEE) was explained to John Peter Yazzie, he responded, "It is what we really need." Used for years in Africa and Latin America, TEE came to the mission, and then to the reservation.

35TH ANNIVERSARY (1982) On January 6 Ben Stoner received a call, "I think your house is on fire!" He rushed outside; it was! And it was out of control. School children and the staff helped carry much out of the burning building. The house, the mission's first permanent building, burned to the ground but "...thank God, no one was hurt....We [Stoner family] often praise God for his care and the friends we have...across the brotherhood."

Funds: The mission director made a strong appeal for operational funds in the amount of \$48,000. Gifts had dropped off and various big bills were due.

In brief: The Navajo Community Center began a special focus on youth....Because of deterioration, the hospital building was dismantled; Navajos were invited to help themselves to materials (small charge) which they could use....Rosa Eyster was honored for 35 years of valued service at the mission—from the very first day....The \$48,000 operational need was received...."Even though school is closed, the mission educational outreach continues."

(1983) George Bandy reported: "Spring and summer months will be punctuated by a Messiah College cultural group in May....revivals and tent meetings....the Stoner's return in June, VBS in July, and youth camps in August."

Rosa Eyster's words as she got on the plane on November 10, 1983, were: "I can't believe I'm not coming back." She was, however, "just as certain as the Lord led her here in 1947, he was leading her to Oklahoma now." She didn't sleep well that first night in 1947, 36 years before, because the wind blew hard and some horses prowled around outside the tent. The first months were rainy; then the snows came. She and the Nicholsons were often cold until they finally put up a wood stove. In late February they moved into their new house and rejoiced greatly. As the plane rose into the sky from the Farmington Airport, Rosa left many Navajo friends behind.

(1984) The mission "always gets lots of sun, so we have started to explore the possibilities of solar energy." A solar hot air collector was built, and it worked. The total cost was about \$5.00. Their hope was to harness the sun to heat water. "Any suggestion from those of you who have built solar hot water systems would be very highly appreciated."

Theft: Some checks were stolen from the mail by the area mail delivery man. Regular financial supporters were advised to check their records to see if any of their checks had been stolen. Fortunately, none were.

The first time Tyler Lopez looked at a Navajo New Testament he exclaimed, "What's that? How can anyone read it." This began a series of years during which Ben Stoner taught Navajo reading to both Navajos and whites. Ben requested: "Pray that as we learn to read Navajo together God's Word will speak to the readers. Our aim is that people will experience new life in Christ."

In brief: The Navajo Education Center was renovated. —Plans were made for a reunion of former staff members in 1985. (this booklet to be released at that celebration)

(1985) In 1983 five-year old Shawnte Yazzie fell into an irrigation ditch; she was in the water 45 minutes. Doctors said she could never be normal.

Miracle: People were praying. Her first smile came five weeks later...slow recovery...January 85...doing well in school...and she's running!

Some facts about the Navajos: Population approaching 200,000...capital at Window Rock, AZ...have 108 Chapters (something like counties)...have own police force and judicial service...rely primarily to federal government.

"Therefore, the Navajos should be in control of their own churches. We [at the mission] are interested in building up a Brethren in Christ fellowship of churches."

The staff reunion convened on July 11-14, 1985. The *Navajo News* featured many pictures and activities. As the saying goes, "A good time was had by all."

(1986) Navajo is one of the 1,785 languages in which the Bible is now printed. On January 17 the Navajo Bible was formally dedicated in the Farmington Civic Center. Wycliffe and the American Bible Society cooperated on the project. Fannie Scott of the mission spent many years working on the translation.

Danger: "Navajo Roy Larvingo is an iron worker. One day he was working high in the air at a power plant. Suddenly a huge chain and plank were falling toward him; the plank hit his arm. 'I knew I was safe because God was taking care of me.'"

The circulation of *Navajo News* was 6,000 in 1986. The cost then: ten cents a copy plus seven cents postage (much more now). "We willingly send it to anyone who wishes to receive it. Many faithful friends give financial support to this ministry."

40TH ANNIVERSARY (1987) (by Dean Pottsiger, working with Navajo youth) "I especially thank the Lord for...Ernie Francisco. Ernie is a Navajo in his mid 20s who was heavily involved in drugs and alcohol, but through a miraculous experience with the Lord in jail, he gave his life to Christ. He's been a big help in relating to the Navajo young people through teaching and his personal testimony." (Ernie is a 1995 graduate of Messiah College.)

Birthday! The mission was 40 years old. A special gathering was held in the Community Center. An excellent article, written by Ethel Bundy, appeared in the November *Evangelical Visitor*.

"One of the avenues of reaching the needs of our community is the Community Center. The average attendance for the past six weeks has been 48. Many who come between 7 and 10 p.m. on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday evenings are not Christians."

(1988) One of the men helping to replace the roof on the old "staff house" which housed the Dennis Ritchey family fell through the ceiling. He landed on Joanna's ironing board, breaking her iron. She was displeased! What was worse, it happened again. At least she was better prepared the second time.

"Indigenization—a long word with an important meaning. It has to do with people taking primary responsibility for the Christian ministry among themselves. It is a change from parent and child relationship to a ministry of cooperation between equals. Usually, where people take the initiative for Christian service, the church is strengthened and grows. Here among the Navajos progress is being made."

Water: A pump was placed in the lower reservoir so Navajos who haul water can fill their containers more quickly. (The writer observed this valuable free service in 1996.)

A new telephone service was purchased, with plans to install it before long.

(1989) On January 10 five members of the Chaco congregation were received into church membership. Several of the group felt they were already members because they had been baptized many years before. But they had never accepted the membership covenant statement. Through the years the Navajos have been slow to take the membership step, even after baptism.

Leaders: George Bundy listed five Navajos who were filling active roles as key church leaders: George Weero, Rodney Ignacio, Earl Nez Begay, Ernie Francisco, and Roy Larvingo, giving information about each one.

"Last year Navajo officials linked three teenage suicides with satanism. The cult is growing among the Navajos. A Tuba City...official blames the rise of satanism on the 'heavy metal culture' of those disenchanted with the values of society. We have been told that the body of one of the people buried here at the mission in 1989 had been mutilated."

The mission increased the amount of Navajo Christian literature. Raymond John and Fannie Scott did an enormous amount of translation work, primarily with TEE materials.

(1990) The two mission graveyards, the "final resting place" for 384 Navajo people, were completely filled. It therefore became necessary to expand the second one. No whites are in the first one. Only two whites, a woman and man (names later), lie at rest in the expanded part of the second cemetery.

Water: Another good story, told by Lula Asper Couch: When the mission was drilling for water [1957] a group of us in California were praying fervently. "Oh Lord, we pray that you will give [the mission] a deep, gushing well of water...so that there will be [enough] for the whole community...." Several days later the good news came. And the water is freely shared with all.

George and Ethel Bundy terminated their nine years of service at the mission in August. Jeff and Connie Sechrist, at the mission for over a year, succeeded them as superintendent and mission hostess.

Confession of a ten-year-old girl, on idols which hindered her worship: "Yes, I have idols—my television set, my dolls, my books, my dog, my jump rope, and my watch."

(1991) Dr. Alvin Heise was the first medical director at the Mission. He departed this life in March of 1991. Evelyn Longenecker wrote a beautiful tribute to him which was published in *Navajo News*.

Dr. Steve Cobb, professor of sociology and cultural anthropology at Messiah College, spent two weeks at the mission gathering information for a history of the mission he was starting to write. His focus was on the Navajo culture. (As of this writing, the project is ongoing.)

For some years the mission discussed ways to help the many Navajos entangled in the curse of alcoholism. It was agreed that they must be shown the love of Christ, no matter what the cost in time and money. In late 1991 an Overcomer's Outreach group was formed. The group studied the 12 step program which has been effective around the world. The need for the alcoholic to turn his/her life over to God is a very important part of the program. "Pray for us that we may be strong and courageous. Pray with us for a mighty moving of God's Spirit here in Navajo Land." ...Jeff Sechrist, Sept.

45TH ANNIVERSARY (1992) Only heaven will reveal how many Navajos have become believers and/or received spiritual nurture through the mission. One example is Harry Larvingo, who died in February. Excerpts follow from his children's tribute at the funeral, entitled "Dad, We Thank You."

"For the many nights and days you cared for us, we thank you—You showed us that by working hard we can provide for ourselves, we thank you—From your friendly and caring personality we perceive the importance of brotherhood, we thank you—Teaching us to have faith in God, we can have lives of happiness, we thank you."

Language: The staff continued to study the Navajo language, as taught by Ben Stoner. "It is a slow and difficult process. It helps us to understand the culture of a people who are dear to us."

The TEE program continued to be a vital part of the outreach and encouragement to local Christians. The Navajos have a real desire to know God, as evidenced by their questions.

(1993) George and Ernestine Chavez are a very special Navajo couple at the mission. As of June, 1993 they had 11 children, 29 grandchildren, and six great-greats. Both remember the early days at the mission. Ernestine gave her heart to the Lord under John Peter Yazzie's preaching. She has been a growing asset to the work at the Chapel. George struggled with alcohol for many years. In early 1993, with his wife's help, he gave his heart to the Lord. In his own words, "This was the greatest moment in my whole life."

(Writer's note: When we were at the mission in 1996, Ernestine, now in her early 70s, led in the singing of some choruses. Her voice was sweet and clear.)

Jeff and Connie Sechrist left the mission in June, 1993. Garland and Virginia Whittington replaced them as superintendent and interim pastor of the mission church, and mission hostess.

John Peter Yazzie's 80th birthday was celebrated (a year early) along with his 40 years of valuable service at the mission as interpreter, teacher, preacher, pastor, and translator.

(1994) Transition: The Navajos once came on horseback and in wagons, now they come in cars and pickups. Where there was almost no witness, now there are small camp churches led by Navajo pastors.

"Some may ask, 'Why are we still here if there is no longer a hospital or school?' We still provide many services, but our focus is changing to a stronger evangelistic emphasis. We will continue with our substance abuse counseling, our training of leaders, and our sensitivity to cultural values. We are here to evangelize, not to anglicize." ...Garland Whittington.

Water: The state required the mission to chlorinate its perfectly clear, pure water. New storage tanks were needed. The project would be costly. At the end of May over \$4500 had been received. VS people were waiting.

Because of Garland's heart attack, the Whittingtons left the mission after 16 months of service. Paul and Tommie Mohler were asked to fill in until the new superintendent arrived.

(1995) On March 3 Charlie and Leone Byer arrived at the mission to begin their ministry as superintendent and mission hostess. They had pastored in Canada for 22 years.

Two shocking deaths: Connie Sechrist, who still lived in the area, died from a heart attack, and became the first anglo to be buried in the mission cemetery in its 48-year history. Paul Mohler died in his chair at the mission on October 1, also of a heart attack. The funeral was in the mission chapel, and his was the second anglo body interred in the mission cemetery. His wife Tommie was in the hospital at the time, recovering from pneumonia.

Charlie Byer was giving leadership to seven church services/Bible studies a week. "We have several hundred acres, a craft store, thrift store, and laundromat to maintain as well. We are not complaining—we are encouraged, but we are also busy. Pray for us."

(1996) The Board of Directors met at the mission in January and made two announcements: First, a homecoming and revival are planned for July 13-20, 1997, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the mission. Second, an alcohol and drug treatment program (Overcomers) will be opened at the mission. "Almost every family in the area is affected by alcohol abuse. Half the plots in the cemetery are the result of alcohol. The closest Christian treatment program is 130 miles away."

Jane: According to Charlie, "We are on target with planning for the Overcomers program, [with a] January 1 start up date." He said that

staff and facilities are in place. Roger Rasch came in early September, as Program Director, along with his wife Audrey.

November: Roger Rasch reports: At least three teachers from our community, with a hundred years of collective experience to their own Navajo people, plan to participate on a volunteer basis. Sponsors are needed for those who cannot pay the fee for the three month course: singles, \$450; families, \$720. (Update: Overcomers has been changed to a 30-day program, with an option to stay an extended 30 to 60 days. This new plan is working well.)

Water: (one final time) In a December 1996 letter to mission supporters, Supt. Charlie Byer reported, "...our water pump burned out recently.... We needed a drilling rig to pull it out and reinstall a new pump, leaving an unexpected bill of \$2900."

And, as has happened again and again in the past 50 years, funds came in to underwrite this expense. And one more time the mission staff responded, "It is because of...your generosity that we are able to keep [the mission moving forward].... What a privilege to be partners in Kingdom Work."

50TH ANNIVERSARY (1997) Reflections

By J. Wilmer Heisey, first long-term mission superintendent

In a sense the Navajo Mission has been a laboratory for discipleship and mission for the several hundred servants of the church who later served elsewhere, in America and overseas. The Navajo people, whom we came to know and love, understood that our cultural understandings were at times quite limited. But, individually, many Navajos made significant contributions to the lives of the mission workers.

When a Navajo believer volunteered that, "we are brothers and sisters, in Christ," that testimony had great meaning. The Apostle Paul put it this way: "So all of us, in union with Christ, form one body, and as parts of it we belong to each other." Romans 12:5 (J.B.)

By Marion J. Heisey, second long-term mission superintendent

The evolution in change at the Navajo Mission is exciting because each change reflects the need at the time. I believe each change made over the years was appropriate, relevant, and contemporary. We don't create change for the sake of change, but because a need exists.

Foundations are established as building blocks for each phase of development builds on what went before.

There is no such thing as going "backward" in a program, but only capturing what is needful at the time. Statistics change, personnel changes, programs change, leadership changes, but vision and objectives essentially remain the same.

It is interesting to note that the first proposal for an alcohol rehab center was written in 1976, but it took 20 years for it to come to fruition in a form that is workable, practical, and viable. God does not negate or obliterate the work that went before. "...So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one...." 1 Cor. 2:7-8

By George Bundy, third long-term mission superintendent

The decade of the 80's began with change at Navajo Mission. The hospital had discontinued and now early in 1983 the school closed as well. Staff had changed. From 38 in 1972 and 24 in 1980, it dropped to six (for a time just two of us!). All of this caused one Navajo man to ask, "What are you doing over there?" Of course, we continued to do many things.

Among the new moves was the training program for church leaders known as Theological Education by Extension (TEE). There were two weekly Bible study programs for all ages during the spring and fall. The reviving of the camp meeting program of former years, now called Sagebrush, was an effort to bring spiritual renewal. A Brethren in Christ membership was established to develop a feeling of ownership.

Congratulations to those many Navajo families who participated intimately in the life of Navajo Mission during the past 50 years. It has been a wonderful journey, and those of us who shared in that journey rejoice with you!

By Charles Byer, present mission superintendent

It is our privilege to be a part of the Navajo Brethren in Christ Mission at this milestone in her history. One of the recurring realizations is the vast impact the mission has had these fifty years.

Most every Navajo I talk with has been connected here. Many of the 2500 people born in our hospital still live in the area. Former students

proudly talk of teachers and staff. Many Navajos return to pay respect to loved ones interred in our cemeteries. At many community church gatherings tribute is paid to Brethren in Christ teaching and influence.

At this point in history, our community focus is the BIC Overcomers Program, which is a residential program geared to point substance abusers to the overcoming power of God.

Other social needs are met by providing water, laundry, and shower facilities, a used clothing store, a retail craft store, and some GED opportunities. Our chapel membership is near 50, with an average attendance of 35. We pray for many more years of positive influence for the kingdom of God in this remote area of USA.

Conclusion by writer: As I studied reports and talked to various people involved in the ministries of the Navajo Mission during the past 50 years, I came to the conclusion that the mission's life is much like an individual Christian's life. There are high points and low points, with routine and mundane experiences scattered between. With the unfolding of the years at the mission, an untold amount of blessing flowed out to the native Americans being evangelized, nurtured, educated, and healed. And while that was happening, the missionaries also received spiritual strengthening, service skills, and inspiration.

The Navajo Mission has been an exciting ministry which gradually came to involve the whole denomination. It has been carried forward and upward on the muscles, emotions, intellects, hands, and prayers of countless people.

The mission's welcome mat is always out. A visit will stimulate your faith and challenge your imagination. You will see for yourself that wonderful things continue to happen there. In any event, our prayers (which mission personnel have sought passionately from the first) will, as always, help enlarge the vision and vigor of the Navajo Mission's ministries.

Sketches of the first 50 Years of Ministry

Navajo Mission Personnel

Please Note:

With few exceptions, this list includes only the names of those who served at the mission for at least six consecutive weeks. A listing of all who served for shorter times and gave significant service would likely contain at least 500 more names.

In addition to the names below, the kind of service is given, often in abbreviated form to allow for more information.

All names are listed alphabetically. When married couples are listed, the initial of the spouse's first name is placed following the first name. Sample: John (A) Smith.

Under the names of some married women their single name is listed. This means that both spouses served at the mission as singles before they were married.

The names of Navajos are followed by an asterisk (*).

Ethel Bundy has compiled a similar list of names with more information: dates of service, single names, married names at present, cross-referencing, and those deceased. This helpful list is available by calling or writing to the mission.

Our apologies for any incorrect information or omissions below. If you notice such, kindly inform the mission and the correction will appear in a coming issue of the Navajo News.

Tracy Archer*, maintenance
John Almar*, Ch Board, bus driver
Nina Almar*, Chas Ch Board
Pauline Almar*, Chas Ch Bd, and past
Don Bauman (L), office mgr, hosp, dorm pt
Joan Bauman (L), LFN, dorm parent
see Joan Hoffmann
Fabia Baylyle*, BOB, Overcomer
Ernest Baylyle*, Overcomer program
Billy Beyer*, showers, laundry, workshop
Emeline Beyer*, Ch Bd, and Bd of Devo
Lilly Beyer*, dorm supervisor
Marie Beyer*, visitation, teacher
Elin Boudy*, jewelry, Self Help program
Ann Bort, dorm supervisor, maintenance
Ruby (L) Boudy*, interpreter
John (R) Boudy*, maintenance
Ann Boudy*, clinic int, clerical
Lucy (L) Boudy*, wife, bus dr, cook
Linda (L) Boudy*, teacher
Laura Brad, RN
Gussey Brulace, dorm super, wife's aide
Bob (M) Bruck, housekeeper, support staff
Father Bruck, teacher, secretary
Laure Bruck, long sick, camp worker

Martin (B) Bruck, MD, Medical Director
Ruth Bruck, RN
Dora (F) Bruck, builder
Priscilla (B) Bruck, cook
Nancy Bruckhill, teacher
Mildred Brullinger, RN
Anna Brubaker, cook
Lucy (L) Brubaker, housekeeper, apt staff
Samuel (L) Brubaker, MD, Medical Dir
Samuel Bruckwiler, hospital builder
Bruce Bundy, computer technician
Ethel (L) Bundy, house, teacher, writer
George (L) Bundy, Superintendent
Charles (L) Byr, Superintendent
Leona (L) Byr, house, sales minister
Dorothy Campbell, dorm supervisor
Marie Carlson, office mng, sewing of
Allen Carlson, maint, long assist
Dorothy Carlson, first school teacher
Marjorie Charles, support staff
Richard Charles, long int, teacher, etc
Ernest Chavez*, land cook, dorm parent
Emeline Chavez*, weaving, visit, Ch Bd
Ervin Chavez*, teacher's wife
Julia Chavez*, land cook, dorm parent

Melvin Chavez*, teacher's wife
Nita Chavez*, support staff
Rachel Capenhaver, RN, teacher
Evelyn Cawalt, office manager
Dorothy (L) Cawalt, and bus mng, meat
Shirley (B) Cawalt, teacher
Bill (K) Caylor, church minister
Kenneth (L) Caylor, MD for staff
Troyla Caylor, staff and school cook
Rich Cunningham, maintenance
Phoebe Cussey*, nurse's aide
Martha Cullen, dorm supervisor
Fred Eaton*, Church Board member
Lynda Eaton*, int certified staff aide
Carl (C) Dierly, maintenance, cook
Chas (C) Dierly, RN
see Chas Meyer
Glad (L) Dey, cook
James (L) Dey, cook
Evelyn (L) Edwards, secretary
John (L) Edwards, maint, com center
Edison Edwards*, maintenance
David Eagle, maintenance
Howard Eagle, maintenance
Margaret (M) Eagle, support staff
M.E. "Mike" (M) Eagle, builder
Ralph (L) Eagle, maintenance
Richard (B) Eagle, teacher
Joan (B) Eagle, teacher
Lucy (L) Easinger, RN
Samuel (L) Easinger, maintenance
Peggy Edmonson, hospital apt
Barbara Everett, dentist
Anna Jean (L) Eyster, support staff
Dorothy (B) Eyster, dairy, maintenance
Barbara (L) Eyster, teacher, dorm super
see Barbara Koller
John Dean (A) Eyster, Bd of Dir, com
Joyce Eyster, hospital aide
Kathy Eyster, office secretary
Rosa Eyster, long term missionary
Eunice Feltzinger, kitchen aide
Ernie Francisco*, 35 yr youth, TEE child
Glenora Fry, teacher, writer
Philip Fry, dentist, common etc apt
Alyce Frisner, cook
Martha Garber, RN
Ruth Gertel, RN
Carl Ginder, maint, vacation apt
Nina Goldsmith*, long apt, int, etc, dorm
Gladys Gonsert, maintenance
Dorcas (B) Gordon, staff and school cook
Richard (L) Gordon, maintenance, cook

Richard Gordon, maintenance
W. Eugene (B) Hase, teacher, Accompanist
Sophia (L) Hase, RN
see Sophia Reynolds
Ralph Hader, cook
Rose Hamilton, wife's aide, dorm super
Ruth Harman, RN
Joan Harlings, patient care
Barbara Hawk, patient care, sewing
Alice (M) Heise, MD, medical director
Kath Heise, accountant, and nurse service
Maxine (A) Heise, housekeeper, apt staff
Shirley Heise, RNA (same as LFN)
J. Wilcox (V) Heisey, Superintendent
J. Walter Heisey, maintenance
Joan Heisey, secretary, office manager
Joyce (N) Heisey, RN, Head Nurse
Marlyn Heisey, principal, etc head apt
Marion (B) Heisey, Mission Director
Nelson (L) Heisey, maintenance
see Joyce Widgenoth
Rachel (M) Heisey, apt, housekeeper, teacher
see Rachel Edmonson
Valene (B) Heisey, RN, housekeeper
housekeeper
Joan (B) Helms, teacher
Ronda (L) Helms, hospital cook
Carol (B) Hessel, cook
Earl (L) Hessel, maintenance
Chris Hess, maintenance
Earl Hess, maintenance
Erma Hess, RN, teacher
Joan (B) Hess, maint, etc apt, dorm
Martha Hess, LFN
Raymond Hess, builder
Rosa (L) Hess, RN, dorm parent
see Rosemary Wiggin
Ruth (B) Hess, cook
Joan Naomi Hess, cook
J. D. Hoffman, maintenance
Connie (W) Hoffman, housekeeper, apt staff
Warren (L) Hoffman, principal, pastor
Harriet (M) Holbert, LFN, Chas, visitation
see Naomi Scott
Dora (B) Holbert, maint, visit, Chas
Jeff (L) Hollibaugh, porch apt, maint
Lilly (L) Hollibaugh, teacher
Anna (B) Hoover, nurse house
Anna Marie Hoover, long int, exceptional
Eunice Hoover, teacher
Kenneth (A) Hoover, interim Superintendent
Lauretta Indle*, evangelist
Ruthie Ignacio*, as int, study log for min

John (M) Imboden, principal, teacher
 Mildred (J) Imboden, school assistant
 Raymond John*, ad. YEE-paater, teacher
 Arvey (B) Kanabo, maintenance
 Brenda (X) Kanabo, cook
 David Kanabo, maintenance, mechanic
 Alice (C) Karna, dorm parent
 Cecil (X) Karna, dorm parent
 Linda Kniffman, kitchen helper
 Luke Krieger Jr., teacher, principal
 Greg Kennedy, teacher, school assistant
 Bill (J) Koller, language study
 Laura (B) Koller, support staff
 Elmer (J) Krieger, RN, head nurse
 see Elmer Walgemoth
 Al Krieger, teacher
 John K (J) Krieger, MD, Med Dir
 Brian (J) Lady, dorm parent
 Joyce (B) Lady, teacher, dorm parent
 Mary-Olive Lady, teacher, dorm supervisor
 John (J) Landin, maint, construction
 Lucy (J) Landin, teacher
 Harry Larvinger*, sch. com. memb., builder
 Nina Larvinger*, interpreter, long aide
 Nancy C Larvinger*, dorm, long aide
 Kim Larvinger*, teacher's aide
 Roy Larvinger*, witness ch. hd., maint. bldg.
 Geneva Levy, RN
 Peter Lee*, electrician
 Russell Lee, maintenance, shop work
 Charles Lehmus, RN, pub. health nurse
 Lucy Lehman, cust. service, cook
 Earle (J) Leisy, dorm supervisor
 John (J) Leisy, dorm supervisor
 Donna (W) Lindert, lady, kitch. dorm, aide
 Harvey W Lindert, jch. of all trades
 Sam Lindert, builder, gasfitter
 Winby (J) Lindert, handy, maintenance
 James Light, kitch. & office asst., cook
 Edna Long, RN
 Martha Long, teacher
 Richard Long, maint. sch. supervisor
 Evelyn (N) Longmacker, cloth, craft shop
 Ned (J) Longmacker, dir. of maintenance
 Anna Mae (J) Ludwig, LPN, dorm super
 John (A) Ludwig Jr. dorm super, library
 Emma (R) Mullins, maint., clothing cr.
 Rick (B) Mullins, maint., bible teacher
 Lauren Martin, school cook
 Tim McCulloch, support staff
 Beth McIlhenny, office manager, Mktg. rep.
 Linda Miller, student teacher
 Edith Mickey, teacher, dorm parent

David Miller, hosp. assistant, maint.
 Donald (J) Miller, MD, Medical Director
 Martha (J) Miller, homemaker, apt. staff
 Ruth (J) Miller, homemaker, nie. house
 Samuel (B) Miller, Supt., builder, etc.
 Paul (J) Muller, interim Supt., counselor
 Yvonne (J) Muller, craft, as. teacher
 Jane Moss, RN
 Verda Meyer, RN
 Jay Mouser, dorm supervisor
 Joyce Mouser, RN, teacher
 Jane Mouser, secretary, dorm parent
 Charles (J) Myers, maintenance
 Peggy (J) Myers, co-house, cook
 Robert Myers, maint., handy, farm
 Alvin Neuenhauer, electrician
 Philip Nee*, maintenance
 Earl Neefelger*, preacher, int. in youth
 Sandra Lee Neyer, RN, head nurse
 Michael Neuenhauer, maintenance
 Elmer (J) Nicholson, teacher, house
 Lynn (J) Nicholson, Superintendent
 Evelyn Noel, RN
 Marie Noel, kitchen help
 Christian (J) Oberholzer, prin. & teacher
 Shirley (C) Oberholzer, homemaker, teacher
 Janet Oberholzer, kitch. clerical, dorming
 Anita (J) Porechki, homemaker, Jefferson
 Paul (X) Porechki, Mgr. print, maint.
 James Potts, maintenance
 Eva Platter*, student teacher
 R. Nelson Fox, maint. cook, boys dorm
 Dean Pottiger, maint., youth worker
 James (B) Pottiger, sch. asst. bldg. maint.
 Ruth (J) Rowell, teacher
 Mervin (B) Pottiger, cook
 Ruth (M) Pottiger, LPN
 see Ruth Albrecht
 Steven Pottiger, school cook
 Audrey (B) Raach, Overseas, wmt. min.
 Roger (A) Raach, dir. of Overseas
 Karen Radfoss, painting, cleaning, etc.
 Joe (M) Rame, sch. cook, building super
 Melvyn (J) Rame, school cook
 Donald Rauler, Maintenance
 Vera Mae Rauler, cook, office coordinator
 April Richardson, office & laundry asst.
 Ralph (J) Rickett, maintenance
 Shirley (B) Rickel, homemaker, apt. staff
 Dennis (J) Richey, music, maint. M. TEE
 Elvin Richey Jr., maintenance, handy
 James (J) Richey, sec., bookkeeper, music
 Davis Roberts, cook

Eugene Robson, builder
 Elizabeth Rosenberger, sec., business admin.
 Ma Rosenberger, teacher
 Edna (N) Rosenthorpe, teacher
 Nancy (J) Rosenthorpe, RN, sch. health, vet.
 Lois (J) Ruess, clothing cr. supervisor
 Leroy (J) Ruess, maint. bldg. at school pr.
 Kelly Rott, support staff
 Isaac (N) Schaeffer, Supt., maint. etc.
 Nina (J) Schaeffer, mission house
 Nicola Schaeffer, Hosp., kitchen, car sale
 Evelyn Schick, RN
 Joel Schwartz, maint., gym activities
 Jane Schwartz, hospital cook
 Fannie Scott*, nurse's aide, int. trans. sch.
 Corrie (J) Seibert, Child's min. house
 Jeff (C) Seibert, Supt. bldg. maint.
 Dallas Shelly, maintenance
 Fannie Shelly, secretary
 Glenn (J) Shook, maintenance, handy
 Isaac (J) Shook, LPN
 Nancy Shook, RN
 Cindy (K) Shultz, cloth cr., wash bar
 Ken (C) Shultz, maintenance, builder
 Donald (M) Siler, head truck, farm manager
 Ethel (J) Siler, school matron
 John E (J) Siler, teacher
 Marion (J) Siler, LPN, dental technician
 see Marion Wagner
 Martha (B) Smith, homemaker, support staff
 Robert (M) Smith, MD, Medical Director
 Lorna Smucker, maint., construction
 Lois Smuck, cook
 Donna Tollenberger, RN
 Joe Sommers, customer service
 Sharon Sommers, customer service
 Elsie Stauffer, LPN, dorm supervisor
 Eunice (J) Steinbocher, homemaker, Adm. Asst.
 LaRue (J) Steinbocher, MD, Medical Dir.
 Edna Steinbocher, maintenance
 Earl K (M) Stone, business manager
 Martha (J) Stone, homemaker, support of
 Denise (V) Stuchfinger, support staff
 Vernon (J) Stuchfinger, maintenance
 Ben (J) Stover, Supt. sch. parent, music
 Eunice (B) Tanner, house, sch. maint.
 Evelyn Tanner, school cook
 Donald (M) Tammes, M.D., maint. sch. house
 Martha (J) Tammes, school cook, sch.
 Kathleen Thoma, RN, head nurse
 Karen Tice, dorm mother, athletic, house
 Bertha Tiedemann*, int. nurse's aide
 Beanie Trujillo*, int. sch. dorm super

Debbie (J) Tyson, dorm parent, teacher
 see, Debbie Tice
 Keth Tyson, sch. dir., maint. dorm super
 Dave (J) Tyson, dorm super, athletic dir.
 Annabelle Valdez*, dorm assistant
 Anita Waldron, hotel, coach, office asst.
 Charles (J) Walters, MD, Medical Director
 Sylvia (C) Walters, RN
 Donna (J) Weaver, part. apt. hd. of maint.
 Karen (J) Weaver, school secretary
 Cecile (B) Weiler*, sch. hd. parent, church, hd.
 Rae (C) Weiler*, vibration
 Shadrack Weiler*, bldg. sch. com., sch. hd.
 Daisy West*, typist, children's min.
 George (J) West*, preacher, int. jail min.
 Priscilla (J) West*, int. jail min. sch.
 Keith Whitson, maintenance
 Garland (N) Whittington, Gen. Supt., gate
 Virginia (J) Whittington, sewing center
 Lorenz Whitman, RN
 Mark Whitman, maint.
 Mary Whitman, RN
 Mary Sue Williams, cook
 Gracie Williams, RN
 Lois Wilson, RN
 Shady Winger, head hospital cook
 James Winger, RN
 Marilyn Winger, teacher's aide
 Angela Witter, secretary, craft shop
 Melba (J) Witter, maintenance
 Phyllis (B) Witter, sec., bookkeeper
 Margaret Witter, dorm supervisor
 Abner (J) Wolgemoth, NEC, builder
 Earl (J) Wolgemoth, admin., maintenance
 Helen Wolgemoth, V.N., child worker
 Jane (J) Wolgemoth, teacher
 Cynthia (A) Wolgemoth, support staff
 Jane Wolgemoth, teacher
 Anne Wyck, dir. of students
 Alfred Yarnie*, school com., Church Bd.
 Annabelle Yarnie*, sch. cook, interpreter
 Bobbie Yarnie*, school chaplain, pastor
 Jane Yarnie*, cook
 Emma Yarnie, headroom supervisor
 John Peter Yarnie*, int. parent, sec. as. com.
 Kenneth Yarnie*, self help jewelry
 Willie Yarnie*, builder, school com. memb.
 Ruth Zecher, RN, writer
 John (N) Zimmerman, maint., farm, kitch.
 Nancy (J) Zimmerman, long and sch. cook
 Elaine Zuck, secretary



ABOVE: A ministry planning group, about 1983. Standing: Fannie Scott, Ethel Bundy, Roy Larvingo, Eunice Stoner, Joseph, Becky, Timothy, and Ben Stoner, Angela Witter, Linda Bomberger, Carisa and Larry Bomberger, Rosa Eyster. Seated: Cecil Werito, Ray Werito, Ernestine Chavez. Front: John Peter Yazzie. RIGHT: Clinic visitors in new hospital, about 1953. Bertha Todachene is the Nurse's Aide.



TOP: Dr. Leroy Strishmecher accompanies Mr. Trujillo, a medicine man, to a medical plane for a flight to Albuquerque for special treatment in 1964. MIDDLE: George Bundy at the computer. BOTTOM: Education Building, Chapel, and Boys Dorm, about 1987.





ABOVE: Airview of mission about 1960. Good well in foreground. No sidewalks as yet (came about 1961). BELOW: Church Board at front of chapel in 1989: Theresa Yazzie, Nancy Larvingo, Roy Larvingo, Ernestine Chavez, Emile Francisco.



ABOVE: Large Navajo funeral at the mission cemetery. BELOW: Old style logan on mission property. This logan has been used by numerous people through the years. Many Navajos today have more modern buildings.





ABOVE: Bible translators: Mrs. Martin, Fannie Scott, David Tutt. LEFT: John Peter Yazzie, dressed up and ready to go from his room in 1958—a routine for 43 of the mission's 50 year history.



RIGHT: Child on Navajo cradleboard. BELOW: Mission sign: Jane Reynolds, Mary and Shadrack Wente.





TOP: Funeral crowd at the chapel. MIDDLE: Sarah Charlie and her new baby at the hospital, 1957. The baby's two sisters, Lucinda and Virginia, look on. BOTTOM: Community Center. Used for socials, sports, showers, laundry, youth activities, etc.



Four couples who served as superintendent and mission hostess: ABOVE, L: L. J. Wilmer and Velma Heisey served 14 years, 1952-1966. ABOVE, R: Marion and Rachel Heisey served 12 years, 1968-1980. BELOW, L: George and Ethel Bondy served nine years, 1981-1990. (These three couples provided leadership for 25 of the mission's 50 years.) BELOW, R: Charlie and Leone Byer, serving at present, 1995-.



A MISSION TO BRING
**LIVING
& WATER**
TO A THIRSTY LAND

Paul Hostetler has written a fascinating account of the Navajo Brethren in Christ Mission in New Mexico. His eye for interesting and important elements gives sparkle and life to the story of an institution.

People are at the heart of this book. Among the many the author introduces are Lynn Nicholson, catching a vision for a mission among the Navajos, Peter Yarric "with a song in his heart," and a ten-year-old Navajo girl confessing that her idols are "my television set, my dolls, my books, my dog, and my jump rope."

Through stories and people, Paul Hostetler has helped us to see God at work in a small part of his kingdom.

...Dr. E. Morris Sider, Professor of History, Archivist, author

With our daughters, Connie and I shared in the life of the Navajo Brethren in Christ Mission for four years. In the close day-to-day interaction of the mission community, we learned much about interpersonal relationships. In our association with the Navajo people, we entered into the challenge and fulfillment of cross-cultural friendships. In our work we participated in the sustained commitment of the Brethren in Christ to serve the felt needs of the Navajo people through the ministries of church, school, hospital, clinic, community center, and alcoholic rehabilitation.

The magnificent vistas, the ubiquitous sagebrush, the glorious wildflowers, the rugged terrain and weather, the resilient people, and the epiphanies of God in the desert—all are cherished memories of our years in the Tsi'ah Tuh community.

...Dr. Warren L. Hoffman, denominational General Secretary

Paul Hostetler has served the Brethren in Christ Church as pastor, convention director, college information director, stewardship director, and writer. He has authored four books, edited two, and published numerous magazine articles.

After beginning his "retirement" years in 1990, he and his wife visited the Brethren in Christ churches of North America. They promoted stewardship and missions, and gave four months of Voluntary Service in Zambia, Africa. Paul's work included (and continues to include) the donation of cabinet work and other finish carpentry for churches and institutions such as the Navajo Mission.