

Peggy Reiff Miller



Ferne Baldwin, a former Nigeria missionary, described the early opposition to missionaries in the Church of the Brethren.

Camp Mack dedicates Mission Village

In his book *The Story of Camp Alexander Mack*, L. W. Shultz refers to the camp as "a project in church history." Its very name, its many buildings and structures named after outstanding leaders in the Church of the Brethren, and its historical murals all give credence to this designation. On Sept. 13, under warm end-of-summer sunshine, a group of Camp Mack friends and missionary descendants gathered to continue this project in church history through the dedication of Mission Village.

Six yurts, round wooden huts of Mongolian design, make up the village. Each yurt has been named for a Church of the Brethren missionary couple representing various mission fields: Wilbur and Mary Stover (India), Adam and Alice Ebey (India), Franklin and Anna Crumpacker (China), Ira and Mabel Moomaw (India), Homer and Marguerite Burke (Nigeria and Puerto Rico), and J. Benton and Ruby Rhoades (Ecuador). "These yurts recognize another group of outstanding leaders in the church whose lives have touched Camp Mack in one way or another," said Rex Miller, the camp's executive director.

In her dedication address, former Nigerian missionary Ferne Baldwin spoke of how we almost didn't have missions in the Church of the Brethren. Besides the belief of many Brethren that the Great Commission was for the Apostles and not for us, there was great reluctance to pay support for missionaries when pastors were free ministers. The turning point was the development of Church of the Brethren colleges and publications, through which many Brethren began to learn that other denominations were doing mission work around the world.

The sharing of stories about foreign missions in the 1890s and following decades built an excitement that led many Brethren to devote years of their lives to the mission field. In the same way, it is the hope of the Indiana camp board that through the stories of Mission Village a new generation of leaders will catch the vision. "By lifting up the ministries of these six missionary couples, Church of the Brethren missions move from being a historical fact, as depicted in the murals in Quinter-Miller Auditorium, to being a living force in people's lives," said Miller, "to the extent that individuals may be inspired to enter into service to others as volunteers or to make vocational choices that continue the work of Jesus."

More pictures of the dedication can be seen at www.campmack.org—Peggy Reiff Miller