

In Thanksgiving to God for Harold S. Martin

Harold S. Martin was my mentor and friend for over 40 years. After reading the *BRF Witness* I wrote to him--at age 18--and he wrote a handwritten (!) letter in reply encouraging me to go into full time ministry and he recommended Ashland Seminary (the Brethren Church school). He sent me an alternative book list for the Brethren Three-Year Reading Course, and I read them all.

I first Bro. Harold in person when he preached on the Second Coming of Christ at the BRF General Meeting at the Maple Spring Church of the Brethren (Jerome, PA) in September 1985, and being fairly local, I attended. I was too shy to introduce myself to Bro. Harold then, just being a 21-year-old law student who would soon be elected to the ministry.

The next fall, when the BRF General Meeting was at the Pleasant View Church near Red Lion, PA, I did get up enough courage to introduce myself and inquire about possible candidates for our pastorate at Markleysburg-Asher Glade. I can picture that conversation still, in the foyer of the Pleasant View Church.

In the summer of 1987, knowing I would be attending Brethren Bible Institute that July, he dropped me a line inviting me to take his preaching appointment at the North Codorus house of the Pleasant Hill Congregation, the night before BBI was to begin. I accepted, and with much anxious feeling, preached a message on Acts 8 with Bro. Harold sitting on the front bench. I almost felt as though I was back in college, anticipating a grade from the instructor once again, yet Harold provided encouraging words.

As a student at BBI I took every course he taught, and still have his notes, including his masterful exposition of Daniel, and his extensive teaching on Brethren Life and Thought.

At my invitation, he and Priscilla later came to Ashland to hear Gordon Fee lecture on First Corinthians (including 1 Corinthians 11). Their attending was a surprise, as he had written to me that his schedule would hardly allow him the time to attend. It was my honor to enjoy their fellowship that day.

In 1989 I was invited to serve alongside the elders on the BRF Committee where I learned to know a different side of Bro. Harold's personality. Self-admittedly not a joke-teller, his ability to be amused by quips and jokes of Brethren Jim Myer, Paul Brubaker, and Harry Nell was funny in itself.

After graduating from Ashland, in the summer of 1990 I received another letter from Harold, relating how the Blue River congregation in Northern Indiana had requested his recommendation for a new pastor. He gave them my name. After the requisite interviews, trial messages, etc., the congregation extended its call and Bro. Harold strongly recommended I accept it. So, my now 33-year long pastorate is directly attributable to him, and he provided steady encouragement and counsel through the years.

One particularly memorable event was after I had been at Blue River for five years. The congregation put on a surprise anniversary Sunday, and unknown to me, invited Bro. Harold to attend. As I opened the service at Blue River that morning, I was stunned to see Bro. Harold and Sis. Priscilla come walking up the aisle to sit in the benches. My first thought was, "Oh no! I knew I should have worked more on my sermon!" Happily, I was relieved to discover that Harold would preach that morning.

I assisted Bro. Harold at the first large Love Feast I ever attended, at White Oak in May 1990. I knew very little about the protocol, yet he graciously directed me in how things were handled. Thirty years later I was the one officiating the White Oak Love Feast, while keeping the unique experience of 1990 in my mind.

Bro. Harold preached a number of revival, Pre-Easter, and other meetings at Blue River through the years. My eldest daughter, Cora Lupardo, trusted Christ the night that Harold preached his last extended series of meetings at Blue River. We had to cancel the previous night's service due to a blizzard. At the prompting of a deacon, I asked him if he could preach both of his remaining messages on Wednesday evening. Harold consented. He preached a sermon on nonconformity, and then one on nonresistance.

After the unique service concluded, Harold and Priscilla began their return journey to Pennsylvania. Sometime later that evening, Cora came into my study, with signs of tears in her eyes. The Holy Spirit used Bro. Harold's teaching message on nonconformity to bring this 7-year-old girl to conviction of sin and need of her Saviour. She was baptized the following Easter Sunday morning. It simply demonstrated to me that a preacher doesn't need always to preach evangelistic messages to draw persons to Christ.

It was an honor to be asked to work alongside Bro. Harold as assistant editor of the *BRF Witness* from 1991 and which I continue to do today. It was both a pleasure

and a challenge for a possible *Witness* article to be returned with plenty of corrections in red ink—yet every one was intended to tighten and clarify my writing. Then there were opportunities for me to return the favor!

It was always a pleasure to spend time in their home on Stephen Avenue in York and at their cottage at the United Zion home in Lititz.

It has been my privilege to learn from, read, listen to, and labor alongside Bro. Harold Martin for these many years. He has been a faithful servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. May God bless his memory and may his legacy continue to build among the Brethren and beyond.

Pastor Craig Alan Myers