

OBITUARY - CORNELIUS P. EITZEN

1.6.4

Cornelius P. Eitzen, our father, was born in Russia on September 10, 1877 to his parents Peter and Kathrine Nikkel Eitzen. One year later his parents brought him to this country and settled in Mountain Lake, Minnesota, where he resided with them during his childhood and early life.

It pleased the Lord to allow our father many testings and trials during his early life. The Lord took from his side his first wife, Mary Funk, after only a few years of marriage. Marie, the daughter that was born to this union also preceded father in death in February of 1929. Father married again to Anna Friesen and to this union was born a son Harry. In less than two years, Typhoid fever took both our father and his wife Anna to the Hospital. The Lord spared our father's life, but took his wife to be with Him. It was during this time in 1914 that our father rededicated his life to the Lord and began to serve Him with greater zeal. In the year of 1930 he followed the Lord through the waters of baptism in the Bakersfield Mennonite Brethren Church with Rev. J. B. Kopper officiating. On Dec. 30, 1926, he was married to our mother Mary (Harder) Cornelsen, a widow who had also experienced the loss of two husbands. Together they shared their faith in Christ and began to build a life that proved to be both meaningful and blessed. To this union was born a daughter Doris in 1928.

During his lifetime our father has lived in Mountain Lake, Minnesota; Munich, North Dakota; Bakersfield and Shafter, California. Our family moved to Shafter in 1949 where we became members of the Shafter M.B. Church and Father remained a faithful member until the Lord took him home. He worked as a carpenter until his retirement in 1947. Retirement did not mean inactivity to him as he sought to help where he could. In 1954 and at the age of 76 he built the house in which he lived until his death.

To sing was his delight. He knew many Hymns and Gospel Songs by memory. One day he told us that he had sung 20 hymns by heart during that evening.

The Pacific District Conference elected him to serve on the first Board for the Homes for the Aged. It was this Board that was entrusted with the responsibility of building the first Home in Reedley, California. His church meant much to him. He enjoyed his Sunday School Class, the Church Services, and Prayer meeting and attended regularly until health did not always permit regular attendance. When he could not fellowship with the believers in church he sat by his radio and listened to the regular morning Worship service of our church as well as many of his favorite Christian broadcasts. He was present at both Sunday services during the last Sunday of his life on March 17. During the evening service the question was asked "How many Octogenarians are present?" He was over eighty years of age and raised his hand.

His interest in the work of the Lord went far beyond the fellowship of the local church. The deep pain that he experienced during his daughter Marie's passing turned into an opportunity to serve the Lord. Marie had prepared for Foreign Mission service but the Lord led in another way. Our father invested Marie's estate into a missionary fund that kept a missionary on the field for 20 years. The celebration of our parents 25th Wedding Anniversary in 1951 was also a real blessing and highlight in their life.

On Wednesday evening he read the scriptures marking the passage that he had read by placing his eye glasses in the Bible. He read the scriptures often and his Bible was well marked. Early Thursday morning he was taken to