

A Brief History of Black Forest Academy

Making an Impact in World Missions

Dick Derksen

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the Director of Black Forest Academy and the Principal for making possible the time in my assignment to research and write this history. I would also thank Harding Braaten and many others in Janz Team Ministries for assisting in finding the people who had the information needed.

Doing historical research involves going to the original sources as much as possible. Some of these provided written documentation of events, people involved, locations, and in some cases, anecdotes that spiced up the information. I have included probably more than enough citations from these documents, mainly because I believe that the people themselves should be heard. They were the people that laid the foundation for the present school. Please bear with any repetitions that might occur because of this, and the story might flow more evenly, were it not for these quotations, but I believe they are valuable in themselves.

Many of them dug into long-stored caches of bygone memories to find pictures, old newsletters and records, and other memorabilia to recall the time they spent at BFA. To those who responded to the questionnaire, I would extend my thanks on behalf of everyone who reads these pages and muses over the pictures. Because the responses to my questions were not always in full sentences, the citations reflect these shortened replies. I trust the readers are able to decipher the meanings of these snatches without the attending questions. Added to these personal memories were many documents and pictures from archives in various locations that provided insight into the development of Black Forest Academy. It will be noticed that there aren't any interviews with more recent staff members and students of BFA; this is possibly a weakness in my research, but I believe that there will probably be a need for a second edition of this work, to broaden the scope of its findings, particularly in regards to where our alumni – both students and staff – presently are in their pilgrimage. That could be a doctoral dissertation!

In the fifty years since BFA's inception, people have come and gone. Some originals, like Vera (Kroeker) Voth, Tina Isaak, Dick Driedger, Richard Loepky, Bill Neudorf, Ray Ratzlaff and Henry Toews are in retired or semi-retired status. Jay Barnes is now Provost of Bethel College and Robert Sloan is Chancellor of Baylor University, while Harold Klassen heads up the Transforming Teachers ministry of Janz Team. These people took time to fill out questionnaires and graciously sat through interviews, following them up with e-mails to answer questions that eventually arose out of questions.

This has been a labor of love. I have a deep love of history, music and astronomy, particularly the history, music and astronomy of God's work in the Church, and Black Forest Academy is one of the stars glistening in the heaven of institutions raised up by the Lord to honor His great Name through the great concert of hundreds of young people that have received their basic education in its classrooms and their life skills in its residences.

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Chapter 1

Beginnings

Black Forest Academy – its name has gone around the world. In Europe, Africa, Asia, North and South America and Australia, and who knows but also the Antarctic and the space program, BFA graduates may be found. Housewives, doctors, lawyers, teachers, pastors, missionaries, mechanics and cooks – all stations in life can trace their roots back to a basic education at BFA. Teachers have given one year or many years to serve as missionaries on support to give of themselves and their gifts to the students.

House parents and residence assistants have poured their love and energy into students' lives. Office and support staff and administrative leadership have all responded to the call of God to use their expertise to serve at this school. Missionary families have relinquished their children at tender ages, and with great sacrifice have sent them away to this boarding institution, knowing that somehow God would reward them for their choice.

Yes, the name of Black Forest Academy resounds with stories of academic, personal and spiritual growth in a host of students and alumni. A few people, whose life project was begun but is still unfinished, are in process at another stage of their journey.

What factors have contributed to this phenomenal Christian boarding school in the heart of Europe? Let's look at its history to find the various impulses that formed what it is today.

Before we can begin the actual story of the school's beginnings, we must look at some of the people that were originally involved in starting it. That would involve members of a family from Main Centre, Saskatchewan, Canada, who had moved to Three Hills, Alberta, to become part of Prairie Bible Institute. This family was named Janz, a name that comes out of Anabaptist roots that brought them to Canada from Ukraine, and more distantly, from East Prussia and northern Germany and Holland in the Mennonite migrations.

On the prairies of Canada, the Janz Brothers, under the leadership of baritone Leo, with older brother Adolph as second tenor and their younger brother, Hildor, as star first tenor soloist, and with brother-in-law Cornie Enns providing a booming bass voice, had formed a male quartet – a vocal group very popular in the late 1940s and throughout the 50s and 60s – which became well known across the prairies for their renditions of gospel melodies. Leo was also a gifted evangelist, and many came to a new experience of Christian dedication under his ministry.

They first settled at Briercrest Bible Institute in Saskatchewan and produced a radio program there. There they also met the resident nurse, Tina Blatz, who was later to become part of their team in Germany. Their move to Three Hills, Alberta, occurred when they were invited

by Prairie Bible Institute for extension ministry and a radio program, “Hymns that Live,” which was aired on stations throughout the Canadian prairies and on American stations, as well. On weekends they often traveled to outlying churches for meetings. So great was their demand in the early 50s, that a Christian businessman gave PBI an 8-seater Anson airplane, and they flew to their weekend destinations. Mr. Maxwell, the Principal of the Bible school, often went with them as speaker.

Perhaps a bit about the attitudes of Christians in western Canada in the 50s would be in order here. Evangelical churches were generally very conservative, and PBI was noted for this conservative approach. It was the largest missionary training institute in Canada, and its graduates could be found in most of the “faith missions” around the world, doing credible work in all areas of missions. Evangelistic “crusades” were popular in those days, as evidenced by the growth of the Billy Graham Association during that time. Because of their Mennonite background, the men all spoke a Low-German dialect, which made communication with Germans possible, though not perfect. Their heritage was somewhat modified by their having disbursed themselves into other evangelical denominations and into an increasingly English-speaking environment.

In 1951, they were asked by a friend in Youth for Christ to make a tour of post-war Germany. This tour opened their eyes to the tremendous spiritual vacuum that had been left by the devastation of Europe, and by the dashed hopes of many who thought that the Enlightenment values that had gripped Germany would bring lasting peace. Leo felt the call of God to come back and help struggling German-speaking people to find spiritual answers to their deepest questions.

Although it took until November, 1955, this calling was obeyed. Leo and Hildor, and their wives, Lydia and Olga, together with Harding Braaten, who had joined them as pianist and organist, arrived in Basel with families to begin their ministry in German-speaking Europe. They settled in Basel, Switzerland, and opened an office in a block of suites and apartments at Elsässerstrasse 22. They absorbed themselves in language learning. The first item on their missionary agenda was to find a radio station to air their inspirational programs. Since radio in Europe was state-controlled, and Germany and Switzerland did not accept their programs, they settled for broadcasting through Radio Luxembourg. Soon the Janz Brothers Gospel Association became well known in Europe. Calls began to come in for more in-depth evangelistic outreaches, and the crusade ministry was added to that of radio broadcasting.

Here are Harding Braaten’s recollections, written in the 1990s, out of his memory of many years as Secretary of the Janz Team School Board:

In November of 1955, the Janz Brothers evangelistic team (now called Janz Team Ministries) arrived in Basel, Switzerland, with six children of school age and more approaching that age. These six school children were sent to the Swiss school at first, where sudden differences in language, culture and school system made learning extremely difficult. Added to that was the fact that the school year in Basel began in spring, which would have made coordination with schools back in Canada a big “fiasco” during furlough time. There seemed but one alternative – call for help!

Cornie Enns, reflecting in Karen Sander's book, (1988) *Leaving Home at Last*. Kandern: BFA, writes:

When efforts were unsuccessful to integrate the Janz Team missionaries' children in 1955-56 into the Swiss school system, it became apparent that something would have to be done for the education of these children if the work in Europe was to go on unhindered.

Phyllis, Gloria, Ken, Vern, Gerald, Paul – all surnamed Janz – began Swiss schooling in grades 1-5, coming into the middle of a school year, and because they did not adjust well to the change in language and curriculum, an alternative had to be found – and quickly. Alberta correspondence courses sent from Calgary were chosen, because the program was familiar to them, and because across the Canadian prairies in those days, Christian education and secular education were virtually synonymous. Since most areas were primarily settled by strongly religious people from the Old Country, the idea that the school reflected the Christian values of the population was taken for granted.

Prairie Bible Institute had a growing Christian boarding high school and an on-campus elementary school – unique institutions in Canada in the 50s. That school followed the Alberta curriculum, and that was the model “Christian” school for the Janz brothers. The Janz Team School was generally spoken of as a Canadian house school, rather than a Christian school. The idea of home schooling was not to come into common parlance in Canada until twenty or thirty years later.

The students finished out the school year working around the kitchen table in Lydia and Olga Janz's care, doing their correspondence lessons, to be sent back to Alberta for correction and comments. All the students were able to go into their next grade the following year, thanks to the motherly-auntly care of Lydia and Olga.

Being cramped in city apartments was another major discomfort for these families, who had enjoyed the endless Canadian prairies to this time. Keeping six squirming elementary school children profitably occupied and out of each other's hair, along with a group of smaller toddlers coming along behind, was a challenge no mother would take easily. There was a desperate need for something to be done.

Harding Braaten continues his reflections:

In fall of 1956, Miss Vera Kroeker from near St. Catherines, Ontario, was on hand as our very first teacher in what was recognized for several years as the Janz Team “Hauschule” (house school).

Cornie Enns adds:

Consequently, in 1956, we received our very first teacher. Vera Kroeker arrived on the scene to teach eight, energy-laden youngsters.

Vera Kroeker had known the Janz brothers at Prairie Bible Institute and had returned to her home in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, when she was called by the Janzes, now in Europe, to come and help them. She writes:

The Janz Team children's elementary school (later to be named Black Forest Academy) began in fall of 1956. Before the Team left for Europe the men had asked me if I would come and teach the children, but I had already signed a contract with the Niagara-on-the-Lake school board. After an unsuccessful attempt to start the children in the local Swiss school (the school year began in April), the Janz wives opted for teaching their children at home with the aid of correspondence courses. After finishing my contract year, I met Alvin Voth and we were engaged in July of that summer. However, that did not stop me from going to Europe where the Janz children were waiting for me to be their teacher. At that time the Team resided in Basel, Switzerland, just over the border from Lörrach, Germany, the place destined to be the location for the European headquarters of Janz Team.

In the apartment building where the Janz Team office was located a large classroom was arranged. School desks, black boards and book shelves were all in place for the first day of school. Phyllis, Gloria, Ken, Vern, Gerald, Paul, David and Danny were happy students!

As a guide we used a correspondence course from Calgary, AB and started with four grades. Each morning class was opened with the singing of *O Canada*, followed by prayer and Bible reading. The older classes could begin their work alone while I taught the lower grades. The children were obedient and did most of their work in class so they would not have much homework to do.

At recess time the students went outside to play on the swings and slides in a nearby park. In winter they enjoyed sledding in the nearby hills (if and when there was snow, that is!). Sometimes the Swiss children living in the neighborhood wanted to play with them, so our children got to know them very well. Later they were able to bring them along to our Sunday School, and some parents even got them interested in the ministry of Janz Team.

Since the fathers were often away holding meetings in some village or town, I tried my best to entertain the kids after school and on weekends. We would take walks on the beautiful walkways or play ball in the park. The kids enjoyed art class and some painted lovely scenic pictures. At Christmas, Easter and Thanksgiving we presented short programs for the parents to enjoy.

I had the privilege of helping in the office as well. Many letters came in as a result of the broadcasts over Radio Luxembourg and since I knew German, I was able to help answer them. In addition, I sometimes had the opportunity of helping the counseling at the evangelistic meetings held by the Team. Leo Janz usually gave me the young girls to deal with. It was rewarding to see how the Word of God opened their spiritual eyes to the new life in Christ. Many times the wives would go along on the evangelistic tours and I stayed home to babysit the gang. I did get to know the kids quite well and years later, when I heard how several of them got involved in the Lord's service, my heart rejoiced. May the Lord continue to bless each of the families!

In total I taught for two years and then returned home. Other teachers arrived to take my place and the school soon began to grow, becoming what is known today as the Black Forest Academy. *I am the Lord, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?* (Jeremiah 32:27).

Vera Kroeker went back to Ontario, married Alvin Voth, and spent many years in Colombia with Mennonite Brethren Missions before retiring back to her home area in Canada. Agnes Loewen, and eventually Tina Isaak, came to replace Vera.

You will have noticed that the founding date of the school is taken to be the arrival of the first teacher, not the correspondence-lesson based home schooling that preceded it. This again is typical of 50s Canadian logic in regards to schooling – a real school has a qualified teacher and a properly furnished classroom. If the family was too far away from a school, correspondence lessons from the Department of Education were used to guide the lessons.

Since the children had begun with correspondence lessons, and since there were multiple grades in the small school and only one teacher, the curriculum continued to consist of Alberta Correspondence lessons for each grade, with the teacher supervising the lessons.

Tina Isaak reported:

1960: Elsässerstr. 22, Basel, Switzerland; the school consisted of an apartment of 3 rooms plus kitchen, with a very small back yard. In front ran a narrow street with clanging tram. Three parks were within easy distance. It was a stressful situation to begin. Books and correspondence courses arrived late. David Enns, Lauren Enns, Danny Janz, Gloria Janz, Jerrold Janz, Ken Janz, Mary Ann Janz, Paul Janz, Phyllis Janz, Vern Janz were in grades 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9.

From January-June 1961 Martha Goertzen joined me as teacher for Gr. 7 + 9. Alice & Elaine Janz were added as students.

1961-62: Tina Isaak taught grades 1-6; Martha Goertzen taught grades. 7-10. Carol Enns, Steven Fuller, David Janz, Gordon Janz were added as students.

1962-63: I taught grades 2, 3, and 6. Students were Carol, David, Lauren Enns; Jim, Robert Peters.

1963-64: I taught the same students in grades 3, 4, 7.

Harding adds:

Students were confined mainly to children of Janz Team families (the Team was still small in those years!), although exceptions were made here and there. These exceptions included families such as the Dan Fullers (founder of Fuller Theological Seminary), the Heine Germanns (Swiss-Canadian family serving with World Vision in the Far East), and the Ernie Klassens (co-founder of Brake Bible Institute).

In an interview in October, 2002, Tina Isaak said:

I wanted to be a missionary, somewhere, anywhere, as I had learned at Prairie Bible Institute. I went to PBI because of Janz brothers' radio broadcasts and

an evangelistic crusade they held in my home town of Osler, SK. I had read a book by L. E. Maxwell, President of PBI. I had taught piano one year at PBI and after four years at the Mennonite Collegiate Institute in Gretna, MB, I wrote Leo Janz, whom I had gotten to know better at PBI, to ask him which mission I should go with. "Don't do anything!" was his reply. They were coming on Home Ministry, at which time we met, and he invited me to come to Basel and teach in their school.

I had a horrible first year; it was very stressful. I tried to get a blackboard, but it was too heavy to carry up the stairs, so we painted a sheet of pressboard. Where could the children play? We used parks near the building, so the neighbors very quickly became aware of our school. We burned trash in a barrel in the yard, and the fire department was called by the neighbors. A tram went by the front door of the building, which made so much noise we had to stop teaching each time it passed, and the Janz brothers' recording studio had to pause each time, as well. I lived with a number of Janz Team people.

In 1959-60 the entire Janz Team was on Home Ministry in Canada, so there were no students in the school. Cornie Enns adds:

Spending a full year on furlough back in Canada, the entire Janz Team arrived back in Europe in 1960, with an enrollment of 13 students in grades 1-10. With the much-needed help of Tina Isaak, the children were taught until after Christmas, when Martha Goertzen came to relieve her. The school rooms were established on the second floor of an office building owned by the Janz Team in Basel, Switzerland. The location chosen proved to be in an area which was not the most conducive to learning. In close proximity to the school offices were a lumber yard and a slaughterhouse. It's not difficult to imagine what would happen when the windows were opened. Yes, the children were provided with distractions from their studies from the whine of the saws and the squeals of the pigs. No doubt Martha was not told about this in Teacher's College. Recess proved to also be a challenge as an office building doesn't have extra space available for a playground. Fortunately, only a few meters away there was a public park, which became well used by the Janz Team children that year.

Those 8 years from 1956 until 1964 must have seemed like eternity for Tina Isaak and other teachers, operating in an expatriate situation without any helps common to schools in Canada, often alone and without any school board office to contact for more supplies or encouragement. And, as Tina and Cornie both mention, the situation was stressful because of physical and social factors, as well. The Janz men were often away, so the wives spent much of their time with their children, a fellowship that Tina shared. Still, a quiet vision was being born in Tina and others for a school that would adequately fulfill the mission that they felt God had for the Janz Team School. Perhaps God had something new in store for it.

Chapter 2

The First Changes

Change in God's work is often brought about by a particular person called to initiate a vision, or to put one into practice. Just that happened to the Janz Team School in the summer of 1964. Dick Driedger arrived from Saskatchewan, where he had been a school principal and had worked on a provincial curriculum committee under the government education ministry. Dick was a friend of Clarence Peters, Superintendent of Education, Saskatchewan Education, and that provided the contact for adopting the Saskatchewan curriculum and writing Saskatchewan departmental examinations. In addition to Dick and his family, Marion Rigby-Meth, an Australian recently graduated from Prairie Bible Institute, arrived as a third teacher to help Dick and Tina by teaching middle school grades.

Tina Isaak continues her description of those early years:

1964-65: More floors were allotted to classrooms at Elsässerstrasse 22. Dick Driedger arrived September 13 and Marian Rigby-Meth arrived September 19. School began September 21. The Saskatchewan curriculum was used.

Marion Rigby-Meth fills in a few more details:

In 1964-65 I taught grades 4 to 6. Names of students recalled are David Janz, Judy Janz, Gordie Janz, Robert Peters, Phillip Peters, Carol Enns, Lauren Enns, Becky Braaten, Karen Driedger, Calvin Germann, Luke Germann, Sami Germann, Priscilla Germann, Paul Janz, Danny Janz, Patricia Braaten.

Each teacher had one floor of the building, with only one room per floor; a race track was built in the top room and students raced electric cars on it and played ping-pong and chess at recess.

When interviewed in October, 2002, Tina reflected on several issues that have remained with the school:

DD: What sort of outreach did the school have?

TI: "Zero as a school. Clubs where students helped provided some opportunity to serve. Later in the Junghans house we sang for a senior citizens' home in the area.

DD: What about spiritual life in the school?

TI: "There was a weekly Bible club for students together with John Peters. We told the story of Pilgrim's Progress with flannel graph. Morning devotions by groups or by class were held by teachers. Charles Fuller spoke to the school while he was studying under Karl Barth in Basel University. At Christmas and Easter we presented programs for the parents, but there was always a space problem. Students attended church with their families. I was alone, so I made Swiss friends through my club work. I attended the Schänzli Mennonite Church in Pratteln with Margaret Neufeld."

DD: What about member care in the mission?

TI: “We muddled through. Dick Driedger came, and that helped. We were invited into homes. We had an annual retreat first in Kandersteg, then in Bergün, and there was the annual Inter-Missions Conference in Villingen-Schwenningen.

And Harding continues his:

During those years Mr. Dick Driedger served at one point as principal of the school . . . Through Dick’s timely endeavors, our little “house school” attained official recognition and accreditation with the Saskatchewan Department of Education, which meant that graduates were entitled to write departmental examinations and achieve entrance into North American colleges and universities. Attendance then peaked at slightly over 30.

1964-65 saw the new addition in the Janz Team School of teacher-taught classes at the high school level, using the Saskatchewan curriculum, which Dick Driedger introduced that year. The procedure of providing a set of correspondence lessons to every teacher in every subject was continued in the high school until 1998-2000, when the school officially ended its connection to a Canadian province for curriculum. It had the good effect of providing for inexperienced teachers, or teachers teaching outside their specialties, a guide along with a set of search questions that was based 100% on the curriculum being followed. In some cases this guide followed a prescribed textbook; in other cases the course itself became the text and the exercise. In general they were very carefully and pedagogically constructed to maximize learning. Teachers of high school subjects found them extremely useful in preparing students for the departmental exams that followed at the end of grade 12.

Here is another unique part of this education: terminologies such as “Grade 12,” rather than “twelfth-grade” or “seniors” demonstrated its Canadian origin. The term “Departmental Examination”, in addition to being foreign to American teachers, added a tinge of fear to first-year teachers of grade-12 subjects, whose experience had never included an external exam on the subject matter being taught.

As the school grew to 30 and more students, it was possible to introduce the innovation of teacher-taught classes. This made possible other innovations: 1965-66 was the first year to enroll students from another mission. The first Graduation occurred – Alice Janz and Heather Klassen – these wrote SK departmental exams and were graduated in the Janz Team mission office in Lörrach on May 12, 1966. The Germann family, Swiss-Canadian missionaries in Indonesia, brought their three children to the family property in Switzerland and placed them into the Janz Team School. Again, from Tina:

I taught grades 1-4; Marian Rigby-Meth taught grades 5-8; grades 9-12 were taught by Dick Driedger, Principal. This was the first year to enroll students from other missions. Total enrollment was 30.

Because of problems with getting work visas in Switzerland, the Janz Team office moved in 1965 from Basel, Switzerland, immediately across the border to Lörrach, Germany. The Janz

Team School continued in the Basel location for two more years until the summer of 1967.

1966-67, the teachers included Principal Dick Driedger; Tina Isaac, Margaret Neufeld (later Toews), Wilma Quapp (Sturgeon), and Marion Rigby-Meth (Stucki).

James Montgomery Boice was pastor of Basel Christian Fellowship, where most of the students and staff went to church. Marion Rigby-Meth, an Australian, married a Swiss (Kurt Stucki) and continues to live in Basel, where she and her family are active in the Salvation Army.

Dick Driedger adds, still talking about the school facilities on Elsässerstrasse in Basel:

It was a 5 storey building with Janz Team office in the bottom floor. The fifth floor was used for ping-pong, chess and other games. There was a bathroom on the stair landing on each floor. Approximately 35 students attended in grades 1-12. Children stayed in private homes with their parents. There was no official board except the Janz Team board. The playground was about 30 feet by 30 feet. We used Kanenfeld Park & rented a gym for basketball and gymnastics. We used the Saskatchewan curriculum, which I began in '64. Since there were no playgrounds to use at recess we built race car tracks and raced our cars (electric) during recess time. Chess tournaments lasted days or weeks. Ping-pong was a very popular item with the high school students.

This was the year Tina refers to in her comment:

One year, in Elsässerstrasse, we had a wonderful choir led by Margaret Neufeld, later Mrs. Toews. We put on a cantata. Another year I led the choir and also performed a cantata.

In 1967-68 the Janz Team School elementary division was re-located to a house near the German Baptist Church on Feldbergstrasse 14, Lörrach, Germany. The high school moved to a furniture warehouse, called the "List Building," on Wölblinstrasse 35, Lörrach, at the same time. Use of the gym near St. Johann Tor in Basel, Switzerland, continued, with buses and trams providing the transportation. Tina Isaac and Manfred Paul registered the school with the Oberschulamt (regional education office) in Freiburg.

In another section of Tina's memories she states about this time:

Moving the school across the border to Germany meant we got rid of everything possible including excess paper, so all the records were destroyed. With the help of prayer letters, diaries (not much help there!) and photos I have tried to piece together the years I taught. I should mention that I gave piano lessons every year and usually had a Good News Club.

We might interject here that this destruction of the records resulted in massive problems in researching, as the documentation was no longer in existence. Fortunately, those letters, diaries and pictures had been saved; otherwise, our beginnings would have been lost in the rubbish. Tina continues:

It was exciting when we began to enroll students other than Janz Team. Franz Hassler, Swiss, had been born in Venezuela, lived in Jamaica, Columbia, Peru

and would be going to Mexico. After she asked Jesus into her heart, alone at home, her desire for the Word grew. Everything was strange to her; she called Corinthians 'Carnations' and wondered at there being 1 John and John 1. It was good for the rest of the students to try and answer her questions and help her along. Prodosh Banderjee, Swiss and Indian, was another blessing. The same year we had the Deutsch boys, Germans, whose parents were missionaries in Hong Kong, home on furlough.

We had the use of a gym in a Swiss school near St. Johann Tor for at least that year of 1967-68.

Teachers included Tina Isaac, Renate Kohlhasse, Frances Lepp (Harms), Margaret Neufeld (Toews), and Doreen Reimer (Peters). Students graduating were Danny Janz and Judy Janz – these wrote SK departmental exams. The curriculum continued to be Saskatchewan.

Again, Tina Isaak adds detail:

Teachers were Doreen Reimer, Frances Lepp and I. Let me insert here a bit from my Feb./68 prayer letter: "The need of an inter-mission school is growing more acute every day. Judging from the number of interested non-Christian English-speaking people who would like to send their children to our school, we could operate without MK's, but that is not our aim. Please pray with me and with Europe's missionaries that a school will be opened, SOON."

Frances Lepp (Harms) recalls:

Ping-pong at noon, gym time – a park about 2 blocks away. I had seven students in grades 5-8. Susie Brodisch lived with the Swansons. The Christmas Program was held in the Lörrach offices, as well as one PTA and Grad. Danny and Judy Janz graduated from tenth (sic) grade. I taught piano lessons to Rob Peters and Becky and Tricia Braaten. When I arrived in Basel around 2:00 a.m., Leo Janzes were there to meet me; I had missed my train connection in Luxembourg, so I arrived late in Basel – not a soul on the platform, middle of the night – it was good to see Leo and Lydia!

Doreen Reimer (Peters) remembers:

We played Canadian baseball in a park about 2 blocks away. We also had access to an indoor gym for a few months during the winter (very little equipment). There were 3 students in grades 9 and 10, and 2 students for grade 8 math and science. Based on longevity at the school, Tina Isaak had the most responsibility. It seems that I took some initiative as well.

We had a Christmas program held in the Lörrach studio; we held one PTA meeting, at which we spoke to the parents: I remember presenting our "island" situation to the parents. We felt (and discussed at length as teachers) that the school would be much better served with a larger student body, with more missionary children involved.

We put on a formal graduation with dinner for students and parents for our 2 graduates. I remember the students wanting to go and watch the Basel Fasnacht parade. It was quite splendid, with many costumed groups and much political content.

We were very well received and “mentored/mothered” by the Janz Team families. They were so thankful that Fran and I had come on very short notice and were available to teach their children. I remember taking a field trip to Kaiser Augst, ruins of a Roman city, Augusta Raurica, near Basel (with grades 9 and 10).

I remember the daily tram ride to and from school – quite an adventure, one that immersed us, for that hour each day, in the Swiss German language. By the time spring arrived, I suddenly discovered that my brain had sorted out the sounds and I could understand it! Fran, Tini, and I walked home to our apartment in the block at Hauptstrasse in Lörrach/Stetten from school along the Wiese River (flowing into the Rhine near Elsässerstrasse). A distance of about 5 km, quite frequently the better part of the year.

One year the students had their school in the apartment on Feldbergstrasse in which the Peters family had lived until they moved to the newly-built town houses on Wilhelmweg, in Lörrach. The apartment was in the same building as the Baptist Church.

We begin to sense in Tina’s quote from her prayer letter the vision that was to become BFA’s mandate: an inter-mission school in Europe serving missionary families from a wide area of the world. Bringing in the Saskatchewan curriculum had provided one important plank in that platform. Having a provincial curriculum with departmental examinations assessing the learning gave BFA graduates a ready access to universities and colleges around the world, and often provided Advanced Placement status to American students. Accepting students from other missions in the area was the next step in the growth of the school. Moving the school to Lörrach was another step in the development of this vision. We’ll soon see how another major shift in the school’s development paved the way for what it is today.

Chapter 3

Preparing For The Big Change

Another move was in store for the Janz Team School in 1968-69. Tina Isaac continued to be the lone elementary teacher, and she remembers:

The elementary school moved to the Janz Team studio/office building, Hammerstrasse 10, Lörrach. There was one large main-floor room with a kitchen. For the first time all students could go home for lunch to get that needed break. There was a small park near the Wiese River for play. I taught grades 4-6. Robert Peters came from Germany by correspondence 2x/wk. and helped with Art in return.

In another place, Tina reflects thus:

For all those years from 1960-1968 students had to come to school via tram, bus or car, many of them crossing the border from Germany, some also from France, every day. Strange to me was that when I lived in Switzerland and taught in Germany 1968-69, I had a shorter distance to travel by tram, without transfer, than when school was held in Elsässerstrasse in Basel. I lived in Riehen, Switzerland, you see, not too far from the German border.

Over the years I pursued many avenues in looking for a suitable building for an international school and interviewed all possible authorities: the Director for Education in Basel, who was very kind and indicated that the requirements were not too stringent; the Director of Kanton Bern as I looked at various localities, including Haus Edelweiss, Iseltwald, where I spent the year 1969-70. In the end Lörrach and area proved to be best. Manfred Paul, Janz Team Office Manager, and I visited the Director of Education in Freiburg and obtained permission to operate the school.

The high school continued during 1968-69 in part of the furniture warehouse, but no one seems to remember who taught or who studied. Perhaps this was one of the times when Saskatchewan correspondence courses provided the guidance for these students in their various subjects. This is hardly an auspicious beginning for a growth spurt in the school.

In 1969-1970 the elementary school moved to the Junghans Haus, Baumgartnerstrasse 30, Lörrach, near the Rosenfels Park and the Hans Thoma Schule. Teachers were Wilma Quapp (Sturgeon), Alvira Friesen, and Lois Hurtubise. Tina Isaac worked for another mission at Haus Edelweiss in Iseltwald, Switzerland, during this year.

The school year passed normally from one assignment to another, one activity to another and from one season to another. It was not in the school at all that something was brewing.

The teachers could not have known what was being hatched elsewhere and by whom. Tina's vision was going to be set in motion in her absence!

An Inter-Missions Conference for missionaries working in German-speaking countries was held every spring in Villingen-Schwenningen. John Peters announced there that Janz Team School was opening its doors to children of other missions. Peter and Wilma Friesen, GMU missionaries, were present. A letter sent out in May, 1970, by the Friesens gives us a peek behind the scenes:

Postfach 834
7850 Lörrach
Germany

As the result of discussions at the inter-missions conference at Villingen, in March, 1970, the Gospel Missionary Union has committed itself to help in the education of missionary children in Europe.

The Janz Team, which for some years has had a private school for its children in the "Three Country Corner" of France, Switzerland and Germany, has graciously offered to open its facilities to missionary children. The GMU has accepted this offer. This year we plan to rent a home in order to provide a dormitory for GMU children who plan to attend this school.

Early in May, Mr. Wm. Neudorf, principal of Bethel Academy, formerly of Tangier, Morocco, and now of Malaga, Spain, came to Lörrach to discuss plans with the Janz Team and with GMU missionaries responsible for preparing the dormitory facilities. The following decisions have been reached:

School Facilities: The Janz Team has again rented the property they have used as a school for several years, plus additional rooms to provide four classrooms.

School Dates: School begins Sept. 15, 1970, closes June 16, 1971.

Curriculum: The Janz school is following the Saskatchewan curriculum; it is accredited. We feel that this would present no major problem for any American student; in fact, any student graduating in the Saskatchewan course is ahead of the student graduating with an American course. It has been pointed out that the subjects are practically identical to the American subjects, except for some variations in Literature and History.

Students Eligible: For this coming year, boarding facilities will be provided for grades 7 to 11 only. The following year it is planned to include grades 5, 6 and 12 too. There will be limited accommodations for non-GMU students in the GMU dorm this year.

Costs: Tuition this year will be approximately \$105.00 per student. It has been estimated that dormitory fees will be \$60.00 a month. (\$540.00 for the school year. Total cost of dorm and tuition, \$645.00),

Registration: Since the GMU must rent a home to accommodate the students who plan to come, and since the teachers must order books soon we must hear from you *before* June 1, 1970.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to write to us. We covet your prayers as we seek a suitable location for the dorm and prepare it for the children.

Sincerely,

The Friesens responded to our request for detailed information with the following, dated June 23, 2003:

We are Peter & Wilma Friesen, and we were the first house parents at BFA, in 1970-1971, and in 1971, from September to December, when Clarence & Amanda Rempel came to take our place.

We serve with Gospel Missionary Union, Kansas City, MO. After 21 years in Morocco, Pete, along with all other GMU missionaries on the field at the time, was given 8 days to leave the country. As we had served as House Parents at our MK school, Bethel Academy, in Tangier, Morocco, for 6 years, we tried to re-establish that school in Spain. While many missionaries agreed that such a school was necessary, those in each city wanted it to be in their city, so we left Spain and joined co-workers Fred & Deloris Plastow in La Cote aux Fee, Switzerland, to decide what to do next.

In March, 1970, we joined Jim & Alma Taylor at the conference for English-speaking missionaries working in German-speaking Europe, in Villingen, Germany. At a business meeting, the subject of the Janz Team opening up their private school to other MKs was again brought up, as it seems it had for 10 years, and again it was about to be tabled when we discovered we had offered to open a dorm and be house parents until some one would come and take over.

With no money and with no support promised, Pete began scouring the area around Lörrach for a place for the dormitory. When nothing suitable was available, he started looking across the border in France (Switzerland did not want us). Germany, France and Switzerland form a 3-country corner. In France, Pete discovered a new Residence, almost completed. He contacted the owner, who agreed to rent us the top floor, the penthouse, for a dorm! It was located at 5, Quai du Maroc, 68, Huningue, France. From there we could look across the Rhine River to Switzerland and Germany. The penthouse had 5 bed rooms, 2 terraces and a balcony, plus a living room, a dining room, a kitchen and pantry, a shower room and a bath room. There was lots of hall space and lots of built-ins, plus storage space, wash lines and a garage in the basement. There was an elevator and stairs, of course. There was also a garbage chute in the hall.

We started with 10 students in the dorm: Danny & Tim Merck, Rebecca Ketel, Libby Boyer, Danny & Sammy Germann, Sheri Entz, Kathy Murphy, Frank & Harry Bettig. We placed 3 boys in each of 2 rooms, and 2 girls in each of 2 rooms. Though we'd had 6 years of experience in a "co-ed" dorm in Morocco, we were not prepared for life in the "co-ed" dorm in the three-country corner of Europe!

Our VW mini-bus became the school bus which took the children from the dorm in Huningue, France, to the French-Swiss border in St. Louis/Basel, then through Switzerland to Reinfelden (sic)/Lörrach, Germany, and in the evening, back through all three countries. We attended church services in an English fellowship in Basel. It was also possible to cross the Rhine by ferry, but the route through Switzerland was most often used.

As the Rempels could not come till December, 1971, we started the school year in September, 1971, as a girls' dorm. The Wagners started a boys' dorm in a German village. We started the school year with the following girls: Rebecca & Elizabeth Ketel, Chrissie Young, Sue Glerum, Libby Boyer, Susan Taylor

The children of the "Janz Kibbutz" had to adjust to the new-comers in their private school, and of course the new-comers had a lot of adjustments too! Some had come with the idea that since they were now away from home, they could act like college freshmen 'living it up!' It took awhile before we discovered that their parents held to the same standards as we did. Children take on the 'color' of the school in the country where they grow up. For instance, a student who grew up in France, thought it perfectly normal to go on strike to get what she wanted!

"It does not matter what a fellow and a girl do, just so they love each other!" (a statement from a student). We of course, were "old fogies" whose standards no longer held. A young man, studying French in Switzerland, who was visiting us, overheard a conversation, and asked to speak to our young people in the dorm, and told them he believed just like we did! One girl wrote letters to a number of missionary friends in France, telling them she was in prison. It was the same young person, who, when invited to a "Kibbutz" home, raved about how wonderful it was to have a hot meal! Her hosts believed her story, and tried tactfully to inform me how easy it really was to have a hot meal for students when they came home from school! I had learned at the beginning of my career as house mother to keep a record of every meal served, and we always had hot meals in the evening!

The German expression "Aller Anfang is schwer!" (Every beginning is difficult.)
Peter Z. & Wilma Friesen

Harding reflects:

A visit by Bill Neudorf (one of the GMU missionaries who had to suddenly leave North Africa when missionaries in Morocco had been told to get out - he had served there in a mission school, was also a long time friend of the Janz Quartet), and Jim Taylor (GMU missionary in Switzerland now serving as one of its directors in the home office in Kansas City), brought us as a Janz Team, with our little "house school," to a historical crossroads. Bill was eager to continue in the field of Christian education. All of us agreed that there was a need for a school for the children of missionaries working in Europe and North Africa.

Our final consensus was that we as Janz Team would expand the school to officially include children from other missions, supply the teaching staff, and assume legal and financial matters; GMU would supply the dormitory. Pete and Wilma Friesen, ex-dorm parents from the school where Bill Neudorf had taught, served at the first dorm, which was a co-ed facility located across the border in St. Louis, France.

Having discovered in the Inter-Missions Conference that they were to open a dorm for the Janz Team School the following year, the Friesens began a search for a building, and God began to work throughout Europe to fill it. Bill Neudorf came into the school side of the equation following a home ministry time to provide further leadership and impulse to the vision. Lena Isaac came to help fill the hungry stomachs of students in the dorms. These last two were to become long-term legends in the school, as Tina Isaak already was. Others, such as Dick Driedger, left their mark in a few years and went to pursue other avenues of God's leading.

Tina Isaak tells about her experience in Haus Edelweiss, in Iseltwald, Switzerland, this year: "I taught three of Heini Germann's boys and one Nigerian." After attending the spring conference at PBI, in Canada, she felt refreshed and went back to Janz Team. She continues, "The school was like a rollercoaster, depending on HMAs, until GMU came into the picture." Her absence made everyone aware of the importance of keeping long-term staff. Personal needs must be met, if teachers are to remain at their jobs. She described how she did not have the fare for the tram to go to work one day, when someone came to her door with an envelope with 10 Swiss Franks in it and offered her a ride to school. God proved Himself faithful each step of the way.

The elementary school opened in 1970-1971 in the Junghans House with Tina Isaac in charge, and Lois Hurtuboise and Anne Dyck teaching. The high school continued in the furniture warehouse. Construction of several more classrooms was necessary, in order to accommodate the additional students. This extra space had only been secured two weeks before classes were to begin, so teachers were helping in the construction of classroom walls. The new Principal, Richard Loepky was assisted by Menno and Hildie Kornelsen, Steve Karelic, Jay Barnes and Wilma Quapp (Sturgeon). Teachers taking on practical roles during vacations is another factor that has not disappeared from the school.

Richard Loepky, Principal from 1970-72 thinks back:

We got old rusty furniture given, which was cleaned and painted by the dorm fathers to use for school desks. There were about 50 in the junior and senior high, and about 20 in grade school at the Junghans's suite by the park. Grades 1-6 were in the elementary school at the Junghans Haus and grades 7-12 were in the List Building. John Peters was board chairman, with Adolph Janz, Harding Braaten, Larry Swanson and Richard Loepky working together in the committee. Herb Jantzen, Eric Wong, and Andrew Stücklin were elders at Basel Christian Fellowship. We went from a "house school" to a regular school with 70 students. We held the first official graduation exercises. We took a soccer team of students to Lahr and beat them (had only enough students to make a

team – no subs!). On April Fool’s Day the students left the classroom (unknown to the teachers) and went to Rötteln Castle. We went to Lahr to claim leftover books from the Lahr school.

Interviewed in December, 2002, Richard thought back:

DD: Where did you come from before you began to teach at the Janz Team School?

RL: “I was teaching in Blumenort, near Kleefeld, SK, among the Holdemen (a very strict Mennonite sect), teaching history, social studies and junior high German.

DD: Why did you leave the Janz Team School?

RL: “My wife had lupus.”

Jay Barnes was a teacher then. He writes:

I was at Janz Team School in the fall of 1970. I stayed for a semester before I had to return to the US to fulfill my military obligation. We were in the furniture warehouse in Lörrach. Richard Loeppky was the principal. Wilma Quapp was the only other teacher. When I arrived at the train station in Basel, Harding Braaten and Pete Friesen met me at the train. Pete Friesen and his wife were GMU missionaries and were dorm parents for a dorm just over the border in France. This was the first fall that the Janz Team School was open to other mission groups and GMU was the first to provide help. Harding was very welcoming, but Pete was ready to put me and my long hair back on the train. The first activity was to build classroom walls in the warehouse. That is how I got to meet my students. We had propane powered space heaters which we turned on between classes. I’m sure we must have violated several laws! I did mostly grade 11 math and science subjects.

The elementary school remained in the Junghans House in 1971-1972. The high school remained in the warehouse. Little did the occupants know at the beginning of the year what was to take place by the end of the year. The school grew from a “house school to a regular school” with up to 70 students. Richard Loeppky continued as Principal; with Anne Dyck and Tina Isaac as elementary teachers, and with Bill Neudorf, Wilma Sturgeon, Menno & Hildie Kornelsen along with Richard in the high school.

Tina Isaak writes:

Elementary grades were in the Junghans home, Lörrach. A park within a 2-minute walk of the school and also a playground available at a nearby school provided playing space.

Clarence and Amanda Rempel came in December 1971 to relieve the Friesens as house parents for the dorm in St. Louis, which had been declared to be a girls’ dorm this year. A boys’ dorm was begun by a Baptist couple retired from working with John Deere in the USA, the George Wagners. Looking for a place to begin another student residence, they found space first in a Lutheran vacation house on the Rührberg behind Lörrach, then in a Christian retreat center, Haus Frieden, in Hägelberg, near Steinen. Janz Team was expanding

at this time. The team bought Haus Palmgarten, a Kandern Gasthaus gone bankrupt, as a center for Christian education, family camps and as a guest facility, and Haus Bad Riedlingen was purchased to be used both as a boys' dorm and as a children's summer camp facility. This large house in the country had originally been built to take advantage of the healing qualities of the warm mineral bath bubbling out of the ground there. When this spring dried up, the building had served in a variety of other ways: an administrative center for SS troops in WWII, a home for disturbed youth, and a senior citizens' home.

Clarence and Amanda Rempel look back:

We began in Huningue, France, Quai du Maroc, relieving Pete and Wilma Friesen in December 1971, in a penthouse on the 10th (sic) floor, and moved dorm goods to Tannenkirch/Gupf in the summer of 1972. This was a huge undertaking for a couple of newlyweds ages 22 and 23!

Herbert Jantzen and other members of a leadership group, including Eric Wong, Clarence Rempel, and Ian MacKenzie, were in charge of Basel Christian Fellowship.

Harding continues his reflections:

The next year saw the GMU dorm continue as a girls' dorm in the Gupf facility, and a boys' dorm was started in Hägelberg, near Steinen. A retired couple from Waterloo, Iowa, with connections to the Baptist denomination, served about two years as dorm parents. No successors could be found and Janz Team was forced to take over the boys' dorm. The girls' dorm continued as a GMU entity for a few years.

By the end of the year it was evident what was going to become of the Janz Team School. From the time it had moved out of Basel to Lörrach, it had existed in two locations - elementary and secondary divisions being separated by a distance. This distance was to increase considerably over the summer. Another development was underway in God's plan for the school. Along with a change in location, something else of permanent interest was to happen to it before the end of the following school year.

Chapter 4

A New Era Dawns

1972-1973, continuing the decentralization that was becoming part of the school's reality, saw the Janz Team School's elementary division remain at the Junghans Haus, Lörrach, while the high school moved to the recently vacated German school building in Sitzenkirch, 3 kilometers north of Kandern. Janz Team bought Haus Palmgarten and Haus Bad Riedlingen in the Kandern area that year and acquired the Sitzenkirch School through a lease agreement from the newly-formed city of Kandern district administration. Reorganization of the whole concept of government and schooling in the area had resulted in this less-than-ten-year-old building becoming empty. The city government saw in Janz Team a possible long-term renter, and was rewarded with a grateful tenant. The furniture warehouse in Lörrach had fulfilled its role in the development of the school, and it was no longer needed.

The Principal, Bill Neudorf; was assisted in the teaching by Anne Dyck, Tina Isaak, Jay & Barb Barnes, Menno & Hildie Kornelsen, and Dave & Sharon Harder. Carol Enns, Dawn Jantzen, Gordie Janz and Connie Penner graduated.

It is evident from the names of students that Campus Crusade for Christ was present in the area and made use of the school at this time. CCC had its European office in Lörrach for a number of years, and in other nearby towns for many more years, before settling right in Kandern. It became the latest mission to join the BFA board, but participated informally for many years before that.

The girls' dorm was settled in Gupf - Clarence and Amanda Rempel and Lena Isaac were the dorm staff. The boys' dorm was now located at HBR - George and Violet Wagner, along with Zane and Diane Hetzel, were dorm parents.

With the move to Sitzenkirch and the increased resident student population, the school's social program increased. A table in Appendix 1 lists the first mentions of such activities. Sports continued to be developed, particularly basketball and soccer, using gyms in the area and a field in Stetten, south of Lörrach.

Harding gives detail here:

Then the mayor of Kandern, who had told us of the availability of Haus Bad Riedlingen (it had been a senior citizens' home) tipped us off about the availability of the school in Sitzenkirch. The centralization of schools had taken the Sitzenkirch children to bigger schools in other towns, leaving the one in their own village empty. As of the fall of 1972, Sitzenkirch became the home of our mission school, with Grades 1-6 attending the elementary school (populated only

by local residents) located first in Lörrach, then at the boys' dorm, Haus Bad Riedlingen.

In 1973 the school board chose Black Forest Academy as the official name for its school.

Here is what Jay Barnes, a teacher at the time, writes:

We had a contest in which students and staff submitted names. We had suggestions like CAJABRO (Canadian Janz Brothers), Can-Am School, Schwarzwald Academy and others. Barb and I submitted Black Forest Academy, which was chosen by the board.

The Janz Brothers Gospel Association, as it was then known, drew up a constitution for Black Forest Academy, in which it was stated:

The Janz Brothers Gospel Association comprises the final place of authority for the school and that (sic) the school is fully accredited with the Department of Education in the province of Saskatchewan, Canada.

General responsibilities of the JBGA board were delineated, as well as those of the school board, the principal and faculty members. Most of those are still in place. Board meeting minutes from this time onward provide more insight into the developments of the school, especially involving lines of authority and budget allotments, that took place in the ensuing years. It seems that our submission to one another and our treatment of money must be regulated, when it comes to Christian organizations, in order to preserve a biblical model of conducting our business with one another.

Black Forest Academy was then registered in Saskatchewan with the Department of Education under its new name. No longer was it JTS, but BFA. This is the permanent change that came about in this important year in BFA's history.

Bill Neudorf, Principal at the time, gives a bit more insight in an interview in October, 2002:

DD: What was the direction of the school during your time?

BN: "It was a Janz Team school. The name Black Forest Academy was chosen when John Peters initiated a contest to name the school, without the word "Christian" in the name, suggesting rather that it reflect where it was located. We formed a student council, and an official school board was formed. It was exciting, we were encouraged. We were now primarily a multi-mission school, moving from a Janz Team School. There was a burden to allow 20% enrollment from the Basel business sector."

DD: What relationship did BFA have with Basel Christian Fellowship?

BN: "I was an elder. Our teachers taught Sunday school classes. Discipline became a stress, so we began to think of an English church of our own. Black Forest Christian Fellowship came out of that in 1976."

Tina Isaak left Germany in 1973. Later, she served a term in Togo, West Africa, teaching children of missionaries with Wycliffe Translators. These children later came to BFA to

complete their high school education. Tina lives with her two sisters in retirement in Erickson, MB, Canada.

Tina reflected on some of the difficulties that surfaced during her time with the Janz Team School. Because the Janz Team men were usually away in their evangelistic duties, the administration of the school was more or less up to whoever was the head teacher, and Tina was often called upon to be that. The other problem was that, because the school was added to other parts of the work of Janz Team at the time, there was no set budget within the mission for the school. Her year with another mission in 1959-60 showed her that these problems were not unique to the Janz Team, so she came back to the Janz Team School with new wisdom in how the Lord sometimes works to get a new work going.

Tina's and others' vision has survived in the BFA of today – a school serving the missionary families of Europe and North Africa. Janz Team's having chosen to help missionary families by providing a boarding school for their children has resulted in this agency's now emphasizing Christian education as part of its mission and vision statement.

The years 1973-76 went by without too many visible changes. Locations for the school and the dorms had been fixed for the foreseeable future. A new name had been chosen, along with a new destiny. Other things in the school's structure could now be considered. Some were to define that destiny.

1973-1974 saw the elementary school move from Lörrach to the second floor of HBR, where it remained until 1981. Decentralization still prevailed, as the school was in two locations, and Gupf and HBR remained the girls' and boys' dorms respectively. The distance from Gupf to Sitzenkirch was about 7 kilometers, and from HBR to Sitzenkirch was about 7 kilometers. From this point on leadership of the school can be seen in Appendix 1.

Jay Barnes was High School Principal and Dorothy Sowden Elementary School Principal in 1974-1975. The student body numbered 95. Larry Janz was board chairman. Sports included soccer, volleyball and track and field events. DeEtta Janz led a band and taught piano, while Ray Ratzlaff unleashed his considerable talent in directing the high school choir. Plays and social activities brought out different kinds of creativity. Frank Bettig, Dee Ann Hickerson, Mary Anne Janz, Grace Ann Mulkey, Steven Nikolov, Jonathan Paul and Virginia Peifer graduated.

Ray Ratzlaff was appointed Superintendent of the school in 1975-1976, and Jay Barnes remained Principal. From this point onwards the table of faculty and staff becomes more and more complete. To see the tables of the staff and of the students from this point on, please check the BFA web page, at www.bfacademy.com.

The skill of Ray Ratzlaff in leading choirs produced musical results at BFA, and the choir was involved in performances in Basel, Berchtesgaden, Baden-Baden, Lörrach, Frankfurt and Lausanne. Jolene Ensz laid a solid musical foundation in the elementary grades. The fall saw a play production and spring season saw a collage of individual performances. The arts had become a solid part of BFA's image.

Although Basel Christian Fellowship had provided a spiritual home for the missionary families during the school's infancy, now that it had settled farther away and developed a strong residence program, problems began to surface. Transportation to and from church was longer, involved a border crossing, and took time. The increase in student numbers made behavior harder to monitor. A church service geared to adult expatriates was not interesting to students. Discussions were held with the thought of beginning a church service in connection with Black Forest Academy. In the spring of 1976 a couple of evening meetings were held in the church in Tannenkirch. This led to the formation of a council of elders and the calling of a pastor to plan regular services of Black Forest Christian Fellowship in the fall.

In 1976-1977 Ray Ratzlaff remained Superintendent; Henry Toews joined staff as HS Principal; Peter Dueck as ES Principal. The student body numbered 98, and from this point on all students are listed in the student table available on the BFA website mentioned earlier. 12 girls lived at Gupf and 17 boys at HBR; with Janz-teamers Karl and Carol Enns and Peter and Sally Dueck as dorm parents and Lily Penner as cook. Board chairman was John Peters, a Janz Team missionary who taught Christian Education at the seminary St. Chrischona, near Riehen, Switzerland, and father to BFA students.

Black Forest Christian Fellowship began regular services in the Riedlingen community hall in the fall of 1976, with Robert Sloan, a Th.D. student at the University of Basel and a former dorm parent at HBR, as the first pastor. Elders included Ray Ratzlaff, Al Jessup, and Jim Mulkey. Sunday school was held at HBR beforehand, using elementary classrooms and lounges. Black Forest Christian Fellowship became a part of the BFA fabric.

Henry and Margaret Toews (a Janz Team teacher named Neufeld in 1967-68) from Manitoba, my wife Jerry, and I, from Alberta, Erna Martens, also from Alberta, and Nina Stephenson from Tennessee came to join Bill Neudorf as long-termers in 1976, and Bruno and Dorothy Fast came for a couple of years from British Columbia, then returned for a few more years after a time in Canada. Until then few teachers, other than Tina Isaak and Bill, had stayed for more than two years, causing a sense of rootlessness in the school.

Band was introduced as a subject in junior and senior high, 14 new instruments purchased with money raised through local Kandern missionaries, and several more used instruments brought along in my baggage. The Christmas concert in the Ochsen Gasthaus hall featured the new BFA band, comprised of three classes conducted by myself. Instruments were passed from student to student, after having mouthpieces disinfected with alcohol pads, to give everyone a chance to play. Ray Ratzlaff's choir was, as usual, the highlight of the evening.

Four band students went to a weekend band workshop with the Canadian Forces Base students from Lahr and Baden-Baden, held in a medieval castle overlooking the Rhine Valley. One of the BFA girls was able to point a military girl to Christ. The strong music program created for BFA the designation, expressed by a pastor in Lahr, "Black Forest Music Academy." Staff members also sang and played, making it possible to perform such pieces as Mendelssohn's "Elijah" as a combined student-staff choir, with soloists found among the staff or parents. Every staff meeting began with a hymn or two sung in full harmony. When God's people rejoice harmoniously in Him, He plans bigger things for them.

Chapter 5

Getting Close To Home

Until 1977 Black Forest Academy had been comprised primarily of children from local missionary and business families living at home with their parents, and a small segment of high school and upper elementary students living in BFA dorms far away from their parents. This service of boarding was to take on new importance in the year 1977, as more and more students from a distance began applying to BFA. So great was the demand for residence space that BFA began to look for more buildings to house the increased enrollment of girls, and HBR's capacity for boys was increased.

A house on the Bülhstrasse in Holzen was obtained as a small new dorm and named "Hiltonheim" because it was newer and more comfortable than the other buildings. The Holzen school, now empty, was offered to BFA three weeks before school was to begin. Since there was no Building and Maintenance Department, teachers and board members got busy and began to do the necessary renovations to transform classrooms into a kitchen and dining room, as well as into a dorm parents' suite. While the men took care of the heavy construction, some of which meant jack-hammering a hole through a meter and a half of concrete and stone to provide a shaft for water and drainage for the dorm's kitchen sink, the women made curtains for the windows of the suite above, where the girls would live. A young couple with a baby was coming from Canada to be dorm parents. A German couple lived in the apartment above the dorm parents' suite, making it difficult to maintain sufficient quietness to satisfy their tastes.

As renovations progressed, rumors began to circulate that the prospective dorm parents for the school building, by this time dubbed "Storchenblick," due to the stork's nest on the roof of the church, were having difficulty raising sufficient support to come. One day Margaret Toews said, "If those people don't come to be dorm parents, we'll have to find someone here to take over, and I think Dick and Jerry are the best suited." Jerry didn't see it that way. The apartment in Sitzenkirch was comfortable and just right for the two boys, aged six and four. She had no intention of moving out to take on a dorm full of girls.

Finally, the weekend before school was to begin, Jerry and I agreed among ourselves that, if Ray Ratzlaff announced that the couple was not coming, we would consider it our calling to 'bail out the school' and be dorm parents – for one year only! Just after I had sung "When God Speaks" in the Sunday morning service, Ray read the announcements, ending with the statement that the couple had called that morning to say that they were not coming.

We went to Ray following the service to tell him that we were his new dorm parents. We requested that our apartment be held for us the next year. I attended staff orientation on Monday, while Jerry packed. They moved Tuesday; the girls arrived Wednesday, and school

began on Thursday. Another couple, evacuated by their landlord's needing their apartment, moved in to hold our apartment in Sitzenkirch. By Christmas the Lord had whispered quite loudly in our ears that this was not just for one year. We would not need to hold the apartment in Sitzenkirch. Five years later we completed our stint in the dorm program. Our boys had now entered junior high age and living in a girls' dorm was no longer practical for the family. Though the boys wanted their parents to take over HBR, the parents disagreed, and I went back into full-time teaching, picking up my favorite history courses in addition to my band classes.

Storchenblick, with Jerry and I as dorm parents and Elsie Klassen as cook, and Hiltonheim, with Albert and Edna Martens as dorm parents – both in Holzen – were the new dorms in 1977. Harold and Betty Klassen came to be dorm parents at Gupf, with Lena Isaac as cook, while HBR opened with Roy and Barbara Glerum, whose son's graduation the year before had completed their family's education at BFA, along with Steve and Gudrun Trowbridge and Gary Hildebrand as dorm parents, and Lillie Penner and Elma Plett as dorm assistants.

Harold and I were teachers, as well as dorm fathers. Teachers have always been encouraged to offer tutoring help in the dorms as they are able, but teaching, even part-time, while being a dorm father was quite demanding.

With the introduction of two new dorms into the program, and with the missions that had run the dorms until this time finding it increasingly difficult to administer the dorm they had built up, all the dorms were given over to BFA administration in 1977. Missions continued to provide staff as before. Since the dorm parents from previous years had all moved away, there was no one to check with about problems that arose, and they arose! Four new sets of dorm parents, all inexperienced in how the dorm program should be run, and an administration inexperienced in running such a program, were catalysts for high-stress situations. Transportation issues, rules about clothing and appearance, music to be allowed, menus and mealtimes, weekend program to be provided for dorm students to entertain them, where and where not should non-dorm students be involved with the dorms in activities, church attendance – all the issues were there, and each set of dorm parents trying to do their best to wade through the problems from their own perspective. One dorm father felt it was like the Book of Judges, with “each man doing that which was right in his own eyes, and there was no king in Israel.” There was a great deal of complaining on the part of residence students, which created tension between them and non-dorm students. The mettle of dorm parents was tested regularly, as students sought to establish their own independence. Tensions resulted in illness. One set of dorm parents needed a break from the dorm at Easter.

At this point Ray and Dorothy Ratzlaff moved into that dorm, and within a very short time, other dorm parents could hear the Superintendent of the school saying, “It's in the dorms that the vision of BFA is being realized.” He had begun to understand firsthand how vital a healthy dorm program was to the health of the whole school. At first the dorm fathers began meeting weekly to plan activities, share transportation plans, and to discuss guidelines for some of the questions already mentioned. Then the dorm mothers and resident assistants began to be included once a month in these meetings. The fellowship-starved workers ate up the times together, as well as the ample refreshments provided, as the meetings rotated

around the various dorms. Each one could share what worked and didn't work in their situation, and eventually a residence manual was created to help in establishing the 'BFA way to do dorms'.

One principle was tried at that time. Students were segregated not only by sex, but by age as well. Gupf, as well as a floor of HBR, were designated for junior high students. Another floor was for intermediate grade boys, and one for senior boys. Hiltonheim was for senior girls, and Storchenblick was intermediate girls that year. This division was cultivated over the next two years, with dorms changing their age-focus as enrollment changed. Those who had the older students appreciated this arrangement, as the students were old enough to do many things for themselves. Indeed, Storchenblick had no residence assistants during the two years that only eleventh and twelfth-graders lived there. The staff in those dorms that had the younger ones, however, found that they had to work much harder than those who had the older students. Within the structures available to BFA at the time, there was little that could be done but to discontinue segregating students by age. It was reasoned that children and young people would normally grow up in a family that included people of various ages and stages of development, and that older siblings were always expected to assist in helping the younger ones, so it was not unrealistic to expect this in a residence. Each dorm from 1980 onwards had a mixture of ages.

For quite a few years this arrangement of four dorms was maintained. Storchenblick shared its facility with the German family until 1980, when they moved with their baby son to their own home in Holzen. Having the entire building now made it possible to increase from 10 girls to 18. Gloria Droge (Gloria Bettig was a graduate of BFA) came in every day as resident assistant. Irv Kroeker and a visiting work team created the upper floor rooms and washroom during that year. In 1981-82 there were twenty-two girls, two live-in residence assistants, and the Derksens in the building. Two women presently on the staff of BFA shared that time in Storchenblick. Lorelee Stonehouse (Hill) was one of the students living there until her graduation in 1981, and Sandee Meier (Shuman) was one of the resident assistants in 1981-82 and beyond.

It was never intentional that the residences should be far from each other and far from the school buildings. This happened simply because certain buildings were available for rent or purchase at that time. Just as God had led the school in its migration from Basel through Lörrach to Sitzenkirch, and from being the Janz Team School for children of Janz Team families only, to BFA as an inter-mission school, He was instrumental in bringing suitable buildings for dorms to it. Distances increased, creating increased transportation difficulties. Decentralization resulted in many difficult areas: food preparation was done in each dorm until the central kitchen began providing hot suppers in the past few years, laundry facilities are still decentralized in each dorm, and sufficient staff members are needed to care for all of the needs of the students in the dorm. Still, God seems to provide sufficient staff each year. There are benefits, as well: integration into the community is easier with houses located in most of the villages that make up the community of Kandern, behavioral problems can be dealt with in more private ways, and students have developed a very strong sense of family identity in their respective dorms. Dorms have even created their own T-shirts to advertise the loyalty of their staff and students.

What is a week of work? This issue began to surface regularly among the dorm staff. When it was brought up at school staff meetings, the teachers who had families stated simply that they never got a day off as parents; why should dorm staff get days off? No provision was made for days or weekends off for the first several years. If the dorm parent or RA could get a replacement, they were allowed to get away. Otherwise, it was 24/7 in everyone's mind. This has been reconsidered over the years, because of the extra stress of excessive numbers to supervise, so that dorm parenting and assisting has been made more endurable, with regular days and weekends off duty.

Another factor worth considering here is the Lord's direct working in the lives of students and staff. The years of 1974-78 had been hard years for BFA staff and students alike, as a group of hard and rebellious students sought to establish their turf in the context of the school. Bit by bit the Lord brought different ones to their knees in repentance, but there seemed always to be new ones ready to join the ranks of those who refused. The issue seemed to coalesce in the area music in 1976-79. Several factors played into this, both within BFA and within the mission community surrounding the school. Tom Allen, a young man recently graduated from Asbury College had spoken effectively on this topic during Spiritual Emphasis Week in two other schools for missionary children, so on the basis of their recommendations, BFA invited him to come in March of 1979 and share his insights with its students. He was to speak both in school chapels during the week and in BFCF services on the opening Sunday. Students had heard of his reputation of speaking against rock music, so they were predictably on their guard.

Tom did not speak about music at all. He talked about relationships and personal faithfulness to Christ. By mid-week the curiosity of the most dedicated rock fans had peaked to the point of asking him whether he was going to speak on music. "It's an hour and a half long, and I expect action," was his response. That demanded some time for consideration. Finally, the students requested him to deliver his message. Administrators arranged for the Thursday evening meeting to be held in the Tannenkirch church. It was packed! Tom's message was unemotional, deliberate, almost dry, speaking about the various techniques of secular rock music and its effects on young people. Because he was billeted at HBR, he had access to the students' records and tapes, and his quotes were from their music. At the end the front of the church was filled with teary young people and not a few adults in the missionary community pledging themselves to bring the music tapes and records, the posters, and the books that they had hoarded against the Holy Spirit's wishes to a bonfire that would be held at HBR the following Sunday night. In every dorm, students were wrestling with the issues of spiritual life, as represented in their music, and were selecting those items that needed to be weeded out. The bonfire was attended by everyone in the area, it seemed, and many tapes and records, posters and books were burned. Souls were set free from their bondage. Although not every missionary agreed, those who worked in the dorms thought it was God's working in the lives of teenagers and adults, to bring about the kind of obedient attitude He wanted in hearts.

The dorm fathers met to discuss how this phenomenon should affect residence life from then on. Several decisions were made and carried out: no personal record or tape players would be allowed in the dorm next year, a quality hi-fi set would be bought for each dorm, and all records and tapes would have to be approved by the dorm parents before they could be played on the dorm hi-fi sets. For a number of years this provided a basis for how the dorms dealt

with the music issue, and this paved the way for more democratic but responsible measures to be put in place in later years.

Since the residence program is such an important feature of BFA, it was important at this stage to describe its foundations. Issues have not changed greatly over the years. Young people have needed the same kind of loving care and guidance in every generation. In a school a new generation is born every year. When a school also provides the living situation for its students, the issues are compounded. By facing these issues in a spirit of humility and prayerful discussion, BFA has developed a boarding program that is the envy of the world of international Christian schools.

Chapter 6 Growing Within

The years from 1977-81 were years of inner growth, both for the school and the residence program. The same four buildings were residences and the same two buildings served as classroom buildings. Each building was renovated and improved to maximize its capacity and utilization. God provided more staff as the student body grew. Leadership grew out of the teachers provided by the Lord, so there were no radical changes of direction or purpose.

Ray Ratzlaff continued as Superintendent; Henry Toews as HS Principal and Peter Dueck as ES Principal in 1977-1978; John Peters was board chairman. Although many of these activities had been held in the school before, perhaps more spasmodically, a routine-ness seemed to begin now in each school year: "A Man Called Peter" was directed by Nina Stephenson. The Fall Retreat at Credo, a retreat center near Wilderswil, Switzerland, featured Gordon and Esther Balisky, newly arrived missionaries with Slavic Gospel Association, as speakers. A banquet at Haus Palmgarten and a Christmas Concert, complete with Henry Toews as Santa Claus took the school into its Christmas vacation. The Penny Fair had a good variety of booths, including a 'puppet theater' involving live performers on instruments. The soccer team played against the Canadian military school team in Lahr. Advanced music students took piano lessons from Toronto Conservatory teachers in Lahr, and the teacher who drove them there each week was also responsible for the exchange of 16 mm National Film Board (Canadian) movies that were the stock in trade of audio-visuals in classrooms, provided the projector didn't chew up and swallow the film.

"I thought my problems would be solved when I came to BFA. Instead, they have just started" The BFA English teachers - Babs Miller, Doris Penner, and Jeanne Moessner - began their submission to the principal in spring 1977 with this quote, and continued, "This comment was made by a current junior high student, coming from non-English schools. This student is experiencing difficulties in reading and writing English." This problem was probably in the school almost from the beginning, but growth in the size of classes made it more evident and more difficult for teachers to meet the individual needs of those students. Recommendations were brought forward to include a remedial teacher in the faculty and to schedule English classes so that a student in difficulty could be offered a lower-level class in place of one at grade level.

School growth was visible and challenging. A report to the board from this time presents a projected growth pattern involving boarding versus home student enrollment, "with little special promotion":

1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982
24/72	30/78	32/84	36/90	38/100	40/110
96	108	116	126	138	150

Boarding students would increase proportionately against home students, and this would impact building and staffing needs.

Harding looks back to this time with these issues in mind:

It soon became evident, as the school continued to grow annually, that it would be simpler to place both the school and the dorms under the jurisdiction of one central board. When the designated term of the Jessups terminated in 1977, the entire operation became the responsibility of Janz Team Ministries, the sponsoring mission from the beginning. Since the Board of Janz Team Ministries was deeply involved in evangelism, it has appointed a school board to govern the affairs of the school and to operate as an extended arm of the mission Board.

In 1978 the idea of participating mission status was discussed and favorably assessed. GMU had already given valuable assistance by providing a girl' dorm facility as related above. This mission was one of the first to gain participating mission status, followed soon by others.

Ray Ratzlaff had led the school through these vital areas of growth. In the summer of 1978 he and Dorothy returned to Canada, and Henry Toews became Administrative Director. The title 'Superintendent' seemed not to last beyond the one holder. Harold Klassen was named High School Principal and Peter Dueck retained his position as Elementary School Principal. Art and Annie Heinrichs, dorm parents at HBR that year, recall: "Personal memories of the year are too many to even start writing them down. It was an overall very positive experience for us and our two children. The week in Bergün was special; it was good to get to know teachers and other staff of BFA and also Janz Team staff. The Janz Team crusade in Basel was a highlight; it was special to be present at a crusade in Europe."

There is an item in the BFA staff meeting minutes of 10 January 1979:

Re-organization of School Board - J. Peters, Chairman; Executive. Others - J. Dyck, L. Swanson, D. Huff, D. Schaefer C&MA, C. Adams North Africa Mission, J. Moore GMU; J. Mulkey and D. Barnes, members at large.

This brought out the official joining of C&MA as a participating mission along with NAM (later AWM) and GMU (later Avant Ministries). Jim Mulkey of Campus Crusade and David Barnes of GEM represented the non-participating missions in this new arrangement. The other board members were all sponsoring mission Janz Team members.

BFA Staff meeting minutes of 13 February 1980, provide a concept report being considered by the BFA board to provide bilingual, bi-cultural schooling for both missionaries and German youth at the Gymnasium level. Henry Toews visited the Oberschulam in Freiburg in March, a development committee was formed and sites for building were looked at, including the Reha Klinik beyond Marzell and Schloss Beuggen near Rheinfelden. In the end, the decision to buy the Medima property was announced on 4 June. BFA remained a totally English-language North American school, without adding the German division. The budget for the year was DM 310,000.

Yearbooks and staff meeting minutes provide us with a rich array of activities over the succeeding years. Whether in drama, sports, music, or parties, BFA staff and students outdid themselves year after year in providing both intramural and extramural challenges and entertainment.

Myra Gannett's marriage to Heinie Tanner on 17 May was a highlight of the school year. BFA's first teacher to marry a German neighbor provided even more hilarity when Myra arrived for school at HBR driving Heinie's farm tractor.

Ruth Brown (Enas), grad of 1980 reminisces:

“My dorm experience was wonderful, especially when Dick & Jerry Derksen were my dorm parents. Not only were they busy with two young boys of their own, but they graciously and lovingly took care of a dorm full of hormonal, emotional females. They truly gave me, and many others, a home away from home!” Ruth demonstrated the international character of BFA: Korean-born, adopted by American missionaries working in Spain and studying in a Canadian school in Germany.

The Medima company offered their property, including the present buildings, plus the land on which the Luise-Klaiber-Haus and the lot on which the row housing where various BFA families have lived. Many in the BFA community, who had long considered this property to be ideal for BFA, took part in a prayer walk around the property to claim it for the Lord's use. BFA had no money to buy at that time. Stadt Kandern took advantage of this and bought the part on which the senior citizens' home is now located, and a developer built row housing on the lot that had once been Quade's display for used cars. Possibilities of building a gym or even an entire school on property around Haus Palmgarten or across from HBR were discussed.

A new school year calendar went into effect in the fall of 1980, in order to accommodate Saskatchewan Education's demand that BFA students write departmental exams on the same day that students in Saskatchewan write them. Instead of beginning classes after Labour Day and ending around the 15 of June, the new school year began in the middle of September and ended on the last Friday of June. Students and teachers appreciated the extra long summer holidays that year.

The BFA board approved BFA's joining the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) that year. As far as we know, BFA was the first international Christian school in Europe to join ACSI. Membership in this worldwide organization of Christian schools gave BFA contact with many others seeking to put into practice the philosophy of Christian education that BFA was striving to exemplify. Gifted speakers came to BFA to share their knowledge of biblical integration into the school and its subject areas. Conferences for the encouragement of Christian teachers were held at BFA. Teachers were encouraged to seek ACSI certification, a process that forces them to think deeply about pedagogical issues in the light of God's Word, and to seek to integrate the two in their own teaching. Soon other international Christian schools in Europe followed BFA's example and also became members of ACSI.

Ernst Spohn began serving BFA with insurance plans. Having worked before as a technician in an electronics company, he now began to build his own business in the insurance field. He considered BFA to be a place where he could serve the Lord as a Christian businessman. That relationship has continued to the present day, and his daughters each spent a year at BFA as students to improve their English skills.

Renovation of buildings was mentioned earlier in this chapter. Some interesting stories developed around this theme. When I arrived to begin the band program in 1976, there was no room in the Sitzenkirch school where I could teach without disturbing other classes. Having carpentry skills learned from my father, I went about constructing a classroom under the large overhanging roof of an enormous porch at the front of the school building. A cement and tile fountain that wasn't being used was removed, and soon a classroom was ready to use.

Others set about creating offices for the Principal and the Director where the building provided an overhang to store bikes. Since few came on bikes, this space was considered dispensable. A reception office was created inside the large entryway. All of this construction was of wood, a building material very familiar to Canadian handymen. When Bruno Fast asked what we planned to do about the dime-sized gym, he was told that the new ruling at BFA was that, if you wanted a classroom, you built it yourself. It was to be a full twenty years before BFA would have its own gym, an occasion that Bruno did not live to experience.

Smaller projects were also undertaken by various teachers – shelving for library books and textbooks, walls to divide large classrooms into half-sized ones, insulating these walls to provide some level of privacy for teaching, changing these walls the next year, eventually a wall to create extra working, storage and teaching space under the stairway – even the furnace room was used as a teaching area at times. No building has ever had so many reconstructions as the school in Sitzenkirch. As the student body changed from year to year, the configuration of classrooms had to reflect the size of individual grade levels. Classes did not grow evenly, so there were waves that went through with larger or smaller numbers. That meant keeping classrooms for that group year after year and re-designating the grade level.

Until this point there were really very few options for students to choose. What would normally have been options were included as part of the expected program, because that is what the Lord had provided in the way of teachers. This is one reason why the music program grew to be so powerful at that time. Music was first of all a scripturally-defensible subject, useful in evangelism. That gave it a 'halo effect.' Secondly, God provided gifted and dedicated musicians to teach courses and private lessons, and lead performance groups. It could involve large numbers of students at one time in useful educational employment, an ideal prospect for any timetable planner.

During this time the junior and senior high schools were organized into three divisions: the Junior Division comprised of grades six-eight, the Intermediate Division comprised of grades nine and ten, and the Senior Division with eleventh and twelfth-graders. Choir and PE were alternated. When the boys had sectional choir rehearsal, the girls had PE, and vice-versa. Band had beginner, intermediate and senior groups based not on grade levels, but on ability. Although this had great potential for the band program, it did not enhance other courses, so the timetable was changed to give a more equal distribution of time to all "options."

Smaller musical groups were formed out of larger groups or formed themselves. Talent was everywhere. Singers often played instruments, and formed instrumental groups, as well.

During the first few days of Easter break 1981, such a traveling group went on the road into central Germany, with John Peters, board chairman, as the speaker, ministering in churches and centers run by parents of BFA students. Services were held in either English or German. This idea of a smaller, picked-voice group that could easily travel has continued to this day, having evolved through several name changes and compositions - Adoration, Redeeming Light, Ablaze - as well as leaderships. Recently it was called Kenaniah, but that has also evolved into a Jazz Choir.

Margaret Toews' Girls Chorus won the hearts of many in the Three-Country-Corner. Singing at ladies' meetings, concerts and on the street, this group could also minister in English or in German. It seemed that each year this group could be counted on to perform at peak level. One year the high school boys also had an exceptionally good male choir.

Inner growth also brought numerical growth. The buildings were no longer large enough to comfortably house the classes that assembled. New space was needed. We have already indicated where that space was found. The year 1981-82 saw a complete change in configuration at BFA. That deserves a new chapter.

Chapter 7

New Beginnings, Again

School life has a strong similarity from year to year. The calendar produces certain seasonal activities and a certain rhythm of its own. Differences from the norm are therefore larger-than-life. BFA had by the early 80s learned how to add zest to life. A move provides one such possible distraction from the mundane.

Grades 10-12 moved into the top two floors of the Medima building at Hammersteiner Strasse 33 (later re-numbered as #50 by the town of Kandern) in the fall of 1981, on a rental basis from the Medima corporation. Medima continued to manufacture knitted angora products in the lower two floors and stored them in the Altbau (old building) behind. A small house stood where the Auditorium now stands, housing Kandern's youth center. It had formerly been the area's Jehovah's Witnesses' Kingdom Hall. With the move of grades 10-12 to the Kandern site as the BFA High School, grades 1-8 moved from HBR to the Sitzenkirch school site, providing added rooms for more boarding students. Grade 9 remained in Sitzenkirch, being joined by grades 7 and 8 to form the BFA Junior High.

Increasing enrolment of residence students in 1983 brought a lot of discussion about possible buildings that might be available for additional dorms. After checking out the Gasthaus in Tannenkirch and the Bretzelfabrik (pretzel factory) in Kandern, among other buildings in the area, the Hirschen Gasthaus in Liel was selected as an additional dorm for BFA, and renamed Landhaus Liel.

Similar discussion whether or not to purchase the Medima property for the school occurred. The board voted unanimously to raise the necessary money to pay a 20-year mortgage, with each participating mission paying DM 5000 per year and Janz Team contributing DM 25,000 per annum. Authorization by Stadt Kandern was contingent on BFA's allowing the youth center to continue operation in the old house adjacent to the school building until 1987.

BFA bought the Medima Building in 1984. Medima then became the tenant of the school, with a plan of giving over one floor per year to BFA for development, while the company built another outlet on the western edge of Kandern. BFA offices were limited to the Front Office, with the Principal's office behind it getting all the window light, the Director's office next door, and the Business office next to that. Room 330 and the present Director's office, along with the Conference Room and Finance Office, comprised the Library. The second floor became science labs, then the bottom floor, called the "Echo Chamber", which provided room for lunches, chapels, wet-weather playing, etc., became the Resource Center.

Gasthaus Maien in Marzell was rented as a dorm for boys that year. Negotiations with the owner of the Sonne in Marzell continued, but there were legal and other issues to deal with,

before a lease could be signed. Temperatures of -24°C in early January, 1985, while most of the staff members were at Bergün, Switzerland, for the annual winter retreat, damaged heating and water systems in a number of BFA buildings, with HBR sustaining the heaviest damage. Students had to be housed in private homes until repairs could be made to the plumbing. During the summer of 1985, Storchenblick began to be used as the BFA Hospitality House, with returning former staff members acting as hosts.

Growth to 115 students in Sitzenkirch, with 50% new students, resulted in dramatic changes in 1985-1986 to accommodate them. The house near the elementary school, Meiergarten 1, was rented and converted into classrooms for grades 1-4, plus some areas for Discovery Center and tutoring. The original school building housed grades 5-9. High school growth was also at a new high, especially residence students. Gasthaus Sonne in Marzell was rented as another large dorm, and renamed Sonnenhof.

Twice BFA's application to build a gym was turned down, because what the school wanted was not what the town council wanted to see. Prices for an inflatable gym were found to be about DM 100,000. Thoughts about how to improve our sports options were very high in everyone's mind, and the inflatable gym option was one of the many ideas being investigated. A permit to erect it would not be granted by the town of Kandern, so the idea was shelved. "Operation Education" as a fundraiser was approved in December to raise US \$ 1.4 M, and the building permit for the expensive version of a new addition was granted.

The science labs in the high school building were finished by the BFA Building and Maintenance department in 1989-90. The stairwell at the south end of the main building, now between the main building and the gym, was also built in this year. Gasthaus Stockberg was purchased in Marzell in 1990-91 and renamed Haus Blauen, as BFA renovated it for a dorm.

A growth phase builds tremendous optimism in both the staff members and those in the community. In the early 80s, BFA was growing, and old guesthouses were being converted for dorm use. Both BFA and the landlords benefited from this symbiotic relationship.

Attempts were made in the early 80s to integrate BFA's teams into the local German sports leagues. Although this provided good competition in the various sports, it was not continued, because the German teams played as clubs, which were all-year activities, and BFA played seasonal sports according to the American system. The BFA Track and Field Day in Stetten, though not involving any other schools, saw many athletes setting records that would last for some years.

Visiting speakers with a name in the world have come to BFA occasionally. James Irwin, a Christian astronaut who had been to the moon, rounded out the school year

Elaine Macknight (now Wharton), a missionary kid from Italy, and a BFA graduate of 1982, remembers these special involvements during her time at BFA : "the senior trip to Bergün, the drama - theatrical presentation of 'Pygmalion' (I played 'Mrs. Pierce'), Spiritual Emphasis Week, with speaker Jim Irwin, ADORATION, the vocal ensemble that toured churches in Germany, all the volleyball and soccer games, Soccer World Cup, in June, 1982 - Italy won!"

BFA was quite international by this time. Of the 183 students in 1982-83, 78 were American, 44 were Canadian, 6 US/CDN, 1 US/Equadorian, 3 US/German, 1 CDN/German, 7 British, 2 British/South African, 2 Cameroonian, 1 Danish, 13 Dutch, 3 Finnish, 1 French, 9 German, 1 Ghanian, 2 Ghanian/German, 2 Spanish, 4 Swiss, and 2 Syrian. Such variety of passports was to continue to be the trademark of BFA, as it became a truly international Christian school.

Dr. Gene Garrick, one of the organizers of ACSI, was the speaker for staff orientation week. As a result of this challenge, BFA began to look more seriously into ACSI's Philosophy of Christian Education course, which showed the teachers how to become truly biblical in what one did as a teacher. ACSI teacher certification became a new part of BFA's promotion of the ideals of Christian education.

The Oberschulamt Freiburg (Department of Education office for our area of the State) visited BFA in December, requiring copies of our entire curriculum guide, as well as the educational and experiential documentation for each teacher. Following this meeting, BFA received recognition from the Ministry of Education as an "angezeigte Ergänzungsschule." This may be roughly translated as a registered school, offering a program that complements the German curriculum in some way. The alternative designation was an "Ersatzschule." This would have made BFA equivalent to a German alternative private school, offering the German state curriculum. The result was that the school would not receive funding from the Ministry of Education in Stuttgart, because it fulfilled no German need with its English-language instruction and curriculum and its expatriate teachers, given almost entirely to non-German students.

In 1982-1983, Bob Janz took over from John Peters as board chairman. UFM International became a participating mission, joining BCU, C&MA, NAM, GMU, and the sponsoring mission, Janz Team Ministries.

A casual meeting between BFA and Kandern Haupt- und Realschule staff was held at BFA, in hopes that a professional relationship could be started that would open the doors to witness for the Lord. Also new in 1982-83 was the annual BFA Rummage Sale.

The possibility of opening a satellite school in Wiesbaden was investigated in 1983-84 by Art Spooner, but never came to fruition as such. Instead, a private Christian school began on its own, running for a number of years until American military personnel was reduced in the area, and the school folded its operation. Some of the furnishings of Trinity Christian Academy were given to BFA.

A Landlords' Appreciation Dinner was held 2 December, 1983, planned by Albert and Edna Martens. The Lennox family, which worked in Beirut, Lebanon, providing Christian literature, were driven out because of the civil war in that country. Eventually, after having their older children boarding at BFA, they moved to Kandern to allow younger siblings to attend school, to continue their ministry from there, and to increase the ministry of the BFA/BFCF Bookstore at the school. The BFA/BFCF Bookstore, which had operated around the church services and in a BFA office for several years, was packed up, as the Lennoxes now moved back to the USA.

In 1983-84, the State of Baden-Württemberg was concerned about the number of people settling in the state without having official working status. The government declared a freeze on the number of missionaries allowed in the state, and BFA was informed that long-term staff members would not be granted extended residence permits any more. Those with the most experience to run the school would have to leave, and the school would be left in inexperienced hands. After some negotiations, the officials agreed that long-termers with titles would be allowed to stay longer than a few years, so they were all given titles, and BFA continued to function with experienced leadership.

A Business Associates Dinner was held at Haus Palmgartgen on 1 December, 1984, for about 80 owners of businesses with which BFA did business. Such dinners were the basis of BFA's outreach into the German community around the school, resulting later in such institutions as Menschen treffen Menschen and the Candlelight Dinner.

The ninth-grade class had swollen to 35 students, the largest class to date at BFA, taxing the resources of the school in Sitzenkirch, which housed grades 1-9.

Karen Sanders, who came for a sabbatical year with her husband in 1984-85, wrote an extended report of their term at BFA, called *Leaving Home at Last*, in which she collected many valuable insights from students and staff members. Here is an excerpt from one by Gloria (Bettig) Droge, in turn a student, then an RA and a dorm mother:

Black Forest Academy will always be considered a very important and influential part of my life. I spent four years here as a student and do not regret at all that part of the time I had to live in the dorm, an 800 kilometer drive from home. . . Dorm life was another new and exciting experience. Coming from a family with three brothers, I found out what it was to live now with eight sisters. . . Because of living away from home nine months out of the year, the times spent together as a family were much more special and caused us to appreciate each other much more.

After graduation, Bible school, and marriage, I returned to BFA with my husband as staff. We have spent five years here now, four of those years as dorm parents. . . the most important part of the ministry here as dorm parents, is not the things we do, but rather the things we are.

Also in Karen's book is this from Ted and Betty Dick, who had just returned after being away from BFA for two years:

Leaving BFA produced a mixed set of emotions which intermingled with each other, producing many feelings within us. These feelings included anticipation of the future, sadness on being removed from the present, frustration on clearing up details, excitement of re-acquaintances and an almost sense of 'loss of identity.'

But again a restless spirit is felt. Over and over messages, devotionals, and discussions with furloughing staff members or former students, would lead us to question our purpose in living in Canada. . . God very wonderfully took care of the details and allowed us the privilege of returning to work here in 1984!

Karen's own summary after returning to Saskatchewan is worth noting:

Now that we are back in routine, picking up where we left off, BFA doesn't preoccupy our minds. Intense occupations such as teaching demand one's full attention. Visiting with grandma and grandpa and renewing old acquaintances have kept our social life active. . . Amidst this activity, snatches of the memories of BFA have become moment treasures.

It is true we are different now than we were before we went. Our values have changed. Kristi and Nikki (their children who accompanied them to Germany) underwent quite a shock as they re-entered a public school system. At first they were appalled at the bad language they heard, and found the loose morals of teenage friends degrading. Their attitude changed when we talked together as a family. The Lord said we are to be the salt of the earth. That means we have a responsibility to produce healing effects on mankind. From this point they have both become active in the leadership of the youth group and the Pioneer Girls Club at the church.

Thank you, BFA, for making our goals in life heaven-bound instead of building up treasures on earth. We will not forget the love of Christ nor the green pastures of BFA.

The Sanders have since served in international Christian schools both in Hong Kong and in Brazil, before returning to White Rock, BC, Canada.

First Henry Toews and Art Spooner, then I, went to Vienna on occasional weekends in 1984-85, to help the missionary group there with the legal and organizational beginnings of Vienna Christian School. Betty Klassen is first mentioned in 1984-85 in connection with donuts! Many present and former staff members are drooling now, as they remember the delicious odors in the BFA kitchen on Thursday mornings. A BFA teacher was sent this year to Norfolk, VA, to learn the therapy program of NILD, in order to offer a Discovery Program at BFA. She married and never returned, but the vision continued and the Discovery Program is today a vital component of BFA's ministry to the missionary families.

BFA's hosting of a graduate program was under investigation during 1985-85, and that summer the European Conference for Christian Educators was held for the first time in Sonnenhof and the community hall in Marzell, and continued each July until 1990.

The Chernobyl disaster in the spring of 1986 brought anxiety to teachers and dorms, and BFA followed local German school authorities in keeping students inside during recess, and having them wash their hands often. "Computers," "hardware" and "software" became words sometimes used in the staff room, and, as BFA bought its first computers, teachers were given instructions on the ethics of working with them. International School of Basel was opened this year, as our closest English-language neighbour.

The Finanzamt (Income Tax Office) and the Landratsamt (Immigration Office) began to give serious consideration to BFA staff members. One staff member had been asked to submit his

homeland tax return for last year and this year, for these offices to use in determining what BFA's status would be.

A home economics program was arranged in 1986-87 for the ninth-graders at the Haupt und Realschule in Kandern, under the auspices of the Volkshochschule (community college), to provide training in a variety of handwork skills. Since the German high school finished classes at noon, and the community college used the facilities following that, and in this case also the teachers of the school, BFA was able to come in for its last hour twice a week and use their specialized classrooms. A three-year agreement was made, during which all ninth-graders were offered home economics and crafts skills. One teacher went along with the classes as official teacher in charge and interpreter, when necessary.

BFA staff members were required to file German taxes from this year on. This, along with seemingly endless, expensive problems in meeting fire safety requirements in the buildings, staff visa problems, declining capital donations, the need for spiritual revival among staff and student body, and staffing needs were prayer requests during the year.

The category of "Career Staff" was created for those who had served many years at BFA. The group met several times during the year to discuss matters vital to the mission of BFA and sensitive to the biblical views of this group, and to advise the Director on these matters. The concept was that these were the people who had invested the most in the ministry of BFA over the long term and should have more say in its future direction than those who were here only for a short term assignment. Career Staff was later amended to include all those who had served two or more years at BFA and were continuing their service on an open-ended basis.

Christine Cline, of Cedarville College, OH, was the first student teacher at BFA, in high school English. George Durance acted as university supervisor, with Marilyn Dailey as cooperating teacher.

Martha Bastke, a mother and occasional substitute teacher, as well as receptionist, writes:

I will never forget the monologue by a guest speaker on the life of Charles Wesley. We have appreciated friendship enjoyed with staff while we spent 11 years in Schliengen. The wholesome atmosphere my children experienced in the BFA high school set a tone for their moral standards, with a more natural, less sophisticated, less peer pressured, world viewed youth.

Hardy Sünderwald became board chairman in 1987-1988. Jan Peters (now Mooney), RA at HBR 1985-88, remembers:

HBR Olympics, HBR Clue Game, (Libby and I being nuns); banquets, dramas - Anne Franke, the 5-man lift initiation in HBR for the new guys, Coke and Snickers breakfasts at HBR, making chocolate chip cookies Friday nights by the dozens, talking in the kitchen with the guys. The things we planned and did created lasting relationships - I still have with many of them after many years.

By the middle of September, 1988, all eyes turned to Albert Martens, Business Manager, as he ran 1000 kilometers from Hamburg to Basel in a sponsored run for missions. After a renovation project, the dedication of the “Upper Room” in the Altbau (old building) took place on 28 September, 1988, and this large room became the home of BFCF, high school chapels, concerts, and other assemblies, as well as larger classes such as choir and band. The agreement with the German school for home economics and crafts was not renewed in 1989. Part of the reason for this was that there was no teacher with sufficient German skills to accompany the classes. A few honors students were hand-picked to write British A-Level Exams this year, as a way of determining how BFA’s program related to that program. The results were not commensurate with what would be expected of British university entrants. Too many differences in program were evident, so the program was discontinued.

Norfolk Christian School and Caronport High School became partner schools of BFA, offering their wide-ranging expertise to us. Much of the original mission statement came out of the Norfolk Christian School’s, and Caronport High School, because of its association with Saskatchewan Education, was a great help in providing support to BFA in its relationship to that curriculum until 1998. These relationships, never formally concluded, have not been active in recent years.

Greater Europe Mission joined the BFA board as a participating mission beginning with the 1988-89 year.

The falling dollar caused appreciable loss in students, particularly in the residence program, which made this a very tight year financially for the school.

A Parents Advisory Committee (PAC) was formed in 1989-90 to inform the administration of issues as perceived by parents in the community. It was very active this first year. A purchase order (PO) system was instituted this year by Bob Darling, replacement for Albert Martens as Business Manager, who was on Home Ministry Assignment. In spring, Margaret Toews opened an office in a central location in Kandern, for the ministry of Menschen treffen Menschen (MtM), which was active long after Margaret’s departure, until Black Forest Christian Fellowship took over that space for their offices in 2001. The various aspects of the ministry have continued in other guises and under other auspices, since then.

Founded at BFA in the spring of 1990 was an organization which eventually became known as European Educators’ Christian Association (EurECA), to promote Christian education throughout Europe. The falling of the Iron Curtain made it possible to make contact with Christian teachers in many formerly closed countries. This organization grew out of the European Conference for Christian Educators, which had been held at BFA for the past five years. Henry Toews joined Phil Renicks of ACSI on a reconnaissance trip through Romania and surrounding countries in the spring of 1990. As a result, a number of teachers from Eastern Europe were present at the ECCE conference in the summer of 1990, the last one held at BFA. The next summer, this conference was moved to Timisoara, Romania, and a committee was formed to explore the formation of an association linking Christian teachers in state schools with Christians teaching in private Christian schools. EurECA has continued with its own series of conferences, alternating between a major conference with

a main speaker in one year and a working conference developing a theme through group work in the alternating years. BFA has continued to supply practical support for EurECA, providing a person to act as Administrative Officer.

In 1990-1991 grade 9 moved to Kandern. Grades 1-8 remained in Sitzenkirch. The move of ninth grade to the Kandern site gave BFA more of the appearance of a typical American high school, where these were considered Freshmen. Until then, the Canadian system of considering them as the final year of junior high had been observed. The SAIC (School Appearance Improvement Committee), comprised of concerned students, saw to it that year that the campus remained great looking to staff, students and visitors alike, and the school canteen provided between-meal snacks and enrichment to dorm meals.

Staff exchanges introduced 1991-1992, as Art and Ursula Spooner and Nancy Deibert moved to Vienna Christian School, and Jerry and I moved back to BFA from Vienna. The Echo Chamber on the bottom floor of the classroom building was converted to the Resource Center during this year. Plans were drawn up for a multi-purpose addition to the buildings in Kandern. The estimate came in at DM 7.9 Million. Depending on extras desired, the figure was also over DM 10M. BFA negotiators explained that such figures were out of our range, and a change of architects brought the figure – without the underground swimming pool, etc. – to DM 5.6 Million. A new building permit was received, and “Project Nehemiah,” a fundraising effort for DM 3.8 Million was started.

A policy regarding non-evangelical sects’ children attending BFA was drawn up to accommodate two families of Mormons in the area as business students.

Henry Toews announced his appointment as European Director of ACSI, and his resignation as Director of BFA. George Durance, Principal, was seen as the logical choice to succeed him, and this school year saw George assuming more and more of the daily workload of the Directorship.

Evangelical Free Church Mission was accepted as a participating mission in August 1991.

Thus ended an era in BFA’s development. Changes of another sort were immanent for the coming year.

Chapter 8

Looking Forward Through New Glasses

The departure of Henry and Margaret Toews in 1992 to head up the work of ACSI in Central and Eastern Europe resulted in the first change in the BFA directorship in 14 years. George Durance moved from being Principal to Administrative Director. I was appointed Acting Principal, until a full plan would unfold for the school. The School Management Team grew to include the Dean of Students, the Guidance Counselor, as well as top administrators. Fundraising under Project Nehemiah was going toward the project to build a multi-purpose facility that would function as gym and meeting room for chapels and church.

The Kindergarten proposed by several staff members was not approved, due to lack of enrollment. This represented one in a long list of attempts to begin a kindergarten program at BFA, always promoted by concerned teachers, and never adopted by missionary parents in the area, who preferred to enroll their children in the German kindergartens in order to encourage them to learn German and make friends with neighborhood children. German kindergartens operate mostly as play schools, with socialization as their chief aim, and no reading readiness or numerical readiness taught. This, of course, has produced mixed feelings on the part of whoever teaches first grade, as the children do not enter with the concepts learned in North American kindergartens.

Dave Jones assumed the position of Principal in the 1993-1994 school year, with me becoming Academic Dean. Tim Shuman moved from being Residence Supervisor to being Vice-Principal of the High School, particularly in charge of the junior high. Mark Wiebe took over from Hardy S nderwald as board chairman. Having operated most years since 1972 as a dorm, and off and on as housing for staff, Tannenhof, in Gupf was sold, and BFA no longer rented it as a dorm.

Because the Christian & Missionary Alliance required boarding for elementary students, due to their opening a new field in Russia and other Eastern European countries, BFA sublet the Liel dorm to this mission, and C&MA began running it for their own children attending the BFA elementary school. This arrangement has continued to the present, though the number of elementary children using this service has declined measurably.

The opening of the town of Kandern's refugee center across the stream from the school presented some problems with children roaming BFA grounds, but it also provided opportunity for BFA students and staff to have outreach right out the back door of the school. A children's club was begun by a staff member and interested students, including one who spoke the Serbo-Croatian dialect of the children.

In 1994-1995 grades 7 and 8 moved to their new classrooms in the Altbau in Kandern, to

form the two-class BFA Junior High School. This reduced the Sitzenkirch facility to grades 1-6 and provided room for the elementary school to accept a growing number of children.

The mortgage on the Medima property (DM 1.85 Million) was paid off in October, 1996, and by January, 1997, the sod-turning for the new gym and auditorium took place on the hillside south of the main building. An anonymous scribe included this paragraph in a short history of BFA:

The Kandern building has undergone extensive renovations to create classrooms, offices, a 13,000 volume library and three science labs. Much of this renovation was done by faculty and staff, along with volunteer summer work crews from churches in the U.S. and Canada. A smaller building on the same property was renovated to provide a chapel, printing and graphic arts rooms, band room, weight room and facilities for BFA's learning disabilities therapy program.

Before the time came to actually begin building, it had become evident that a separate gym and auditorium was the best, and cheapest, way to utilize the space. Herr Lindemer, the architect, listened intently to the wishes of BFA staff members and then proceeded to design the building in such a way as to take these wishes into consideration.

Project Nehemiah work got underway when the first sod was turned in January, 1997, the pylons to support the massive structure on alluvial soil were bored and poured, and the building seemed very quickly to take shape before the eyes of staff and students alike. At times it was hard to ignore the hammering and the boring during class times, but everyone was rejoicing that this was finally becoming a reality. 159 volunteers from North America worked on Project Nehemiah, totaling 6,600 hours. This saved BFA many thousands of Deutsche Marks in the building program. The BFCF baptism was held in the semi-finished auditorium in the spring of 1998, and the gym was dedicated before year-end. From 1956 until 1998 BFA had operated with rented gyms and the great outdoors, but its PE program never suffered, because of the resourcefulness of the teachers God sent.

The Krone Gasthaus in Maugenhard was rented for a dorm, and is now called simply "Maugenhard". Candlelight Dinner began its annual outreach to the German community in 1998.

Chuck Felton, history teacher from 1995-98, recalls staff devotions, matins, chapels, Herbstmesse in Basel, field trips to Augusta Raurica and the Castle (There are three ruined castles nearby); Christmas concerts, Junior/Senior Banquets, outreach to German community including the Christmas pageant acted out on the street of Kandern, in front of the MtM office; ACSI training sessions; meeting so many talented and dedicated students and staff, and being challenged to serve God effectively.

In 1998-1999 the Saskatchewan curriculum was discontinued in favor of a BFA-created curriculum. Saskatchewan Education allowed BFA to keep those registered who had started in the program, allowing them to finish their courses and to write their departmental exams. New students were not registered any more, and the last students finished in 2000. The

Project Nehemiah gym, auditorium and cafeteria were ready to move into by the start of the 1998-99 school year. Haus I and Haus II of Palmgarten became dorms that year.

Charlie and Joan Pollino (teachers at BFA 1989-99) have fond memories. Joan writes, I'll always remember first-graders running through the halls squealing with delight over the "dinosaur egg" we found in the snow and waiting for it to "hatch," then finding goodies tucked inside. What could have put those inside? "You did, you did!" came the delightful reply! I'll never forget our fifth-grade Underground Railroad parties with escaped slaves and plantation owners hard on their heels, or field trips to Vielle Armand, then I can still see two of my fifth-grade girls witnessing to an old woman in Basel. Sincere prayers and desire to serve the Lord will never be forgotten by this teacher. Jonathan Durance once asked me if we would be bored in heaven. I asked him if he would be bored after ten years knowing his parents were still his parents. "No!" he quickly replied, "Why not?" I asked him. "Because I love them," he replied. "Exactly," I said. He saw the point clearly.

The ten-year accreditation with ACSI, ECIS, and MSA was renewed during this year. Tim Shuman was appointed as Director, for which the accreditation visiting team made an extra-year's allowance in the interim reports required of BFA, to allow Tim to put into practice the recommendations of the visiting team.

International Mission Board (IMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention, and Conservative Baptist International Missions (CBI) became participating missions at the beginning of the 1998-99 school year.

One class continued to take Canadian History, the last of the departmental exam subjects, in 1999-2000, and with the writing of the departmental exam in June, the connection with Saskatchewan Education, after 36 years, was ended. A Curriculum Coordinator was appointed to help the faculty develop the new BFA curriculum, and to monitor the quality of the delivery.

Gasthaus Hirschen in Wittlingen became a dorm, allowing Haus II of Palmgarten to go back to Janz Team as office space. The Project Nehemiah kitchen was completed as the final phase of this great building program, and with the arrival of Les Porter, an experimental program of providing hot suppers to several dorms through the working week was begun.

Do you remember Y2K? The hype surrounding this has died down, but it provided for lots of extra checking of computers throughout the fall season. Another problem looked BFA in the face instead. In May the State office in Freiburg and the local office of the State in Lörrach "capped" the student body at 350 and BFA workers at 150 until 2010, with a "bubble" to 400 and to 185 respectively for a few years, if present increases persisted. Because of some negotiations by the Canadian Consulate, this was later relieved to cap at the height of the "bubble" for the entire ten years.

A fire drill involving the units of the Kandern volunteer fire department, including its long ladder rescue unit, was held at the high school in 2000-2001, simulating a real fire with students trapped on the fourth floor of the classroom building. November 30 was a morning

of awful discovery as teachers came to the elementary school early in the morning to find very real smoke pouring out of the ceiling of the front hallway. As the volunteer fire department arrived a few minutes later, the teachers already had the fire under control. A defective ballast in the fluorescent lights had ignited the wooden ceiling and the toxic insulation behind the façade. As a result, container classrooms were erected over the Christmas holidays on the high school site to accommodate the elementary classes until the middle of May, while the school building was being restored and detoxified. In the end, due to the Lord's grace and good insurance, the elementary school was a better place than it had ever been before.

In 2001-2002, the fire demon struck again. In late October, on a Sunday evening around 6:30 p.m., the boys at Maugenhard smelled smoke. With tremendous maturity they threw the fire alarm and got everyone out of the building. They even found the village fire alarm and activated it. Smoke billowed from the attic. Very quickly the volunteer fire departments from every village in the area were there, and the fire was brought under control and soaked out. In the end several bedrooms were totally destroyed and others damaged. Experts determined that a ventilator motor had overheated and lit the mounting beam on fire. The boys were praised for their handling of the situation. That did not prevent them, however, from having to be scattered in various locations for several months, as rebuilding of the dorm occurred. The incident also took its toll on the dorm staff, as roles totally changed and expectations could not be met. In the end the dorm was a better place than before, but the staff was overtired.

The devastation of September 11, 2001, hit the staff of BFA very hard. Most had some contact with a person directly affected by the attack on the World Trade Center in New York, or that on the Pentagon in Washington, DC, or in the plane in Pennsylvania. Even some Canadian families reported effects of the events of that day. Security measures were beefed up at the school's buildings, local police and fire departments took the various buildings under observation, and much counseling was done to provide a sense of God's protection.

As the seniors walked into the auditorium for the annual parade of flags of nations represented at BFA in 2002-2003, we knew that the year had once more begun. Another BFA activity that has become 'traditional' is the junior class trip to Normandy to visit wartime sites, and to Paris. The senior trip to Rome continues the long-standing tradition, as each year's class discovers the magic of the eternal city for itself, along with the art treasures of Florence and Venice.

The year 2003-2004 began with a powerful message by Director Tim Shuman on the life of William Wilberforce, and then Tim was laid up for a couple of months with vertigo - recurring dizziness. Hans Fung and others sprang into the gaps to carry out necessary jobs. The Interim Five-Year Accreditation Report was prepared throughout the year, involving almost everyone in the school in one way or another, and representatives of the three accrediting agencies, Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI), Council of International Schools (CIS), and Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSA) visited in late April to ensure that BFA maintained the highest standards of service to its community.

2004-05 began as usual with Director, Tim Shuman, issuing a challenge from the life of a Christian of the past, this time George Washington Carver. Preceding the Opening

Ceremony, as has become traditional in the BFA calendar, was a week of German instruction for new staff, orientation for new dorm staff, and the staff conference. These sessions began early in August and extended through the weeks of late summer until school began on the 30 August with an orientation day for new students, before the official Opening Ceremony on 31 August. New this year was the scaffolding and building evidence on the old building that had affectionately been renamed the Janz Building. The hopes that the building program would have been finished before school beginning were starved early in spring, as one delay after another pushed the beginning of construction later and later into the summer. In the end, construction began after school was finished in June, instead of after Easter. That left a lot of the work to be done during the school year, and plans had to be adjusted frequently to make it possible for teachers to continue their lessons. Classes were held as usual, but occasionally access had to be diverted around building projects taking place in one area or another of Project ReNEWal. Construction noise, such as jack-hammering, boring, hammering and sawing became a background drone that could be pushed out of the immediate consciousness, but when a math teacher and her class saw the portable ToiToi (workers' toilet) floating by the window suspended from the crane, with attendant smells permeating the air, education paused for a moment.

The 2005-06 school year began with Mark Wiebe stepping down from his responsibilities as board chairman and filling in as Interim Director while the Shuman family enjoyed a well-earned year in their home area. The building on Project ReNEWal continued on various unfinished areas, as classrooms and offices were being used. Summer teams had helped to get these rooms ready for use by school beginning. Several staff members and former staff members were involved in reconnaissance trips to various parts of the world, to see what God is doing in Christian education, and to investigate what BFA could do to assist. The student body held at around 360 students, and the dorms were full, as usual. From 28-30 April, 2006, the Jubilee Celebrations were held, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the founding of the school by the Janz Brothers Gospel Association, and both staff and student alumni returned to see what God had done.

BFA enjoys God's blessings upon it, as it supports the work of missions in Europe, Asia and Africa, by making it possible for missionary families to continue their work while their children are educated and cared for in a loving and nurturing environment. The events of each year continue to point both staff and students to the One who is in control, and who wants to help them all to change their world for Christ.

Chapter 9

Conclusion

Black Forest Academy celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2006. During this half a century God led, sometimes in ways that were planned by the leadership and the board, and sometimes in spite of what was planned. It has survived great difficulties and rejoiced in marvelous provisions. Its graduates have encircled the earth with their talents and callings from God, working in almost every conceivable type of work, both in business and in Christian missions. Staff members have come and gone; some have stayed long, others have devoted a shorter time to this part of God's vineyard. Several have left their lives as a deposit to God's faithfulness in using them to the very end, and others have joined the heavenly throng after some time back in their homelands.

The main Principals and Directors of BFA have been:

Lydia Janz and Olga Janz (1955-56) – the longsuffering parents who tried to shepherd their six elementary-age children through correspondence lessons around the kitchen table, as their husbands were often away on evangelistic tours.

Vera Kroeker (1956-58) – the brave first teacher in the Janz Team School.

Agnes Loewen (1958-60) – carried on the work begun under Vera Kroeker.

Tina Isaak (1960-68) – often single-handedly carried the responsibility during the ups and downs of the early years, but kept coming back for more.

Dick Driedger (1964-67) – the first person designated Principal; brought in the Saskatchewan curriculum and departmental exams.

Tina Isaak (1969-73) – again the stabilizing factor in the school.

Richard Loepky (1970-72) – Principal, carried on the work that Dick Driedger had begun.

Bill Neudorf (1971-83) – another one who often returned to administration, and shifted roles, when no one else was available, but loved to return to teaching. His heart for BFA, where he served long as an elder, was also very strong.

Jay Barnes (1970; 1973-76) – came as a young, long-haired teacher and left as Principal.

Ray Ratzlaff (1975-78) – with experience as a principal, a choir director and a cabinet minister in the Alberta government, he came to teach chemistry and choir and was named Superintendent. Many participating missions came as a result of his work. Most will remember him, however, for his top-quality choirs comprised of senior high students and faculty.

Henry Toews (1976-92) – High School Principal for two years and then Administrative Director for 14 years. Much of what BFA is can be traced to his farsighted, wide-ranging view of its ministry. His skill in articulating the vision of BFA can be seen in the Policy Manual, which he compiled and organized for the first accreditation of the school. His wife Margaret is credited with beginning the outreach ministry named “Menschen treffen Menschen,” in addition to her work in the music department of BFA.

Harold Klassen (1977-99) – came as a dorm parent and chemistry teacher, was Principal

for eight years, refining the timetable with Day 1, Day 2, and semesters after the Saskatchewan model. Then he built the Resource Center into being the pride of the high school campus. Following that he built the Computer Lab into a vital information technology center. He finished as Assistant Director of Operations and Janz Team Integration Supervisor, before moving on to educational ministries with Janz Team International. His wife Betty is credited with reviving the spirits of faculty, staff and students every Thursday morning with her delicious donuts.

George Durance (1985-97) – began as a social studies teacher, became High School Principal in 1987 and Administrative Director in 1992. He was respected for his consummate ability to articulate the vision of BFA and to refine it into workable assignments. He organized the administration into several management teams – school, administration, residences. He finished his PhD at Durham University during his time as Director. The financial drive named Project Nehemiah was his brainchild and passion, resulting in 1998 with the completed gym, auditorium and cafeteria, and in 2000 with the completed kitchen. His wife Bev was the daughter of Edwin Janz, another brother in the Janz family that formed the mission. She brought instruction in strings into the music faculty and taught German.

Dave Jones (1992-99) – coming as High School Chaplain and a teacher in the Bible and PE departments in 1992, he became Principal in 1993 and Director in 1997. During his time BFA went through its re-accreditation self-study. He is credited with putting BFA on the sports map of Europe, when BFA joined the DoDDS leagues in volleyball, cross-country running, basketball, soccer and track and field. His wife Nicky taught math and home economics.

Tim Shuman (1986-present) – coming as a residence assistant, he joined the faculty as a junior high science and high school industrial arts teacher in 1987. In 1989 he became Residence Administrator, and in 1995, Vice Principal in charge of the Junior High School. In 1996 he was named Assistant Director of Schools, and in 1999 Director of BFA. His architectural mock-ups of Project Nehemiah and Project ReNEWal gave substance to vision. His wife, Sandee, began service at BFA as an RA, and served in the reception office.

The unsung heroes of BFA should probably include first of all those who spent many years in service at the school. Some, such as Tina Isaak and Bill Neudorf, have already been mentioned. Erna Martens came in 1976, and is currently continuing as an administrative assistant in the BFA library. Jerry and I also came in 1976, and after assisting in the founding of Vienna Christian School from 1986-91, returned to BFA. Nina Stephenson, also arrived in 1976, and after teaching for some years, is now a missionary in Hungary.

Albert and Edna Martens served from 1977 until 2002, first as dorm parents, then as Business Manager and bookkeeper. Albert is remembered for his extreme marathon running and hockey playing, which gave him opportunity to witness in the community.

Ted and Betty Dick came in 1979 as dorm parents and left for Canada in 1982. In 1984 they were back, to continue to the present as Personnel Officer.

Other teachers and staff members, coming for varying lengths of terms, brought special skills such as computer technology, sports coaching, musical talents, or arts and crafts into the picture. God was able to blend the variety of gifts into a cohesive unit each year.

Jay Barnes' name stands out against a long list of western Canadian Mennonite names in BFA's history: Balzer, Bartel, Berg, Bergman, Buhler, De Fehr, Derksen, Dick, Driedger, Dueck, Duerksen, Dyck, Enns, Ensz, Epp, Ewert, Fast, Friesen, Funk, Giesbrecht, Goertzen, Groening, Guenther, Harder, Heinrichs, Hiebert, Hildebrand, Hoepfner, Isaak, Jantzen, Janz, Janzen, Klassen, Koehn, Koop, Kornelsen, Krahn, Kroeker, Loewen, Loepky, Martens, Neudorf, Neufeld, Nickel, Penner, Peters, Plett, Ratzlaff, Reimer, Rempel, Sawatzky, Schroeder, Thiessen, Toews, Unger, Unruh, Wall, Wiebe, Wiens, and Willms.

Other names of Germanic origin have come up time and again over the years, as though the Old Country was calling the succeeding generations back: Armbruster, Bechtel, Beck, Benjamin, Bettig, Bischoff, Boettcher, Buller, Dein, Droge, Ekk, Ewikowski, Fledderjohann, Flickinger, Frank, Frantz, Friedman, Fuchs, Gascho, Getz, Gieser, Gingerich, Goss, Hasenbein, Heinemann, Hess, Horn, Husmann, Jahnke, Kangas, Kapp, Kephart, Kleinknecht, Kertcher, Klingler, Kocherscheidt, Kohls, Lower, Lauterwasser, Lohnes, Lorenz, Lotz, Meier, Moench, Moessner, Neumann, Ocker, Opfer, Rotter, Quapp, Ratzenböck, Richter, Ritzenthaler, Ruffner, Schalm, Schmidt, Schnack, Schumacher, Shaffer, Shallenberger, Shilling, Shuman, Siegel, Sommer, Sommers, Stebner, Stemple, Stoltzfus, Stricker, Stuckey, Tebbe, Till, Tischer, Utter, Wagenhoffer, Wagner, Walker, Wolters.

Do the names Fung, Kumaraswamy, Lee, Park, Shin and Yau indicate a new direction in the ministry of BFA? Asian students outnumbered Canadians for two years, before the Canadians overtook them again. Staff members with Asian names have all come with American, Canadian or European passports to this time. What does the future hold? Only time will tell.

As the field for recruitment grew, new issues needed to be worked out in this 'inter-mission, inter-denominational' mix. Two sets of parents visited HBR on the same weekend once, and both withdrew their sons from the school, the one claiming that BFA was far too strict and the other claiming that the school was not strict enough. Simple increase in size made many original measures obsolete, and moves of the school resulted in new interaction with a different community. Everyone at BFA was and is affected by these phenomena.

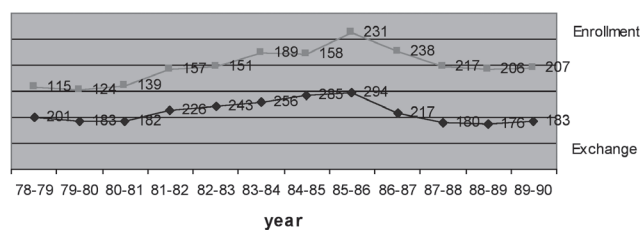
Another factor was language. Western Canadian Mennonites grew up speaking Plattdeutsch, a German dialect, in their homes. Although this practice was fading during the entire time of BFA's existence, there were still plenty of people coming with more or less capacity to interact with the German culture. Later, as many who were not of this background came to serve at BFA, language classes for non-German-speaking staff members have given assistance in surviving in the host culture, and in reaching out to landlords and neighbors. The new swing towards more Asian students has also brought with it a need for someone who understands the Korean language and culture, whom God has also provided in the person of Youngmee Shin.

Work skills must also be mentioned here. Early BFAers were brought up with a variety of skills that cannot easily be understood today. Skills learned at home, often in primitive pioneering situations, were manifold, making such recruits more multi-faceted than the specialists who came later. Most teachers were teaching several subjects. Moving from teaching during the school term to construction in the Christmas or Easter vacation, or during summer 'holidays' was expected by both the teacher and the administrator.

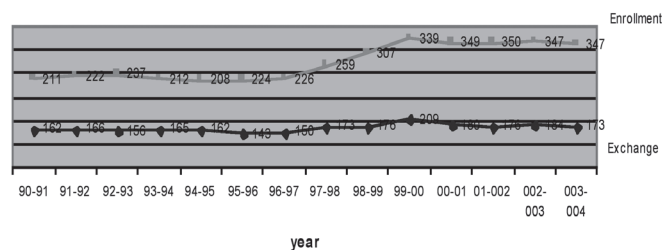
Christianity addresses culture. This means that cultural issues – dress length, hair length or style, makeup, musical styles, entertainment, personal ‘image’ – must be examined by each generation with its own biblical integration. The school is often the crucible in which these issues are clarified. That, in turn, influences the parents, who in turn influence the mission and the home church.

Most of those coming to BFA have never lived on missionary support before. That brings adjustments in lifestyle and in expectations. Each year a new group of recruits arrives to learn what this is all about. Currency exchange is suddenly something that is of interest, where most of the people have never had any reason to investigate this before. In 1956 the American dollar fetched about 4 Deutsche Marks, making it quite easy to raise support to live in this rebuilding, war-torn economy. In 1999 Germany went on the EURO, and the current exchange rate of the American dollar to the Euro is hovering around \$1 = 78 Euro Cents (= DM equivalent of 1.52) and decreasing. The line graph gives a visual description of this devaluation of the currency in which most BFAers raise support. That has meant that support levels have had to increase manifold over the years.

Enrollment Dollar Comparison 78-89



Enrollment Dollar Comparison 90-04



Please note that, because Germany adopted the EURO currency in 1999, the figures from 1999-2004 have been adjusted by the constant 1.95583, which was set for the exchange between the Deutsche Mark and the Euro in 1999.

BFA is primarily a boarding school for high school students, and it is located in a somewhat rural setting. It has chosen to remain primarily an MK school with its staff and faculty totally on missionary support. Tuition and boarding costs can thus be kept as low as possible, and the overall costs to the evangelical church for its missions program reduced to a minimum. This has not prevented BFA’s faculty and staff from growing faster than its student body: in 1976-77 there were 32 staff members for 98 students, giving a ratio of 1:3.1. In 2005-06 there are 188 staff members for 366 students, with a ratio of 1:1.9. Needless to say, BFA offers more electives and cares for more of the needs of its students today than in 1976.

Some aspects about BFA are worth recapping:

BFA seeks to uphold scriptural principles in its teachings and its activities, as well as in its relationships.

BFA has since its inception depended entirely on all its employees coming as supported missionaries.

BFA grew with a curriculum and external examinations from Saskatchewan Education. Since 1998, the curriculum is American-based.

BFA serves the evangelical missionary community working in Europe, the Middle East, Central Asia and North Africa.

BFA has enjoyed long-term leadership of the highest quality.

BFA has one sponsoring mission – Janz Team – and many participating missions (currently 11). Forty or fifty other missions and occasional businesses profit from this group’s leadership.

BFA bought or leased large available buildings and enlarged them with the facilities needed for its program. BFA, as a result, became extremely decentralized. None of the residences is on the same property as either of the school buildings. Decentralization has emphasized a family-style environment for its boarding students.

BFA has integrated into the community in which it is located. Staff and students are engaged in local German churches, and some call Black Forest Christian Fellowship their home church, and there are several outreach programs each year for German neighbors.

BFA became accredited with Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI), European Council of International Schools (ECIS) (renamed Council of International Schools – CIS), and Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSA) in 1989. Continued accreditation has provided input by way of conferences and seminars, keeping staff members up-to-date on latest developments in their fields and giving them spiritual as well as professional nourishment. A number of staff members have served on accreditation visiting teams in other schools, thus bringing back a wealth of experience to BFA.

The National Institute for Learning Disabilities (NILD) program has been offered at BFA for many years, making possible therapy for students with learning disabilities.

Philadelphia Biblical University offers courses towards a Master of Science in Education at BFA each summer. A number of BFA teachers, as well as teachers from many other Christian schools, have profited from this program. BFA in turn has profited from the increased capacity of its long-term teachers to bring cutting-edge pedagogical practice to bear in their department.

BFA has become the model school for many other schools in Europe and around the world.

Every possible technological means has been employed to enhance contact school with parents and between parents and their children.

The number of returning staff and of students returning later to teach or to work in the residences is high – a good sign of satisfaction.

There are plans for BFA's future. Project ReNEWal is nearly finished. The "Janz Building," as the old renovated building is being renamed, is already in use, even before it is finished.

Maintaining staff longevity is a point that consumes much energy and many thoughts. Teachers and others serve as missionaries among missionaries. How BFA can serve the wider field of international Christian education, is a question that continues to play out before us. Keeping good relations with the German government is also important, if people are to feel at home in the school's location.

Will the BFA of tomorrow look like the BFA of today? Each new generation of leadership and faculty, as well as the concepts driving residence work, change. If everyone concerned with the school prays for wisdom and guidance, as well as strength to carry out God's will, the BFA leadership of today will be able to pass on the torch to the leadership of tomorrow. Perhaps God has already had students of Black Forest Academy whom He is preparing to take on these challenges.

The Mission of BFA

Black Forest Academy, a school primarily for missionary children, provides a quality, international Christian education that equips its students to influence their world through biblical thought, character, and action.

The Vision of BFA

Globally minded Christians changing their world for Christ.

