



A dream, a prayer, and a \$5 bill

The story of Hope Homes, Inc.

Written by Paul B. Kiewit



Hope Homes

Serving Adults with Developmental Disabilities

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Forward

In my early years as a minister—during times of serious illness or before surgery, etc.—family, friends, and colleagues in the ministry told me they were, and would be, praying for me. I appreciated these promises and was greatly encouraged, assured, and buoyed up by them. But something different happened when I encountered someone who challenged me one day to an endeavor which, personally, I thought could not be accomplished. I was told they would be praying about it all. Never before had I felt the undergirding power that comes when someone assures you that you are continually in their prayers. Now, looking back, I realize how my own perseverance was strengthened, and my own faith greatly encouraged, by this experience which enriched my life.



I must admit I prayed, too. Initially, however, my prayer was to find some graceful way to be released from this burden which had been being placed on me! But then, especially after my own faith had been challenged, I began to join my “prayer warrior” and became convinced, as she had been from the beginning, that we simply could not stand in God’s way when He wanted something done...by us. So, though it did not make the task less arduous, I gradually began to accept God’s seemingly “creeping-forward” progress. As the years went by the endeavor became even more of an opportunity for God to reveal His guiding Hand. I have chronicled in these memoirs the first quarter century, 1963 to 1988, a period when I was privileged to be an active participant in a “dream become reality” enterprise...this ministry which Mrs. Leiphart herself first called...“Hope.”

When the group that later incorporated Hope Homes first gathered, these individuals embraced the concept that God’s Hand was upon them, and that they also needed to undergird their common effort with prayer. We all came to realize that if we remained faithful, God would accomplish His Will through any and all future seeming impossibilities. Together we found that if we are willing to go far enough, it becomes an exhilarating experience to discover that, as God’s blessed people, we are sometimes expected to attempt something so big that failure is guaranteed...unless God steps in. And He did...many, many times. I, and later the Board, tried never to forget that God was the Founder of Hope Homes Inc. in the heart and mind of a special lady. We were simply the privileged ones to bring His plan to fruition.

To Him be the Glory!

Paul B. Kiewit Lancaster, Ohio April 25, 2003

Introduction

Though these “Memoirs” are personal in nature I have chosen to couch them in the third person rather than the usual “I” or “me.” In putting it all together, I found it easier to tell the story in this way...from this perspective.

I’d just like you to “look down with me” and view twenty-five very special years; beginning when a parishioner stops in to see her pastor. By using the third person you and I are viewing all of this from the same vantage point...we’re just sitting together, perhaps on the limb of a tree, and looking down as a wonderful, faith-filled, drama unfolds beneath us.



One thing which we cannot see, but can spiritually discern, is God at work in all of it..... through an ever-enlarging group of people consecrated to a worthwhile task. “Hope” sprang from a lady’s heart forty years ago. Its ministry is still desperately needed, and it’s still growing! It is a work in progress. The drama is not over; so hold your applause!

But you can be grateful.....I am!

A DREAM, A PRAYER, AND A \$5 BILL!

Great dreaming, fervent prayer, and dogged determination...these were the beginning “impulses” which ultimately (but not for a l-o-n-g time!) became what we now know as Hope Homes, Inc., Hope Homes Foundation, Inc., and its companion corporations.



Margaret Leiphart was a faithful member of Grace United Church of Christ. She seldom missed Sunday worship except when illness intervened...either her own or her young son, Robert. Dr. Orris Haulman, long-time senior minister of Grace Church was the pastor when “Aunt Margaret” ...as she became affectionately known through the years...came to worship as a visitor the first time with her son. That day they were recipients of the Haulman family invitation to Sunday dinner...a custom of Dr. Haulman with visitors to this downtown church at the corner of Bowery and State Streets in Akron, Ohio.

Mrs. Leiphart felt a particularly close parent-child kinship to young Robert, her “Bobby”; for though born a normal child, Robert suffered a high fever at an early age which left him mentally retarded. Bobby had brothers and sisters, but she felt he was her responsibility and with God’s help (she would remind you!) she would surely take care of him; and she did, in a humble and loving way. Robert was her constant companion as she conducted her business affairs; attended worship and congregational social events; and was a good neighbor to those around her in her modest home within walking distance of the church. Her son was a primary concern but she never lost sight of those around her who were “in need of a little blessing which maybe I can give”...so she would say.

Thus “Aunt Margaret” and Bobby lived, lovingly challenged by a special need, but not allowing her situation to dim her vision of what she could do for others. Consulting annually with her pastor, she would get the addresses of a handful of church-related institutions, such as children’s homes. To this list Mrs. Leiphart would always add the Emmaus Homes in Missouri; of particular interest to her for they were the only ministries then in existence in the United Church of Christ who cared for the developmentally disabled adult. At Christmastime every resident of these many institutions would receive an individually wrapped gift! All during the year purchases were made through managers and buyers at several downtown stores who helped her with great “deals” on things which they thought she might want to include in her Christmas boxes. Church groups and individuals helped in modest ways, but it was her love and giving spirit alone that made it happen....and wrapping gift after gift, packing box after box, was her joy each fall. Only her church’s name appeared on the boxes. Letters of gratitude were sent to Grace church, and then given to her; for she was the planner, organizer, and prime worker behind this annual largesse. In some later years

she added the making of packets of candies at Easter...individually wrapped, sending them to these and other institutions. She was a Christian lady who, despite her special responsibilities, lived “beyond herself” with joy and satisfaction. So the years passed, and then...in her late seventies...with Bobby now middle-aged, she decided one day to share a dream...a vision...a hope...with her minister.

A truly remarkable story began to unfold when she and Bobby walked into the Grace Church office just to say “hello” as they often did; and to inquire whether Rev. Kiewit was in...he was. The minister could tell that something was on “Aunt Margaret’s” mind. “As I get older,” she began, “I’m growing more concerned with each passing year about Bobby and his future; when I can no longer be helpful.” Robert’s siblings might take him into their homes, as they had done before when she had been hospitalized; but she felt this was not necessarily their responsibility. And many families had absolutely no one to turn to! It seemed to her that this was a place where the “faith community” could well become the “caring community.”

As the conversation progressed, the minister knew that this dear lady was not just speaking for herself and her “Bobby”...she was speaking on behalf of many other families of whom both she and her pastor were aware. When the Emmaus Homes in Missouri was mentioned as an established ministry to such needful persons, Mrs. Leiphart of course knew of it for they had received her Christmas boxes through the years. Yes, the Emmaus Homes provided great care... “But we here in Ohio should be making provision for our loved ones. Don’t you think so, pastor?” She said that she had been much in prayer about all of this...it was not a whim...it was not just a passing thought...it was a conviction born of serious consideration. “We” needed to do something in Ohio...and that “we” was herself, her minister, her church...and anyone else who could be found with a zeal for such a noble project. By now Paul Kiewit knew this visit was much more than a social call. It was inextricably turning into “a call for action.”



Her pastor frankly explained the complexities of such a project; providing home-like facilities and programming for the developmentally disabled adult. Even if the scope of such a new ministry would extend to the Ohio Conference of the United Church of Christ, it would take a great deal of time and the cooperation of many, many, people. It was indeed a worthy dream but he was not at all sure that it really could be done. Mrs. Leiphart listened patiently to his reasoning and mild protestations that her dream was well nigh impossible. Folks like Bobby would continue being cared for in large, state-run, institutions...he didn’t like it; but that was the way it would be for the foreseeable future. One local church alone could not do anything this ambitious and it was improbable that a larger church body would OK such an idea. He assured her it was a good thought...but as a practical matter, it was not possible.

Having said all this, the pastor revealed how little he really knew about “Aunt Margaret.” His remarks would have been devastating to anyone else since they completely denied the possibility of fulfilling her dream! But she just moved forward in her chair and replied, “You know, what you’ve told me may be true, but I have prayed about this and I believe that God wants us to do it; and if we will help, He will get it done!” It was evident Margaret Leiphart knew she had an ally that her pastor had not taken into consideration. As she spoke she opened her purse, took out a bill, leaned forward, placed it on his desk, and said...“Here’s five dollars to get it started!”



“Now what?” thought Rev. Kiewit. He noted, with some fear and trepidation that Mrs. Leiphart had not said, “Here’s five dollars, see if you can get something going;” or “Here’s five dollars. Perhaps we can start something;” or “Maybe something can be done to be helpful to people like Bobby.” No, he had heard her correctly. She had said, “Here’s five dollars to get it started.” As far as Mrs. Leiphart was concerned, there was nothing to question. Had she not told her pastor that all of this had come about after much prayer, and that she felt that God wanted it done? How then could it not succeed? So...he accepted the five dollar bill (it should have been kept as a memento!) and told her that he would make some inquiries, and “float” her ideas and dreams not

only to the leadership of Grace Church but also to the executives of the Ohio Conference of the United Church of Christ. For, he reminded her again, this kind of project was beyond the scope of a single congregation. “Well, I’ll do what I can,” were among his final words to Mrs. Leiphart as she and Bobby readied themselves to leave. But that quite tentative word of her pastor was not the last word; for as she turned to leave, she smiled and reminded him again that she would continue praying, and that she knew God wanted him to succeed with any effort he would put into it. She assured him that he was not alone; God would be helping.

With a silent prayer for guidance, he attached a note to the five dollar bill and put it in his desk for the time being. What should he do next? Which way to go? Who to talk to? These thoughts coursed through his mind. Then later, as he passed the church secretary, leaving the building to make some hospital calls, he mentioned to her that Mrs. Leiphart had asked him to do the impossible...or so he felt at that very moment! How could anyone expect something as audacious as this dream ever to succeed? He would just have to tell Mrs. Leiphart the next time she came in to visit. Not fifteen minutes had gone by and he had already forgotten the two allies which she had promised...her prayers, and God’s help! However, he reported Mrs. Leiphart’s dream to the Grace Church official board and later wrote a letter to Dr. Leo Keil on the Ohio Conference staff. After several weeks “Aunt Margaret” asked how thing were going with “the project” as she now called it. He had nothing to report. She said, “I’m still praying!”

When she stepped into his study the next time Rev. Kiewit reported that Dr. Keil had written saying he would consult with certain committees and commissions of the Conference when they met and would get back to him. He'd also tell Rev. Kiewit when he would need to come to Columbus to present the idea. Then at some future date it might be put on the agenda of the Conference Board of Trustees. All this would take some time. He also added he was not sure what kind of response would be made to it. But Mrs. Leiphart was elated with the report and said she would now begin praying for the Conference leaders, that their hearts and minds would be receptive. Also, she said, she had received some money for her birthday and she wanted him to have it..."So here's another twenty dollars." Her pastor pulled the original five dollar bill with the note still attached from his desk. Though he didn't mind having a few dollars in his desk it was not prudent to have larger sums there. The minister could literally see the radiance of faith on Mrs. Leiphart's face...for to her "things were moving." How could he return her to what he felt was the "reality" of the matter? So for now, to be sure the twenty-five dollars would be safe, he suggested he open a bank account with it. He told her that he would do so within the week, and asked, "What name should I put on the account...what name shall we give it?" She thought for a moment, her face brightened, she smiled, and replied..."Let's call it HOPE."

Thus, simply as the name on a twenty-five dollar bank account, Hope was born! But through her love, faith, and Christian witness, "Hope" had been conceived years before in the mind and heart of this Christian lady. Now it was "sink or swim." To her minister sinking was a distinct possibility! But with her prayers buoying him, perhaps he should try to swim a bit longer.

Rev. Kiewit was ready to meet with Conference personnel whenever they might invite him to come to Columbus; though he knew such meetings were probably still months in the future. He reported this to Mrs. Leiphart who was not fazed by the delay...it would give her just that much more time to pray! Then the word was received; and, after about a year of both letter writing and trips to Columbus to meet with Conference committees and commissions, the Board of Trustees put Hope Homes on the agenda and gave him time to tell them of the dream of Mrs. Leiphart. He explained that she knew all about the ministry of the Emmaus Homes in Missouri, but she felt that church members in Ohio should take an active interest in a ministry to the developmentally disabled adult. Thus, because it was obvious that such an undertaking would take the support of more than one congregation, he was seeking the Board's permission to ask other congregations in the Ohio Conference of the United Church of Christ to take part in helping make this dream a reality. After many questions the Board agreed to adopt the possibility of beginning such a ministry; but with the proviso that he diligently seek the support and cooperation of another denomination. It was to be an ecumenical venture if at all possible; and he was to report his progress from time to time. So with "Blessings on you, Kiewit"..."Good luck"..."Let us hear from you"....he once again drove back to Akron from Columbus. Though the Board had essentially said "yes" he still was somewhat discouraged about any real prospects for success. He reported the results of the meeting to Mrs. Leiphart. She was not

discouraged at all, but “turned the coin over” and suggested to her pastor that her prayers were being answered!

Now, with the Board’s OK, he had to begin some sort of “campaign” with very limited resources. A mailing was prepared to all United Church of Christ Ohio Conference Churches asking for their help in getting a project underway in Ohio to benefit the developmentally disabled adult; something that was now simply a dream. The postage for this first mailing was paid for with a grant from Grace Church. He tried to preserve the small balance in the Hope account for the future...if there was going to be a future! Considering all the other ongoing benevolences with which congregations were engaged he didn’t expect an influx of replies. So he was not surprised when there were only about a half dozen; some letters with further inquiries and a couple with modest checks. When the checks were banked he discovered that, with a bit of interest, and a gift from Mrs. Leiphart who had another birthday, the Hope account now had about a hundred dollars!

Mrs. Leiphart did not “pressure” her pastor during her occasional visits to his office...rather she always sought to “encourage” him...and he needed a lot of that! When, on one occasion, he was ready to “throw in the towel” she suggested that perhaps they ought to incorporate as a non-profit entity in the state and thereby make it helpful, tax wise, for people to contribute. She knew three people were necessary to form such a non-profit group. She had a banker friend, Waldron Rice, who would join her minister and herself; and the three of them could apply for such a charter. So, in a conversation where he was ready to write “finis” to this dream, he was challenged to go yet a step further. Not only was the dream not to be dropped; it was to be incorporated! On April 19, 1966, “Hope Home for the Retarded, Inc.” was born.

Following the dictum of the Conference Board, Rev. Kiewit also began what was to become quite an arduous task: corresponding with, and making phone calls to, judicatories of various denominations with large constituencies in Ohio. This was an agonizingly slow process; discovering to whom to write or call, and more often than not finding that it was the wrong person or that a committee needed to be contacted. Then determining who the committee chair was, and sometimes finding that this person was no longer in that position, etc., etc. Answers were extremely slow in coming and all of them, when they were finally heard from in an official way, said, “No thank you, we have enough projects already;” or “We’re not interested in getting into that area of ministry just now;” or in the case of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, “We already have such a ministry, the Luther Home of Mercy, in northwest Ohio.”

After more than two years of correspondence, telephone calls, and back-and-forth referrals, it looked increasingly probable that no other denomination was interested. During this period occasional letters were also written to UCC Ohio Conference churches asking them to support this new project. But he found that, for the most part, no one really wanted to contribute to something which, as one correspondent put it, “doesn’t have a ghost of a chance.”

From time to time Mrs. Leiphart would stop in and give Rev. Kiewit a “pep talk”; but discouragement began to envelop him...after several years of trying to bring substance to a dream...and with a bank account still well under three hundred dollars. He felt he should bring this “college try” to a graceful conclusion and send the accumulated funds to the Emmaus Homes. No other denomination had come forward to help. Also, it seemed that United Church of Christ congregations were not ready to add a new ministry either. As a busy pastor he’d given a lot of time and attention to this hope...this dream. But it remained only that ...a hope and a dream. It was reasonable now to be realistic!

He knew exactly what he was going to say when Mrs. Leiphart stopped in with her cheery “hello” and her eternally optimistic spirit. During all these years she had believed that the dream of Hope would become the fact of Hope; and her pastor knew that she had prayed for him. He felt he had diligently pursued every avenue, and had done his best. It just wasn’t going to happen; it had proven itself an impossibility! He needed to speak with her about it, and soon.

So when she next visited him in his study he poured out his heartfelt feelings based on all that had happened (and had not happened) in the past several years. He recalled for her the few responses that had come; and the pittance which had been received. “Mrs. Leiphart,” he said, “I think we ought to drop the idea and give the little money we have to the Emmaus Homes.” There was stunned silence for several moments and a slight frown formed on her brow as she absorbed what her pastor was telling her. Then with a little smile on her face she reminded him again how she had been praying for the success of the venture. “I still believe this is something God wants done; and that he wants you to do it.” She admitted the difficulties, but believed them to be only temporary. She had faith, she continued, because she really believed God wanted it to happen. She would continue to pray about it every day. Then, shaking her finger at him in a serious, but kindly manner, she concluded.....“Now, pastor...where is your faith?” A great many folks had sat in the chair opposite his desk during his years as pastor of Grace Church, but Rev. Kiewit could not remember anyone ever shaking their finger at him...nor more especially, challenging his faith! But now, coming from this dear lady, it was a humbling experience. She and Bobby sat in the fourth row on the right side of the sanctuary Sunday after Sunday listening to him speak of service and witness, prayer and forgiveness, and a dozen other themes, including faith; and now she was simply asking...where was his faith? Though the question was asked with her usual gentleness of spirit, nevertheless he was jolted by it and by her conviction that since, not if, God wanted this ministry begun, then it was not up to her nor her pastor to give up. So what had meant to be a concluding visit about a dream...and a “let’s go on to other things” conversation...became a lesson in how sometimes one must continue when all the signs seem to say “Stop.” You must continue if you really believe it is ultimately in God’s Hands and He wants it done! Confronted with that kind of faith was there anything more to say? Just keep at it awhile longer was her encouraging word. And, like Moses’ helpers did for him as he looked toward the fulfillment of God’s promise, she would “hold up his hands” in every way she could. So, just when the pastor was ready to let go of the rope called “Hope” he tied a knot instead...and hung on!

Periodic mailings continued to United Church of Christ congregations and statistics were reported in these letters which indicated the need for such a ministry in Ohio. A few contributions were received after each mailing, enough to pay for the postage and add a small amount to the bank account of "Hope Homes for the Retarded Inc." which was the name on the State Charter. It was "Homes" not "Home" as Mrs. Leiphart had suggested...what faith!

Lists of foundations who might be interested in helping fund the beginning of such a ministry were located through friends at the University of Akron and many letters were written. For the most part the answers were negative, for no foundation was ready to fund what was just a dream. Mrs. Leiphart, on her occasional visits to Rev. Kiewit's study, would assure him that she truly felt God wanted it to happen and that he should continue to remain faithful. As she spoke encouragingly, she once remarked, "All we need is the help of one millionaire!" He had to admit such a person's interest right then, or in the future, would be helpful. The trouble was, the few people he knew of such wealth were supporting other interests and projects.

The search for an ecumenical partner, as mandated by the Ohio Conference Board of Trustees, was frustrating and discouraging. However, the chance comment of a Presbyterian Synod executive caused Rev. Kiewit to move in that direction. This gentleman said he would consult with Synod officers, for Presbyterians were not involved anywhere in the country in such a ministry to the developmentally disabled adult. He thought it was a great idea and he would promote it. Tragically, soon after their conversation this new friend suffered a heart attack and died. But he had shown an interest; which others had not shared. That was enough for him. He began contacting Akron Presbyterian clergy friends, asking for their help. After appropriate committee consideration, the Eastminster Presbytery, which included Akron, gave the project an "exploratory" status. Area Presbyterian congregations were canvassed seeking persons who might be individually interested. A number were discovered; and they, and their successors, brought their denomination more and more "on board"...a process which continues to this day.

Mrs. Leiphart was pleased to learn of this very tentative support. She felt God was moving in the hearts of people to get His mission accomplished. And, every year following her birthday, she brought in the remembrances which had been given to her by family and friends; "to add to the Hope Fund" to help make it happen! Mrs. Leiphart's pastor had to admit that things might be "moving" (a bit)...but ever so slowly. Almost five years had passed since the first five dollars had crossed his desk! Hours of labor and concern had gone into this endeavor. Though, now being assisted by a few, it was far from a "fait accompli."

It was thought that Bobby would probably be the type of individual who could be served by the Hope ministry...once it got underway. Mrs. Leiphart was now having more health problems. The very real possibility of Bobby needing someone else's care was growing more apparent each passing year. So Rev. Kiewit paid a visit to the Luther Home of Mercy and asked the superintendent if he would be receptive to Bobby coming to that home if the family agreed and made appropriate application; at least until Hope

Homes had begun a ministry. They would be glad to do this; for the Superintendent felt this was one way the Lutheran Church could help. A couple years after this conversation Mrs. Leiphart suffered a heart attack and died within several hours. After a few months, Bobby did join the Luther Home of Mercy community.

During the last months of her life, Mrs. Leiphart often reminded her pastor of her continuing prayers for both him and “the project.” Some of her final counsel to him was that she had absolute faith that it would all come to pass! He had spent hours writing, phoning, and traveling the state to “sell the dream” to pastors and mission committees. The response most of the time was “when you get it started we may help”...which, of course was of no momentary help at all! But now, at last, a few doors were a bit ajar.

At last a number of individuals were invited by Rev. Kiewit to attend an exploratory meeting at Grace Church. A lot of correspondence and phoning had identified these persons as being interested in the idea of creating some sort of church-related ministry in the Akron area...with the hope that it could be enlarged later. The purpose of the gathering was to get acquainted, to relate to each other, share mutual hopes and dreams, and ultimately arrive at some common goals. Information about the relationship with the United Church of Christ and the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. was given; and he reported how frustrating it is trying to promote a “dream.” He told the group the story of the five dollar bill and something about Mrs. Leiphart and her unflagging faith in the project’s ultimate success; and suggested they all take up her forte and be much in prayer as together they sought ways to move forward. The Hope bank account still had only a few hundred dollars in it; but over the years it had funded a number of mailings, phone calls, etc. It was not a long meeting, but a fruitful one. The group agreed to meet again in a couple of months, and in the interim each one was to approach others who might be interested.

At one of the following meetings Rev. Kiewit announced that he would be moving to Canton to become Senior Pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ. However, he intended to maintain his close relationship with these new friends. It was reported that an attorney in Cleveland had indicated his willingness to provide pro bono legal services when the formation of a formal organization was desired at some future date. After several more meetings it was agreed that the group was ready to amend the original Articles of Incorporation of “Hope Homes for the Retarded” which contained the names of only three individuals. The new Articles would recognize the interest of the United Church of Christ and the Presbyterian Church; and its original Board would consist of four persons from each denomination. Also, a statutory agent would be named. Because the bank balance was still woefully small, it was suggested that each individual should seek the financial support of their respective congregations.

Soon thereafter the attorney was asked to draw up the necessary papers, and Hope Homes, Inc. was officially incorporated as a non-profit corporation in the State of Ohio on March 11, 1969. Representing the United Church of Christ were Mrs. Perry Longaker, Mr. William Minnich, Rev. Harold Auler, and Rev. Paul Kiewit. Representing the Presbyterian Church were Mr. Robert Hunter, Rev. Lloyd Alamsha, Mr. Kenneth

Shuman, and Mr. Charles Leiphart. Because of the sudden death of the Synod executive, the Presbyterian members also set out to clarify their denomination's official relationship with this fledgling group which was still only a relatively few interested persons. Recognition was first given by the Eastminster Presbytery headquartered in Youngstown. A number of years later the Synod officially recognized the Hope Homes ministry as part of its mission outreach. Through Dr. Keil, who frequently met with this group, it was reported to the United Church of Christ Ohio Conference Board of Trustees that an ecumenical board had indeed been organized.

Officers were: Rev Paul B. Kiewit, President; Mr. Ken Shuman, Vice-president; Mrs. Perry Longaker, Secretary; and Rev. Harold Auler, Treasurer. Immediately the Board sought to gradually increase its size. The new Charter called for a larger board, with eight members always to be from the two parent denominations. Soon others were invited to join as the base of interest and support widened. The Board's first meetings were held at Grace Church in Akron. Later, when additional members had been added, it began to meet at the Stow United Church of Christ or the Presbyterian churches in either Stow or Cuyahoga Falls. Through the efforts of board members a few more dollars began to flow into the coffers. But the amount of financial support did little more than allow the group to continue to meet, to authorize mailings, to reach out, to pray, and together hope that Mrs. Leiphart's dream would somehow become reality. About this time it was learned that Summit County intended to build a sheltered workshop someplace in the county. Since some, or perhaps all, residents in our group homes would participate in the sheltered workshop it was thought prudent to wait until the county decided where to locate its facility before we chose a site for our ministry...whenever it could be started. Why not begin our work in the general vicinity of the workshop rather than miles and miles away? It was agreed that board members would continue to meet, to raise funds, and distribute informative pamphlets about our hoped-for ministry in the area.

Rev. Kiewit reported on one visit to a mission committee of an Akron area congregation. He was cordially received and patiently listened to as he told "the five dollar story." He pointed out that it had taken almost six years to get to the point of having an ecumenical board which was meeting regularly. Now he was hoping this congregation would give a sizable amount to help. Would they? Alas, their answer was something he had heard many times before. They were interested in the possibility. Yes maybe even the probability of such a ministry, but they were not ready to help at this time. "When it gets underway we will put it in our mission budget." He was very disappointed, and thanked them for their time. But before he left he also reminded them that if everyone to whom he...or any other board member...spoke responded as they had that evening, then nothing at all...no progress...would ever be made! Other board members spoke of similar conversations. Mrs. Leiphart probably would have said these people were like the many "little faith" folks spoken of in the Bible!

At this point Hope Homes Inc. was nothing more than a group of persons who had organized themselves and were making plans to do something good for developmentally disabled adults. Until other individuals, groups, and congregations began to take up the “dream” and make it their own, nothing much was going to happen. Others with the vision of the Board had to be found! They had to be willing to give to a cause that was at the moment only on paper and in the hearts of a relatively few people. In retrospect, it is amazing that the little organization held together during these months when there was no appreciable progress. However, when board members spoke with groups in the Akron area who were engaged in other services to the developmentally disabled, the leaders of all these groups and agencies strongly encouraged them to “keep on, keeping on” for the kind of ministry which Hope Homes envisioned was very much needed both locally and throughout the state. Developmentally disabled adults were being cared for by their parents, who, like Mrs. Leiphart became more concerned with each passing year; or they were “institutionalized” in large, impersonal, settings. The need for a more compassionate approach was apparent to everyone who cared to look into the matter.

Finally, Summit County decided to build its sheltered workshop and other facilities on the east side of the county. This decision was helpful for, without knowing where the workshop would be located, the Board had been reluctant to begin looking for either land or a facility which could be renovated for the kind of residential care which was envisioned. Their hope had always been that the site would be conveniently located so as to make the bus ride for our residents shorter, and to allow our staff to be closer, in case of special need. It was decided that the northeast quadrant of Summit County was now the preferred area.

The Board began looking, even though its financial resources now amounted to only a few thousand dollars. More letters were written and pamphlets prepared for mailings and use by board members. Bulletin inserts for congregational use were printed. Thousands of these were sent out, and, as our “progress” was reported, a few churches and individuals responded with modest amounts. If there was “a millionaire in our future,” as Mrs. Leiphart had predicted, he or she was yet to be discovered!

Some board members visited facilities and land in eastern Summit County and also in Portage County just across the line. They looked at a number of sites and even examined a small L-shaped motel that was to come on the market to determine if such a building could be refashioned and refurbished into something which could be used, and which they could be proud of. Now, besides praying about all of this at each meeting; exhibiting great hope for the future; and talking to anyone and everyone who showed the slightest interest in helping; they began searching for “the right spot...at the right price.”

The very fact that the Board began to search for a location reveals a lot about the faith of its members. The Board now numbered fifteen members...all actively looking for a place where someday the ministry could begin. And they were doing this with less than ten thousand dollars in the bank; and the real possibility that local banks would not loan them anything!

Several members had approached Akron area financial institutions, and the word was not encouraging. Hope Homes was too high a risk. Contributions were not being received on a regular basis nor at a rate which would finance an adequate mortgage. But did that stop the Board from looking at sites? Absolutely not, for to do so would have meant giving up! The Board was now meeting regularly so that members could brainstorm and continue to plan; and, as Mrs. Leiphart would have reminded them, to pray!

About this time Board vice-president Ken Shuman...who lived in Stow...had coffee one morning with a new acquaintance. They just happened to be in the same restaurant at the same time and the conversation led to the fact that the man and his wife, who lived at the edge of Stow, were planning to sell their home and surrounding acreage at some future date and move into an apartment. The Shumans lived on one end of Norton Road and these folks lived on the other end, near the Summit county line. Ken knew the area. How much land was involved, and were there other buildings on the property besides the home? The tract, he was told, was approximately forty-two acres. Seven, including portions of two ponds, were on the south side of the road; and thirty-five acres were on the north side, where the house, a barn, and another outbuilding were situated. The man and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Snider, had not yet determined what they were going to ask for the property. Ken told Mr. Snider that he was part of a group that was looking for property. He told them of the hoped-for ministry of Hope Homes and said the group might be interested. Shortly after his conversation, Ken visited the area so he could make a report to the Board which was to meet again soon.

At the Board meeting there was a sense of excitement as maps were looked at and the matter was thoroughly discussed. The site was in the right place, but the amount of land was a lot more than most Board members had ever considered acquiring. What would they do with all this land? Wouldn't this large tract with buildings on it put the price so high that it would be well beyond further consideration? A few acres, perhaps, was all that would be required to begin a ministry. The entire tract, with buildings, was to be sold together. However, this chance meeting was something everyone felt should be pursued. Ken was requested to contact the Sniders and determine what they would be asking for the property. Also, he was to inquire again whether only a portion of the land would possibly be sold separated.

When the Board next met a follow-up report was given. The property would not be divided...it was all or nothing. "But," Ken said, "The Sniders are interested in the work which Hope Homes wants to do. They like the concept of our ministry to the developmentally disabled adult." They had talked it over and they would sell their property to Hope Homes for \$65,000! This was a pleasantly shocking surprise; for Ken and others on the Board had found that even undeveloped land in this area at the edge of Stow was now being sold at between two and three thousand dollars an acre. Here was an offer to sell 42 acres for just over \$1,500 and acre; and it also included the Snider's home and two other buildings!

About this time in the meeting everyone turned to the treasurer and asked, "How much money do we have?" The answer was, "a bit over \$13,000." The question was raised, "What are the banks saying now

about loaning us money?" Others on the Board who had spoken to just about all the commercial Banks and Savings and Loans in the Akron area reported again that the answer was "No." Rev. Kiewit said he had talked to two directors of a Savings and Loan who were members of Grace Church...and they'd taken our project to their board. But our "dream" did not have enough substance; enough consistent support; and their answer was the same..."sorry."

After looking again at the maps, and considering the proposal the Sniders had made, every member felt that the opportunity to buy this property at such an very attractive price was just too good to pass up. Was this kindness...this willingness to offer their property to Hope Homes at such a reasonable figure because they wanted to help us...part of the prediction of Mrs. Leiphart years before? "We only need the help of one millionaire," is what she said. And though the Sniders were not millionaires they had just offered Hope Homes something worth more than we had ever received before! All kinds of plans were talked about...buy the property...sell off parts of it which we do not need...buy the property...rent the house for income...buy the property. Buy the property! But how?

Records aren't kept about when the Board prayed nor exactly what they prayed for; but it can be safely assumed that there was a closing prayer at this meeting which included an intercession; asking God's guidance in a very special way. Everyone sensed that Hope Homes had come that day to an important point on its path of development; and no one wanted to see the purchase of land on Norton Road as a "closed gate" that somehow could not be opened. Mr. Shuman was to inform the Sniders of the Board's real interest in their property and thank them for their very attractive offer to sell it to Hope Homes.

Not too much more had come into the treasury when the Board next met, so it was decided that we would offer a modest sum to the Sniders...as little as \$100 if they would accept it...to show our interest, and to "hold" the property for Hope for up to a year. Mr. Shuman had found, in his conversations with Mr. and Mrs. Snider, that they were in no particular hurry to move. Therefore it was felt that some sort of "deposit" would at least indicate our interest, and they would not seek other buyers before contacting us. Subsequently this agreement was made and the Sniders accepted our check to hold the property for us. This did not solve the problem of course, but it gave the Board some "breathing room."

The next meetings involved conversations about what needed to be done with the property if and when it would be purchased. The home had a well and septic system which made it acceptable as a rental property. But if any part of the land would ultimately be used for Hope's ministry, two things would have to be done: water lines and sanitary sewers, both needed to be extended along Norton Road. This would be costly but it would raise the land's ultimate value. But how to fund anything as ambitious as a \$65,000 land acquisition was the overriding problem.

Since Hope Homes' "borrowing power" was nil...was there any other way that this attractively priced property might be acquired? Would the Sniders help with this as well? It wouldn't hurt to ask...and so we did!

Nelson Snyder had recently retired from his practice of law in Canton, Ohio. He was a member of Trinity United Church of Christ. When it became apparent that no financial institution would participate in the purchase of the property on Norton Road it was decided that Rev. Kiewit should approach the Sniders about helping Hope Homes acquire their land. Knowing that he did not have all the answers which would probably come up in such a conversation, he spoke to Mr. Snyder and filled him in on the details of just where Hope Homes stood with the banks, and why some sort of financial arrangement with the Sniders themselves might "save the day."

As an Elder in his church, Mr. Snyder knew a bit about Hope Homes since Trinity had made several contributions to the ministry. After listening to the need to move deliberately on the issue of the property while it still was available to us; he made some suggestions. And, as Rev. Kiewit hoped, he offered to accompany him when he paid his visit to the Sniders. An appointment was made, and as the two of them drove northward to Stow Nelson Snyder, now acting as the unofficial attorney for Hope Homes, asked more questions. How long did Rev. Kiewit feel it would take to pay for this property...was the Board thinking of 30 years or 15 years perhaps? "No, we feel the property can be paid for in approximately five years...we just don't have enough money now."

"Tell me again how much they are asking...and how much money does Hope Homes have right now?" "The price is \$65,000 for the entire parcel with the buildings...and we found they will not sell just a portion of the land. The treasurer reported at the last Board meeting that we now had something over \$17,000 in the bank."

"How much could be paid as a down payment?" "Of the \$17,000, probably no more than \$14,000 should be used. Some funds need to be held to pay for continued publicity, for mailings telling about the acquisition of the property, and asking for help to pay for it. If we kept back \$3,000 that should be enough."

So questions were asked and answers given as Mr. Snyder made notes and considered how best to begin. Soon they were turning into the driveway and walking to the door for what was to be an extraordinary turning point in Hope Homes' history!

Mr. and Mrs. Snider warmly welcomed the two and it was soon apparent they had a real interest in Hope Homes. Ken Shuman had done a great job of telling them what the hopes and dreams of the Board were. Nelson Snyder spoke for Hope Homes and complimented them on their generosity in making the property available for such an attractive price. He said he was going to make some suggestions and, if there was verbal agreement, something would be written which they should then take to their attorney for review.

From a tax point of view he pointed out that it would be advantageous to them if they did not receive the entire \$65,000 at one time; as they would if a mortgage would be taken out and they would receive a check for the full amount. Also, he made them aware that Hope Homes felt that, with a reasonable down payment, it could pay off the indebtedness in five years or so, with interest at an agreed rate. It was evident the Sniders were intrigued by the direction the conversation was taking. A formula was presented that offered a \$14,000 down payment. Then each year, for four years, Hope Homes would pay \$10,000 plus interest on the amount owed for that year. At the end of the fifth year a payment of \$11,000 would be made plus the interest on that final amount. In five years...or less...the full sum would be paid, with interest. The Snider's would hold what was essentially a "promissory note" for \$51,000. Hope Homes Inc. would receive the deed so as to be able to develop the property in any manner it saw fit...rent the house...build on the property or dismantle buildings, etc. the formula, and its provisions, seemed to be agreeable.

There was some further conversation about the interest rate with Mrs. Snider...who really spoke for both herself and her husband! She started "high" and our Mr. Snyder started "low" and agreement was reached at a figure which was higher than they could receive on savings accounts or certificates of deposit, and considerably lower than Hope Homes would have had to pay if it could have obtained a mortgage! It was a pleasant two hour visit, ending with coffee. The Sniders were assured that all that had been agreed to would be put into a short document which they should go over with their attorney. The Hope Homes board would also review it and, if both parties agreed, plans for signing and making the down payment of \$14,000 would be made with them at an early date.

Rev. Kiewit was enthusiastic about how the meeting had gone! He expressed his heartfelt thanks to Nelson Snyder for guiding the Sniders through an agreement which was advantageous to both parties involved. Both men were gratified that the Sniders were willing to extend Hope Homes this kind of "credit" in the form of a note, which they would hold while the property was being paid for. This was somewhat farther than Mr. Snyder thought they would go; and he was happy he did not have to offer several less attractive alternative arrangements which would have been more difficult for Hope Homes. While driving home, Rev. Kiewit spoke again of Mrs. Leiphart and how she would have felt...that the steps taken that afternoon were somehow just part of God's way of working through people to "make it happen."

Though Mrs. Leiphart's hoped-for "millionaire" continued to remain elusive and undiscovered, a significant moment in Hope Home's history was Ken Shuman's chance meeting one morning with a "Mr. Snider" whom he did not know. Or was it "chance?" The conversation came around to the hoped-for ministry of Hope Homes. And, (we know now) this was a "Godsend," for here was someone from the "outside" who had something that Hope Homes just might be interested in. And he seemed interested in us! Ken's cup of coffee with Mr. Snider didn't put more money in Hope Homes' treasury, but it did a great deal to change the frame of mind of the Board. Though they would not sell just a portion of their property; the Sniders

agreed to make possible the purchase of the entire acreage, including their house! When the Board learned of that, the word “ecstatic” is too mild! For a “light” had suddenly appeared in what had been a long dark, tunnel.

It was felt that before any purchase was finalized, it would be prudent to inform officials in the City of Stow, with whom we would be working, of our intention to build one or more residences for developmentally retarded adults on a portion of this land, if we would acquire it. Mr. Shuman made the contact with the planning commission of the city and so, on April 27, 1970, he and Rev. Kiewit appeared to tell the commission what we had in mind. We gave a little history of Hope Homes and told them we were ready to buy a parcel of land in Stow. We had no building plans to show them. We were simply asking if this kind of project, would find ultimate acceptance at that location. How did they feel about all of this? After coming to understand just why we wanted to meet with them; the chairman said, “You were wise to meet with us at this point, and you have a right to know how we feel.” Then, turning to the clerk he said, “Poll the board...vote ‘yes’ or ‘no’.” Would we be accepted? We knew there were those in the community who might object; but we had to know. We waited...and one by one every member answered “yes.” The chairman smiled and said to us, “I would buy the land if I were you!” What a great report was now in store for the Board!

There was some heartfelt rejoicing at the next Board meeting. We were no longer a group of people simply with a cause or mission; something that was wrapped by only a dream or a hope. We were now to be owners of some property...at least \$14,000 worth! It was almost like a new beginning after years of working, planning, hoping, trusting, and praying. Now the Board could approach individuals, groups, and churches and say, “Help us pay for this property which we have purchased where we hope to begin a ministry.” There was something tangible, something “real” (perhaps that’s why they call it real estate!) about the work now. It gave everyone a good feeling. Someone mentioned Mrs. Leiphart who had died the previous year. All agreed that she would be pleased. She might well have encouraged us again; saying that we were just doing what God wanted us to do...we were simply being His hands and feet. And, with a little smile curling at her lips, she might also have quietly reminded us that we had come this far and the group had yet to meet the “millionaire” she had spoken of to her pastor many years before. Was there one “out there?” Perhaps that person was still in our future!

The Sniders were visited again; the \$14,000 check delivered, papers signed, and the deed received. Not long thereafter they indicated their intention to move, and in a few months they did. Now we were the “proud owners” of a vacant house and 42 acres of land. No one on the Board really knew where the remainder of the money was coming from to pay off the note, but not one member was discouraged! Somehow our mutual “labor of love” had turned a corner. Though we were not yet helping developmentally disabled adults, which was our mission, we were now “showing progress” and it uplifted everyone’s spirit.

Through these many months no one on the Board had given up; but now there was a confidence among the members which was not evident before. It was an important milestone in Hope Homes' development!

Word about our finding a location to begin the ministry was soon sent out to congregations, groups, and individuals around the state. One pamphlet said, "We've picked our spot!" and a big O was drawn on a section of the map of Ohio showing Stow. During the next several months contributions did increase; and several respondents indicated that the "believability" level in...that 'Hope' dream"...was growing!

Since he lived in the area, Mr. Shuman was asked to check on the condition of the house and to indicate to the Board if any work needed to be done before it could be rented. Though an older residence, it had been well cared for; "all systems were working," and soon thereafter the house was rented. The income received from the rent practically covered both taxes and insurance so this was not a drain on Hope's treasury. The house remained rented almost continuously until the Board was ready to make another use of it a number of years later.

Members of the Board toured the premises including the two-story tile brick building not too far from the house. Young chickens had been raised here. There was a large but non-working boiler for heat, and both floors contained more than a "dusting" of bird droppings! Someone said "that would make good fertilizer," and shortly thereafter a group of youth from Trinity Church, Canton, with Rev. Steve Daniels, spent part of a day sweeping out both floors of the building and bagging a large number of small bags of this "fertilizer" which was then sold. Now, though the building was cleaner no good use could readily be found for it. The barn was sturdy for the most part, but essentially unusable since a portion of the roof was missing; so a "No Trespassing" sign was put on it, and the tile brick brooder house nearby was locked.

Meanwhile, the "clock was ticking," and the first anniversary of the Note was approaching. Thankfully, contributions were sufficient to take care of this first \$10,000 payment, plus interest. During the next several years, through mailings and in other ways, Board members were out "beating the drum" and raising funds; for before long it was time to make yet another \$10,000 payment, plus interest. There was not a lot in the treasury...but there was always enough...like the "manna" of old; and the payments were always made on schedule!

About this time the Emmaus Homes in Missouri were indicating in some of their mailings that they had developed a design, and were intending to build several "residential style" facilities on their campuses rather than erect any more large multi-storied buildings which had been part of their history. Hope Homes had always planned on "residences"... "homes," as opposed to the large facilities now used throughout the state. The new design which they saw depicted in publicity from Emmaus intrigued members of the Board. Much time and thought had been given to it by people who for well over half a century had been in service to developmentally disabled adults with varying degrees of severity. Plans were made to contact the Director of the Emmaus Homes in St. Charles, near St. Louis.

In 1971, following a visit with his son, David, who was a student at Eden Theological Seminary in a suburb of St. Louis, and attending the annual spring Eden Convocation; Rev. Kiewit drove to St. Charles to see what was being proposed by the Emmaus Homes. He was welcomed and shown the complete set of blueprints. The plans were impressive, and he could envision Hope Homes perhaps using some of the ideas...or the entire concept...in Ohio; if that would be acceptable to the Emmaus Homes administration.

As the conversation about all this developed, the Director said, "Let me call the architectural firm in St. Louis who made these drawings and ask them if they would permit you to take a set of blueprints back to Ohio." He phoned the firm and Rev. Kiewit spoke with the man who was working with the Emmaus Homes. When he learned there was a group in Ohio whose mission was to provide for the needs of developmentally disabled adults, and to give them good care and better housing; he said his firm would consider it an honor to have their plans viewed and discussed by this Ohio group. And, if we wanted to use any or all of the ideas which these plans incorporated, they would be delighted. "And how much would be charged for a set of blueprints?" he was asked. "Oh, there will be no charge at all! We would just be happy if the plans are of help to you; for I admire and support what you are trying to do." So, an entire set of blueprints, absolutely free; were brought to Ohio! They were at the Board's next meeting; and the members liked what they saw.

At the moment nothing could be done with these plans except to find out whether, with the necessary changes to meet the Ohio code, they might be used as a basis for a residential unit which we hoped to build someday. John Knecht, a member of the Hope Homes board was an engineer, and he volunteered to review the blue prints and make a report at some future meeting regarding the feasibility of using all or portions of these plans in some manner. Now we were buying land and had been given some well-considered plans for a residence for developmentally disabled adults. Funds were being received in greater amounts, and mailings and other informative materials were going out on a regular basis.

The founding of Hope Homes was notably included in the Citation which was read when Eden Seminary conferred the honorary Doctor of Divinity degree on Rev. Kiewit in 1972. Also mentioned was his interest in overseas missions which he continued to foster as a pastor. But he was most gratified that his Seminary alma mater would hold up and honor the Hope Homes ministry which had challenged him for almost a decade.

After the 1974 payment was made, the Board began to think of the next step...and it was a BIG one...putting a residence, or two, on the property on Norton Road. The Board felt that the Emmaus' plans were worthy of being duplicated in large measure; building two residences, one for women and one for men. While mulling over all of this, it was brought to the members' attention that not all of our neighbors shared our sense of mission...at least not on property close to theirs! We felt we did not need to formally address this negative sentiment until we went to the city to obtain necessary permits. Our philosophy about taking care of the needs of the developmentally disabled adult was taking shape. Our houses were to be "homes" in

the truest sense; and the plans we had received provided for a small apartment unit within the residence where “houseparents” would have their own quarters. We hoped these ideas would be acceptable to “city hall.” It was decided that if there was any “neighborhood fall-out” we would face it with an educational approach. So, during these couple of years we tried to make people of the area better acquainted with our mission.

The Board continued to meet regularly looking for the time when a ministry would actually be in operation. Even those congregations who had previously looked at us as “a bunch of visionaries” were now beginning to get the idea that “Hope Homes is for real.” And, though we had no staff, we even began to receive inquiries from pastors who had needful families in their parishes. The question was being asked, “When will you be opening your first facilities?” More and more people wanted us to succeed! The house on Norton Road remained rented as the Board contemplated its next moves, and contact continued with all Ohio UCC congregations and many Presbyterian churches and groups who had learned of our ministry and wanted to know more about us.

About this time Dr. Kiewit received a phone call from a member of Trinity Church in Canton. It was from a lady who had a wide interest in various ministries and missions in which her church was engaged. In fact a year or so earlier he had given her details about Hope Homes. She had not shown much interest at the time. “Perhaps later,” she said. So, when she called, her pastor thought perhaps she now wanted to talk about Hope Homes. That was not the case. Rather, she said, in settling her late husband’s estate her attorneys were now telling her, in October, that tax-wise before the end of the year, it would be well for her to make some sizable charitable contributions. It was a good thing he was seated when she indicated the total amount! And...She was asking him to compile an informational list of things in which he thought she might be interested. Would he do that? You bet! When someone says something like that to a clergyman, he almost “thinks he’s died and gone to heaven!”

Mrs. Helen Deuble made her pastor aware again that it was not her custom to be benevolent just so she could save paying taxes. Her minister knew this to be true, and he agreed with her that some gift-planning was now necessary because the amount of tax the attorneys had indicated was very large. “The money can be put to much better use than paying such a high rate,” he said, “and we can discuss my suggestions when I return.” They talked about a number of mission enterprises; he asked what her special interests were, and made notes. He told her he would have a list for her in a day or so; and as he drove away he thought of Mrs. Leiphart. Was this dear lady...a person Mrs. Leiphart never knew...was she the one who would make a difference at a crucial point in Hope Homes’ history? As he pondered it; he was sure she was!

When he did return a few days later he brought with him a single-spaced list three pages long! A paragraph or two explained each of a dozen missions and ministries related to the United Church of Christ both in the United States and abroad. As she had requested, he had also put amounts next to each one so she could visualize what her gift would accomplish. By far the largest project was the renovation of a hospital in

South India, an area Dr. and Mrs. Kiewit had visited upon two occasions, and something about which he had first-hand knowledge. Also, he included a number of ministries with which she was already acquainted.

It must be admitted that it was difficult for him not to put Hope Homes at the top of the list, in bold faced type, and suggest a substantial amount! On the list he noted Hope Homes' purchase of property and the Board's hopes for the future. The amount he suggested was less than ten percent of the total which would be available. They discussed the three pages at some length and she indicated a great interest in supporting the India hospital project. This would take more than half the total sum involved. She then chose several other smaller projects. Finally...because Mrs. Deuble had a sense of humor and wanted to make her pastor think she had overlooked it!...she said, "And I'd like to give something to Hope Homes, too. The amount you suggest is fine; but I thought your request would be larger."

Indeed her pastor had thought long and hard about what he should request for Hope Homes. Gifts were gradually increasing in both numbers and size. He had suggested a \$20,000 contribution, "as a matching gift if another \$20,000 would be raised by Hope Homes in the next 12 months." He felt confident that her generosity would stimulate other gifts! If he was right, within a year her \$20,000 would be doubled. She agreed...and churches, organizations and individuals did respond in a wonderful way. More generosity was shown than ever before. Twelve months later Hope Homes had over \$40,000!

When he drove away from her home this time, he pulled to the curb, stopped the car, and reflected for a moment on how Mrs. Leiphart's faith in "the project" had been vindicated again. The friend about whom she had spoken years before had been discovered! Upon Mrs. Deuble's death a number of years later she also remembered Hope Homes in her will. At that time her generous bequest was the first such gift received by Hope Homes!

During these several years following Hope Homes' purchase of the tract of land on Norton Road in Stow, the focus of the Board was on fund raising. Everyone knew that nothing could be built until the land was completely paid for...or at least to a point where "the end was in sight." The board welcomed several new members during this time and they joined the others in getting the word out about Hope Homes and its progress. Gifts, many in somewhat larger amounts than before, and from a much wider constituency were being received. More and more congregations were "climbing on the bandwagon" and the mission was being interpreted to more and more church committees and individuals, with better results. As each payment date for the land purchase approached, enough money was on hand to make the payment along with the declining interest amount. In fact, the Board authorized that the final payment of \$11,000 plus interest be made several months before its due date. So, in less than five years the property had been paid for in full!

During these years Mr. Ed Partee who ran the UCC Ohio Conference printing office in Columbus was extremely helpful to Hope Homes. Since we did not have an office anywhere, in order to get mailings out

to all the congregations of the Conference, the work of stuffing envelopes, separating the pieces by zip code, and preparing the bundles for mailing, was done by volunteers at several area UCC or Presbyterian churches. Some of the printing was done in Columbus by the Conference printer who did it at a cost. All envelopes were addressed by him; and all mailing labels were prepared there. He also printed most of the offering envelopes which were sent out in large numbers, as requested by congregations. Though Hope Homes paid for the materials, when we wanted to pay him for the personal time he had given, he replied "No, this is my gift to Hope Homes." Mr. Partee died as a relatively young man several years later, but we remember him with great affection, for he was an enormous help to our ministry.

March 10-13, 1975 were "red letter days" in Hope Homes' development! At the meeting of the Council for Health and Welfare Services of the United Church of Christ in New Orleans, Hope Homes, Inc. officially became a member of that group. Though we were not yet in active ministry this national organization, which encompassed the entire gamut of these ministries in the United Church of Christ, recognized how far we had come and the real progress we were making. We were welcomed as a partner organization! At the next board meeting Dr. Kiewit proudly displayed the certificate of membership which had been given him. We were now official" in one of our parent denominations. At a later date we also became a member of the Presbyterian national organization for human services ministries; making us a "recognized" ministry in both denominations.

From time to time the Board heard reports from John Knecht who was working with his engineering firm to make the building plans from Emmaus usable in Ohio. We discovered that there was the usual "red tape" both with Stow building codes and with the department in state government having to do with facilities for adult persons with developmental disabilities. We also discovered about this time that some people who lived close to where we anticipated building our first two residences were not "thrilled" to have us on their street or even in their neighborhood. At one meeting board member Ken Shuman, a resident of Stow, related how he had been accosted by a man who lived close to our property. He wanted to know all about our plans. "OK, two homes for mentally retarded men and women...how dangerous are these people?...where are they going to come from?...who will be 'guarding' them?" So the questions ran...with a final query which showed that the questioner knew very little about this kind of developmental disability... "How high is the fence going to be around the houses?" Some people found it difficult to differentiate between "developmentally disabled" and "criminally insane." Ken had heard this kind of thing before and of all the persons on the Board he probably was the best able to address these questions, and to allay fears. He reminded the questioner that he was the father of a developmentally disabled son. Yes, the man knew that and he knew the son. "Well," said Ken, "these are the kind of folks Hope Homes plans to serve in well-supervised homes. They will be residences of which the neighborhood can be proud and," he continued, "there will be no fences!" Of course there were to be no signs either. These and a few other rumors were laid to rest for the most part, but we could sense that until we had been in operation for awhile at least, a few of our neighbors were going to be somewhat uncomfortable. The Board pressed on

with its plans. We confirmed what we thought to be the case in Ohio that assistance was available from the state for children and youth, until about the age of 18. However, after that age parents or other caregivers were pretty much on their own; with institutionalization of the person in large state-run facilities about their only option. In as much as the state did not wish to continue building more such large facilities, their representatives welcomed what Hope Homes was intending to do...provide small group home setting for such persons, with good care and supervision.

When they were shown our plans for a four bedroom split-level home adequate for up to eight persons; plus a small unit for "house parents"...personnel in the Akron office of the state supervisory were agreeable. They quite readily gave our concept their "OK." Now all we needed to do was raise sufficient funds to get the two homes built; one for men and one for women. During this period the Board worked with several people in the Akron regional office, including a young man by the name of Dominic Gambone Jr. who was assigned to our project.

Plans and drawings were authorized by the Board which would bring both water and sewer not only to the area where we anticipated the first two residences would be built, but also past that site to the former Snider home which was now using a well and septic system. New water lines would also extend fireplugs along Norton Road which would be necessary if we were to build our residences there. As anticipated, the Board found that these two projects would be quite costly because of the distances involved. The sewer line would come from a small subdivision past the two ponds and across Norton Road. The water line would be an extension down Norton Road. The two projects would cost about \$40,000! But this had to be done before we could even consider building the residences.

Our "giving Base" was expanding each year. And though this was the case, the number of contributors and the amounts given were not yet sufficient to signal that these necessary projects could begin. However, about this time we were delighted to learn from the treasurer that Mrs. Deuble's "conditional gift" was going to be matched within the twelve month period. Knowing that soon it would have a total of \$40,000 to work with, the Board gave the "green light" so these projects could get underway. Of course, the engineering studies and permits took more time than we anticipated; but finally the contracts were signed. Thus, a few months later the renters in the former Snider home were on city water and city sewer, and several new fire plugs had "spouted along Norton Road.

Though we were not permitted at this time to begin any official capital fund campaign among Presbyterian churches in Ohio, we made it known to them that we were at this crucial point and some gifts were received from time to time. For the United Church of Christ, a letter seeking permission to conduct a capital fund campaign among Ohio congregations was sent to the Ohio Conference Board of Trustees. At the same time a request was sent to the Stewardship Council of the United Church of Christ in Philadelphia seeking its approval for such a campaign. The national office not only needed to approve the campaign itself, but also the proposed dates for it. All of this took time. However, the Conference Board of Trustees

soon gave its approval, subject to the agreement of the national Stewardship Council, as to the proposed dates for such a campaign. Dates needed to be agreed upon by both groups, as well as an agreement reached on the dollar amount goal. Before the national body would act on our request, Dr. Sheldon Mackey, head of the Stewardship Department of the United Church of Christ came to Ohio. He met with a couple of Board members, visited the farm we had purchased, and the site where we hoped to build our first two homes.

He was touched by the story of Mrs. Leiphart and her “five dollars to get it started,” and how she had given the name “Hope” to the endeavor when the first twenty-five dollars was deposited in a bank. Dr. Kiewit told Dr. Mackey how supportive Mrs. Leiphart had been of him; how her faith in the ministry never flagged; how she often assured him of her prayers and that her confidence came from the fact that she implicitly believed that God wanted it done! Dr. Mackey was happy to note that Hope Homes had been accepted as a member of the national Council for Health and Welfare Services of the UCC. He was impressed by our progress, and the dedication of the Board to get the work underway.

The plans which had been given us by the Emmaus Homes were shown to him, as they were now being reworked to conform with the Ohio code. “What a great gift!” he exclaimed. “The gift of these blueprints saved Hope Homes thousands of dollars, and it surely shows a wonderful level of cooperation.” He said he would recommend that Hope Homes be permitted to conduct a capital campaign looking toward the building of its first two residences. The goal would be \$250,000, and the active campaign period would begin sometime in 1976. Thus the stage was set for yet another giant step by Hope Homes.

The Board discussed the task before it. Dr. Kiewit, who had served as president of the Board since its inception, suggested that additional assistance would now be needed to make the raising of our goal a reality. While being a pastor in both Akron and Canton, he had continued to write letters and produce the publicity pieces for churches, organizations, and individuals through the years; and had helped with the mailings. But someone now needed to be brought “on board” to give help at this juncture; for it was crucial that at least the minimum goal be raised in order to build the first two residences. Even though the Board would be hiring someone only part-time because of its limited resources, it was an important step to take. Everyone agreed that volunteers, alone, could not accomplish the task. Someone needed to be employed to lead the campaign. Various persons were mentioned as possibilities, among them Leo Keil. The assignment to phone him was given to his friend, Paul Kiewit.

Some years earlier, while on the Ohio Conference staff, Dr. Keil had been very helpful in getting Dr. Kiewit on the agenda of appropriate Conference commissions and committees; ultimately leading to his meeting with the Trustees, and their recognition of Hope Homes as an “official” homeland ministry in the Conference. Leo often attended meetings of the newly chartered Hope Homes, Inc. board as a representative of the Ohio Conference. As a staff member he reported the progress of Hope Homes to the Conference. However, the Keils had left Ohio when he took a position with the national office of the

United Church of Christ Stewardship Council, and they had moved to the Philadelphia area. Now, after some years of service with the Council, he and his wife had returned to Ohio, and were living in Wooster.

Though he had been out of the state for some time, Dr. Keil knew something about the progress of Hope Homes through his friend. During these years the Board had been enlarged; publicity continued to be published and sent out on a regular basis; Summit County had decided where their sheltered workshop would be built; Dr. Kiewit had traveled widely in the state; and he and fellow Board members had raised thousands of dollars as they talked about Hope Homes to churches, groups, and individuals. Also, Hope had taken the giant step of purchasing the Snider property which was fully paid for. Now, with the matching gift from Mrs. Deuble, the property was beginning to be developed.

The phone call to Dr. Keil was made and the position the Board envisioned was briefly outlined: "To give leadership to a Capital Fund Campaign and to present Hope Homes and its mission throughout the Ohio Conference of the United Church of Christ." He was interested, and in a return call, he indicated his willingness to assume these tasks; the most immediate of which was, of course, the \$250,000 campaign. Details were finalized and not long thereafter, working from his home in Wooster (because Hope Homes had no office of any kind), Leo Keil began to develop the Capital Fund plans for Hope Homes. The Board was also happy to employ Leo's wife, Marie, to work with him on the campaign. As their work continued they became active partners in Hope's development.

The Keils began producing the promotional literature needed; made contacts; set up record keeping, and began doing the multiple tasks which are part of an ambitious capital fund campaign. Leo developed an informative program about how Hope Homes had progressed through the years and what the Board's plans for the future encompassed. They were on the road many Sundays when, as guest speaker in an Ohio Conference church, he presented the mission of Hope Homes and challenged them to take part. Lists were prepared. Displays were constructed, bulletin inserts, additional pamphlets and other fund-raising materials prepared and sent out. More and more churches, organizations, and individuals were challenged to become part of this grand effort. Members of the Board knew that both Leo and Marie often went "beyond the call of duty" in the part-time positions to which they had been called.

Rev. Harry Nehrig was an Associate Pastor of Trinity United Church in Canton. Earlier in his career, after his seminary education, but before becoming a pastor, Harry had been a professional fund raiser with a national firm and had traveled widely in the United States. In Ohio he had been part of the firm's leadership team in a capital fund drive, employed by a philanthropy associated with the United Church of Christ. Though a few years had passed, Rev. Nehrig, remembered many names and contacts which he had made from this previous fund raising effort in the Ohio Conference. When asked if he would like to help during the initial part of the campaign, he said he'd really like to do something like that again...for a short while. To facilitate his availability to Hope Homes, Trinity gave Rev. Nehrig a leave of absence of about 10 weeks (spread over two time periods); a few weeks in late 1976 and again in early 1977. During this time

he was relieved of most of his pastoral obligations at Trinity. Harry talked to a great many Ohio Conference pastors and mission committee chairpersons by phone, reinforcing the information they had received from Dr. Keil; encouraging them, telling them how other congregations were becoming part of the campaign, and taking and filling their requests for literature, offering envelopes, posters, etc. Thus, for a period shortly after the campaign got under way, three persons were at work; Leo and Marie Keil in Wooster...with Dr. Keil doing a lot of speaking around the state...and Harry Nehrig in his office on a special telephone line "talking up" Hope Homes (as he put it) to anyone who would hold still! Though Rev. Nehrig's stint was relatively short, it provided an extra effort which was both helpful and productive.

A large sign was painted, and placed in the field between the farm home and the site where the two residences in Stow were to be built. It announced that this was the future site of Hope Homes, etc. Not too long thereafter we found that we were not yet welcomed by everyone; for one day the sign was flattened. Not to be deterred, it was put up again and received no further damage. Perhaps someone had learned Hope's true mission; and, though they probably were not exactly friends, at least they were not going to continue to treat us as "enemies." Everyone felt that when the work got underway the ministry would be accepted and even goodwill would prevail. Dr. Keil attended board meetings in order to keep members up-to-date with the progress being made. The plans laid earlier in 1976 began to bear fruit already that fall and, even more, in the spring and summer of 1977. The Board could see that the story of Hope Homes was being well received as more and more literature, offering envelopes, and other materials were being requested. Checks were being received and pledges...to be paid over a suggested three-year period...were beginning to come in. At each meeting of the Board significant progress was reported as more cash gifts and pledges were recorded. We were on our way!

The Board was ready to move ahead just as soon as it was assured that the capital fund drive was going to bring in sufficient funds to cover the building and furnishing of two residences. In early conversations with Leo, Paul Kiewit had informed him that because no Akron area Bank or Savings and Loan seemed ready to provide any financing for Hope Homes, it would be necessary to have the campaign well underway, with cash beginning to be received and some pledges paid, before the Board would consider signing with a contractor. Our operating funds were limited and could not be used for the building project.

What was really needed was a "line of credit" based upon capital fund receipts and pledges. The Board could then make temporary draws from such an account, depending on how rapidly funds were received. This would allow Hope Homes to begin the building project sooner; using borrowed funds at the outset if necessary. Dr. Keil thought he knew someone who might help. He made some inquiries at the Wayne Savings and Loan in Wooster, and in April 1977 he and Dr. Kiewit met with its president. It was pointed out that Hope Homes owned valuable land, and was well on its way to meeting its capital fund campaign goal in both cash and pledges. We were well received and shortly after this meeting we were informed that the

Wayne Savings and Loan would extend a sufficient line of credit. The interest rate was established, and our account was turned over to the company's Medina, Ohio office.

The campaign reports were good enough so that in the fall of 1977 the Board was ready to sign with a contractor and begin building. The two residences were to be situated a few hundred yards from the original home which was still being rented. Several members of the Board in the Stow area knew of Henry D. Welty and Son, Inc., a general contractor. Mr. Knecht and Dr. Kiewit had met with its president, Jerry Welty, in 1976 when they had asked him to examine our building plans and give us some idea as to the probable cost of the project. Now, a year later, Hope Homes received a favorable bid from them; and so the Board chose the Welty Company to build our first two residences...What a joyous day!

Dr. Kiewit and Board members continued promoting the ministry at every opportunity. Dr. Keil kept Hope Homes and its mission before Ohio Conference churches; and also at group meetings, and with individuals who needed to be cultivated as possible donors. At this time he also sought to strengthen the relationship of the Presbyterian Synod with Hope Homes. As the buildings were being raised; so also was an awareness that Hope Homes was soon to be in active ministry with developmentally disabled adults, both men and women. The dream was taking shape!

The building of the residences, using the concept we had received from the Emmaus Homes several years earlier, went rather smoothly for the most part. We knew that all the building codes, both local and state needed to be adhered to. From time to time vice-president Ken Shuman, who owned his own business in Stow, worked with the Welty Company and "city hall" as Hope Homes' representative. However, after the framing of the homes had gone up, the roofs were completed, and the interior had begun to be finished, Mr. Shuman called Dr. Kiewit.

The City of Stow fire chief had indicated to the Welty Company that both homes must have sprinkler systems! This was not necessary according to Stow's building code. The plans which had been submitted to the city and approved did not include a sprinkler system in each house. What was being built was a "Home" which had adequate safeguards in every respect. The best thinking was that the chief wanted to be extra careful. Though no one could quite understand the ruling, we were all glad that it was made while the construction was underway which simplified the addition of the sprinkler systems. Rather than appeal the directive, it was decided to do the installation, which added almost \$13,000 per homes...an additional outlay of over \$25,000. Now, with a sprinkler system, both these homes could accept persons if they had some physical impairments. In fact, over the next years Hope Homes installed sprinkler systems in the homes it built or remodeled. However, at the time this requirement was made, the Board was especially concerned simply because of the cost involved. Members were not sure just where the extra money was coming from. Someone said at the meeting of the Board, when the sprinkler system was OK'd..."I guess we'll just have to have faith!"

It had been decided by the Board at an earlier date that, after the sewer lines were being installed through the land across Norton Road, Hope Homes really had no reason to continue to own this parcel, and it should be sold. That work was now complete and the seven acres were put on the market. A sale was completed rather quickly...for \$25,000...just what we needed to pay for two sprinkler systems! God was indeed looking after His project.

The Keils continued to put the “finishing touches” on the capital fund campaign and in less than a year the goal of \$250,000 in cash and pledges had not only been met; but it had gone over its stated goal! The Board expressed its sincere gratitude to Leo and Marie for their conscientious work, which was recognized again in Dr. Kiewit’s remarks at the dedication of the first two residences.

As the Capital Fund Campaign was concluding its “follow-up” stage, Dr. Keil was asked if he would continue his employment on a part-time basis. He agreed, and did this until mid-1978; speaking around the state, attending to other concerns on behalf of the Board; and, with Ken Shuman, keeping an eye on the building project. Following his interim position, Leo continued his interest in Hope Homes and served several terms as an active member of the Board.

In the spring of 1978, the Hope Homes took a “giant step” and began to advertise locally and in some professional journals, seeking a full-time Administrator. The Welty Company indicated that, if all went well, the homes would be ready for occupancy by early September. Furniture, appliances, and furnishings for each home needed to be selected and moved in. Everything, including pots and pans, dishes, linens, blankets, curtains and drapes, etc., etc. had to be acquired and put in place. It was now time to find our first full-time employee. The Board was reluctant to wait too long to begin this search...or begin too early...for the salary of this person would come from a budget which was still funded exclusively by voluntary giving! There would be no other source of income until our homes housed their first occupants.

At the next Board meetings Dr. Keil reported that he had heard from several people and one of them was Dominic Gambone Jr. who knew of our ministry for, when he was with the state regional office, he had worked with Hope Homes getting the building plans approved. A committee interviewed Mr. Gambone and in early June 1978 he was employed as the first Administrator of Hope Homes, Inc.; the first full-time employee, with a lot to do! Along with a myriad of other tasks, when the renters in the former Snider residence vacated the premises, Mr. Gambone began getting it ready to become Hope Homes’ first office. Indeed, the farm home occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Snider for so many years was to become the headquarters of Hope Homes for sixteen years, from 1979 to 1995.

Dr. Kiewit knew Mr. and Mrs. Reginald Pancoast as fellow Heidelberg college graduates. They had been in the furniture and home furnishing business for a number of years. Both Enid and “Reggie” were philanthropists in their own right and had been supportive of many good causes through the years. He decided to visit their business in northwest Ohio and ask them if they would be interested in helping with

the furnishing and decorating of the two homes. They were happy to learn about the ministry of Hope Homes and volunteered to be as helpful as possible. Enid was an established interior decorator and visited the homes to help her plan the décor. They indicated that whatever they would furnish Hope Homes through their business would be provided at their cost, with only a modest markup for delivery and ancillary expenses. With an adequate time frame everything...living room, dining room, and bed room furniture and furnishings could be ordered, delivered, and in place by late September...and so it was! The Board was grateful to the Pancoasts for making Hope Homes yet another one of their special benevolence projects.

Meanwhile “Nick” Gambone, the new Administrator, was busy “setting up shop” for what was hoped would be a growing ministry. The Board had told him that it was its plan to extend Hope Homes’ ministries around the state of Ohio as financial support made that possible. Homes #1 and #2 were intended to be only the beginning.

About two weeks after Mr. Gambone came “on board” the phone rang in Dr. Kiewit’s office at Trinity Church, Canton. It was Nick and he was calling to see if it would be possible for him to stop in to see Dr. Kiewit later that day. Dr. Kiewit said, “OK, about four o’clock.” However the conversation concluded before any mention was made as to why Nick wanted to see the Board president. All kinds of thing went through Paul Kiewit’s mind...what could it be? Was he dissatisfied with the position he had taken? Was he going to submit his resignation after just two weeks? He’d just have to wait until four o’clock to find out. When he arrived and sat down in the pastor’s study Nick’s first words were, “Dr. Kiewit, you’re probably going to kill me.....” And the rest of the sentence went unheard for Paul Kiewit thought his worst fears were coming true...Nick was going to resign! He began again, “I came down because I have a suggestion, and I wanted you to know my thinking.” Well, there was some modicum of relief in the conversation..... At least it didn’t seem like he was going to resign! Nick continued by reiterating the hope of the Board...to expand Hope Home’s ministry as rapidly as funding would permit. The Board had no wish to stop with homes #1 and #2. That being the case, Nick felt strongly that the entire financial and bookkeeping sphere of the office needed to be set up by someone with a good background in this field. He said to Dr. Kiewit, “If we were just thinking of running these two homes I wouldn’t make this suggestion; but if Hope Homes is to grow as the Board and I hope it will, then right at the beginning we need someone to set everything up properly so that growth will be easier in the long run.” Then, he cleared his throat and continued, “I think we ought to employ a business manager as soon as possible, and,” he concluded, “I have someone in mind.”

When he got over the shock, Dr. Kiewit smiled and said....”Yes, Nick, I’m probably going to kill you! Where is the money coming from? And, incidentally, who is this person you have in mind?” He quickly reminded Nick that his salary and all the furniture and everything else to complete the two homes and the office was coming from a treasury which was being funded solely by voluntary contributions. But even as he said all

this, which Nick already knew; the idea, though audacious, was beginning to take on considerable merit in his mind.

So, who was this person whom might be willing to be Business Manager for this corporation? His name was Vincent Rubino who had been on the financial staff of a nursing home corporation and the Department of MR/DD. He had experience. Nick felt he would be able to do just what the Board had in mind, and he was available....if we were interested. Nick hoped we would be! The two talked at some length about Hope's financial situation and whether the Board (which was to meet yet that week) should seriously consider such an ambitious move. However, when Dr. Kiewit reflected for a moment, he thought.... "After all, everything I've done for fifteen years, since the 'five dollars to get it started'....has been an adventure!" If the Board members take another giant step now, it surely will not be the first time they have moved out in faith. So, by the time the conversation ended about an hour later, Nick had made one convert; and it would be put on the Board's agenda. As Nick turned to leave and the pastor went back to his study he mumbled to himself, "Well, at least he didn't resign!" But what would be the Board's reaction?

He should not have been concerned, for when Nick presented the proposition to the full Board there was some discussion, but they quickly came to agree with his assessment...to move ahead. A Business Manager would be helpful already at this early point in our operating history. A committee was appointed to interview Mr. Rubino and it was given the authority to hire him if the members felt he could fill the position. This they did...and by mid-June, 1978, Hope Homes had a new Administrator and a Business Manager who joined Nick in setting up an office and later buying used office furniture. Nor even the Treasurer, Chares Holloway, who had to pay the bills, hung his head in disbelief...for we were forging ahead as we had for years, with a great deal of faith. The Board had come to believe as Mrs. Leiphart had...that God wanted it to happen, and so, moving ahead in faith...was simply not getting in His Way!

The leadership team of Gambone and Rubino kept things moving; Vince setting up the books with the goal that at some later date all the financial records and accounts would be computerized. He reminded the Board that, because some operating funds would be coming from the State of Ohio, certain rules needed to be followed from the very beginning. Nick began to talk to families about persons in their homes with special needs, and began to advertise for staff to work in homes #1 and #2.

The date for the Dedication of the first two residences...Hope Homes' beginning...was set for Sunday afternoon, October 22, 1978 at 2 P.M. The dedication ceremonies were planned to be relatively brief, for, unless you brought your own chair, it was to be a "standing room only" event! In case of inclement weather we would meet in the lower level of one of the homes and spill over into its other rooms. But God smiled yet again, and that fall Sunday afternoon was partly sunny and, all in all, a pleasant afternoon for the approximate 100 people who attended. (A copy of the Dedication Program may be found at the end of these Memoirs)

A number of people had brief parts in the ceremony; but one of the most touching moments was when Mr. Charles Leiphart, a member of the Hope Homes' board, took part in "The Presentation of the Keys." He received the keys from Mr. Jerry Welty representing the general contractor and Mr. John Knecht who had seen to it that the Emmaus plans were transformed into something which Hope Homes could use in Ohio. Charles was the son of Mrs. Margaret Leiphart who, in the Dedication Program, was referred to as "Founder of the 'Hope Home Idea'." In accepting the keys, Charles said a few words about his mother's unshakable faith. He then presented the keys to Mr. Gambone who, a bit later, officially opened the two homes. Through her son Charles, Mrs. Leiphart seemed to say again to all who had gathered, "See, I told you God wanted it done. Thanks for being faithful; and being His helpers!"

After the presentation of the keys the group was to join in a unison benediction before being dismissed to visit the homes. However, the Vice-president of the Board, Mr. Shuman stepped forward and asked the group to pause for just a moment since he had a special announcement. Without the knowledge of either Mr. Leiphart or Dr. Kiewit, the other members of the Board had decided that each of these residences should have a name. So it was announced that the home for women would be called "The Leiphart Home" and the home for men would be named "The Kiewit Home." Needless to say both Charles Leiphart and Paul Kiewit were profoundly touched by this thoughtful action! Then....all joined in the benediction and many stayed to visit both residences, enjoy refreshments, and meet the house parents. The very next day would be "move in day" for several people. So, on Sunday we celebrated; and on a Monday the ministry was underway. And this was only the beginning!

Members of the Board of Trustees of Hope Homes, Inc. at this significant milestone, are listed in the Dedication Program. Some of them had been on the Board since its first organization...with four from the United Church of Christ and four from the Presbyterian Church. They were now 17 in number and represented a deep commitment to "keep things moving" with the ministry now underway. The Board still met either in the Stow or Cuyahoga Falls Presbyterian churches for the time being; but later began to have its meetings at the "farm house" Hope Homes offices. A number of things needed to be done inside the house to make it functional as office space; and slowly but surely the necessary changes were made. Neither the office nor the two homes nearby had signs of any kind; a decision the Board had made and for several years no one really knew much about where the office of Hope Homes was located; just an address on the mailbox by the driveway. Some gravel had been hauled in to provide a parking area for several cars, and except for that, the exterior and yard looked as it had for years. No one had informed the city of Stow that Hope Homes was going to have its offices here...we just did it! Until...one day a staff member arranged to meet someone from city hall about a matter of minor importance at one of the homes. Rather than meet them at the home, they innocently suggested that the person come to the office address...they did...and "the cat," which no one had really meant to "keep in the bag" was out! The man from city hall said, "Why we didn't know you had offices in this building. I'll have to inform the building inspector; for you are not using this house as a 'home' but as an office, and there are certain office building regulations

which need to be adhered to.” Zoning was no problem, evidently. “City Hall” moved rapidly, and an inspector was on the premises in 48 hours!

He wanted to know how long the several-person staff had been working there. And he began an inspection which led to some changes being mandated. On the list was the requirement that the fireplace in the living room was to be sealed off. “Why?”...no reason given. But the one thing that struck everyone as the most unusual was that the furnace now needed to have a fireproof wall built completely around it in the basement. The staff tried to explain, patiently (we think), that normally no one was in the building after regular office hours, nor on weekends. Also, it was pointed out, there were three doors for exiting, a front door, a side door, and a back door. For many years families had been living in this residence, full-time, 24-7, even sleeping there on the second floor; without the furnace being thus contained! Why now? “Because that’s the rule for office buildings...and this home is now an office building.” Since the staff had no other place to conduct the business of Hope Homes; these requirements were accepted quickly and quietly; the changes were made, and life went on for a number of additional years “at the old home place.”

The community close around the two homes seemed to welcome us. Within days our residents were taking part in the sheltered workshop program provided by Summit County at a location not too far from our residences...just as the Board had planned! Very soon after opening day both homes had their capacity of eight residents. Not too long thereafter Jan and Terry Alexander who were house parents at the Kiewit Home, became proud parents; and this new addition to the “family group” was welcomed by all.

Meanwhile, the Administrator and Business Manager and one office secretary, were moving ahead; getting the staff trained, the ministry organized, Policies and Procedures written and approved, and our books and ledgers properly set up. An operation such as Hope Homes is complicated in that every resident has an “individual financial profile” which must be used in making application to the state for supplemental operating funds. All of this needed to be put together correctly so that it could be more easily audited by both our own, and the state’s, auditors. And, it was the intention of Vince, the Business Manager, to move from “the quill pen” to computerization as soon as Hope Homes was financially able to do so.

It wasn’t too long until the operation of Hope Homes’ first two residences was running smoothly and in a relatively short period, because of the pledges to the Capital Fund Campaign being paid, the Board was able to pay all loans and accounts related to the building of the Leiphart and Kiewit homes. The Board was now not only receiving checks from the campaign, but also funds were being received from the State for services rendered. To not only have sufficient funds to operate, but also to have a bit of a cushion...this had never happened before!

As the Board met and heard the reports of problems encountered and problems solved by the staff, a new subject was creeping into member’s conversations...”When and where do you think we might open a third residence?” After all, the operation had begun on the premise that there would be more than two homes.

The question was where should we look? Should we look for other land, or should we look for homes already built which would meet our need? We knew that Stow would probably be cooperative with some other location within its city limits, but would it not be well for Hope Homes to do its expansion at some other locale? Suburbs of Akron such as Tallmadge and Munroe Falls were suggested. Also the eastern portion of Akron might be considered. Mr. Gambone was asked to make some inquiries and talk to officials in these two suburbs to ascertain what the “reception climate” might be. Dr. Keil indicated that he and others in the Wooster area were willing to do the “spade work” which might lead to a home in that community. An “Expansion committee” was named. They were given “the green light” to do some exploring in the Wayne county area and report back to the Board.

While all this was being discussed checks continued to be received as pledges were fulfilled in the Capital Fund campaign! Congregations which had not made pledges were now also making contributions. Offering envelopes by the hundreds continued to be sent out. Also, as the ministry began, individuals and groups who had heard about our “hope” and “dream” now began to believe in Hope Homes, and sent gifts. The “giving base” was growing and so was our bank balance. The Board discussed what it would require, financially, to add another home. Members felt that we should look for an appropriate residence if possible; rather than build. The unanswered question was where?

The Wooster “Expansion committee” helped us answer this question; for after a few months they reported they thought a suitable house in Wooster had been found. It was a house which could be refurbished and transformed into a residence for men. Furthermore, the committee believed that “city hall” and the neighbors would give their blessing! Thankfully no great problems were encountered. Several Board members toured the house and its purchase was authorized. Soon work was begun and the two-story dwelling underwent some modernizing and other changes to make it more commodious. A staff was hired, men residents selected and later in 1979, about a year after the first two homes were opened in Stow...Hope Homes experienced its first “expansion”... a pleasant residence in Wooster which was later dedicated as the “Kiel Home.”

The bank balance was not only sufficient to make an adequate down payment on the Wooster residence; it continued to steadily increase. However the growing sum in the Hope Homes Inc treasury also became a matter of concern to many on the Board. Our income essentially came from three sources: Contributions, Resident’s SSA and SSI; And the State of Ohio. Everyone agreed that Hope should continue raising benevolent funds in order to enhance our programs and develop new homes. However, we did not want the raising of funds for these purposes to be used at some future date as a reason for lowering government funding which was used for operating expenses. Was there any way for the Board to prevent this from possibly happening? How could Hope Homes “earmark” some of its funds for later expansion? The Board wanted the ministry to grow. So how could the income protocol, with contributions from churches, organizations, individuals, etc, allow the Board to direct these gifts as desired?

This question was something everyone felt should be addressed in the near future. Mr. Lee Davies, an attorney, was a board member and it was agreed that that he and Dr. Kiewit should come up with a plan, or plans, which could be considered by the Board. The brief report that came back a couple of months later suggested that a good first step was to actually separate the functions and proceeds of fundraising, from the program operations of Hope Homes, Inc. The simplest way to do that was to create a separate philanthropic corporation, and all gift monies would be directed to it. This would “stand along-side” Hope Homes, Inc. The Board agreed with this idea, for it seemed rational to keep the church relationship and state relationship appropriately separate. The new corporation would be called Hope Homes Foundation, Inc. and contributors would make their gifts to it. Hope Homes, Inc. would continue to operate the ministry to developmentally disabled adults. The Board accepted this “separation recommendation” and soon thereafter the Foundation was established. An “Endowment Fund” from which only the income would be used, was made a part of it. Later the Board set up a “Memorial Fund” within the Foundation.

For many years another ministry of the United Church of Christ in Ohio had used “Mothers Day” in May as a Sunday when many congregations which were part of the Ohio Conference would receive a special offering for their ministry. The Board decided to ask the Conference for a Similar Sunday for Hope Homes. It was suggested that the second Sunday of February each year be designated as “Hope Homes Sunday”... when Hope Homes would annually approach all UCC congregations in Ohio and ask for a special offering. The request was acted upon favorably by the Conference Board of Trustees and special bulletin inserts were created each year telling of the progress of Hope Homes (new ministries, new residences, facts and figures, etc.). For several years these were sent out in bulk to every congregation, using a percentage figure of their congregation’s size as a guide. In an accompanying letter Hope Homes asked that they be used and this letter included a return-request postcard on which offering envelopes and other informational materials could be ordered. For a number of years, “Hope Homes Sunday” was observed by many United Church of Christ congregations in the Ohio Conference. The program was discontinued and annual United Church Christ support diminished, both in the number of congregations making contributions and in the aggregate amount received. Perhaps “Hope Homes Sunday” will one day again be promoted, for the Conference has not withdrawn its permission for this annual support-recognition of the ministry.

While the Wooster home was being renovated and made ready to open, conversations began with representatives of the Southwest Ohio Association of the UCC Ohio Conference. A new church start at Maineville, very close to the King’s Island Amusement Park had “foundered” for the moment (it later was restarted and is now a thriving congregation) and the Association now had a former parsonage now vacant and available. Would Hope Homes be interested in renting this home with purchase a possibility later? Mr. Gambone and Mr. Rubino visited the home. It was determined that the residence could be used as a group home for women and so terms were negotiated and it was rented.. Some refurbishing and redecorating was done and in the fall of 1980 this roomy house became the Maineville house for women... home number four... with another on the horizon!

Trinity United Church of Christ in Fairborn, OH near Dayton, had shown great interest in the ministry of Hope Homes and their church board wrote they owned a home near their church building which might be renovated to make a good group residence for men. "Would we be interested?" they asked. "Yes," was our answer. Vince had indicated that whenever and wherever we would expand a portion, if not all, of the mortgage payments on these properties would become part of the per-diem rate, supported by the State. So the Board authorized the staff to begin conversations with Trinity Church. It was determined that the house would be suitable, but it needed some alterations. However, it was not too many months before the Fairborn Home was ready to open in 1981.

Thus in few years... after waiting so long before the first homes could be built...in a relatively short period Hope had expanded from two to five homes! And in the process the Board had decentralized Hope Homes' ministry to several areas in the state. Now Hope Homes, Inc. was operating in Stow with two residences, and also in Wooster, Maineville, and Fairborn! Many prayers of thanksgiving were said as the Board heard these reports and rejoiced! What would Mrs. Leiphart think of all this? Someone suggested that she would just smile and say "I truly felt it all would happen if you just remained faithful. Thank you" And she might have added, almost as a forecast of what was to come, "Keep praying...for God is blessing your efforts!"

While the Maineville and Fairborn homes were being developed the staff had not forgotten that the Board was also hoping to expand elsewhere in Summit County...perhaps in a community near Stow. Mr. Gambone discovered that the city of Tallmadge, just south of Stow, seemed receptive to the placement of a group home. We believe the City of Stow had given Hope Homes "a good press" While the Fairborn renovation was underway a small group began working with Mr. Gambone, looking at possible sites in the Tallmadge area.

In a couple of months, the Board was informed that a home on Alling Road, on the east side of Tallmadge had been located. The house was on a residential street of substantial, mostly one-story, single family homes; situated well back from the street, on a large lot. Board members were invited to look at the house as soon as Nick could make arrangements. He had already spoken to members of the zoning board, some city council members, the city solicitor and others in authority. They were all in agreement that the ministry of Hope Homes could be provided here... with their blessing... if we chose to purchase the home. A down payment was authorized and Banks and Savings and Loans in the Akron area were approached. Several of them were found to be ready, and even hopeful, to get our business. What a change!

Not long after the home was purchased, we found negative forces were at work which might well prohibit our hoped-for ministry ever getting underway on Alling Road. "Guess what?" began Nick Gambone in a phone call to Dr. Kiewit, "Hope Homes just received a court injunction stopping us from opening our residence for women in Tallmadge. Both Hope Homes and the city of Tallmadge are named in the injunction brought by a few Alling Road neighbors and others in the area." It seems the city was involved

because those who were bringing suit against Hope Homes felt the city was wrong in permitting Hope Homes to use the Alling Road property as a group home.

Unless Hope Homes could get the injunction lifted it was barred from proceeding as planned. There was a telephone conversation with Board member, Lee Davies, who served as our attorney. Then Dr. Kiewit talked to board Vice-president Ken Shuman, for he was going to be out of the country when the Board held its next scheduled meeting at which a decision about “folding” or “fighting” would need to be made. Ken would chair that meeting. The property could be put back on the market and Hope Homes would not suffer much of a financial loss, if any. Also, the home could be leased or rented and its income would probably cover the mortgage. But the home had not been purchased simply as an investment ...it was to be part of Hope’s expanding ministry. A decision needed to be made.

As he prepared to leave, Dr. Kiewit felt that when they met the Board would probably decide that going to court would be too costly and time consuming. Its best course of action would be to abandon the plan to have a home in Tallmadge; sell the property in due course, and seek another area where he would be more welcome. He could not have been more wrong!

When he returned home he immediately phoned to get a report. Ken told him that the Board had carefully, and prayerfully, considered its options. After a thorough discussion the members decided that if Hope Homes did not take a stand on behalf of the developmentally disabled then how could they expect others to do so. The Board decided to simply say “we will see you in court!” Mr. Davies had communicated this decision to the attorney for those who had sought the injunction, and the “legal wheels” were already turning. What a great report this was. The Board had looked at the larger picture and had taken a stand! And, it was good to know that it was a unanimous decision.

Sometimes you have to wait for weeks or even months to “have your day in court” and this was true in this case also. It seemed unlikely that “the other side” was going to change its mind. Board officers attended a city-sponsored meeting where grievances about us were aired, and we tried to set the record straight. However “our day” in the Court of Common Pleas arrived. The case of Beres Vs. Hope Homes, Inc. began. Testimony was given by persons from both sides The Judge said he would render his verdict in due time. Not too long thereafter we learned much to our satisfaction that we had won! The ruling indicated that the evidence presented should not stop the development of a residence for women on Alling Road. The Board was elated. This concluded months of work and worry. We could proceed; or could we? “Don’t move too quickly” warned Lee Davies, “They will probably appeal...and they did!

The next “round” would be a review of the first court’s findings by the Summit County Court of Appeals. Again, weeks passed...but it was worth the wait...for the prior judgment in our favor was upheld. In a phone conversation with Mr. Davies, Dr Kiewit asked “Lee, is it over” and he was somewhat disheartened by the answer: “Well... they could appeal to the Ohio Supreme Court; that is their privilege” Of course that was

not the answer he was looking for because the defense of our position had already run into several thousands of dollars and it looked like the end might not yet be in sight. The Board again extended its thanks to fellow member, Lee Davies, who was not billing for his services. We were only paying for work done by others in his office. What a great gift to Hope Homes this was; and everyone was grateful!

The Ohio Supreme Court was our next stop in our legal journey “down the halls of justice,” and without waiting too many more months this Court upheld the two previous judgments; telling the plaintiffs they would not hear the case. Case closed...or was it? Mr. Davies indicated that with this declaration the case, for all intents and purposes, should be closed. Hope Homes had “won” three times, and it was over. Of course, there was always the United States Supreme Court...Yes. The one in Washington D.C.! One last appeal could be made there. Lee did not think this would happen; for the case being adjudicated was not a “constitutional” matter. But, everyone has the right to “go all the way” if they are willing to pay the costs involved!

While all this was happening it was decided to rent the Alling Road house and recoup some of the ongoing costs of ownership, since we could not yet use the home in our ministry. This was done, using a one-year lease, renewable by the month after the first year. The rent covered the mortgage payments. However, since Hope Homes was not yet using the residence, real estate taxes were levied, and the property needed to be insured.

Though Mr. Davies was providing his services essentially pro bono, our legal bills were still mounting. They took a big jump when we were informed that we were again being taken to court...this time it really was the United States Supreme Court! From a legal point of view no one could understand the rationale for this action. Now yet another “defense” needed to be mounted. Board members kidded Lee Davies, asking him if he thought he would need to buy a new suit for his appearance before this “august” body; but he informed them that the first and probably only thing that would appear in Washington D.C. was a written “our side of the story” with its history of surviving three courts, etc.

However, when you submit your brief to this court it is not just a few mimeographed pages held together with a staple in the top left-hand corner! No...nothing so simple nor inexpensive. Everything our attorney submitted (and theirs too) was to be in the form of a printed booklet about the size of a church bulletin. Eighty copies of this booklet were to be sent to the Court! We can’t imagine what happened to all of them; but that was the requirement. Mr. Davies and his staff put our case together. It was printed and duly sent to the “wise men of the east” (At that time there were no women on the court).

We believe the matter probably got no further than a law clerk working with one of the Justices...for in a rather short time official word was received from the full Court that the case would not be heard. Other agencies in the area had encouraged us to pursue the issue; and now they rejoiced with us and applauded our efforts and persistence. The developmentally disabled had their day(s) in court, and had won!

Because of all this protracted defense, Hope's bank account was suffering because funds which were received for the care of the men and women in our residences could not be used to cover legal expenses. Dr Kiewit made an appointment with a department head in the Presbyterian Synod office in Columbus, explained what was happening; why the Board decided to pursue this matter through the courts, and the considerable sum...well over \$10,000...which it had cost Hope Homes. Not long after his visit a check for \$5,000 was received from the Synod. Also an extra gift was sent to Hope Homes from the UCC Ohio Conference. Both groups appreciated the defense which had been made on behalf of the developmentally disabled!

When all the "legal cobwebs" had been cleared away, preparatory steps were taken to get the residence on Alling Road in Tallmadge ready for occupancy. It had been rented for more than two years which had helped the financial picture. A tour of the premises indicated that not too much needed to be done before "move in." Soon the staff was ready, new residents identified, an "open house" was held on November 9, 1984 and this home began its ministry. About a year later, by Board action the home was given a name...it was to be called the "Holloway Home."

Charles Holloway had worked all his adult life for the Goodyear Company in Akron in the accounting department. He was an active member and Elder of Grace United Church of Christ and knew Mrs. Leiphart and her son Bobby very well. He and his wife, Marion, had followed with great interest the development of Hope Homes through the years and had been supportive of its work. Charles retired from Goodyear in the late-70's and not too long thereafter Dr. Kiewit asked him if he would accept nomination to the Hope Homes board. When he indicated his readiness to do so, His former pastor "dropped the other shoe" and said "Well, Charlie, if you get elected...and you will...I'm going to nominate you as Treasurer. Would you be willing to be Treasurer?" He would have no problem with that, was the reply...and jokingly added that Marion would probably readily agree too; for as she put it, "it will keep him off the streets" now that he was retired! So Charles became treasurer, and before long, at the invitation of both Nick and Vince, he began to volunteer a couple days a week in the office; being helpful in the bookkeeping department. Indeed, Charles Holloway not only remained a Board member and treasurer for over a decade, but was ultimately named "Treasurer Emeritus"...and he continued his volunteer service even after the offices moved into "the Hope Center" on Call Road.

After the residents moved into the Tallmadge home, the staff began to receive more frequent "hellos" from family members who lived nearby. A son in one family was hired to do yard work, and later his parents and others indicated to staff members that they were sorry they'd been part of the suit which had been brought against Hope Homes. "We were told things which simply were not true, and we are sorry about it." They said. Other neighbors also became better acquainted with the ministry and...even sooner than we had hoped...they showed, in one way or the other, that they were not unhappy that we were there! One man who lived nearby mentioned, "If you ever need anything in an emergency, please don't

hesitate to call me!" Thus another community learned of our mission, applauded it... and the Board was grateful.

About this time Hope Homes was informed by a representative of the United States Department of Labor that "houseparents" could not "live in" though this type of community residential service was emerging around the country. There were complexities in wage and hour rulings regarding live in staff. So we moved to a shift model as did many providers like Hope Homes. We then continued with this model which also gave Hope Homes the opportunity to improve its staffing capabilities. The number of qualified staff who can also live in can be quite limiting. Furthermore, if something happens to a live in staff such as illness or resignation, it is difficult to staff the home on an interim basis.

Early in the '80s work had begun to create a computer data base of individuals who had given a gift to Hope Homes. Also work began on obtaining names of families who might be financially supportive if they knew about Hope's ministry. This was a program to be run alongside the church-relations effort, which focused on "Hope Homes Sunday" in February; and other publicity and contribution-request mailings to churches, groups and individuals.

Also early in the '80s several persons were called together to brainstorm what more might be done. As a result of this meeting a program called "The Hope Chest" was developed. Regular mailings began to be made to both former and prospective donors about the progress of Hope Homes. Later these families were challenged to make a gift of a hundred dollars or more. It was explained that this was a new "annual gift" effort on behalf of Hope Homes Foundation. With such a gift they became members of "The Hope Chest Family," and in the fall of the first year they were invited to a complimentary dinner at Trinity United Church of Christ in Canton. At the first year's dinner in the fall of 1984 about forty-five were present, and in succeeding years the number of contributor-attendees at Hope Chest dinners, and the amount raised each year, continued to grow. Evalenn Nutter was the chairperson of the event for several years. A member of the Hope Homes board, she was the daughter of Dr. Orris Haulman who had been the pastor of Grace Church in Akron; and who had first come to know Margaret Leiphart and her son when they arrived in Akron. They became close friends. An artist, Evalenn painted a large chest on poster board and during the evening, when the "Chest" was opened it revealed just how much had been contributed during the preceding year to "The Hope Chest."

Trinity congregation in Canton had faithfully supported the ministry of Hope Homes in which their pastor had been engaged for so many years. The Welcome In class, a group of adults, proved to be especially helpful when they volunteered to both provide and serve the annual Hope Chest dinners. They did this for a number of years so that the entire annual gift from each donor could go toward the work of Hope Homes! Sheffler Meats was owned and operated in Canton by members of this class; and because of their special interest in Hope Homes, the Sheffler family provided the meat entree for the dinner each year. With this kind of support it is easy to see how this interest grew from year to year. The Hope Chest dinners

continued for about a half-dozen years, raising almost 60,000 during these years with minimum effort or expense.

Also early in the '80's the Board authorized a new publication called "Rays of Hope." At first it was just published occasionally...to be sent to churches, organizations, and individuals who had contributed or were on Hope Homes "hopeful" list. Copies of "Rays of Hope" were used by the hundreds in UCC Ohio Conference congregations and Presbyterian churches in Presbyteries which requested copies. It soon became a several-times-a-year publication supported by Hope Homes Foundation, using pictures and the printed word to tell of the ministry and expansion of Hope Homes. Other brochures were produced to have available when Hope Home would be represented at regional United Church of Christ and Presbyterian meetings in the state. Dr. Keil created new, folding, display boards which continued to be used at such gatherings. The Board felt it important to actively keep the ministry of Hope Homes before as large a constituency as possible.

In 1980 Mr. Gambone resigned to follow other pursuits. He was followed by two Executive Directors who helped in the "growth process" but who remained with the organization for relatively short periods of time. David Groetzinger served from 1980-1983 and Steve McPeake headed Hope Homes from 1983 to 1985. While the Executive Director's was vacant and a search committee was working, Vince Rubino who continued as business manager, was asked to fill in as Interim Director. While working at Hope Homes he was continuing his education; and during the third interim he asked the search committee if he could submit his name for consideration as Executive Director, as he now had the credentials for the position. Since Mr. Rubino was a "known quantity" and had served Hope Homes well for a number of years in the position to which he had been called, the Board decided that a search was not necessary. Mr. Rubino was named Executive Director in 1985, his seventh year as a member of the Hope Homes' staff.

Dr. Kiewit informed the Board that in early 1985 he would be retiring as Senior Pastor of Trinity Church in Canton after almost sixteen years. He and his wife Dorothy, who had been very patient with him and helpful to him during the long years of Hope Homes' development, planned to remain in the area for the foreseeable future. If the Board agreed, he would like to continue to promote the ministry of Hope Homes Foundation on a part-time basis. Since he would be changing roles in relationship to the ministry, he resigned in 1985 as Board president; a position he had held since Hope Homes Inc. was founded in 1969.

Now, at least on a part-basis, he would continue to help an endeavor which initially had been thrust upon him, but which he had come to love and appreciate. He'd been privileged to see the hope and dream of Mrs. Leiphart germinate and grow over a period of twenty two years! Countless others had joined him in "keeping the faith" though thick and thin. The Board honored him by naming him "President Emeritus" He was succeeded by Rev. Dr. Joseph Foster from Amherst, Ohio who had served on the Board for several years.

“Ev” Nutter again used her artistic talents and created a beautifully colored drawing of Margaret Leiphart and Paul Kiewit. She presented this meaningful picture to the Hope Homes Board and two large framed copies were made. One was given to the Leiphart family and one was for the Kiewit family. Someone jokingly suggested that the pictures be entitled “Inspiration and Perspiration!” The beautifully framed original was first hung in the farm home which had been turned into Hope Homes’ original offices. Today it hangs in the lobby of The Hope Center on Call Road in Stow, Ohio.

In the spring of 1987 Paul Kiewit was invited to return to New Orleans. In 1975 he had been there when Hope Homes was officially recognized and received as a new member of The Council for Health and Human Services Ministries of the United Church of Christ. This time at the Annual Meeting he was to be personally honored with its highest recognition; the “Hall of Fame Award.” And so, on March 14, 1987... almost 24 years after a dear lady visited with her minister in his study... a labor of love was recognized with this award from the Council. How he wished Mrs. Leiphart could stand with him on that platform to receive this accolade as well! For, as was said at the beginning, “Hope was born in the heart and mind of a Christian lady” who passionately believed that “good things” would come to pass with faith, and prayer, and hard work. She had indeed “held up his hands” and flagging spirit many, many times! However, we know that, in spirit, Mrs. Leiphart was there...and rightfully so! He was deeply touched by this honor and recognition, and told the members of the Council that though Mrs. Leiphart was not mentioned by name, he was especially grateful that her gift, given with consummate faith, was mentioned in the Citation. It was not just a five dollar bill...it was a gift of faith and love; for those who needed the ministry of “Hope”

The Citation read in part:

The Hall of Fame Award of the Council for Health and Human Service Ministries of the United Church of Christ is given to persons or organizations who have made outstanding contributions to the field of health and human service ministries. The Reverend Doctor Paul B. Kiewit is a dreamer. He is also a dynamo for Jesus Christ who has accomplished the nearly impossible. As the Pastor of Grace United Church of Christ in Akron, Ohio he responded to the needs and aspirations of his parishioners with faithfulness and determined ability. One request, supported by a faith donation of \$5.00, was that Grace Church should become involved in the residential needs of mentally retarded adults. Thanks primarily to Dr. Kiewit, there came into being an ecumenical Board of Directors which developed a complex of six group homes for mentally retarded adults in Ohio. A companion organization, Hope Foundation, Inc., was also established.

To make this dream become a reality Dr. Kiewit had to be not only a dedicated Pastor but also a charismatic leader, a fund raiser, a litigant, a real estate developer, and an administrator. He did each with great ability and with outstanding success.

Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Council for Health and Human Service Ministries March 14, 1987

Dr. Kiewit worked part-time for three years, 1985-1988, promoting Hope Homes Foundation: developing publicity, doing mass mailings, and continuing the fund-raising efforts of “The Hope Chest” and “Hope Homes Sunday.” “Rays of Hope” was put on a regular publication schedule. He took displays, which had been constructed and refurbished by Dr. Keil, to area meetings of both parent denominations, and corresponded with many individuals and groups. He was happy to be able to continue to do what he had done for many years on behalf of a ministry he often thought would never happen. Many folks had joined him along the way. But he never forgot that one “faithful soul” who had prayed for him... and all the others. She had faith and she believed... from the very beginning...that God wanted it to happen! And it did!

To Him be the glory!

Epilogue

In these pages you and I have been watching the fascinating first quarter-century of something that began forty years ago! At my invitation, you joined me in “sitting on a tree limb and watching these faith-filled first twenty-five years unfold before us. I’m going to climb down now, but why don’t you stay awhile longer? You’ll be amazed (I know I was!) as the ministry in the succeeding fifteen years continued to expand and adjust its focus, to minister to an ever-widening range of persons with special needs; and to be helpful to their families as well.

The year 2003 marks the fortieth anniversary of a “compassionate idea” that ultimately became Hope Homes. Forty years ago there was a need to be met; and in 1963 a concept rose in the mind and loving heart of a dear lady who, at the beginning, stood very much alone in the belief that it could be done...and would be done. She believed...from the very outset... that God truly wanted it to happen; He just needed some willing, dedicated, human helpers!

2003 also is the Silver Anniversary, the 25th year, of Hope homes’ operational ministry. 1978 marked the dedication of the first two residences, and the hiring of the first full-time staff. Two persons have been with Hope since “opening day” in 1978. Mrs. Teri Alexander was, with her husband, the first “house parents” at the Kiewit Home. Today Teri remains a leader in the ministry as Service Director.

Mr. Vince Rubino was the second individual employed in mid-1978. He was the new Business Manager when... you remember... there was a nagging doubt that Hope could even pay the salaries of two full-time employees... but we did! After serving well as Business Manager, he was later named Executive Director. Presently Vince is the President and CEO of Hope Homes Foundation, Inc., and its affiliate organizations... Hope Homes, Inc., Hope Housing, Inc., Hope Homes of Maryland, Inc., and The Blanchard Means Foundation, Inc. in Massachusetts.

Hope Homes recently reported that it now serves residents in 20 homes! A home in Hudson, OH is being added in July, 2003 and a new twinplex in Wooster will be completed in September. There are also two adult day services locations. Hope now serves 140 people and employs 200 full time and part time staff. The 2003 budget is \$6,500,000. Hope Center, the corporate headquarters in Stow, has become a gathering place for a variety of area groups who use its commodious facilities. Hope also hosts and leads work camps and youth missions groups.

In Frederick, Maryland Hope provides a home; and it also has an emerging affiliate program in Brookfield, Massachusetts... the Blanchard Means Foundation, Inc. Here individuals are being served in a farm setting with vocational, equestrian, and both day and overnight recreational programs. Mission trip hospitality, camping programs, and other popular community events are offered. Future horticultural therapy programs are envisioned.

Our Invitation

Well, that's the story!

So friend, if you're comfortable where you are ... just keep watching. God still has greater things in store for this ministry. Then again, perhaps... just maybe... you'd like to climb down from your vantage point and take an active role in Hope's future! Those who have done so through the years will tell you that all it takes is readiness to serve; and a large measure of love and faith. God will take it from there.

He always has... He always will!

