

## MEMORIALS

### Ronald John Behm

Ronald Behm was born on January 22, 1943, in Camden, New Jersey, the son of Edward Gilbert and Beulah Belle Behm. He died June 29, 1982, at the age of 39 on the south side of Chicago in a tragic triple murder, which also claimed the lives of his wife Barbara Jean (43) and his son Matthew Samuel (almost 6).

His higher education included a B.A. in philosophy with honors from Nyack Missionary College (1965); graduate work at the Winona Lake School of Theology; a B.D. with honors (1968) and an M.A. in philosophy of religion (1969) from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School; and a D.Min. from McCormick Theological Seminary (1978). His doctoral project proposed a strategy for evangelism in an urban church.

As a seminarian Ron was working in Chicago's blighted Cabrini Green housing development when Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated. The event moved him to commit his life to ministry among inner-city blacks. To that end he became pastor of South Shore Bible (Baptist) Church in Chicago in 1969, a charge he served with extraordinary patience, faithfulness and vision. Two days before his death the congregation honored him for thirteen years of ministry to them.

Reared in the Christian and Missionary Alliance, Ron was ordained by the Evangelical Free Church of America on March 9, 1975. Later he took steps to affiliate with the Southern Baptist Convention and the Chicago Metropolitan Baptist Conference. His personal theological views formed a striking synthesis of Keswickian holiness, evangelical, black, charismatic and Baptist influences and experiences, but he made no secret of seeking to be thoroughly and radically Biblical. He was also quick to acknowledge his debt to teachers with whom one might not readily suspect an affinity (e.g. Gordon H. Clark).

A heavy and continuous load of pastoral duties did not keep Ron from engaging in a wide range of other activities. He co-authored with Columbus Salley *Your God Is Too White* (InterVarsity, 1970), which received wide distribution and was published in an expanded edition as *What Color Is Your God?* (1981). He also contributed articles on urban ministry to a variety of publications, appeared on radio and television interviews, and wrote Sunday-school lessons for David C. Cook Publishing Company. He was director of the City Churches Intern Ministries for the Great Lakes District of the EFCA (1974-1981), a visiting instructor at TEDS (1975-79), member of several boards of directors for Christian organizations, president of the South Shore Ministers Association (1979-80), secretary of the Pastors' Fellowship Congress (1981), and initiator of various programs tied more directly to his local parish, including a tutorial school, a day-care center, a youth center, and an outreach to Haitian immigrants. His political lobbying for the urban poor helped recover well over a million dollars in medical aid to South Shore just weeks before his death.

Ron married Barbara Jean Mason Jackson on May 16, 1970, herself a nurse, registered travel agent, and ordained evangelist (for a brief sketch of her remarkable personality see Rita Finger, "Barbara Behm—Called to Preach," *Daughters of Sarah* 5 [July/August 1979] 8-11). They had a daughter in addition to Matthew, Rhonda Jean (b. 1972), as well as two sons by Barbara's previous marriage, Herschel and Kurtis Jackson.

Ron's full beard and mustache never hid his ready smile. A man of peace with a forgiving spirit, he was known to reconcile estranged Christian leaders with a footwashing service. None the less, he refused to compromise what he understood to be basic principles of Biblical ethics and took costly and courageous stands against racism and the practice of homosexuality.

Long lines formed during the two days when people paid their last respects to Ron, Barbara and Matthew, and a large crowd gathered outside the overflowing church at their funeral. Those present praised God for lives that dared to witness to the evangelical faith in materially unpromising circumstances. Ron is survived by his daughter and stepsons, his parents, his brother Lawrence, his wife's family, and many friends.

### Julian C. McPheeters

Julian Claudius McPheeters was born in Oxley, Missouri, on July 6, 1889, and died in Lexington, Kentucky, on October 31, 1983, at the age of 94. Nurtured in a Christian home, he was early confronted with the claims of Christ and yielded to him at the age of five. It was during his first year at college that he made a total surrender to the Lord and experienced entire sanctification. "So profound was this experience," he stated in his retirement years, "that all I have ever achieved in life is rooted in this commitment."

McPheeters completed his undergraduate work at Marvin College in Missouri in 1909. He received honorary degrees from Asbury College, John Brown University and Asbury Theological Seminary.

On January 28, 1914, he married Ethel Chilton, and they had two children, Virginia Wade and Chilton C. McPheeters. While in his twenties he was stricken with tuberculosis, but God healed him from a predicted death. His bout with tuberculosis led him into a regular and vigorous program of exercise to maintain his health. His hobbies included hunting, fishing and water skiing.

A member of the California-Nevada Conference of the United Methodist Church, McPheeters was ordained a deacon in 1911 and an elder in 1919. He served pastorates in the St. Louis, Arizona and California-Nevada Conferences. From 1930 to 1948 he was pastor of the Glide Memorial Methodist Church, San Francisco. He was president of Asbury Theological Seminary from 1942 to 1962 and for the first six years commuted from his pastorate in California to the seminary in Kentucky. Simultaneously McPheeters was editor of *The Herald*, a position he held from 1942 to 1975.

He inaugurated a monthly devotional booklet, *Today With God*, while pastor of the Catalina Methodist Church, Tucson, Arizona, whose format was later used by the Methodist Church to develop *The Upper Room*. He is the author of several

books, among them *Sunshine and Victory*, *The Power That Prevails, Conquering the Unconquerable* and *The Greatest Prayer Ever Prayed*.

McPheeters was a charter member of the Evangelical Theological Society, having become a member in 1950. His interest in and support of the ETS was demonstrated by his hosting of the Society during his presidency of Asbury Theological Seminary.