

## *Alumni Focus*

### **Cliff and Eleanor (Koehl) Maier Quick Facts:**

- Years you were at TRBI:** Cliff: in high school, 1948-1952; Bible School-1952-1955  
Eleanor--Bible School, 1948-1952; Faculty/staff 1952-1955
- Best TRBI memories:** For both of us: Life-long friends both from my high school (Cliff) and Bible school days.  
Wonderful high school (Cliff) and Bible School teachers (both of us)  
Great times of fun and fellowship with fellow students and at times with faculty and staff members too.  
Precious times with the Lord and learning to serve Him.  
Exploring and learning the Bible.  
For Eleanor it was an instant new family as she was sort of ostracized by her own family.
- Favorite hobbies:** Both of us-- Reading, gardening, serving the Lord in various capacities and for Eleanor cooking also.
- Where you each grew up:** Cliff-Glaslyn and Carrot River, Sask. And Eleanor in Lintlaw, Sask.
- How you met:** At TRBI
- Date you were married:** August 10, 1955
- How many grandchildren you have:** two

### **Interview Q & A**

- J: Cliff and Eleanor, thanks for taking some time out of your lives to share some of yourselves with the alumni. I'm not sure you'll remember, but I actually had the privilege of staying at your house in the spring of 1998 when Dale Harder (NBC staff, 1994-2002) brought our drama team through Marquette on our way to southern Ontario. Have you ever had any other teams from NBC through your way?
- C&E: We had a team stop here one evening in the 1990s. It was not scheduled to speak at our church, but on the spur of the moment we arranged to meet with a small group at the church. I believe this was a team other than the one you were with Jason.
- J: You've been in Marquette for a number of years now. What brought you to Marquette in the first place and how much has life changed in the years since you've "retired".

C&E: We arrived in Marquette in 1968, me (Cliff) to teach at Northern Michigan University. I retired in 1993 because of some medical problems which after a few years were pretty much cleared up. Since I retired I have had much more time to participate in various types of Christian service and other things. I have had much more opportunity to pick and chose how I use my time. Among the types of Christian service I have been involved in are being on our Church's Outreach and Mission Board from 2002-2007 and being chairman most of that time, helping a mission project in Haiti including sending three container loads of supplies there between 2001 and 2003, and visiting that field on two different occasions, and helping with medical and manual labor projects. I have also helped with off-site VBS efforts in Marquette and in a Hispanic community in East Grand Forks, Minnesota. I served as an elder in the 1990s and have just now agreed to serve again. I am also an on-the-job trainer in the Evangelism Explosion program and involved with follow-up with people who accept Christ. For years both of us have conducted a weekly small group home Bible study with college and career folks.

J: It's evident to me that God has led you to be a part of a ministry called "Evangelism Explosion". Can you share a bit of what that's all about - and one of the blessings and/or challenges you experience being a part of it.

C&E: Eleanor has been consistently teaching two 13-week seminars of Evangelism Explosion (EE) annually for about 17 years. It is a discipleship training course teaching people how to witness effectively and tactfully. It includes actually taking people out weekly to see witnessing in action by an experienced trained leader. We call this on-the-job- training. We see people who are fearful about witnessing and/or don't witness at all to becoming effective evangelists. Also as we go out on visits, a good number of people accept Jesus. For three years we also did this seminar twice annually in the nearby prison with some wonderful results both in teaching prisoners how to witness and in seeing several prisoners accept Christ. I (Eleanor) feel it is the most beneficial and fulfilling class/seminar I have ever taken. It so helps us obey Christ's great and last commandment - to love and to make disciples. (To learn more about it go to [info@eeinternational.org](mailto:info@eeinternational.org))

J: When we look over the course of our lives we can see so much change - both how we've changed as individuals, as well as how the world around us has changed. As you wrote "A Journey of Faith" the NBI Story, complete with all the change that has accompanied the school since 1934, was there one or more really meaningful truths God seemed to impress on you?

C&E: As we wrote A Journey of Faith, the NBI Story, among the truths God impressed upon us include the following:

- Bible school training has been vitally important in changing the lives of many young people for the glory of God.
- The sacrifices required to make this type of training possible has been great at times. But it is a price that must be paid if God's work is to be maintained and strengthened. Some Bible School education is vitally important for virtually every Christian for the advancement of Christianity at home and abroad.
- God meets the needs of people and ministries that are doing His will, even though He sometimes chooses to test their faith severely during the process for His purposes.

J: When you think back to your own first years in college at TRBI, do you remember God placing a specific calling on your hearts? Did each of you receive similar calls, and how do you remember responding at the time?

C&E: Yes, I (Cliff) remember God specially calling me during my early years at TRBI to be involved in helping to get the Gospel out in any effective way I could and doing whatever was necessary to be as effective a servant as possible in doing that. At the time, some of my responses were deciding to engage in regular Bible reading, prayer, attendance of prayer meetings, Bible classes, etc. Ways I became involved in seeking to help people come to Christ included helping with TRBI's Bible Camps, its Christ For Everyone campaign efforts, its Sunday outreach efforts in area churches, the summer VBS efforts of TRBI students at various schools throughout the northeast area of Saskatchewan, and so forth. Unfortunately some years after this, I became a doubter for 15 years. But fortunately, God in His grace brought me back to faith in Him (More of this story is in the NBI history book). I (Eleanor) never felt called to any particular far-off land but God laid on my heart a very strong desire to witness to people. Hymns like "Rescue the perishing, care for the dying..." tugged deeply at my heart strings. I seemed to always carry that desire but it really wasn't until I got involved in Evangelism Explosion that I really learned how to witness effectively and with very positive results - both in teaching others to become witnesses and to be one myself

J: What significance, if any do you see in maintaining an alive and functioning alumni association at Nipawin Bible College today?

C&E: I think it is very worthwhile to keep an NBC alumni organization alive. Alumni encouraging their peers to help meet their Alma Mater's needs can be very significant to a school financially. Also in maintaining connectedness, school

spirit, and keeping loyalty to NBC alive. All members of the alumni association who have labored hard to achieve ends such as these deserve the hearty thanks of all friends of NBC.