INTRODUCTION

This is a book of words for, by and about Jack Shaver, lover of
good words and Minister of the Word.

There are all sorts of words here. Stories about Jack seem to go
back a long way and to cover thousands of Canadian miles. There
are funny stories and moving stories and stories which describe
just one aspect of Jack. There are stories of his teenage years,
of college, his early ministry in Manitoba and the Vancouver years
of the Campus Ministry, Inner-City Project, Metro Council, Outreach
and finally First Church. There are also stories of Dorothy and her
stalwart help and one or two stories of the family.

Many people have written of Jack and Dorothy as doers of the word,
and although there are no specific stories of Jack's intense dedi-
cation to practical matters, particularly on behalf of other people,
lots of us are grateful that he came by just at the right time to do
some puzzling household job, such as sanding a floor, or fixing a
Christmas tree in an ill-fitting stand. However, a recurrent theme
seems to be that Jack's own choice of words has been a very important
part of his ministry. This gift of saying the right word at the right
time has been (and is) a very special one. Did he have to be lying on
his back on the floor to find such wisdom? It would appear to be so.

So Jack's own words are here too. They are reproduced in italic type
within quotation marks and are unsigned. Longer sections are from
prayers, sermons and newsletters; the one-liners have been collected
over the years so that one day they might be shared with a wider
audience.

Our grateful thanks to all contributors!

Elizabeth Stebbings Hannon

September, 1982
"Our Father .... You've got such strange ways of blessing us. We call you to be with us when what we need is to acknowledge that you have already come. We cry out that we be heard and what we are led to discover is that cry in us is your Spirit. We despair for the world that you love and are trying to give us."

In the beginning ..... Michael John Victor Shaver, age 23, arrived in his first pastoral charge at Murillo Ontario, near Fort William. Being single, he became a boarder at the home of a middle-aged couple in the village and very soon became "one of the family".

After some time, the lady became ill and had to undergo a major operation. In those days a blood transfusion was a routine requirement during surgery and Jack was quick off the mark to offer his blood. When it had been taken it was evident to the staff that he was much weaker than he should have been, and was on the verge of collapse. After taking appropriate measures and asking questions they learned that only a short time before (too short) he had given his regular blood donation to the Red Cross War Effort. He had accidentally (?) neglected to mention it, knowing that they would refuse his blood. We wish this story had a happier ending, but the dear lady did not survive the operation. Nevertheless, Jack's parishioners and friends in that small rural community were profoundly moved by his selfless act. (Greater love hath no man ....)

Dorothy Hill, [McNally]
and Eunice Merklay (Murillo, Ontario)

This is a story told to me by Dick Clarke. It refers to a Metro Council meeting in 1972 or 1973. It was going to be a fairly bloody meeting and Jack was asked to pray. He said all anyone need ever say before any meeting: "Lord, constitute us and forgive us our presumptions."

Alpha and Omega -- what else is necessary?

I also "blame" Jack (among others) for my drifting back into the church in the late 1960's. I think he hooked a lot of us by hitting us with challenge, not by trying to hook us by conversion.

M.J. Patterson (Vancouver)

"I don't know how you have a ministry without mimeographing something."

"Lord, bless the busy ones who don't dare stop lest they be destroyed by the emptiness that surrounds them."
"Our Father .... Earth's the best place for love -- we don't know where it can go better."

My favourite 'Jack' story relates back to my days on the staff of First Church. I was in a state of depression which grew worse each day. One day I walked out of the church, left my car in the parking lot, walked home and took my phone off the hook. I wasn't sure what I wanted to do but knew I didn't want to see or talk to anyone.

Early in the evening my apartment door buzzer rang and I didn't get up to answer it. Finally it stopped ringing -- then it rang again. I got up and looked out the window to see Jack's van parked across the street. To make a long story short, he persisted until I finally let him in.

When I opened the door, he said that he'd been sent on a mission of mercy. I remember thinking sarcastically "terrific -- just what I needed; if he's come to talk to me about the love of God, I'll wring his neck".

With neither of us speaking I sat in one chair and Jack in another. The silence seemed heavy to me and it wasn't long before Jack got up, walked over to the phone table, picked up two phone books and put them on the floor. He then proceeded to lie down on the floor using the phone books as a pillow.

And there he stayed for the next two hours. There seemed to be a lot of irrelevant conversation but I gradually began to realize that it wasn't all irrelevant. Most importantly, I realized that he had come not to preach the love of God (or anything else, for that matter); he hadn't come to pry with a lot of questions. He had come simply to be with me!

Eleanor Jackson (Vancouver)

Jack supervised my internship at First United during his last year before retirement. Supervision consisted primarily of 90 minutes a week when we stopped everything and sat in his office for theological reflection, before returning to the subject of our reflection.

In one such session Jack was lounging in his chair, staring out the window past the Salvation Army Temple to the new jail under construction on the next block. While I rambled on, declaiming and despairing for the institutions around us, Jack's head suddenly went back and he laughed and laughed. The huge crane at the jail had stopped lifting steel girders into place and was lowering the portable toilet from the top of the structure so it could be emptied. "I guess it gets full, eh?" he exclaimed. Unable to follow his train of thought I waited, then resumed my wandering. I was on to more woes, the sorry state of my soul or that of somebody I had been with, when Jack broke up again. Sure enough, the crane was returning the little booth to its perch and function, and he found it too funny for words. The session was ended for another week, and we went back to whatever it was that we did.

At the time I found the two interruptions awfully disruptive and away off topic. They weren't.

Bill Bruce (Vancouver School of Theology)
"Our zeal to be blameless has a destructive effect on others. The only way I could be a blameless parent would be to destroy my kids."

Not many of Jack's B.C. friends may be aware that he had a brief stint in the army -- compulsory, of course.

In the early stages of the war, some of the power figures at our college decided that all male students should participate two or three times a week in the University Military Training. The theology students were placed in Platoon 38 which was nick-named "The Fightin' Parsons". No uniforms were issued and we were told to wear old clothes since we were required to sit on the floor during exercises. The mental picture I recall about all this is the competition that seemed to exist between Jim Taylor and Jack over who could appear in the weirdest garb for these training sessions.

As you may well guess, there was no doubt in the minds of those within easy hearing distance of Jack concerning his feelings about the whole exercise, and militarism in general.

Wes Bray (Clearbrook)

Jack - I thought and thought of a story to write in your book, but all I really want to say is "Thanks for always being there when I needed you".

Cindy Marshall (First Church)

No Bondage to Results

One Saturday night Jack Shaver went over to Deer Lodge Hospital to visit Les Thompson. He went back the next Saturday night, and the next and the next. Interminably he went back, months stretching into years. He never got results as we generally perceive results. Les was a young minister suffering from M.S. He was cantankerous and bitter and regularly heaped contempt on Shaver's version of the gospel. "He crapped all over me".... but he kept going back for more.

Only God knows if Les ever heard the word. It hurt Shaver that there was so little response but the absence of satisfying effect never deterred him. He was called to go out, not to bring back a trophy. Most of us can't keep doing things unless we have the encouragement of good results. Shaver was not in bondage to results.

Bruce Johnson (Saskatoon)

"Between the call and the response there's many a step, and your steadfast love, O God, is quite remarkable. We sure need it. May we count on it more. Depart not from us until you have blessed us."
"If I do good to you without a sense that when I am being most just I am most a sinner, I can do you a lot of harm."

A number of Jack's sayings remain with me. The one I most often quote (to myself and others) is: "As long as you've got it all together you have left something out."

I often recall with thanks some personal advice Jack gave me. I had let my name stand in nomination for a job at "85" which I really did not want to undertake. While I was stewing over this at an event at Naramata, I asked Jack for his advice. As I recall it now, he said "Hell, Jessie, there's enough attrition in any job even when you like doing it. Why take on one you don't want to do?" That settled the matter for me. I had my name withdrawn and the committee made a very fine appointment.

The year Jack presided at the annual meeting of B.C. Conference I took notes as he introduced the Christian Initiation Sessional Committee. Jack said then "the search for roots of our being may not provide a right handbook, but it can provide an opportunity for hearing the gospel afresh."

I feel saddened at the thought of "official retirement" of someone whose contributions are so badly needed, but am sure that Jack will continue to find creative ways to serve the church.

Jessie MacLeod (Sydney, N.S.)

I'm very sorry they're leaving, Jack and Dorothy. He done a very good turn when he moved me to Roddan Lodge that time with his VW van. He's a very good boy.

Art Chalmers
(First Church)

Dear Jack:

Do you remember a C.U.T. course in the early 70's when we were asking ourselves what in the world we should be doing, and I summed it all up with "just living love" like the psychedelic United Church logo stuck up on my bathroom mirror said? You said "rubbish" or "heresy", or words to that effect. I was shocked and horrified. Then you very tersely said: "The good news isn't 'get out there and live love' .... that's burden stuff .... the good news is 'you are loved'."

I wept. It was so beautiful. It was as if I was hearing the gospel for the first time.

Many thanks,

Jan Bulman (Vancouver)

"You can't fit the Biblical God into someone who rewards the good and punishes the bad. His intention is to save his people."
"How come it's the good things that do us in? How come righteousness can do more harm than evil? How come the innocent commit the most devastating violence?"

I have two stories that go back to my association with Jack in the 50's and 60's.

The first goes back to a study group for ministers that Jack and I were involved in. The group included Harry Meadows, Art Griffin, Milton Little, Shaver and myself, and the meetings were held on Mondays in our respective homes. On one particular occasion we were studying Donald Baillie's 'God was in Christ', and the meeting was at the Wilson Heights manse. My daughter, Beth, who was three, came into the room and watched Jack holding forth in one of his favourite postures. He was horizontal on the floor with his head in his hands looking straight down and holding forth on the "Atonement". Beth walked around him three or four times and eventually put her head down and peered up into his face. He said "Hello sweetheart" and returned to the Atonement. Beth went back to the kitchen and announced to her mother that there was a funny man in the front room talking to the floor.

The other incident took place a few years later when we were both university chaplains and were going to our Bi-Annual meeting at Bala. I had already boarded the bus for Bala at the Toronto bus depot. I looked out the window and saw Jack Shaver about to get on. (Now I had four years in the British Navy in the Second World War, but Jack's ability to express himself made any "Lower Deck" seaman appear like a novice.) I was not particularly keen to have the whole busload introduced to Shaver's colourful vocabulary, so I crouched down in my seat hoping I wouldn't be detected and that I could have a quiet ride to Bala. But Jack spotted me and shouted out "What are you doing slinking down there, you little bugger?"

Jack Shaver has been a wonderful friend to a lot of us. In his very convoluted way, he has given us insights that have left an indelible mark on us which can never be obscured by his own modesty. Jack Shaver is the Interpreter on the Watchtower described in Habakkuk 2, who writes the vision and makes it plain so that he who runs may read it.

Best wishes to Jack on his retirement.

Benjamin G. Smillie (Saskatoon)

In the early 1950's, a group of ministers, identifying themselves as the "Silver Seven", used to meet for breakfast, Bible study and theological reflection, on a rotating system in their Winnipeg manse. At the time we had three young children. Even now, thirty years later, they still ask me to identify the minister who used to lie on the carpet on his back with his arms and legs stretched out, and at intervals let out raucous laughter! Needless to say it was Jack Shaver. Just one of the memories we have of a remarkable man.

Lois Wilson
Moderator

"Whatever in the world the word is going to be, it's going to look like a stumbling-block. Take heed how you hear."
"When we run from where the hurt is
When we run from where the evil is
We're hiding from where the good news is."

In the office we often have fun interpreting Jack's typing, since his "hunt and peck" system leads to amusing mistakes. It is always understood that we are to make required changes. However, the content of anything Jack gives us is always worth any proof-reading that is needed!

Personally, I'd like to record an instance where Jack's insight and guidance were of great help. Last Spring I rashly undertook an ambitious (for me, that is) Philosophy of Religion course in the downtown SFU series. When I was stumped for answers or needed help with a book review, a short paper or the final essay, I would plan to take a coffee break or have lunch when Jack was also in the lunch room. I would state my dilemma and Jack would immediately respond with "Have you thought about this angle? or, "What about this approach?" .... and I would be off and running, approaching my assignment with a new confidence. Thanks, Jack, for everything! And especially for reminding us that "Where sin abounds, grace much more abounds."

Dorothy Manson
First Church Team

Jack came to visit me in hospital, and he came quite a few times and I was glad to see him because I didn't have too many visitors way out at UBC. He said a prayer for me. I want to say "thank you".

Rose Smith
(First Church)

Dear Jack:

Often I recall with much enjoyment a chance meeting at UBC many years back when you were chaplain there. We had had lunch together and were walking back across the campus discussing one of the issues of the day when a young woman overheard us and joined in. I don't recall what we were talking about but I do recall my impression that from the way you two went at it you must be great friends of long standing. Too soon you had to take off for a meeting. After you left us, to my surprise the young woman turned to me and said "Who in the world is that?" "That's Jack Shaver, the United Church Chaplain at UBC", says I. "What a fascinating character", she said.

Thank you Jack for being about the most engaging, stimulating and compassionate character I've had the blessing of knowing. I am eternally grateful for your courage to be so honest and discerning in your absolutely unique theological formulations. Thanks be to God for incarnation, for the flesh and spirit we name Jack Shaver.

Shalom,
Roy DeMarsh (Pictou, N.S.)

Fast Asleep

Agnes and I went on their honeymoon with them. As I recall it, Dorothy's only complaint was that Jack would rather sleep!

Bruce Johnson (Saskatoon)

"There's a deep and powerful mix of creation and fall. To get to be created at all means going wrong."
"Our Father .... this is the hour in which we seek to see again your Kingdom in our midst. Give us eyes to see; open the eyes we have; turn our eyes on one another."

I knew Jack when he was in high school in North Winnipeg. I was the boys' worker at All People's Mission and he was the youngest son of the Superintendent, Dr. J.M. Shaver. He and two of his friends were leaders in the Junior Department at Sutherland Ave. Mission. Jack grew up in a non-Anglo-Saxon community and was early aware of the problems of unemployment during the depression years. Summers were spent at the mission camp next to the Shaver's cottage on the Assiniboine River, west of Winnipeg. For $2.00 a week we could take the boys to camp, make a contribution to the camp, pay transportation and feed them. I remember Jack making twenty saskatoon pies on one occasion.

Jack went to United College for his Arts and Theology. In his senior arts year he was Senior Stick. Jack's language was a mixture of academic theology and north end idiom. He is remembered at Otterburn, a student charge, and after ordination at Murillo-Kakabeka, just outside Fort William. It was while he was there that he met and married Dorothy Hamlet of Fort William. I was Superintendent of Institutional Missions at the Lakehead at that time, and Jack was a regular visitor to our manse. ... In Winnipeg he was minister of Fort Garry United Church.

History and geography combined to make Jack the church leader he became -- the roots from which he came in the community, and the scholarship that he attained. His sensitivity to the needs of others and his ability to express himself in both theological and practical language added to the influence he had on all those who knew him.

Fred Douglas (Winnipeg)

CHRISTMAS 1979

"The Christian World's most winsome festival draws near.
Anything that winsome is bound to get used in offensive ways.
Something that promising is going to encourage make-believe
which is sure to disintegrate into bitterness.
Only God's own coming in the flesh will enable us to
keep the feast of God's coming in the flesh.
Not make-believe, but made-to-believe.
Not won by glitter but by God's love of the world.
That's what's in store for broken believers
as the festival of Christmas draws near.
God bless us everyone."

Jack's greatest gift to us has been his disasters. It's terrible to
have a minister who doesn't have disasters. E.S.H.

"You can't make the Holy Spirit work -- you have to let it work."
"The God that hears us and not bawls us out."

The Night Visitor

The night was warm, almost too warm for restful sleep. The doors had been left open on the cabin, and the inside was protected against the outside only by the flimsy screen doors. The dimmest of night lights flickered in the midnight sky.

From somewhere beyond his slumber, Jack, like Samuel, heard a voice summoning him up. He tried to ignore it, but it persisted. The power of the unseen necromancer was too great, and reluctantly Jack began the long ascent toward consciousness.


"Jack, there's somebody at the back door!"

Jack climbed the lower foothills of semi-consciousness. Somebody at the door? How could there be somebody at the door? They were miles off the highway and it was the middle of the night.

"Jack, there's somebody at the door. Go see who it is."

"Dot, go back to sleep. Nobody's at the door." Despite his show of certainty, Jack began to sense that he was going to lose this one.

"There, didn't you hear that?" Dorothy's voice dropped to an anxious but triumphant whisper.

Jack now found himself crossing the threshold into consciousness. He wasn't certain that what he heard came from the vicinity of the door. It might have been the creaking bed. No matter. Dot thought it was at the door. Plainly she wasn't going back to sleep until the door was checked. He also knew that she wasn't about to go to the door.

Jack swung his legs over the side of the bed and felt around for the flashlight, his only hope of shedding light on this matter.

"Jack, hurry up! They're trying to get in the screen door!" Dorothy's whisper revealed her growing alarm.

Jack's entry into consciousness was swifter now. He picked up the flashlight and lurched to his feet. Gaining momentum and confidence, he swept into the hall, brandishing his sword of light. The screen door was closed, and locked.

"I told you there was no one ...." The rest of the sentence evaporated like the mist on the lake. As the beam of the flashlight penetrated the screen, there, about five feet above the level of the stoop, was a pair of dark eyes shining back at him. On either side they were flanked by a large palm pressed against the screen, and protruding from the hairy fingers attached to each palm, long pointed nails dug into the fragile wire mesh.

No one will ever know how long Jack and the bear contemplated their respective situations, nor what they thought about. Perhaps each wondered about the apparition before him. Perhaps each speculated about the other's intentions. Nor is it known who made the first move. But with Jack now operating at peak consciousness, the bear was no match. Suddenly confronted with a hundred-pound door slammed and bolted in his face, undoubtedly the poor beast merely shuffled away, humiliated by such an inhospitable reception.

Who can say, except Jack, what images of danger, courage and victory raced through his mind the rest of the night? And who can say, except Dorothy, what it is like to live with a man who can stand up to a bear in the middle of the night, clothed in nothing more than his own resolution, and armed with nothing but a flashlight? Chuck Anderson (Vancouver)
"Our Father .... Translate our deep hunger, our restlessness, our longing, our desolation into a knowledge and need for you. We need what is wrong between us put right, what is central to us restored, what overcomes the destructive powers provided. O giver of life and spirit, O reconciler of enemies -- come by now, today."

Thanks Jack! Do you remember in 1960 when you walked me back to my English 200 class after I'd skipped out for a week? Who knows if I would have got there without you.

love,
Sharon Cashore (First Church)

The TV broadcast was one of the most outstanding things Jack did in the church, one of the real highlights. I would have been sorry to have missed it.

Bob Wright (First Church)

Jack was Chairman of the Winnipeg Presbytery Task Force asked to review all the "inner-city" work of the United Church and make recommendations about its effectiveness. I was to direct the survey. One evening the Official Board met to consider Jack's request that I be seconded for six weeks to do the work.

We arrived a few minutes late for the meeting upstairs at Robertson Centre, and I ran up the stairs thinking Jack was on my heels. After meeting some of the members I turned to introduce them to Jack. No Jack! So I returned to the long staircase with adults and kids alike on it and there was Jack, motionless, at the foot of the stairs. When he made no effort to respond I went down and found him in a trance and speechless! All he could say was "God, what a smell!" as the memory of his early years swept through him, years when his father was Superintendent of the neighbouring Stella Mission in North Winnipeg.

George Morrison (Mayne Island)

We recall how Jack and the local Penecostal minister were good friends and what an impact that made on us, as young people, to witness the friendship between two fine men of different denominations. It wasn't until I was older that I realized he had whetted our appetites at an early age for ecumenism by having guests from various denominations and encouraging us to attend functions of numerous denominations, to meet and work with all types of people.

Dec. 11/60
Donna (Peck) Harland (Sidney, Manitoba)

"Just because we mess up there is no need for us to abandon wonder and delight."
"Righteousness as a possession becomes a monstrous thing."

In 1961, sometime near Christmas, Jack visited us (Sid, a lay minister and almost a minister; Mary, an ex-teacher and new mother; Tom, about six months old.) Jack preached, conducted communion, baptized Tom and was kept up almost all night for conversation with us and neighbours and passers by from the street (like Cisco who spoke Latin and was drunk, and later on unfortunately put the Goldbridge Hotel on fire, and died.)

About (more or less) three a.m. a car got stuck in the snow on the narrow street outside our home. The driver came in and asked for help. Five minutes later Jack suggested we go back in again. The drunken driver had organized three to push on the back and three to push on the front.

Sid Rowles (Kelowna)

Jack values his friends for many reasons. When we were in Winnipeg he once remarked: "When I'm feeling down I call Boyce because I know he'll be feeling lower than I do."

Jack detests meaningless, irrelevant groups, especially in the church. So in announcing the formation of a men's group to his congregation in Fort Garry, he assured them it would not be just another group "piddling in a puddle".

When the late Al Forrest was appointed Editor of the United Church Observer, he was introduced to the Manitoba Conference by being asked to be devotional speaker. After his first sermon a group of us young ministers went up to introduce ourselves to him. Before any of us could say a word, Jack expressed his delight in Al's sermon by throwing his arm around Al's shoulder exclaiming: "Well, you old sonovabitch!" This gave the rest of us an opportunity to introduce ourselves to the speechless editor!

A bit of history. As I recall, Jack and I were having a cup of coffee during a meeting of Manitoba Conference. We had both recently moved to churches in Winnipeg, and Jack said "Let's get together regularly to talk theology". The rest of the details I forget, but out of this conversation began the "famous" group of ministers who met weekly for breakfast and theological discussion, beginning with Tillich's The Courage To Be. One of the memories of that group is the way Jack enriched our discussion with recollections of the thinking of the Church Fathers and philosophers from his well-furnished, retentive mind. The study group continued to meet weekly for at least five years.

Greer Boyce (Emmanuel College)

After the first time I met Jack I really got to like the man - so comical - always laughing - even when he said Mass. Some people run around with a chip on their shoulder, but he's happy go lucky. Dorothy - she's nice to talk to. I can't get the words, but I'm so sorry to see him go.

Larry Pelletier (First Church)

"What more can there be than that God stands before me with all that he is and I stand before God with all that I am."
Jack must be one of the few campus chaplains that was midwife to a cartoon strip. In October, 1965 the revolution was warming up at UBC, and Jack wrote a piece on self-righteousness that was published in the Ubyseasy. A cartoonist at the student newspaper, Arnold Saba, got together with Jack and a couple of others and they developed a "Moralman" cartoon that ran, off and on, for three or four years. The following is the article that was the starting point for the cartoon.

Bob Stewart (First Church)

CAMPUS MORALS

Ubyseasy, Oct.26 1965

Brother, are we moral!
But what does it mean?

By REV. JOHN SHAVER

That I have been a chaplain at UBC for six years is no justification for offering an article on the moral situation in the university. But that is no problem. The Ubyseasy allocates a good percentage of space to moralizing articles, with just as little justification.

I do have a problem, however. How does one write an article on campus morals without sounding uprightious? You see, I find uprightiousness not only unjustifiable, but also a crashing bore.

This sounds like a place to start.

UBC is frightfully uprightious. This doesn't mean all the self-conscious misbehavior is wasted on me. It just doesn't fascinate me as much as unconscious uprightiousness.

The latter appears everywhere — in weirdie-beardies and anti-weirdie-beardies; in the forestry Plank and in letters to the editor advocating both free sex and chastity; in rebels who are out to get stupid adults and adults who are to put kids in their place. Brother, are we moral? But I don't find this kind of morality morally helpful.

Observation number two is related.

I find self-justification everywhere. Brother, are we interested in justifying ourselves? You name the place and it's going on.

Administrators, underlings, voters, non-voters, writers, coffee drinkers, drivers, hitchhikers, top students, drop-outs, higher-ups, lower downs, all jumpy about criticism, responding with the twin ploys of look-what-a-good-boy-am-i and look-what-you-made-me-do.

Nor do I find this morality very helpful. When you justify yourself, it's a bore, and when I do it, it's a bust.

There is one promising aspect of the moral situation. I find a large percentage of university people are lost. They are experiencing a thing that can be called 'identity diffusion.'

Young adults are finding it harder to identify. Most present offerings look crummy. I find that a great many UBC people long to have their lives mean something.

They would like to have their student politics mean something, their sexual pleasures mean something, their going to jail mean something. But they can't mean any of the pompous phony pretentions some people seem to be hooked on. They have entered a perpetual identity pilgrimage.

It's a wilderness, and it's not much fun. But it may be a very moral place to be.

Only, neither uprightiousness nor self-justification is much help in it. I don't see much of the kind of morality that would be much help. This is a kind of dialogue and mutual affirming of one another in which a person is permitted to discover what he can really mean.

In this respect I guess we are not very moral.
"We don't have clean choices. If you want clean choices then you don't choose for this world."

Jack Shaver, eyes closed, head back, lying on the floor, glasses up on his forehead, taking in the raging ideological, personal, theological, ravings, diatribes, assertions, pleadings of twenty university students during another summer at the Vancouver Inner-City Service Project circa 1970.

In the midst of this stormy and electric scene was an island of serenity which intervened, on occasion, one carefully crafted word at a time to move peoples' consciousness through the eye of the needle.

The rampaging Vancouver Inner-City Service Project students, and staff people like Max Beck, Erma Francis and myself, came to appreciate Jack's uniqueness. He was a ying presence in the midst of our raging yang between reform and revolution, personal change and societal transformation. Jack's example spoke louder than many of our words.

Michael Harcourt, Mayor

The scene: A meeting of Winnipeg Presbytery.

Jack Shaver speaks at some length to a motion on the floor. As Jack sits down a layman asks "Were you for it or against it?"

A wonderful guy! 

Nelson Mercer (Calgary)

Forty years ago Jack was Senior Stick at United College, now University of Winnipeg. As such he held sway in a small windowless triangular office on one of the top floors. Never did much, just laughed, a high volume whoop that could not be ignored by faculty or students from the chemistry lab in the basement to the library wing on the far east end. And we would smile and explain to freshies "It's Shaver", as though that were all the explanation needed. Years later I heard that same great laugh during a ponderous General Council debate. Those in the know said "It's Shaver"... no further explanation needed, but the empty rhetoric was shattered and people remembered what they were about. In Jack Shaver, God has made laughter for us. God knows why.

Peter Gordon White (Toronto)

Of Charles Bewell in Gladstone Manitoba Jack was one day heard to say: "He gets more like himself the older he gets".

Bruce Johnson (Saskatoon)

"You'd be surprised at how many things that are wrong with the world come on as remedies."
"Whatever prompted the word to become flesh must have been an almighty prompt. If we could meet up with some of that, we could embrace the flesh, weariness and all."

Blessed Christmas 1980

"Every experience of the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver exposes flesh to flesh. It's a very physical place. As the Feast of the Incarnation draws near, the city's core becomes even more physical. There are more bodies around because in order for everybody's generosity to be justly distributed, the needy must get in line. Such experiences are not unique to us -- they are typical of our time -- that the most blessed season of the year is also the most bruising. Yet,

If we are to come upon the Word made flesh, it will take place where flesh meets flesh;
If we are to be truly blessed, it will be when we are found in him who was bruised."

In 1956 I was a theological student, two years prior to ordination. I was serving as a student minister on the Clandeboye Pastoral Charge.

During my years as a student I had met, and had come to see myself as a friend of, Rev. Jack Shaver. I liked him and admired him. He talked my language. I understood a lot of what he said; I especially understood him when, in religious sounding phrases, he spoke to his car, or about writing sermons, or opening a tea.

One day, around Conference time, he dropped in to my Residence room looking, but not necessarily sounding, very clergy-like. My room-mate and I were being visited by a very pious clergy friend from Ontario who finally asked, in somewhat awed tones: 'Jack, are you one of this year's ordinands?' 'Hell, no', said Jack, 'I've been at this racket for years now!'

As a student I remember Jack as a person of few pretensions, who wore his father's made-over suits, who could be a critic of the Church but was not a griper. Jack was then, as he is now, a person of startling integrity, who sought in all ways to live in and out of the gospel. I remember a sermon he preached one day when he was a guest at College chapel. I remember things he said and stood for in Church courts. I remember that just when we would finally find the most central and serious point of theology and obedience, Shaver would laugh his roar of a laugh. One always wondered if it was the laughter of ecstasy, pain, humour or joy.

I trust a person who prays, and thinks, and laughs that way. Whatever his strengths and imperfections, Jack can be trusted; even to laugh at us and so pop our bubbles. Jack ain't perfect, but he is a man of God.

Ralph Donnelly (Saskatoon)

"There's always a chance that a story will take off and bring a living word."
"Our Father .... we bring our personal cares and common needs before you.
Even though we come together we come trying, each one to bring the concerns
of each other one.

We are all scared. There are some here who are really scared, in some deep
dread or terror they can't name. Empower them to grasp life anyway. It's a
gift to be able to grasp what terrifies us instead of flee it. Your gift.

We are all enslaved, but there are some who are more enslaved. Hear their
cry. It's a gift to be liberated. Your gift.

We all hurt, but there are those who really hurt. Their pain is overwhelming.
Hear their cry. Buoy them up. May they find you, your gift of yourself
entering into all human pain and sorrow.

We are all lonely. Some are really lonely. We are your gift to one another.
Work that giving and receiving in our midst this morning.

We are all weary. Who is more weary than any other? This world of ours has
got to us. We are not up to it unless we are constantly restored. The world
has really got to us. Just any old restoration is not enough. Nothing short
of your restoration is sufficient."

Jack Shaver is most widely known as a
top-flight theologian with a somewhat
maverick manner, but his unorthodox
style can show up also in committees!

Some years ago in a Vancouver church
we were meeting to deal with an
exceedingly delicate personnel problem.
As the discussion grew more and more
complicated, Jack moved restlessly
away from the table to a couch by the
wall. He lay there with his hands
cupped beneath his head, and his feet
straight up in the air until they
finally subsided to render the lank
form in deep repose.

We continued for some time without him
until we had reached an utter impasse.
At this point a sepulchral voice
sounded from afar. Two or three
cryptic sentences of Shaver-sharp
wisdom summarized our dilemma, cut
the gordian knot, resolved the issue
and allowed us to adjourn.

George Tuttle (Sidney, B.C.)

Jack has never
tried to pretend
he's happy when
he isn't.
I guess he's
never tried
to pretend. E.S.H.

"Between the call and the response there's many a step, and your steadfast
love is quite remarkable. We sure need it. May we count on it more. Depart
not from us until you have blessed us."
"We're all the time dealing with that question "By what order do you put life's pieces together so that it doesn't self-destruct?" Fundamentally, that's a God question.

Where's all this white light?
Wherever love is the courage that empowers your life. That's where all the heavenly testimony is.
Wherever you forego your self-earned status,
Wherever you let what saves the situation be a gift to it rather than something you bring. That's where all the heavenly testimony is.

Where's all this glory of God?
Wherever the real burden is. If a burden's destroying you, it's the wrong burden. If you can get to the real burden at the bottom ... the real one, that's where the glory of God is.
Wherever the burden of the world's sin is assumed. That's what this message is saying. That's where the glory of God is.
What it is to find out what the whole Bible was put together to tell us, "That the light of the knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

Where's all this white light? Wherever the pain of giving and receiving forgiveness is experienced.
Wherever the least are."

My recollections of Jack are all humorous; none of them are really funny. I speak of humour in its profound sense of containing such a joyful experience of life that one's capacity for hilarity is always very close to the surface and in spite of the depth of his conviction and the spirituality of his nature, this was always true of Jack.

He was first thrust upon me and my attention as a chaplain in the university. There I had to learn a great deal about a variety of our ministers who were serving as university chaplains. They varied all the way from the most diminutive to the most robust. Some of them were lusty and off-hand, others were pietistic and sanctimonious. Those attending your event will have no difficulty whatever in knowing in which of these categories to place Jack! Indeed, there are no categories in which he can be said to belong with any limits, or if he does, it will not be for any appreciable length of time.

My whole relationship with Jack was one of delight and appreciation and I am pleased to have this opportunity of just saying "God speed, farewell to one phase of ministry, welcome to the club in another". I have ostensibly been "retired" for nine years and I haven't yet had a day of freedom to enjoy this retirement people are always telling me about, nor do I have any intention of lying down and doing that until it is necessary.

Harold W. Vaughan (Toronto)

I remember a time during the height of my involvement in the group lab movement when Shaver confused my new Dogma about always and everywhere expressing one's anger. He talked simply and honestly about a time in his life when he "bore his own wrath", and he went on to give that statement theological depth in the course of our discussion. I emerged confused, but ready to re-think the whole business of merely expressing feelings. I know that experience improved my work and prevented who-knows-how-much conflict.

Tom Bulman (Vancouver)

"Intimacy - equals - salvation is a God that fails"
"The innocent are as frightful inquisitors as the power-hungry. How true it is that only sinners can bear the gospel."

I remember the first supervisory session I had with Jack. I was really keyed up for it. (Actually, there were two reasons I wanted to do an internship at First Church: the inner-city setting, and Jack Shaver.) I remember going into his office rather nervously, sitting and waiting to be inspired and changed within the twinkling of an eye. However I was dismayed when Jack put his feet on the table, leaned back in his chair and closed his eyes. How, I wondered, was I ever going to learn anything from this man who seemed to be asleep! By the end of the first session I had received a more realistic view. I realized his unorthodox listening style really worked, and began to trust that he was really working hard to try to sort out the confused garble that came from me. Once, when I was wondering if I had any vocation at all and was doubting that I had what it took to be a minister, Jack asked the question "Are you under the right burden?" That totally changed my perspective. I am so thankful that he encouraged me to find my own way of expression rather than forcing any theology or style upon me.

Linda Greene (McCreary, Manitoba)

I was a teen-ager when Jack was in Austin and I remember his positive impact on our family. Our church service was at 7:30 p.m. and in our household we served late Sunday supper after church. Jack often arrived, shed his vest and tie, declared he wasn't hungry, then with zest joined us in food, conversation and laughter. His sermons were marvellous, but even better was his off-the-cuff theological debate with my father who did not attend church but was a "church-man". Jack was such a good influence in our family life and we wish to thank him for the hours of service.

Betty Mitchell for Olive Graham (Austin United) (in hospital)

There was a rumour circulating at the SCM hut at UBC in the Spring of 1962: "Jack Shaver hurt his back carrying another man's wife up to her bed..." This is the story behind the rumour ....

Jack had heard about a theolog's wife who was pregnant and not feeling very well. He decided to pay a visit one afternoon, and arrived at the door of the house where the couple occupied the second floor apartment. When the doorbell rang, the young woman, who was lying down, jumped up and hurried down the stairs to open the door. After saying "Hello, Jack", she hastily added "I think I'm going to faint" -- which she did, collapsing to the floor. She was only "out" for a few moments, and as she regained consciousness she heard Jack say "Do you want to go back to bed?" "I think so", she answered, and Jack promptly picked her up and carried her up the flight of stairs to deposit her on her bed.

The visit from the chaplain was short, but much appreciated! Sorry you hurt your back, Jack.

Marcia Smith (Fort Langley
"It's when we're most just that we do the most damage."

I will always remember the jolly and informal house and garden parties we all enjoyed at the Shavers' home, not to forget the scrumptious food! In the fall and winter there were many baffling puzzles to try our skills, as well as singing at the piano.

I will always remember the hilarious recitation and performance Jack gave of the "girl who went swimming in a creek". And I will also remember how kind he was and willing to pick different ones up for some occasion or to take them home. Nothing was too much trouble.

Mabel Auxier (First Church Team)

My memory of Jack goes back to 1929. At that time I taught a Sunday School Class and CGIT group at Stella Mission in Winnipeg. Jack lived next door to the mission, and although he does not remember me from those days, I remember not only him but his whole family.

Jack came to First Church to help with the "Outreach Program"—for young people badly needing help. Some of them lived in a project-operated house one block east of the church, and Jack was plumber, carpenter, plasterer and electrician, working hard to make the home more comfortable. Later Jack became our congregational minister at First Church. During those years I have so many pleasant memories of the work we shared and the chats we had.

God bless you Jack! Jennie Jones (Surrey)

Jack has been a member of the Naramata Centre Society Board for the past three years. His insights, use of language, and worship offerings have been greatly appreciated by staff and board members alike. At the 1982 Annual Meeting we were all struggling with an attempt to adapt and then adopt a Theological Statement about life at Naramata Centre. In the midst of the deliberations, Jack said "Well, you want something that says you aren't just in the people business — you're in the God business!" Fearing the phrase would be misunderstood out of context, it did not appear as "God business" in the final statement. However, that's the way I'll remember it.

Marion Best (Naramata Centre)

"Self-justification is a bust -- try it! Zeal to be blameless is a bust. You'll mess up everybody else's life for miles around."
"We are going to be surprised by what fulfils us -- our salvation will come from something that upsets us."

Memories of Jack Shaver! They are so varied that it's difficult to focus on one in particular. All of us have marvelled at his genuine interest in people, especially those who have been hurt or ignored by society. But for me the amazing thing about Jack is his ability to discover theological truths in the most unlikely places.

When I was at Canadian Memorial, Jack would frequently drop into my study for a chat. One afternoon, when my mind was in low gear, Jack started to talk about Saint-Exupery's "Little Prince". I wasn't familiar with the book, but as Jack shared the theological insights he had discovered in it I realized what I had been missing. I immediately went out and bought the book and I, too, became a disciple of Saint-Exupery.

Stuart MacLeod (Victoria)

We had brought our 8-day-old son to morning worship at West Point Grey United Church, thinking that he would sleep through the service. Not so. Piercing squalls; embarrassed parents; eventual peace.

After the service Jack, a member of the congregation, rushed up to me with a light in his eye.

"That's the most beautiful sound in the world", he said.

"You mean you liked it?"

"The sound of new life, you know, nothing like it in the world. Nothing, just nothing as wonderful as the cry of a new-born baby."

Jack hadn't said it to make us feel better. It was obvious he meant exactly what he said, and it was a great and lasting gift.

Elizabeth Stebbings Hannon
(First Church)

"Almighty God ....

Come to us
We must be running after other Gods or we wouldn't have to pray like this so often

Come to us
We must be stumbling all over your presence or we wouldn't have to pray this again and again

Give us a Word
We must be neglecting this word you have given to us or we wouldn't need to keep asking

Come with us
Nothing will work right until we let you be God
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."
"Lord, let us love so that we may liberate but not abandon."

The scene is the annual meeting of Manitoba Conference in Brandon, 1955. One of the lay delegates present is a Mrs. Angel (her actual name) whose home was in the same rural community from which I come. Mrs. Angel was a very large woman, being both tall and big-boned and rather fatter than she should have been. In addition she had far and away the loudest singing voice I have ever heard outside of professional opera. In the small church that she normally attended her voice dominated the congregational singing to such a degree the remaining members appeared to be whispering. (I might add that she was a very nice woman with a heart that was warm and kind.)

The meetings of Conference at that time were much longer than they are now, and it was the custom to have a brief period of worship mid-morning and mid-afternoon. Jack Shaver and his great friend Douglas Rupp were sitting a couple of pews behind Mrs. Angel and a little over. In front of Mrs. Angel was sitting a small, elderly minister. A hymn was announced and the congregation rose to sing. In spite of the fact that the singing at Conference is always strong, Mrs. Angel's voice rang above it loud and clear. After a verse or two the little minister in front of her felt that he just had to see where this enormous noise was coming from, and he timidly swivelled around to look. Jack Shaver and Doug Rupp noticed this, and snickered to one another about it. That very afternoon Jack and Doug were again sitting with one another, not too far from Mrs. Angel, and a different minister was sitting in front of her, again elderly, and again quite small. During mid-afternoon worship the hymn was announced and the congregation stood to sing. Once again Mrs. Angel's voice dominated all others, and this little minister was also overcome with curiosity about this enormous voice. After a verse or two he, too, swivelled around to see who could possibly sing like that. Jack and Doug saw this and were doubled up with laughter. Now Doug Rupp may have been able to laugh without making too much noise, but we all know that Jack Shaver's laugh can be heard for miles around, and so it was on this occasion. As much as he tried to contain himself, it couldn't be done. When the hymn was finished, they were still laughing. During the reading of the scripture they were still laughing. Jack would finally pull himself together and feel perhaps that he would do no further damage when he would hear Doug snort beside him, and then they would be off again. It went on throughout the prayer. Needless to say, no one in the church, including the person presiding at worship, was unaware of what was happening even though others did not know what Jack and Doug were laughing at. The terrible embarrassment both of them felt didn't help to keep the lid on what they knew was disturbing everybody there.

The result was one of the most memorable worship services ever to be held at Manitoba Conference, and the marvellous collection of Jack Shaver stories was extended. Meanwhile Mrs. Angel returned home serenely unaware that she had unwittingly been the cause of it all!

Best wishes for a marvellous Jack Shaver party.

A.M. Watts (Winnipeg)

"Father and Mother of all ....
Re-introduce us to a love that is God, as distinct from a love that drains and exhausts.
Dear God -- that's going to take a company of witnesses to get us to believe that God is love.
Imagine! Our telling You who You are!
Alright. You tell us, Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."
"How do you get called to the ministry?  
I think you goof your way in."

Rev. M.J.V. Shaver came to the district of Thunder Bay, Ontario from Manitoba in August, 1942 to serve the three-point Murillo Pastoral Charge that included the villages of Kakabeka Falls and Murillo, and the farming area of Slate River. There was farming in the Murillo area as well, and the nearest cities were Port Arthur and Fort William (now Thunder Bay). Jack was with us for five years, during which time he met and married Dorothy Hamlet. Their daughter Frances was born during this period.

The ecumenical spirit was on the move in the Slate River area in the mid-forties. Our log church had been condemned. The Anglicans invited us to worship in their church, and Jack asked for and received permission to christen children in that church. Comments gleaned from "old" and "not-so-old" timers concerning Jack are as follows:

"There he was just a boy, standing at our door introducing himself as our new minister"
"very devoted"  "warm-hearted"  "friendly with a hearty laugh, put even the shyest of us at ease"
"always a super dinner guest -- appreciated the cook's efforts so much that all the bowls ended up stacked in front of him ...... empty!"
"I remember his shirt, one button at the collar, several pins holding the front closed behind the bib, no sleeves, shoe-laces dangling"
"I wonder if Jack ever married anyone else in a log church, holding a kerosene lamp while reading the marriage vows"
"He stopped the Ladies Aid from selling tickets on their quilts to raise money"

...... But the most often-heard comment was "I think everyone was really sorry when Jack left, we were so attached to him, you know."

M. Bell

Then too I know of an incident at a Clear Lake Boys Camp when three boys had failed to return to camp following a hike through the bush to the town a few miles distant. It was late evening before their absence was discovered, and search parties were unable to locate them. In the small hours of the morning when worried camp staff were making plans for expanding the search, the boys turned up on their own. They had just decided to do a little celebrating and stay in town a little longer by themselves. The camp staff considered what kind of discipline or punishment was required. Knowing Jack, you will understand why the other leaders decided to ask him to take on the three offending boys in a prayer-session about their irresponsible act. These older boys came out of that gathering in tears. When one of them was razzed about his tears by one of his fellow-campers, he was heard to say "Yeh! but have you ever been alone in a room with Jack Shaver when he's praying? It's just as though you and God Himself were tackling the problem and God sure had clear directions for you."

Wes Bray (Clearbrook)

"You can't put life together with anything but love.  
Why are your survival procedures messing it up?"
"Helping can be a helluva putdown."

When Dorothy and Jack had to be away during the day, mother would baby-sit the children. Although we lived close by, Jack would always walk me home when I baby-sat for them in the evening. Since it was always very still and quiet in those days in a small town at night, I recall my mother telling me that she heard us leave the manse because the sound of laughter travelled so easily at that hour.

I recall vividly one summer Sunday morning. I was taking the small children outside to tell them a story during the sermon time. Son Johnny Shaver, as we knew him then, decided he wasn't going with me. I picked him up under my arm and took him out of the church and over the nearby hill where the other children were gathered and waiting. I pondered over what I had done, but to my amazement young John never said a word. After the service I heard roaring laughter coming over the hilltop. It was Jack, and he commended me for the swift manner with which I had removed Johnny from the service. Being a teen-ager I certainly recall how uncertain I had been about my impulsive action with Johnny.

Donna (Peck) Harland (Sidney, Man.)
(now of Winnipeg)

Christmas 1978

"There is a legend on the street that, on Christmas Day, Skid Road is dead sober.

Have we a sign here that a Saviour has come?

The climax of a SEASON --

in which tenderness, reunion and recollection
are both warm and painful
and are inseparably mixed with hype, shove,
extravagance, temporary generosity and make-believe

- is a Day on which all illusions fail to work and we
are left with the real world.

What if it is the real world God loves and that is why He sent His Son?

No wonder that first Christmas Gift was called unspeakable!

May He be yours!"

One day we talked about the idyllic life. Jack said "I want nothing more than a patch of grass on which to lie and watch the sky."

Here's to the grass
Here's to the sky
And here's to Jack with his eminent ability to relish each of them.

Bruce Johnson (Saskatoon)

"The meetings are what makes life meaningful;
the partings are where you find out how much it meant."
"To die to self-justification and stand before God empty-handed -- to live by forgiveness is a kind of death. Even to know the meaning of love is to die."

Jack Shaver's glasses have, it seems to me, a unique theological tint so that people and relationships, particularly those on the wrong side of society's rules, look very different to him than to most others. I helped Jack teach, or more properly to muck in with, a class of junior boys one winter at West Point Grey United. Following suggestions from the teacher's guide, we prepared "interest centres" to which the boys would naturally gravitate on their arrival at the Sunday morning session. One centre was music, another art, another was research etc...

One morning several boys were busy exploring the limits of their leaders' patience and, having heard the music "Bridge Over Troubled Waters" at the music corner, romped to the art centre to scribble cartoons of derelict bridges leading into swamps inhabited by ghoulish creatures. Hilarious laughter, great glee! This was clearly not what the guide said should happen.

"What is that?" I demanded suspiciously of one artist.

"It's a burnt bridge over polluted waters" he replied.

Jack's eyes, which had barely followed the activity up to that point, suddenly gleamed. "This", he said, holding up a wretched scribble, "is very interesting indeed". The boy hung his head, having failed to irritate his teacher he thus failed to impress his peers. Jack's interest, however, (like his disinterest on other occasions) could not be disguised or denied, and the boy was drawn by Jack's obviously genuine enthusiasm into a discussion on how he felt about crossing bridges, where he had seen one burnt etc., all with several levels of meaning for all concerned. As so often happened, Jack's perceptions had tinted the whole scene with interests and insights peculiarly his own, and had given us all a fresh view of ourselves and of each other.

Ian Gartshore (Vancouver)

In trying to recall incidents surrounding my earlier acquaintance with Jack during our college years, many interesting and grateful thoughts come to mind. Among these are a few mental pictures such as seeing Jack and Bill Davis walking daily to classes from the north end of Winnipeg. Their contrasting sizes made them appear like "Mutt and Jeff" -- with Jack having to run a few steps every so often to catch up to his longer-legged companion!

Wes Bray (Clearbrook)

Instrumental in his ministry in our community was Jack's dear wife, Dorothy, who was certainly an asset to both Jack and the church. Many of us benefitted from her musical talents and always appreciated the fact that while tending her children, she could teach a Sunday School class, lead CGIT or rehearse with a choir. Jack and Dorothy had a love and concern for all people which made them specially important to me, since everyone seemed important to them. As I spent many hours in their home, I dearly loved them both and have treasured memories of my teen-age years and the happy times I spent in their midst which left an imprint on my life. Jack proposed the toast at our wedding and completed my 'single' life as far as I was concerned.

Donna (Peck) Harland (Sidney, Man.)
"Despair of faith, and then your compassion will be true. So maybe, when you despair of helping, your helping is real."

Let me mention two experiences which are, for me, the epitome of this unique man I have known since our seminary days at United College and the class of 1942.

One was the experience of taking books out of the library after Jack had read them. There in the margin, in his inimitable handwriting, were cogent, insightful one-word critiques of the theological giants of the ages. The comments, of course, to be Shavian had to be colourful and witty as well. What more can one say after reading Barth's critique on the Holy Spirit, than "Whoosh!"

The other experience I treasure relates to my experience as first Director of the Vancouver Inner-City Service Project in 1967. As a new and creative experiment, the project was the subject of countless meetings and planning sessions before it got under way. Once it was going, most of the Director's "Support Committee" faded into the woodwork. Some people went on vacation, others became involved in other activities. However, when things got hectic, we could always depend on Jack to be there with wise counsel. I will never forget the night he phoned us from Saskatoon to ask how things were going. He probably never knew how much that phone call meant to a harrassed Director who was up to his neck in a multitude of problems, how much it meant at a time like that to know that someone cared!

Jim Taylor (Burnaby)

It was a stormy night on Gambier Island where the First Church Staff members were holding a retreat at Camp Fircom. Jack and I were sharing a very small and ancient cabin. While he was apparently sleeping peacefully, I was kept awake on my narrow cot by his snoring, the rain beating down on the roof and the wind sweeping around and within the cabin. At the working session the following morning there was a heated discussion on a controversial issue. Despite his good night's rest Jack was reclining on the floor, apparently asleep. Suddenly he came alive, and within minutes his contribution was able to bring the discussion to an effective and happy conclusion.

This was but one instance among so many when critical problems were solved, wise decisions made, thorny issues resolved, conflicts and confrontations avoided .... because Jack Shaver was there! He was there with his theological background, his clarity of thought, his courage of conviction, his caring concern for people, his faith and hope and love. Thank you Jack, our very able and greatly cherished friend.

Ray Tingley (First Church Team)

"What else is our deepest dissatisfaction about but that something's not right at the heart of things?

What else is our deepest dissatisfaction about but that we need to be reconciled with the living truth with whom all life has to do --

That we need to come to trust what is trustworthy;

That we need to be given life by that which doesn't fail, that which doesn't let us down, that which doesn't goof off just when we need it?

What else is our deepest dissatisfaction about but that we need to be empowered to live by a power that does not destroy either us or others? Like -- what else is at the heart of our deepest dissatisfaction but that we want God?

Now -- all of us!"
Rev. M. John V. Shaver, D.D.,
Resident Theologian,
British Columbia Conference.

Dear Jack:

Our paths never crossed very much during the early years you were in British Columbia. I was not part of the Manitoba Mafia, nor was I involved much at the university. I do remember our meetings, though. Your comment about the university crowd and the nature of your ministry there was accompanied by both hands going up in a helpless gesture and the head thrown back, reminiscent of a man being demolished by a steam roller, with the statement "If you are going to be over-run and trampled by a crowd, this is probably the most interesting crowd there is to be over-run and trampled by".

A mutual friend once told me that "Jack is perhaps the most helpful committee person I know". He went on to detail his statement and expand his observation in a way that my own experience later verified. No committee intimidated you. All committees were treated with equal respect and disdain. Even when your remarks seemed to be off target, they turned out to be helpful and enabling. No item of business was too small or too tedious to be given due attention; yet every major item was at the same time always too small for ultimate commitment or undue seriousness. You somehow expected God to be present in this little church, and you were somehow willing to identify with the stumbling humanity that cradled the incarnation.

We participated in a camping conference at Naramata. Actually, I rode up over that highway with you, George Tuttle, Bob Henderson, Alvin John Cooper and Ted Nichols. I remember the event very well!! I felt like a small town, little-leaguer who had stumbled into the New York Yankee dugout.

During the last number of years I was delighted and encouraged and supported by your participation on the Naramata Centre Board. I also delighted in the unfolding awareness of who you were and what you could do on the part of people who had never seen you before. I watched people approach you with curiosity and amazement ("Who is that guy?"); then their attitude began to be one of appreciation ("He's really helpful"); then finally people would begin to trust very deeply and enjoy the interaction of the committee meetings thoroughly and folks would be saying "When Jack Shaver is there, we can always get to the heart of the matter".

How does one express appreciation or pay tribute? Your analyses and comments have always been a mystery to me. Only now have I begun to understand why your leadership and theologizing have been so important to me. It now becomes clear to me that there is a significant difference between standing outside of the human dilemma and commenting on it, and standing inside that same dilemma and commenting on it. The mighty acts of God appear different from the inside looking out than they might on the outside looking in. You have demonstrated a capacity and willingness to stand inside the uncertainties, ambiguities and pain of life. There is a profound difference between accepting the insulation and isolation that academia and the church very often provide for people who want to do theology by observation and remote assessment; and the willingness to step outside the cocoon and choose another way. To choose to stand inside the maelstrom and comedy that is at the heart of our existence in order to reflect on the ambiguity and declare the operative Word, is a gutty and redeeming style of doing ministry.

You are not the first to choose such a way. You will not be the last. Nor will your style alter because of the new life you are experiencing in retirement. We, who are part of your company, want to say thanks for your leadership, your profundity, and your absurdity. Your life and your ministry among us continue to be a delight and a mystery.

Ivan E. Cumming
B.C. Conference
"WHAT WORD YOU HAVE FOR OUR HEARTS, O GOD, GIVE US EARS TO HEAR"