

Editorial

PASSING THE TORCH

Touchstone has been a central part of my life for 30 years. It's true that, with this issue, we are only beginning Volume 28, but it took us at least a couple of years to get our act together for the first number to be published in January, 1983. So my involvement goes back three decades. I was chosen to be editor in time to do the job for Volume I, Number 1.

And now, having just turned 81, I am going to be handing over the editorship to another. What it would have been like for me if the Board, in the circumstances of my retirement, had decided to shut down our operation, or if a new editor had been chosen in whom I had little confidence, I don't quite know. But as it is, they decided to keep going, and incredibly enough found a person to be editor who has all the qualities needed to do an outstanding job. So I am leaving the role in a very positive frame of mind. I look forward to the strong issues of the journal that will appear under the editorship of Peter Wyatt.

John Hogman paid tribute to me in an editorial contained in the last issue. It is now essential for me to return the compliment. My involvement with our publication is, in a sense, a few months briefer than his. The whole notion of having a journal to serve the United Church came from him and his classmate David Hoffman when they returned to Canada from their seminary studies in Princeton. And though David's role in the founding of *Touchstone* was an important one — it was he, for instance, who proposed the name — it was not pivotal, as was John's. John, the youngest of all of us who were formulating the plans to start a journal, drifted into the position of chairing the meetings. It was because he had exactly the right gifts for it, and not because anybody made a formal motion that it should happen. And he has remained the Chair of the Editorial Board to this day, not just because of his profound commitment to its goals, but also because he has the gifts for it. His leadership over the years has been a critical factor in the survival of the journal,

as it was certainly crucial in the months last year — after I announced my intentions to retire as editor — for discussions that led to the decision for continuation of *Touchstone*, and for the remarkable choice of Peter Wyatt as the new editor. We all owe much to John, though I in particular.

And now that operations of the journal are moving to a different part of the country I want to express my gratitude to those in Winnipeg who, since its inception, have made the publication of *Touchstone* possible. Kae Lovelace worked tirelessly for years as treasurer, keeping track of all the money and the subscriptions. John Daly picked up the job from her and has spent his retirement years doing the same thing. Both of these people put in almost as much time on work for the journal as I have as editor. As copy editors, three remarkable women in succession over the years have checked typescripts and proofs with an eagle eye, and saved me from countless embarrassments: Margaret McPherson, Colleen Armstrong, Elsie Douglas, and then Colleen again. I am so much in their debt. And the person who has formatted the journal is Greg Falk, who has passed through hundreds of fretful hours coping with the vagaries of computers and with articles overloaded with long footnotes, which the Page-Maker program doesn't handle easily. All of these people have been volunteers, giving their time for the love of it. I thank them all on my behalf, and on yours.

I have been asked to do a retrospective on the journal for the May issue. So you will be hearing from me again then where, among other things, I will offer some reasons why our church still needs a publication like ours. Meanwhile, over to you Peter!

— Mac Watts