



**Mennonite Library & Archives  
Fresno Pacific University**

**Elmo Warkentin  
An Inventory of His Papers**

**OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION**

Creator: Warkentin, Elmo, 1912-1992.  
Title: Papers of Elmo Warkentin.  
Inclusive dates: [196-]-[198-].  
Quantity: 0.4 linear ft.  
Record Group No.: M274.

**BIOGRAPHY OF ELMO WARKENTIN**

Elmo Warkentin was born 29 January 1912 to Bernhart and Marie Penner Warkentin in Enid, Oklahoma. In 1936 he married Sara Enns and worked for several years after that as a furniture and appliance salesman. At age thirty Warkentin decided to enter the ministry. He and Sara moved to Hillsboro, Kansas, in 1942, where Warkentin enrolled at Tabor College. He received his A.A. degree there in 1945 and his B.A. in History and Bible in 1949.

Warkentin began his active ministry while a student at Tabor, serving as the pastor of the Dorrance (Kan.) Mennonite Brethren Church from 1944 to 1947 and later at the First Baptist Church in Canton, Kansas. Following his graduation in 1949, Warkentin became the pastor of the Bessie Mennonite Brethren Church in Cordell, Oklahoma, a position he held until 1954. The Warkentins left Cordell so that Elmo could enroll at Wheaton (Ill.) College, where he graduated with an M.A. in Christian Education in 1958. While at Wheaton, Warkentin served as pastor of The Cass Community Church in Downer's Grove, Illinois.

After his time in Illinois, Warkentin returned to the Mennonite Brethren Church, working as the Executive Secretary of the U.S. Conference Board of Evangelism and Christian Education from 1961 until 1969. In that capacity, Warkentin was a frequent workshop leader and speaker on evangelistic and Christian education topics across North America. He spoke most often on the topic of church growth, and encouraged Mennonite Brethren congregations to more actively reach out to the communities around them. Many of his presentations dealt with principles and techniques for achieving those goals.

From 1969 until 1981 Warkentin helped to establish several Mennonite Brethren congregations, including the North Fresno Mennonite Brethren Church in Fresno, California, the Belleview Acres Mennonite Brethren Church in Littleton, Colorado, the Blossom Valley Bible Church in San Jose, California, the Laurelglenn Bible Church in Bakersfield, California, and the Fig Garden Bible Church in Fresno, California.

Following their retirement the Warkentins lived in Clovis, California. Elmo Warkentin died in Fresno on 10 September 1992.

## **(Record Group M274: Elmo Warkentin)**

### **SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE COLLECTION**

This record group includes mostly material from Elmo Warkentin's workshops on evangelism and Christian education, as well as some biographical information and material from three demographic studies he conducted in anticipation of planting Mennonite Brethren congregations. Most of the workshop material is undated.

### **DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION**

All God's children have gifts  
Assimilating new people and new converts  
Biblical principles for church growth  
Biographical information  
Boys clubs  
Bridges of outreach  
Christian education  
The church as a base for evangelism  
Church builders  
Church growth seminar publicity  
Church membership  
The church's responsibility to the community  
Constructing a church for Christ  
Contacts  
Deacons  
Demographic study for the Central District Conference, [197-]  
Demographic study of Fresno, California, 1977  
Demographic study of Whatcom County, Washington, 1977  
Evangelism and expansion  
Examples  
Follow-up principles  
Friendship groups  
Home Bible studies  
How to witness  
Mission fields  
New churches  
New move-ins  
Organization for growth  
Orientation for membership  
Pastor/congregation relationship  
Pastor interview  
Principles and strategies for outreach and growth  
Priorities in programming  
Recommendations to congregations  
Records and follow-up  
Sharing time  
Talent questionnaire  
Thus grew the church  
Total church program  
Ushers  
Visitation