

# *The Orie O. Miller Story*

*Study Guide by John E. Sharp*

1. How did Orie Miller's family, church, and education shape his love for the church? How did his background inspire in him a passion for mission, peace and service?
2. How did Goshen College begin to shape Orie's ecumenical impulses?
3. How did Orie's father, D. D. Miller, and his father-in-law, A. N. Wolf, open doors of opportunity for him?
4. What are your reactions to Orie's indecisiveness regarding his career choices at Goshen College?
5. How did Orie gain the confidence of Lancaster Conference leaders?
6. What is your assessment of Orie's accountability to Lancaster Conference leaders?
7. Can you imagine how different Orie's life and ministry would have been had he been chosen by the lot at Ephrata Mennonite Church? How might his life course have been different had he become a minister?
8. Why do you think it took Orie so long to find his gift of administration?
9. What is your reaction to Orie's spontaneous decision in December 1918 to volunteer for relief work in the Middle East? (He would be gone fifteen months!)
10. What did Orie learn about leading in Beirut from his Red Cross / Near East Relief boss James H. Nichol?

## NOTES

11. How did Elta manage in Orie's absence? How do you make sense of Elta's compliance with Orie's long absences from home?
12. A. N. Wolf and Clarence Hess were upset with Orie's long absence from the shoe factory. How do you evaluate Orie's responses? Elta's responses?
13. Why did the Mennonite Church respond so favorably to the Near East Relief workers and so negatively to the Mennonites who served under the American Friends Service Committee?
14. How did Orie manage his increasingly celebrity status when he returned home from his work with Near East Relief?
15. In the July formation of MCC, Orie again volunteered to serve without consulting Elta. Discuss the implications of that type of decision making.
16. How much do you think Orie was to blame, if at all, for Clayton Kratz's disappearance?
17. Orie Miller, Arthur Slagel, and Clayton Kratz worked diligently to pave the way for relief in South Russia, but General Wrangel's defeat destroyed the plans for getting relief supplies delivered. Why do you think Orie still gets credit for this mission of mercy, when it was A. J. Miller who actually made it happen two years later?
18. Back home, Orie very quickly got involved in many mission and service activities. What motivated him to do so much? Conversely, what motivated the church to ask so much of him?
19. How do you respond to the occasional conflict Orie had with Harold S. Bender? How did their gifts and personalities differ?
20. What do you think of Orie's balance (or lack thereof) of family and work?
21. How did Elta's wealth enhance Orie's ministries?
22. What is your response to Orie's "bawling spell" when he was confronted by young Mennonite Central Committee and mission workers in Basel in 1952? What do you think of their critique?
23. What is your assessment of the way Orie "worked the system"—as in the formation of Mennonite Mutual Aid and in arranging for Eastern Mennonite College's endowment?
24. What is your assessment of Orie's extended correspondence with John H. Mosemann Sr.?
25. What do you make of the harsh criticism of the fundamentalist Mennonite leaders of the Virginia Conference?
26. What can we learn about leadership from Orie?
27. Does the contemporary church have leaders today who remind you of Orie? Do our leaders demonstrate similar levels of love for and loyalty to the church?
28. What is your assessment of the way Orie handled his decline in health as he aged?
29. Orie died nearly penniless. Would you say that he manage his assets well?

## NOTES



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