

Fitting eulogy for Bishop Thomas

To the Editor:

8-2000

Thanks for printing the Today's Sermon column by Ernest Hess (Intell, July 22). It was a moving and fitting tribute to a wonderful man. The passing of Bishop David Thomas changes the entire Mennonite Church, not just that part of our denomination in Lancaster County.

When I was a boy selling pork in Central Market at my father's meat stand, David and his family sold beef at the stand beside ours. I enjoyed running around in market with David's sons and going to Bible school with them at the New Danville Mennonite Church.

Sometime in the early 1960s the Lancaster Mennonite Conference called David to serve as moderator. This meant selling his business and going into church work full-time, which seemed strange

to those of us accustomed to bi-vocational pastors. David sold his butcher business; my father immediately began butchering and selling beef!

The significance of this change, however, is at the center of Hess' sermon. Bishop David Thomas was a leader and taught many of us that church leadership was, and is, the highest and holiest calling to which we can devote our lives. Thanks to Ernie Hess for a wonderful eulogy. And thanks, David, for inspiring many of us to help lead at many places in the Mennonite Church. May we do so with the grace, integrity and holiness you expected.

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