MENNONITE LIFE

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of the best
in the religious, social, and economic phases
of Mennonite culture

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MENNONITE LIFE
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COVER

Manitoba Landscape

Photography by Gerhard Sawatzky

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Contributors in this Issue

(From left to right)

ESKO LOEWEN served as MCC representative in Holland, is now pastor of Johannestal Mennonite Church, Hillsboro, Kansas (p. 141).
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VICTOR PENNER taught high school in Winkler, is now editor of "Red River Valley Echo," formerly "Altona Echo" (p. 116).
ELISABETH PETERS, wife of Victor Peters, teaches junior high school at Linwood School, Winnipeg (p. 110).
J. JOHN FRIESEN, native of Butterfield, Minn., has written numerous contributions in Mennonite history (p. 133).
J. WINFIELD FRETZ, chairman of department of social sciences, Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas (p. 126, 128).
G. N. HARDER, fruit farmer in the Niagara Peninsula, active in church work, secretary Board of Directors, United Mennonite Bible School, St. Catharines, treasurer of Home for the Aged, Vineland, Ont. He wrote the article "Fruit Growing on the Niagara Peninsula" April, 1956 issue of "Mennonite Life" (p. 75). Through oversight on the part of the editors, this information was not included in that issue.

NOT SHOWN

ELMER EDIGER, Secretary of General Conference Board of Christian Service, Newton, Kansas (p. 143).
CORNELIUS KRAHN, who grew up in Russia, was one of the representatives meeting with the Baptist Delegation in Chicago (p. 99).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Photographs, p. 100 Kansas City Star by Bill Humphrey; p. 101 S. F. Pannabecker; p. 104 (top) Manitoba Government Travel Bureau, (bottom) D. W. Friesen & Sons; p. 105 (top) Janzen's Photo Co., (bottom) G. Sawatzky; p. 106 Bueckert-Braun wedding, Winkler Studio; 106-7 cuts Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Menn. Publ. Office; p. 107 (top) Frederic Perry; p. 107 Mennonite group of singers, Janzen's Photo Co.; p. 109 (bottom) Richard Harrington; p. 110-11 Alvin Wieler; cuts Young United Church and Bethel Church, Menn. Publ. Office; pp. 116-19, 126-27, contributed by D. W. Friesen & Sons; photographs pp. 120-125 contributed by Frank Brown; p. 130-31 (top) Ken Hiebert; p. 128 (top) and p. 131 (bottom) George D. Hess: photographs front and back covers by Gerhard Sawatzky.

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First Russian Baptist Delegation Since World War I

RUSSIAN BAPTISTS AND MENNONITES

By CORNELIUS KRAHN

THE Baptist News Service of the American Baptist Convention states that the delegation of Russian Baptists, which arrived in New York on May 18, was the first church delegation from Russia to the United States since the Russian Revolution in 1917. This was indeed an unusual event. For thirty days the delegates toured the United States, attending Baptist conventions, speaking in churches, and observing American Christians and life in general. It was fortunate that the delegation was made available to the Mennonite Central Committee on May 28 and 29. The MCC made full use of this occasion with a scheduled program by which the American Mennonites would benefit much by meeting these Russian Christians, who in turn would become acquainted with the American Mennonites.

From the moment these representatives of the Russian Baptists met with the American Mennonite representatives, there was spontaneous, warm Christian contact, which lasted until the final "God be with you till we meet again" was sung. The meeting took place in the buildings of the Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Chicago. The Russian Baptist representative group, officers of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christian Baptists, consisting of Jakov Zhidkov, president; Nickolai Levindanto, vice-president; Alexander Karev, general secretary; Ilya Ivanov, treasurer; and Klaudia Tyrtova, the secretary of the president. R. Dean Goodwin, publicity director of the American Baptist Convention, and A. Klaupiks, interpreter, did an excellent job in making both groups feel at ease and in helping them to benefit by this meeting. The Mennonite participants consisted of the MCC Executive Committee, and representatives of the various Mennonite groups from the United States and Canada, who had been invited to this meeting.

The Message of the Baptist Delegates

After the evening meal the Baptist delegation was given an opportunity to present its greetings and message to about 225 American Mennonites consisting of the aforementioned group and the invited guests. All of them did their utmost to present information about their contacts with the Mennonites of Russia. This was very valuable and there was no question but that what they related was true to fact. This was probably the best way to establish the intimate contact between two groups which prevailed throughout the sessions. On the other hand, the delegation probably would have done just as well or a little better by simply relating something about the spiritual life of their Baptist churches, or by simply presenting their Christian message. When Karev as a last speaker did this, he was at his best. He emphasized the Biblical truth that Christians belong to one flock and have one shepherd. Vividly, he portrayed Christ standing on the mountain top. Those closest to Christ are also closest to each other, and those down at the foot of the mountain are sometimes far apart. Those looking up to Jesus, regardless of what denomination they belong to, are closest to him and closest to their brethren. This thought what also expressed when Levindanto asked whether all the Mennonites present at the meeting belonged to the same conference. When we told him that they were representing various groups, he was surprised to learn that the American Mennonites are not one. He emphasized that the Christians of Russia were moving closer and closer together.

Another basic part of the message of the Russian Baptists was the concrete evidence that Christianity under severe persecution and oppression can not only survive, but can "flourish." It became apparent that the Russian Baptists have neither the facilities nor the material means to promote the spread of the Gospel which American Christendom employs. Their work is restricted primarily to the preaching of the Gospel and the singing of hymns. Sunday school and youth organizations are not a part of their religious life. Organized mission work and Christian service are impossible. The building and the acquisition of new churches is very difficult. Recently they have been granted permission to publish their own paper, *Bratsky Vestnik* (Brotherly Messenger) but only 5,000 copies, or one to each congregation and some songbooks and Bibles. That apparently healthy, spiritual life, full of vigor and zeal to testify for the Lord, is possible under these adverse conditions, puts us to shame. Are we possibly relying more on our prosperity, freedom, achievements in the realm of promoting technical channels for the spread of the Gospel, than on the Lord himself and the preaching of his word? The total message of the Baptists could easily have been that the Gospel is a simple and plain truth that Jesus Christ is the Lord and Saviour who has his believers and followers in all countries and that he can perform miracles through them under most adverse conditions.

When Klaudia Tyrtova related the story of her conversion, everybody felt the nearness of God and his

Russian Baptist delegation at Southern Baptist Convention, Kansas City, Missouri. (Left) A. Klaupiks, American interpreter; (Front, seated) N. Levindanto, vice-pres.; J. Zhidkov, pres.; Klaudia Tyrlova, secretary of pres.; (Back) I. Ivanov, treasurer; A. Karev, secretary.

redemptive and creative work through Christ Jesus. She did not need to tell the people what was holding her back before she surrendered her life to Christ; there were more reasons and possibly more urgent ones than are found in our society. One of them stated in private conversation that there are two ideologies in Russia existing next to each other, which can never become one. They are the Marxian ideology and the Christian faith. They cannot for any length of time find refuge in the same heart and mind. In the long run, one excludes the other. That is what makes the Christian way so difficult for a young person who was born in a country with the atheistic Marxian ideology and was reared in an environment and schools of the same atmosphere. When such a person is challenged to accept Christ, there is an intense struggle before he surrenders. That must be taken into consideration when we think of the conversion related by Klaudia Tyrtova, although she never mentioned it. She was baptized in 1945. She has attended the Moscow Pedagogical Institute in order to become a teacher, but is now devoting her life to the cause of Christ as a secretary of president Zhidkov. It must take many such witnesses to enable the Baptists of Russia to add to their congregations annually some 10,000 members who are willing to sacrifice position, achievement in society and advancement in economic life.

The Origin of Baptists

The Russian Baptists originated through a number of causes, among them the activities of the German Baptists. The German, Lutheran, Reformed and Mennonite settlers of South Russia underwent strong pietistic and revivalistic influences through their contacts with their German homeland. German evangelists would travel in Russia visiting the various settlements, bringing new life into the churches. Revival meetings, mission festivals, Bible study, prayer meetings, etc., were introduced where formerly only a formal worship had existed. The people attending such special meetings became known as *Stundists* which is derived from the German word *Stunde* (hour). Because the people met for an hour of Bible study, etc., they were given this name. This Stundist movement spread from the German speaking communities into the Russian communities. Here, particularly, the so-called Molokans and other groups, which had broken away from the Greek Orthodox Church, became the fertile soil of the revival movement.

Another source of the Evangelical movement in Russia originated through the Englishman, Lord Radstock, who started a tract mission in St. Petersburg in 1875, primarily among the aristocracy. Outstanding leaders among them were Pashkov and Korff. Although this movement in Northern Russia originally had little to do with the Mennonites, later contacts were established through such men as Jacob Kroeker. The Mennonite publishing enterprise "Raduga" (Rainbow) of Halbstadt, South Russia, had a branch in St. Petersburg which distributed Bibles and religious literature. After the Revolution in 1917, Jacob Kroeker established a mission organization in Wernigrode a. H., Germany, *Licht im Osten* (Light in the East) through which thousands of Bibles and other devotional literature were distributed in Soviet Russia

Klaudia Tyrotva taking notes in Menn. Biblical Seminary; I. Ivanov (right); A. Karev in conversation with American representative.

and other Slavic countries. In the Bible school of this organization, many young men and women were trained for evangelistic work among the Slavic people. Some actually went to Russia. This work was born during World War I when thousands of Russian prisoners of war were reached with the Gospel through evangelism in the prisoner of war camps in Germany. The returning Protestant Christians who had been reached through this preaching, strengthened the Evangelical movement in Russia. Licht im Osten, operated to some extent by Mennonites, played a very significant role in the promotion

(Continued on page 137)

The five Russian Baptist delegates during the meeting with the Mennonite representatives at Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Chicago.

"Clear Lake" near Winnipeg, Manitoba. This is one of the many lakes in that area and is a favorite scene painted by Else Krueger.

Featuring the Manitoba Lakes

Else Krueger Pursues Art as a Hobby

Else Krueger was born and raised at the mouth of the Dnepr River, the romantic and cherished home of the Mennonites of the Chortitza settlement for one hundred and fifty years. Her father, Jacob Andres, was a beloved teacher of the community. As far back as she can remember she liked to draw pictures. Her first precious possession was a box of crayons and later other equipment for drawing. She recalls that early in life she made a drawing of her mother sitting on a chair and mending, which her parents, recognizing some talent, showed to admiring relatives and friends. In school it was taken for granted that she was at the top of the class in art. All her spare time was taken up with this hobby. Soon she started a collection of her earliest attempts along these lines.

She remembers vividly a painful experience in the third grade. This was in the days after the Russian Revolution when there was a great scarcity of all materials. After an exhibition, the teacher returned the pupils' drawings so they could use the other sides. Since hers was larger it was cut in half. The mutilation of this picture resulted in a stream of tears. At nine she was asked for the first time to contribute something for a public art display. At twelve she shifted from crayons and water colors to oil.

The artistic training of Else was limited to private

Else Krueger enjoys the outdoors on the lakes during the summer, making sketches which she later uses for oil paintings.

lessons in her childhood. In spite of the fact that the teachers suggested that she be sent to the Odessa Art School, her parents preferred keeping her at home where she attended a College of Technology.

In the 1930's Else Andres married Otto Krueger. Their happiness lasted approximately a year, when with dozens of other young men of the community her husband was sent to a slave labor camp. No word has been heard from him since. Their daughter is now eighteen years old. In 1945 those members of the Andres family who had not been exiled came to Germany whence they have reached Winnipeg since. Else's mother, Mrs. Jacob Andres, is now seventy-four years old. With her are her oldest daughter, Agnetha, Käthe, who is married, Else, and Helen, who similarly to Else, lost her husband. A brother and his family who were in Argentina have recently joined them in Winnipeg. No word has ever been heard from the father, Jacob Andres, who was also exiled in Russia. All members of the family were used to hard work and are now home owners and are enjoying freedom.

Tragic refugee life naturally had a bearing on Else's artistic career. At times she had no materials nor leisure or inclination to pursue the work. However, now that she has steady employment as draftsman at Moody and Moore Architects, she again uses all her spare time to create works of art. She enjoys the outdoors on the lakes during the summer where she makes sketches; which she uses for her oil paintings during the winter months. These oil paintings are on exhibit and for sale at the following

(Continued on page 125)

Picturesque City Hall welcomes visitors to Winnipeg.

MANITOBA ROUNDABOUT

By VICTOR PETERS

Manitoba, one of the medium-sized provinces of Canada, has an area about equal to that of Texas. Winnipeg, its capital, has a population of 380,000. Incorporated as a city in 1873, one year before the first wave of Mennonite immigrants arrived, it had at that time a population of 215.

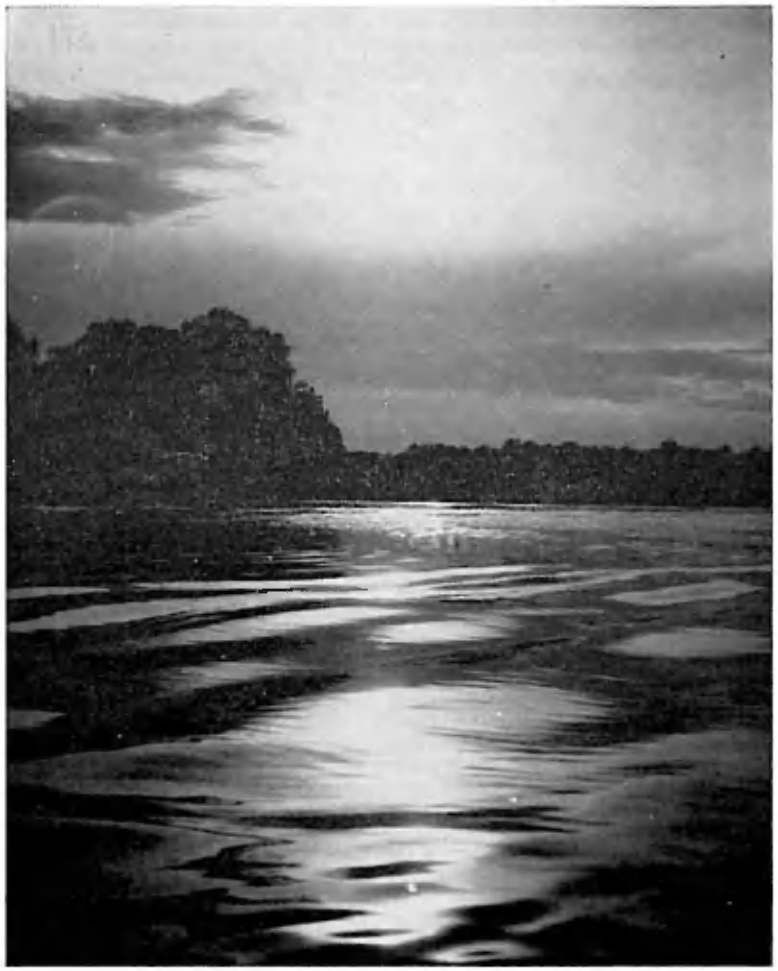
The Mennonite population of Manitoba is about 45,000. Some seven thousand of them live in Winnipeg, about 20,000 live west of the Red River, in the Altona-Winkler-Lowe Farm triangle, another 10,000 make their home east of the Red River, in the Steinbach-Grünthal-Prairie Rose triangle. The rest are scattered across the province.

Monument on Post Road near Gretna, Manitoba, unveiled in 1950, commemorates arrival of Mennonites in 1875.

A Pictorial Survey

Winnipeg has seven Mennonite churches and some mission stations. Four are General Conference congregations, three are members of the Mennonite Brethren Conference. The *Mennonitische Rundschau* is published in Winnipeg. Mennonite firms and industries contribute materially to the growth of the city. Some of the largest construction firms are in Mennonite hands. (See pp. 106, 107, 109). The Konrad Conservatory of Music, one of the largest schools of its kind in Canada, has an excellent reputation. (See p. 108). The Bible colleges of both Conferences are located in Winnipeg. (See p. 106).

Winnipeg is for Canada and the Mennonites the gateway between the East and the West. The highways 81, 75, etc., connect Winnipeg with the prairie states across the border.

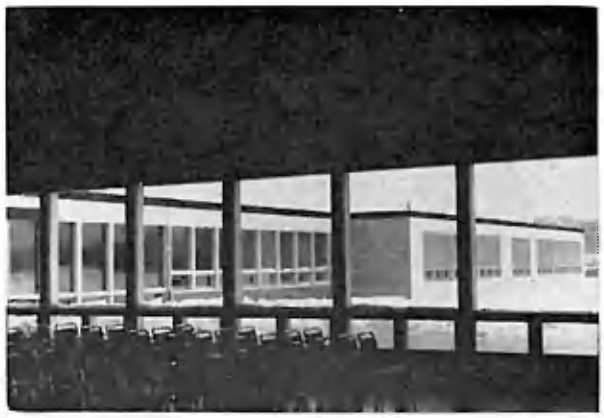


West Hawk Lake in Whiteshell Forest Reserve, East Winnipeg.

Wheat is one of the principal crops raised by Mennonites of Manitoba who introduced a number of new cultures.

Monarch Machinery is one of the many Mennonite enterprises of Winnipeg established during this generation.

Bueckert-Braun wedding. Ninety out of 100 Mennonites marry within group.



Canadian Mennonite Bible College; view from chapel toward classrooms.

Ebenezer Hall, Mennonite Brethren Bible College, Winnipeg. Teachers and students move into new Canadian Mennonite Bible College.

A group of people are taken through the Monarch Machinery factory, founded by John J. Klassen in 1935.

Canadian Mennonite Bible College chapel, located in Winnipeg.

Mennonite group of singers participate in observance of the 200th anniversary of German immigration to Canada. Susan Kraeker Wiesner is director.

Beautifully situated on the Red River near Winnipeg, surrounded by park and farm lands, is Bethania, Mennonite home for the aged.

Junior orchestra rehearsal, directed by John Konrad. Konrad Conservatory of Music is one of the finest in the country.

Bergthal church treasury benefits by harvesting of beets. Machinery, and labor are donated for this purpose.

Administration of C. A. De Fehr and Sons Standard Importing and Sales Co., Winnipeg. (Front) C. A. De Fehr, founder of enterprise.

Co-operative Vegetable Oils Ltd., Altona, Manitoba, produces annually thousands of gallons of valuable oil from sunflower seed.

Mennonite village street and old home, and modern village (see opp. page) and new home, in Manitoba, Canada.

A Nostalgia for

Life in a Mennonite Village

By ELISABETH PETERS

A VISITOR to one of our villages once called it a quiet haven in a restless, mad world of chaos. Here time seems to have halted, and the everyday affairs of plain-living, hard-working villagers with simple village enjoyments set the pace to suit their needs. Here the gnarled roots of the gigantic old trees, anchored deeply in the soil, are synonymous with the lives of the pioneers and old-timers whose destinies are linked with the fruits of the earth.

In spite of the trend to modernize, many of the villages have retained their quaint charm and individualism. There are still to be found the large shuttered houses with the barns and stables huddled protectedly under the same roof, sheltered by tall trees. Board and picket fences are still in common use, and gardens follow the original plan of the old-country homestead. There is the *Vorgarten,* consisting of a treed section in front of the house and a flower garden near the street which in summer is a mass of bloom, fragrant in the warm noon sun. A vegetable garden and a potato patch are at the back where barefooted lads are weeding leisurely, taking liberal time off to push straw hats off their sweating brow, or draw patterns with their toes in the loamy soil as they pass the time of day with neighboring children who are employed similarly on their side of the fence.

Here too, we find the true Mennonite hospitality of few words but adequately expressed by the huge tables in the *Vorhaus,* covered with shiny oil-cloth, laden with big platters of *Schinkenfleisch,* and, at the right season, *Arbusen* and *Rollkuchen.* And all this in such abundance and served in such a matter-of-course style that the most refined appetites are whetted and the coolest hearts of strangers are warmed. There is peace and quiet in the spacious *Grosse Stube* with its great guest bed piled high with extra bedding, its line of chairs in front of the bed, its cupboard where numerous fancy dishes are displayed. Unfortunately there are only a few of the brick hearths left which in winter provided such wonderful warmth for the fortunate occupant of the *Ofenbank.*

Most of the villages have one street with homesteads on both sides of the street. Others have a *Querstrasse* running perpendicularly through the middle of the village. Originally, when education was still in the hands of the villagers, the school building was located at a corner of the street intersection and on Sundays served as the church. Later, when the government took over the supervision of education and heated controversies over the school question developed, no lands within the village were available to the government, and the schools were built outside the village, making the distance to school

Interior and exterior of old-fashioned Mennonite home, Manitoba.

Old Colony girls. (Below) Cast of Dyck's "Welkom oppi Frostei."

very great for all dwellers at the remote end of the village.

I taught in one of these schools after the government schools were fully accepted and always enjoyed the board and teacher meetings when the old-timer member on the board would relate in epic style of those exciting times when all land-holders spent Saturdays during the greater part of fall and spring at the nearest courthouse paying fines for neglecting to send their children to the government school. In the old Mennonite schools all teachers were men. When the first women began to teach it was generally said, *"Aus Tjeatjschi to ful, aus Leraschi to domm!"* (Too lazy to work in the kitchen and too stupid to teach.)

During the long winter evenings village life is bustling with activity. Young people are off to choir practice, 4-H clubs, Bible studies, sewing circles, and literary evenings. Although all of the young people and most of the older ones speak a good English, there are not many village households where Low German or High German is not the language of the home.

For this reason it is a very special treat to have performances such as Arnold Dyck's *De Fria* or *Welkom oppi Forstei* as well as Janzen's *Daut Schultehott* given by a village group. Dramatics are very popular and hours are spent in practices resulting in excellent production with an unexpected finesse coupled with complete abandon. In this, like in other fields, the local teacher usually provides the leadership.

Thus life in the village goes on. According to the season one may hear the rattling of heavy harvest machines, the crack of the whip as a whistling farm boy drives home the village herd, or the sound of the night wind in the age-old trees, while lights go on. All seem to emphasize the serene security of the village life where neighbors are very near. Here the hand of time has mercifully slowed down, and as one succumbs to the charms of the village one cannot but breathe a prayer that it would remain thus—an island of quiet and peace for us, the hurried ones.

Shed, barn, and dwelling place; garden in mass of bloom.

First Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, formerly Schoenwiese Church.

City with Largest Mennonite Population

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

By J. H. ENNS

Winnipeg has more Mennonites than any other American city. This has not always been so. Some thirty years ago the move from the country to the city began which is still continuing. Today there are some eight thousand Mennonites living in Winnipeg.

There are various reasons why they have been moving to the city. Primarily they are seeking work. Young people come to study, old people retire to live in the city. Strangely, the first ones to come to the city were the young girls. They found employment in the homes of the well-to-do families, in order to supplement the family income from the farm.

The occupations of the Mennonites of Winnipeg today vary. Many women work in clothing stores. Men find employment as carpenters, brick layers, interior decorators, technicians, etc. More than a dozen Mennonite physicians, and many trained nurses are active in Winnipeg. Some young people are drivers of cabs and busses, some operate locomotives, and some are aviators. Mennonites are found in government and city offices, in postal and telegraph offices, and in many of the businesses of the city.

At present, many young people study in Winnipeg, attending various schools. Among them are business and technical schools, the two Mennonite Bible colleges, a Mennonite high school, the college of the United Church of Canada, St. Johns College of the Anglican Church, and above all, the University of Manitoba. Of the six hundred students of the normal school, one hundred are Mennonites. Many Mennonites are employed in the public schools of Winnipeg.

Among the independent Mennonite enterprises of Winnipeg we find garages, carpenter shops, metal work shops, such as Monarch Machinery Co. of J. J. Klassen, the import business of C. A. De Fehr and Sons, and the piano store of W. Loewen and Sons, etc. There are three Mennonite print shops, and an outstanding grocery store operated by the Riediger Bros. There are a number of Mennonite construction companies. Mennonites are active as engineers, architects, lawyers, and agronomists.

Originally most of the Mennonites of Winnipeg lived in rented homes and apartments. Very many today live in their own homes, including many of those who came to Canada after World War II. Unfortunately, they live scattered over some two hundred streets of Winnipeg, with the exception of the suburb, North Kildonan. This is a Mennonite village consisting of some ten streets, established after World War I.

How are the Mennonites getting along in the city? Naturally, many characteristics of the Mennonite rural

Mennonite Brethren Church, North Kildonan, Manitoba.

life are gone. The families live scattered; many of the common practices, some of them good, some not so good, have been accepted. Attempts are made to help the Mennonite city dwellers in preserving the good heritage. Winnipeg has two homes for girls, the Concordia Hospital with eighty beds, and two homes for the aged. A well established mutual credit association has helped many.

At present there are five Mennonite congregations of the General Conference Mennonite Church; three Mennonite Brethren congregations which have some mission churches; one congregation of the Kleine Gemeinde; one of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite; one of the Rudnerweide; and one of the Sommerfeld Church. The Evangelical Mennonite Brethren maintain a mission station in Winnipeg. During school functions or, at song festivals, these groups meet together. The ministers of all churches have established a fellowship. May God grant that the Mennonites of Winnipeg will become more and more a useful part of the city, to the honor and glory of God.

Riediger Bros. Grocery store where Mennonites like to shop, and Sporting Goods of J. J. Martens & Sons, Winnipeg.

Young United Church, Winnipeg, where General Conference sessions will take place August 15-22, 1956.

New Bethel Mission Mennonite Church, Winnipeg

Roadside Store, a Mennonite enterprise, North Kildonan, suburb of Winnipeg. Jewelry store owned by J. H. Epp, Winnipeg.

Altona Bergthal Mennonite Church and its elder, David Schulz, and (below) Altona Sommerfeld Mennonite Church.

Mennonite Churches of Altona

By TED FRIESEN

THE Mennonite migration from Russia to Manitoba in the years 1874-76 consisted of the Old Colony, Bergthal and Kleine-Gemeinde Mennonites. The Old Colonists settled in the West Reserve while the other two groups went to the East Reserve on land set aside for them. The Red River divided the two reserves. Due to the superiority of the land on the west side many of the Bergthal settlers began drifting over the river westwards and settling in the eastern part of the West Reserve, establishing the villages of Halbstadt, Neu-Anlage, Silberfeld, Sommerfeld, Hochstadt, Neubergthal, Edenburg, Old-Altona and others, after the traditional pattern. They were a compact self-contained community. Trade centers were, however, soon established at Gretna (1893), Rosenfeld (1892) and Altona (1895), situated midway between the two. The coming of the railway was one of the factors in the rise of towns in the midst of the Mennonite settlement. Altona was thus situated between the Bergthal settlement to the east and the Old Colony settlement on the west.

According to Dawson, Altona is the most distinctly Mennonite town in the Reserve. It is the seat of the municipality of Rhineland, and at one time both the Bergthal and Sommerfeld *Waisenämter* were located here. Today such Mennonite institutions as the Red River Valley Mutual Insurance and the Canadian Mennonite Mutual Insurance Co. maintain their head offices here.

There are three Mennonite churches in Altona: Bergthal, Sommerfeld, and Rudnerweide. All three stem originally from the Bergthal group. After the group that resettled from the East Reserve felt large enough, they organized a separate church with their own elder, Johann Funk, ministers and deacons, retaining the original name, *Die Bergthal Gemeinde*. A progressive element developed in the new church which soon realized that better education was necessary for the preparation of teachers, ministers, and other church workers if the growth of the church was to be maintained. To remedy the situation Elder Johann Funk and other like-minded men in the church worked for the establishment of a school for teacher-training, campaigned for Sunday schools, choirs, young people's activities and for a deepening of the spiritual life in the church. This led to a schism in the church in the year 1890 at a *Bruderschaft* (church meeting), at which no less than 415 out of a total of 476 families

Elder Wm. J. Falk and Altona Rudnerweide Mennonite Church. (Below) Mennonite Educational Institute, Altona, Manitoba.

belonging to the Bergthal Church in the West Reserve broke away to found their own church and elect their own elder, Abram Doerksen. This new congregation was named the Sommerfeld Church, after the village where the new elder had his residence. The remnant under Elder Funk retained the name Bergthal. In Altona they continued to worship in the schoolhouse while the Sommerfeld congregation used the old church building at Schönthal, one and one-half miles north of Altona. Besides Funk, one of the first ministers to serve the Altona congregation was Johann M. Friesen. A noteworthy event in the early history of the church was the first conference of Mennonites in Canada held in the schoolhouse at Hochstadt three miles east of Altona in the year 1903.

The Bergthal Church

The Bergthal congregation grew and in the year 1908 built its first house of worship at Altona. This was enlarged in the year 1944. The new building was a 'T' shape with the top consisting of the old church building and the addition built at right angle. The seating capacity was about seven hundred. It soon became evident in a few years that the building had again been planned on too small a scale and in the year 1952 plans were made for a new large structure. The ground breaking ceremony was held in June, 1953, and the present church building was dedicated August 8, 1954. It is a large frame structure with a stucco finish and has a seating capacity of about twelve hundred. The basement contains 24 Sunday school classrooms; the walls of the classrooms are movable to serve as tables at functions where meals are served. There is a library of 475 volumes for children and adults. The present enrollment in the Sunday school is 245. There are 27 teachers, a superintendent, his assistant, a council, registrar, secretary and treasurer. The present church membership is over five hundred. Receipts for all purposes in 1955 were well over $25,000. The Bergthal Church still maintains the traditional system of a plural lay ministry with some rotation of ministerial service between the various places of worship. However the trend seems to be for each worshiping group to have its own lay ministers. Two elders (bishops) serve the entire church. The Altona Bergthal Church is served by David Schulz, the senior (in service) elder and three ministers: P. P. Kehler, J. W. Schmidt, and H. J. Gerbrandt, and by two deacons, John P. Braun and D. B. Friesen. Schulz was elected to the ministry in 1921, ordained in 1922 and ordained as elder in 1926. Two other members who have been particularly active in the Altona church were Jacob N. Höppner who came here from Plum Coulee in 1936 and was active as minister, choir leader, editor of the church paper, youth leader and Bible school teacher until his death in 1950.

The Altona Bergthal Church is one of the congregations of the Bergthal Church of Manitoba which is the largest autonomous church body in Canada, with a membership of over two thousand. This body is a member of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. Although not officially a member of the General Confer-

(Continued on page 138)

Altona -- From Village to City

By VICTOR PENNER

WITHOUT a doubt one of the most rapidly growing Mennonite centers in Manitoba today is the village of Altona. Located in the West Reserve some seven miles north of the United States border and 75 miles southwest of the provincial capital of Winnipeg, Altona has grown from 150 in 1900 to 400 in 1912, 900 in 1946, and 1,750 in 1956; and if present plans on the part of the community leaders materialize there is likely to be a continued growth in the next few decades.

The prosperity of the West Reserve, of which Altona and Winkler are the main economic and cultural centers, has been rooted in the rich black loam of the Red River Valley in which it is located.

Out of this fertile soil that was largely marsh when the first Russian Mennonite farmers settled in later years reaped bounteously the world-famous "golden northern wheat."

During the depression of the 1930's the ingenuity of the Mennonite farmers led them to increased crop diversification as a step toward greater self-sufficiency. This lesson, plus the rich, black soil on which their farms were located, have stood the West Reserve farmers in good stead during the years of wheat surpluses following the Second World War.

It is to this agricultural diversification, too, that Altona must attribute its expansion in the last ten years. Both commercially and industrially, the prosperity of Altona is almost entirely dependent on the prosperity of its agricultural hinterland. The major portion of Altona's commercial trade comes from the farmers of the community, and expansion in this field has come as a result of increased needs of a growing population.

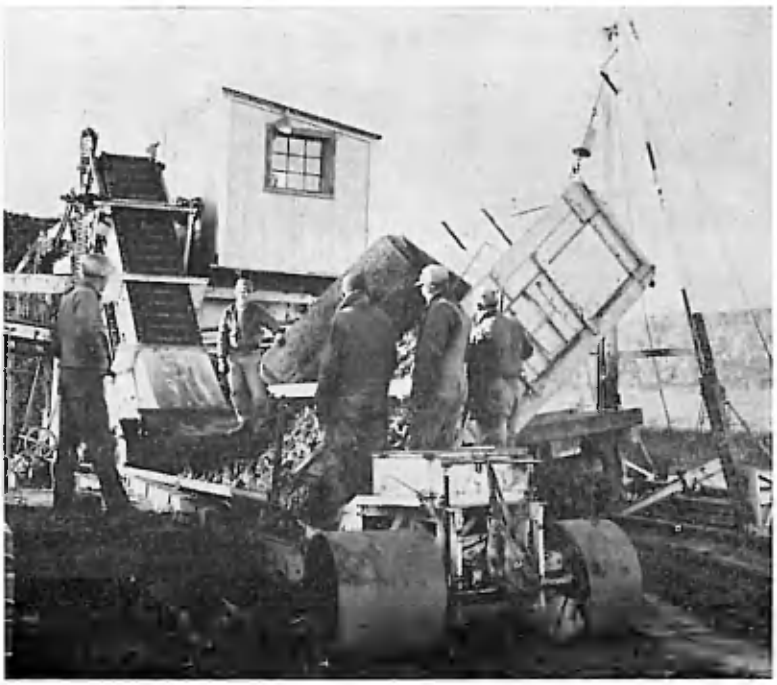
Economically, the organization and operation of Co-op Vegetable Oils Ltd. has had the greatest impact on the community, and the growth of the village in the last ten years has followed pretty closely the steady growth and expansion pattern set by Co-op Vegetable Oils Ltd.

Going into operation on March 7, 1946, Co-op Vegetable Oils and the village of Altona, which was incorporated in the same year, have since then enjoyed parallel growth. A recent study made by the Manitoba department of industry and commerce shows the benefits the local vegetable oil industry has had on the community. The company, for instance, has accounts with 2,848 farmers and last year paid out $1,350,331 for agricultural products. Last year the company paid out $119,700 in salaries and wages to its 46 employees and purchased $30,556 worth of goods and services in Altona itself. It is estimated that the plant is responsible for at least 30 per cent of the increase in Altona's population.

C.V.O., as it is known throughout the community, is not the only industry in Altona, however. Known throughout the Mennonite areas of Canada and many in the USA is the printing, publishing and book supply firm of D. W. Friesen and Sons Ltd.

The growing population of Altona, which was less than 900 at the time of incorporation in 1946 and is 1750 at the present time, has necessitated provision of improved and enlarged church, school and hospital facilities.

All of the six church groups in Altona have built new churches in the past decade. The largest of these, the Bergthal group, built a new church in 1953-1954; its membership at the present time numbers over 500. The Rudnerweide congregation, with a membership of 150, built a new church in 1951.



Unloading beets, Altona, Manitoba. Potato field near Altona.

Three new congregations have been formed in Altona in recent years—the United church of Canada, the Evangelical Free church and the Jehovah's Witnesses. All are composed largely of persons with Mennonite background. Memberships are: United, 117; Evangelical Free church, 20; and Jehovah's Witnesses, 40.

With over half its population under thirty years of age and some 27 per cent under ten, school enrollment has zoomed upward in recent years. Three times in less than ten years Altona taxpayers have been asked to approve expenditures for much-needed additional classroom space. In this time nineteen rooms and a large auditorium-gymnasium have been added to the Altona school system bringing the total number of rooms to twenty-four. There are at present sixteen teachers employed and 437 pupils enrolled.

In 1948 Hospital District No. 24, with Altona as its center, erected a large 32-bed hospital and remodeled the former hospital for a nurses' residence. A new nurses' residence is planned for this summer, if area taxpayers will approve the expenditure.

The remarkable growth of Altona has not been without its growing pains. So rapid has been the expansion of the village that adequate town planning has been unable to keep up with the spreading settlement. In order to assure orderly development in the future and to iron out some of the errors of the past, the village council has recently had a town planner draw up a scheme to be submitted for approval to the provincial government.

It is impossible, of course, to foresee the future, but a number of ambitious community leaders are now working on three major projects for the area: a water supply adaptable to a system of waterworks, a water reservoir for irrigation and a radio station.

Not only is the community hopeful about its future, but the provincial government is also optimistic. A third hydro-power line energized to 66,000 volts will be brought into the area this summer. In order to accommodate any future industrialization this line can be stepped up to 115,000 volts.

The past ten years have been bright for Altona, but the next ten may see even greater developments taking place.

Altona Council: R. J. Sawatzky, G. Dueck, P. H. Dueck, P. E. Braun, L. Rempel, and F. Kehler.

Fields of wheat extend as far as eye can reach.

Field of sunflowers and seed delivered to Co-op Vegetable Oils Ltd.

An Approaching Jubilee

D. W. FRIESEN AND HIS LIFE WORK

By FRANK H. EPP

WHEN the late D. W. Friesen established a small retail business in the village of Altona, Manitoba, in 1907, he probably didn't visualize that the business would expand to become the printing and school supply center of all of southern Manitoba and to serve Mennonites on two continents even before the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment.

David W. Friesen, widely respected as a genuine Christian disciple, was seventy-two years old when he passed away on May 19, 1951. During his lifetime he had established an enviable reputation as a servant and leader in church and community.

Born in the village of Schönsee, southwest of Steinbach, Manitoba, on June 12, 1879, he moved to the Altona district at the age of 14 with his step-parents. After his wife, the former Maria Kroeker, died in 1907, he married Mrs. Henry Striemer, who survives him, together with five children and two step-children.

After teaching in a private school for several years, D. W. Friesen moved into town, establishing an implement business. In 1907 he was appointed postmaster, which position he held for forty-three years. He was agent for the telephone company for thirty-six years. He was one of the founders of the Manitoba Mennonite Insurance, serving as secretary of this organization from 1922 to 1948.

In the Bergthal Mennonite Church of Altona he served as deacon and treasurer for almost forty years. For many years he was Canadian treasurer for the Foreign Mission Board of the General Conference Mennonite Church. He took an active interest in Mennonite relief work, being in charge of the refugee clothing depot from 1923 to 1926.

D. W. Friesen (1879-1951) educator, businessman, and church worker of Altona, Man.

During the course of his life he accumulated a large library on Mennonite history, literature, and doctrine. Various institutions and individuals have frequently made use of his collection of reference books and resource materials.

The publishing and stationery business established by D. W. Friesen will observe its fiftieth anniversary in 1957. Now managed by three sons, David K., Theodore E., and Raymond C. Friesen, the firm represents the second largest industry in Altona, having thirty-two employees and an annual payroll of over $80,000. The business scope of D. W. Friesen & Sons Ltd., has grown tremendously in recent years and still continues on the aims and principles established by the founder.

The firm's secretary-treasurer, T. E. Friesen, who is also manager of the wholesale and retail book and stationery department says, "When father started in business way back in 1907 I have no doubt that he did so in order to earn a livelihood and also serve the community. But I found out, too, that his whole business was motivated by the desire to act according to the tenets of his Christian faith."

D. W. Friesen achieved a reputation for "fair-dealing, honesty, and integrity that is the basis of every solid and enduring institution. Anyone who has ever had occasion to sell anything for our firm will verify that testimony."

The customer is considered the most important part of the business. The employee is next in line. More recently the firm has begun to establish a system of profit-sharing.

Dave K. Friesen, oldest son of the late founder, and now president of the firm, began a printing plant also in 1933, which now includes three-fourths of the total number of employees.

In January of 1941 the publication of the community newspaper, *The Altona Echo* was begun. The *Echo,* which was merged with another paper in the fall of 1955, now is published as the *Red River Valley Echo* and serves the whole West Reserve of Southern Manitoba, entering into 3,300 homes every week. The *Echo* is known as one of Manitoba's best weekly newspapers.

The publication of another weekly newspaper, *The Canadian Mennonite,* was begun in the fall of 1953. As the first English-language newspaper to serve the church and community interests of Mennonites across Canada,

Staff of D. W. Friesen and Sons, Ltd., Altona, Manitoba. This business will observe its Goilden Jubilee in 1957.

this newspaper has filled a great need and has been enthusiastically received by readers among most of the Mennonite groups in Canada. The circulation of *The Canadian Mennonite* is nearing 2,000.

Besides these two newspapers, D. W. Friesen & Sons Ltd. have a large job printing department, and print such Mennonite papers as *Bergthaler Gemeindeblatt, Leitstern, Der Bethesda Herold,* and *Elim Quelle.* Job work is done in the English, French, and German languages.

Several larger books, as well as numerous smaller books and pamphlets, have been published in recent years. Included among these are the scholarly *In Search of Utopia* by E. K. Francis, *Calwer Biblische Geschichten, Choralbuch mit Ziffern,* and *Der kleine Sänger.* The firm has also collaborated with the Mennonite Historical Society in the publication of the four volume series *Woher? Wohin? Mennoniten!* by P. J. Schaefer. One of their books, the *Altona Women's Institute Cook Book*, sells about 2,000 copies a year.

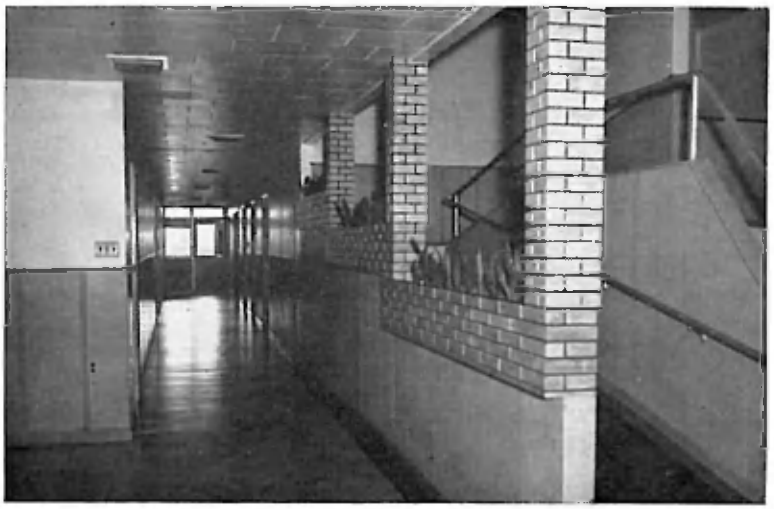
In the summer, during the slack season, the company makes its own Christmas cards, mostly in the German language. They sell 10,000 boxes, which are also made and printed by them, of these Christmas cards. The school supply business which covers a large area of rural Manitoba keeps four salesmen on the road during a good part of the year. Large stocks of supplies are received in Altona by the firm every summer, including four railway cars of school supplies alone.

Raymond C. Friesen, vice-president, joined his brothers T. E. Friesen and D. K. Friesen after his graduation from the University of Manitoba. He has also been Altona's mayor for one term. All three of the Friesen boys have followed their father in leadership roles in the community.

Another son of the late D. W. Friesen is Dr. John K. Friesen, on the faculty of the University of British Columbia. One daughter, Anne (Mrs. Alfred Loewen) is the wife of another Altona businessman. Two other children, Mrs. Diedrich H. Reimer and Henry Striemer, also reside in Altona.

D. W. Friesen & Sons, Ltd. eventually hope to bring the stationery and printing departments, which are located in separate buildings on Altona's main street, both under one roof. Both the departments have rendered immeasurably valuable service to the southern Manitoba community and the Mennonite church community at large. It is the primary concern of the firm to continue in the Christian principles and business practices laid down by the founder.

Part of D. W. Friesen and Sons book and stationery department.



New Mennonite Salem Home for the Aged, Winkler, Manitoba.

WINKLER, MANITOBA

By FRANK BROWN

WINKLER, a Mennonite center of southern Manitoba, was incorporated as a village on April 7, 1906; as a town on April 7, 1954. The Golden Jubilee of incorporation will be celebrated this year. The Canadian Pacific Railroad line from Winnipeg to Manitou, between which Winkler is situated, was placed in operation on December 10, 1882. However, the nearest trading centers for the area had been the two general stores at Schanzenfeld, three miles south, and the siding at Stevenson with its lumber yard and provision to receive the farmers' grain, three miles to the west. The siding at Stevenson was abandoned in 1884 as the town of Morden began to sprout. Supplies for the stores at Schanzenfeld had to be brought in from Gretna and other centers. Therefore, a location right on the railway seemed to be the most practical.

The first owner of the quarter section on which the town of Winkler was later built, was Isaac Wiens, who obtained the land as a Crown Grant on September 6, 1883.

As the early Mennonite churches looked askance at any member who moved to town, Wiens was also reprimanded and advised not to have anything to do with the establishment of a townsite on his farm, although he himself was living one and one-half miles to the north of the proposed site. It is true that the first Mennonite settlers of this area lived exclusively in villages but these villages were away from the railways and organized in a manner that the principles of the churches and their leaders were the controlling influence. Hence it appears that when the siding at Winkler was started in 1892, Isaac Wiens got into a bit of a quandary for he did not want to lend his name to the new townsite. Therefore, when Wiens did not quite know what to do with his quarter section of land, Valentine Winkler of Morden, who came to his aid, owned a quarter section just a half mile to the northeast. Consequently, Wiens and Winkler traded farms to their mutual satisfaction.

On October 1, 1892, the following news item appeared in the Morden *Herald,* "Seven and a half miles east of Morden is the new townsite of Winkler, named after the proprietor of the townsite, Valentine Winkler, Esq., M. P. P. for Rhineland. The elevator is nearly finished, also the mill. A store and other buildings are in the course of erection. A plentiful supply of water is said obtainable at all points."

First Business

In 1892, the first general store was built at Winkler by Bernard Loewen. The large store building also housed the post office. At times, Loewen had as much as $150,000 worth of stock on hand. He used to import women's shawls from Austria wholesale.

The first house to be used as a residence at Winkler

Peter T. Friesen bookstore and printery, Winkler. Winkler gristmill built in 1892.

appears to have been erected in the spring of 1892 by Jacob B. Dyck. When his son, John B. Dyck, arrived here with the first load of lumber he was compelled to find shelter for the night underneath his wagon. This first house was located on West Street and it seems that the second house to be constructed was built just north of the Dyck home by William Peters.

Soon after completing construction of their houses, Dyck and Peters built the Winkler Grist Mill a little to the north of their dwellings and on the same street. In fact, for some years this was known as Mill Street. The first miller was Born who had come here from Austria. Many of the first business houses and stores to be erected in Winkler, were built by non-Mennonites. Today, practically all of them are operated by Mennonites.

Winkler Public and High Schools. Total enrollment, 670.

Printing Establishments

Shortly after 1900, Henry H. Neufeld started a newspaper business in Winkler. He published a paper in the German language called *Die Volkszeitung*. Later he also operated a drugstore here. In 1921, Peter T. Friesen came to Winkler and leased the printery equipment from H. H. Neufeld. When Neufeld sold out his drugstore, P. T. Friesen bought his stock of school supplies, office stationery, and musical instruments. He then opened the first bookstore in Winkler and continued the printery as well. Shortly after this, H. H. Neufeld sold the printing equipment, which Friesen had formerly leased, to a firm in Winnipeg.

In 1924, K. H. Neufeld came to Winkler and in the fall of that year started a printery business. He occupied various premises in town and claims that his printing press was moved down Main Street so often during the next twenty years that it was as common as Ford cars. Until 1945 Neufeld had done chiefly job printing, but in that year he started printing the first English weekly newspaper in Winkler. This paper, *The Winkler Flyer*, was sold in 1949 to Pembina Publishers and renamed *The Winkler Progress*.

However, in 1946 P. T. Friesen and his son Harvey started a job printing plant back of their bookstore. For a time then, there was one printing and publishing plant and one commercial printing plant in Winkler. In the fall of 1949, George Derksen, Jr., started a second newspaper, *The Winkler Leader* which he printed in a room back of Friesen's bookstore.

Then in September, 1950, P. T. Friesen & Son took over *The Winkler Leader* and purchased *The Winkler Progress* from Pembina Publishers. The two papers were amalgamated under *The Winkler Progress* and as such is serving the community today.

Hospital and Bible School

The need for a hospital in Winkler had already been felt for many years by C. W. Wiebe and other local citizens when in August, 1935, a provisional committee consisting of A. A. Kroeker, chairman; C. H. Grunau, secretary; J. J. Enns; J. A. Kroeker; J. B. Dyck; J. Adrian; and A. H. Unruh was elected at a general meeting of the residents of the community. Within two weeks this committee had drawn up a constitution and another meeting was called to adopt this constitution and to elect the first board of directors.

After donations had been solicited, plans for a new $8,000 hospital building were drawn up by the board of directors and approved by the Manitoba Department of Health. On September 27, 1936, the contractor, Frank K.

Kroeker Bros. Garage and Farm Machinery business. View of Winkler, Manitoba, about 1900.

Bethel Hospital with forty-bed capacity.

Winkler Mennonite Brethren Bible school, founded in 1925.

Friesen, started the construction of the hospital and by December fifteen beds were ready for occupation and two patients were moved from the J. B. Dyck home to the new Bethel Hospital. In 1942, the south wing was added at a cost of $10,500 and this brought the accommodation to thirty-six beds. The $46,000 fireproof north wing was erected in 1946. This has brought the capacity of Bethel Hospital to forty beds as well as providing modern operating rooms. It is staffed by two medical doctors, C. W. Wiebe and H. U. Penner.

The Winkler Bible School was organized by Abram H. Unruh and opened its doors for the first time in October, 1925. Although always closely connected with the Mennonite Brethren Church, it was, however, not founded as a Conference school. In 1944, the Winkler Bible School became a school of the M. B. Conference of Manitoba. The Conference elected a board of directors with an executive to supervise the financial and educational problems of the school.

The idea of the Bible school originated in the Crimea, South Russia, where the first three teachers of the Winkler Bible School, A. H. Unruh, J. G. Wiens, and George J. Reimer, had formerly taught at the Tchongrav Bible School.

Public School

The Winkler Public School District No. 747 was formed on April 22, 1893. According to the biannual report for the fall term of 1893, there were 62 pupils enrolled and the first teacher was Cornelius B. Fast who had come here from Minnesota. He held an interm certificate and received a salary of $550. In fact, the first six teachers who were engaged by the Winkler school district were brought here from Kansas and from Minnesota through the efforts of H. H. Ewert. Ewert himself had come from Kansas in 1891, in order to accept the principalship of the Mennonite Collegiate Institute at Gretna, Manitoba.

The period of expansion in the town of Winkler following World War II is also reflected in the increase in the number of children attending public and high school. In 1944 the number was 304, but by 1952 it had climbed to 459. The high school student body more than doubled during the period from 1944-52, increasing from 60 to 131. By the spring of 1956 the school enrollment had reached 670 of whom 222 were in high school.

The principal with the longest tenure was John R. Wolkof. He served the Winkler school district for a period of 24 years, 1916 to 1940. Wolkof's progressive and indomitable spirit has for half a century contributed to the welfare of this community, not only as teacher and educator, but also as reeve and organizer. During his 24 years as principal of schools at Winkler, he raised the status of the one-room high school to that of collegiate department, acted as president of the Rhineland-Stanley Teachers' Association, pioneered in Education Week, and other educational activities.

Tribute to the 30 years' service of Dr. and Mrs. C. W. Wiebe, with elders David Schulz and J. M. Pauls in Bergthal Church.

H. H. Redekopp, Bible teacher, William M. Enns, MCC relief agent, and Reynold Siemens, well-known 'cellist.

John R. Wolkof, former principal of Winkler schools, Peter Brown, principal, Collegiate Institute, and Henry F. Wiebe, chairman of School Board.

Class in education at Winkler, conducted by the Univ. of Manitoba.

Gerhard J. Siemens who is now on the staff at the University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio, was the principal at Winkler from 1940 to 1944. Since 1944, the principal has been Peter Brown. Besides attending to his duties at school and putting the town of Winkler on the map by writing for local and Winnipeg newspapers, Brown has found time to serve the community on numerous committees.

Excellent service to the community has been rendered by the local citizens who have served on the Winkler school board. For 18 out of the 24 years that C. W. Wiebe, M.D., has served on the school board, he has acted as chairman of the board. Wiebe has also served on the Manitoba Trustee Association, the Canadian Medical Association, and in 1932 he was elected to the Manitoba Legislature as Liberal candidate for the electoral division of Morden-Rhineland. He saw Bethel Hospital grow from infancy to manhood.

In 1952, Mary Klassen was elected to the Winkler school board. This was the first time in the history of Winkler that a woman had been a candidate in a local civic election. Mrs. Klassen was born in Winkler and received her education here. For 15 years she taught school in this area. At present, she operates a dress shop in town.

Music at Winkler

Music and singing have always been stressed in the schools and churches at Winkler. The Winkler school orchestra, organized by Ben Horch and now directed by Jacob P. Redekop, has made a definite contribution to the enrichment of the community life. During the twelve years that Horch conducted the orchestra and led local high school choirs he was able to instill unusual enthusiasm and arouse a sense of purpose and direction in musical youth.

Reynold Siemens, Winkler, began his studies of the 'cello under Ben Horch as a member of the Winkler school orchestra. He then went to the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia on a scholarship. He has spent the past three summers studying at Meadowmount, New York. Recently, he appeared on the CBC "Distinguished Artists" series. In the United States, Siemens has been guest soloist with many outstanding symphony orchestras.

The efforts of K. H. Neufeld in helping the Winkler Teachers' Local to organize a Musical Festival in 1932, have also goaded the children of the district on to participate in this field of study at the annual Musical Competition Festival of this area. He is known in all parts of Canada as the traveling conductor.

Bergthal Mennonite Church

The Winkler Bergthal Mennonite Church had its beginnings about 1882 to 1884 in the village of Hoffnungsfeld, one mile southwest of Winkler. It was Elder Johann Funk who realized the urgent need of providing an education for the children and for the young people. Because of this vision and aggressive policy to provide educational facilities in order that the public schools might be staffed with local qualified teachers, about 75 per cent of the members of the Bergthal Church in southern Manitoba broke away and founded the Sommerfeld Mennonite Church. This schism which occurred in May, 1895, also

J. J. Loewen, J. A. Kroeker, and A. K. Friesen, businessmen, and Gerhard Wiebe, Peter Buerkert, and G. W. Neufeld who have been active in civic affairs at Winkler.

Winkler Bergthal Mennonite Church, built in 1947.

affected the membership at Hoffnungsfeld and as a result the Bergthal Church congregation there was allotted one-half of the church building. However, instead of moving one-half of the church building to Winkler, a new church was erected in 1895 at the present site on Sixth Street. This was the first church to be built in Winkler. In 1947, the first church building which had already been renovated, was replaced by a new church which has a seating capacity of seven hundred.

Some of the first resident ministers of the Winkler Bergthal Church were Frank Sawatzky, William Harms, and Jacob Höppner. Höppner was born August 10, 1850, on the Island of Chortiza on the Dnepr River in Russia. In 1876 he and his family moved to Canada. His first year here he was engaged as schoolteacher in a village school. Soon Höppner moved to Glencross (Waldheim) and from there to Schanzenfeld where he and his family lived for twenty-one years. In 1919 they moved to Winkler. In 1887, he had been ordained as minister at Hoffnungsfeld and on April 14, 1903, he was ordained by Johann Funk in Hochstadt, as elder of the Bergthal Mennonite Church.

Since the fall of 1951, J. M. Pauls has been the leader of the Winkler Bergthal Church. He was ordained as minister on June 19, 1933, and as co-elder of the Manitoba Bergthal Church on September 2, 1951.

The first Sunday school convention of the Bergthal Church was held at Hoffnungsfeld on July 2, 1893, and on October 1 of the same year, a mission festival took place in the Winkler Bergthal Church. An attempt was made April 17, 1911, to hold a song festival in the church at Winkler but it was not successful as some of the members objected to the introduction of this new form of service at that time. Since that date, of course, many festivals of that nature have been held.

William M. Enns, former superintendent of the Winkler Bergthal Sunday school, has also served on the Mennonite Central Committee as relief agent. Since the end of World War II, he has visited Europe, Mexico, and South America.

Mennonite Brethren

In the fall of 188-i, news was received in the village of Hoffnungsfeld, one mile southwest of the present town of Winkler, that an itinerant preacher by the name of Voth was coming from Bingham Lake, Minnesota, to conduct evangelistic services. On December -i, 188-i, Henry Voth, father of the late H. S. Voth, arrived at Hoffnungsfeld, Manitoba. He had been sent by the Mennonite Brethren Conference in the United States. In July, 1886, the first baptismal service was held at Burwalde in the Dead Horse Creek, about six miles northwest of Winkler. Later that same year, the first Mennonite Brethren Church in Canada was organized at Burwalde.

As more members were added to the church, Henry Voth invited Gerhard Wiebe of Ebenfeld, Russia, to come to Canada to minister to the M. B. Church here. Consequently, in April, 1888, Gerhard Wiebe arrived at Burwalde and took over the leadership of the M. B. Church. The first M. B. Church was built at Burwalde in the summer of 1889, at a location about four and one-half miles northwest of Winkler. In the summer of 1895, David Dyck arrived here with his family to take over the leadership of the M. B. Church. He had traveled about two months, making the entire trip from Cope, Colorado, with horses and wagon.

As the membership of the church grew, it was felt that the building at Burwalde was too small and not centrally located. A fairly large number of members lived at Winkler, while others lived at Grossweide, a district about twelve miles northeast of Winkler. For a while the deliberations had been to the effect that the Burwalde

Winkler Mennonite Brethren Church, built in 1947.

John Warkentin, first leader of Winkler Mennonite Brethren Church, and H. S. Voth (1878-1953) second leader of the church.

Rev. & Mrs. Isaac P. F. Friesen at silver wedding. Friesen is leader of Winkler Rudnerweide Mennonite Church.

church should be moved to Grossweide and that a new church be built at Winkler, but at a meeting on October 30, 1897, it was decided to move the Burwalde church building onto the Abram Kroeker farm at the northwest corner of Winkler. However, some of the members of the church thought that the new location was too close to town and that the building should be unloaded in the northwest corner of the Kroeker quarter section which would have left it about a mile out of town. Here the church was left standing on wagons for a few days before it was finally moved to the southeast corner of the quarter where it was unloaded, much to the joy of the church members who resided in Winkler. Invariably, this reluctance to have their church located in town can be found in the minutes of every Mennonite church register in Winkler.

John Warkentin was the leader of the Winkler M. B. Church for a quarter of a century, 1906-31. Succeeding his father-in-law, H. S. Voth served as leader of the church from 1931 to 1950. For many years Voth also served on the M. B. Foreign Mission Board. He was succeeded by George D. Pries who taught at the Winkler Bible School 1936-53. On June 26, 1955, J. H. Quiring, teacher at the M. B. Bible College, Winnipeg, was installed as pastor of the Winkler M. B. Church.

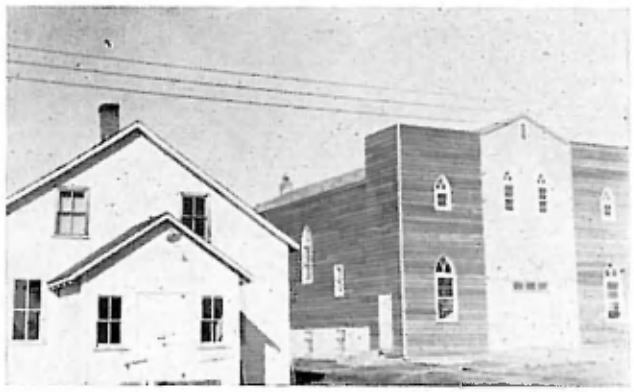
With few exceptions, the services of the Winkler M. B. Church have been conducted in the German language. However, practically all of the Sunday school classes are now taught in English. This change from German to English in the Sunday school has been a controversial subject of discussion at many of the annual meetings of the Winkler M. B. Church.

Sommerfeld and Rudnerweide Churches

When the Bergthal church building at Hoffnungsfeld was divided between two congregations, half of it was moved to Glencross and the other half to Rosenbach about a mile north of Winkler. The half of the church that was moved to Rosenbach was completed and used by the Sommerfeld Mennonite Church until 1937 when the Rudnerweide Mennonite Church at Rosenbach was organized. In 1942, the church building at Rosenbach was moved into Winkler. This church was replaced by the present new building erected in 1953. Isaac P. F. Friesen is the leader of the Rudnerweide Mennonite Church at Winkler.

By 1938, there were many members of the Sommerfeld Church living in town and in that year a new church was constructed and its members organized. There is no resident minister in charge but the following Sommerfeld ministers from the surrounding districts change off for the Sunday service: Isbrand Friesen, Jacob Friesen, Isaac Friesen, P. M. Friesen, G. Loewen, and J. Bergen. Peter Toews is the elder.

After much discussion by different groups of people, the Bergthal Church at its annual Manitoba Conference in 1955 decided to solicit the support of other churches in order to erect a home for the aged at Winkler. It was completed early in 1956 and is known as Salem Home for the Aged. Formal dedication of the Home took place on Sunday, June 24, 1956. Abram Born has been engaged as house-father, and Elizabeth Peters is the matron.



Winkler Rudnerweide Mennonite Church, built in 1953.

ELSE KRUEGER

(Continued from page 103)

place: Art department "Little Gallery," Hudsons Bay Co., Winnipeg. Some paintings have been sold for as much as $175, framed.

During the last years she has participated in numerous displays and exhibitions of works of art. She says the greatest distinction she received was when the Prime Minister of Manitoba was asked which works of art he liked most. In response he pointed at one of Else Krueger's paintings.

Manitoba -- A Mosaic of Mennonitism

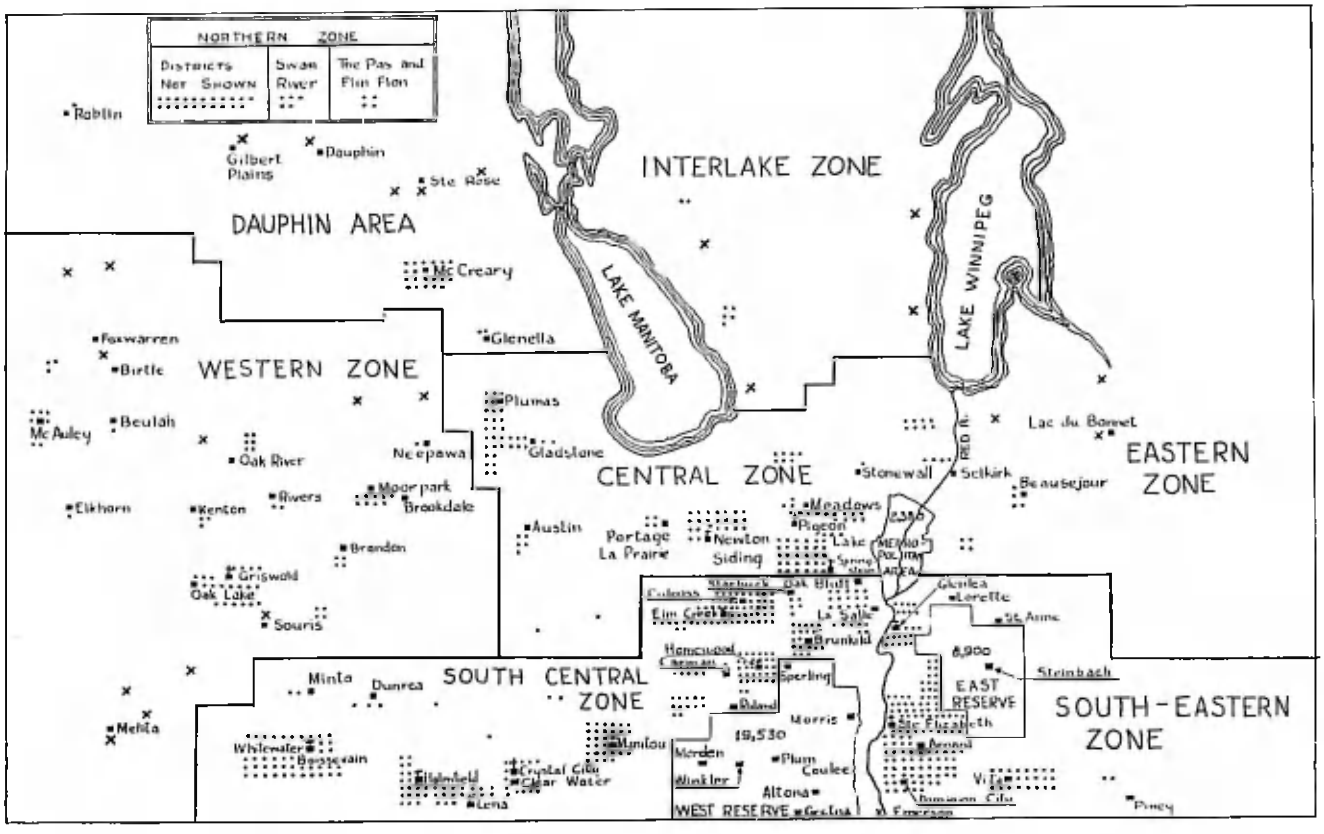
By J. WINFIELD FRETZ

THE world in general knows little about Mennonites and those of us who are members of one branch of this little denomination know surprisingly little about the other branches. The study of Mennonites in Manitoba is a fascinating one because in this prairie province one finds a virtual mosaic of Mennonitism. There are at least nine different branches found in the province, most of them settled in two large agricultural areas known as the East and the West reserves. The "East" and the "West" here refer to large blocks of land on both sides of the Red River which were originally reserved for Mennonite colonization by the Canadian government. The Mennonite groups found in this province are the Conference of Mennonites (General Conference); the Mennonite Brethren; the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite; the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren; the Kleine Gemeinde, and the Bergthal, Sommerfeld, Old Colony and Rudnerweide Mennonites. Some of them are extremely conservative in social practices and group habits while others have accommodated rather thoroughly to the society about them.

The visitor to Southern Manitoba should by all means see the agricultural village communities established by the Mennonites in exact imitation of their earlier Russian patterns. Many of these villages have disappeared but there are still quite a few of these quaint old semi-communal villages in existence. The typical village has the farm houses set along each side of the wide village streets. Between the road and the house is usually an attractive flower garden or an orchard. The barn is generally a long rectangular wooden structure attached to the house by means of a small utility building such as a milk house or small shed. In this way farmers can conveniently move from house to barn during the heavy snows and sub-zero Manitoba winters without going outdoors. A wooden fence usually encompasses a yard around the house and the barn. The common village pasture where all the farmers daily drive their cattle is still maintained in a few villages.

If the reader's appetite has been at all whetted for more information about the origin, customs, history, trends, and future prospects of the Mennonites in Mani-

Map of Mennonite settlement on the East (East Reserve) and West (West Reserve) side of the Red River, Manitoba, today.



toba, the place to satisfy that appetite is in the newly published story of the Mennonites in Manitoba entitled *In Search of Utopia,* by E. K. Francis, professor of sociology at the University of Notre Dame, who made his studies under the sponsorship of the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba. It is a fascinatingly written book and attractively illustrated and printed by the D. W. Friesen and Sons publishers at Altona, Manitoba. One cannot help but admire the author's thoroughness, his sense of fairness and objectivity as he interestingly narrates the complex story of the Russian background of the Manitoba Mennonites.

The reason for a thorough enjoyment of Francis' book is the clear, simple style in which he writes and yet the scholarly thoroughness with which he digs out the many significant facts and the sympathetic yet honest interpretation he places upon these facts. He does not hesitate to point out group inconsistencies or weaknesses when and where they occur in the history of the Manitoba Mennonites. For instance, when he explains the reasons for their leaving Russia he is keen to detect the non-religious motives as well as the traditional religious ones. The internal dissentions, the petty bickerings, and group shortcomings are mentioned along with the achievements, the virtues and the triumphs.

This 294-page book, in addition to containing nine delightful chapters of reading materials, also contains twelve useful statistical tables, and ten helpful charts that illuminate the main contents of the text. Thirty-three illustrations introduce the reader to typical scenes and persons of historical importance. After taking the reader along with him through the century of experience in Russia, the early pioneering days on the prairies, and the struggles and achievements within and without the group over a seventy-five year period, Francis concludes with an interesting final chapter in which he shares his findings about the future outlook for the Manitoba Mennonites.

Modern Mennonite home in rural Manitoba.

Interior of old-fashioned Mennonite church in Manitoba. Originally school buildings were often used for worship purposes.

Johann Funk (1836-1917) first elder of Bergthal Mennonite Church. Progressive leader in education and co-founder of Gretna Collegiate Institute.

Kitchen in an old-fashioned Mennonite dwelling place in Manitoba.

Bethel Mennonite Church, Mt. Lake, Minnesota, built in 1941. (Below) Row of mail boxes in Mt. Lake, denoting solidarity.

A CHANGING MT. LAKE

BY CALVIN REDEKOP

WE of Russian Mennonite extraction will readily remember the exciting accounts of how things were in the "good old days" as told by the "Opahs." With almost nostalgic mien, the "Fathers" tell us how things used to be, but quickly add that things are different now. The heyday of the Russian Mennonite seems to have fled.

It was with a desire to understand social change, and to learn how much cultural change has taken place among the Russian Mennonites that I undertook to study the Mountain Lake Russian Mennonite community in two generations. The years chosen to represent these two generations were 1900 and 1950. Though none of the observations presented here may be fully scientifically valid, they may, however, suggest some things which can be proven, for many of the facts presented here have long been known or at least suspected.

"The Good Old Days"

It may be beneficial to sketch very briefly the history of the Mountain Lake community. The Mennonites would not have settled in Minnesota had it not been for the energetic work of one William Seeger, State Treasurer during Austin's administration as governor. Seeger was able to convince thirteen Mennonite families to move from the Yankton area, where they had just settled, to the better land around Windom, Minnesota, in October 1873.

The stream of Mennonites coming to Mountain Lake from Russia continued until 1880, and totaled about 295 families. The area in which they settled corresponds so closely to the present area that the present community serves as a model for what the extent of settlement looked like during the first years. It is not known what

One of the modern residences of Mt. Lake, home of H. J. Pankratz. (Below) A modern residential street showing neat homes and yards.

the total population was in the Mountain Lake community at any one time, since there was much in and out migration. The population of the village was 595 at the turn of the century.

The community grew quickly, for by 1900 the community had nine Mennonite churches, three parochial schools and was negotiating to send several families to India as missionaries. The local public school system was run by an all-Mennonite school board and was guided by Mennonite principles. There were non-Mennonite people present in the community, but always as a weak minority.

For a number of years after the Mennonites settled in the Mountain Lake area, their practices and beliefs were much like that of their Russian homeland. Ministers were laymen. Education was stressed, though only in Bible and the German language. Secular interests were avoided. Some of the Mennonites smoked, and others had inherited from Russia the taste for good wine. In dress, they maintained their own patterns until the original supply wore out. After that they accepted American patterns rapidly. Low German was the every day language, while High German was the "Sunday" language.

How strongly the thought and behavior patterns of the old country were implanted is indicated in the architecture of some of the earlier homes. Many, especially in rural areas, were built along the Russian plan of enclosing both house and barn under one roof. The last such building was used until about 1946. A combined house and shed of Russian nature still exists in the village. Another example of strong Russian Mennonite influence is the fact that today many Russian Mennonite foods such as "Borsht" and "Portselke" are consumed with relish among the natives of Mountain Lake.

The oft-repeated story of the reputation Mennonites quickly gained as frugal and industrious and peace-loving folk has its corroboration at Mountain Lake. In 1901, the *Mountain Lake View* contained an article boasting about the prosperity and peacefulness of the Mountain Lake community, written by the editor, a non-Mennonite. Such eulogies can be found elsewhere. For

the first quarter century or so after their immigration to the United States it is quite apparent that the Mennonites at Mountain Lake carried on the life they had lived in Russia, but a change has come over the community, causing the older members of the community with a memory of other days to say "times have changed."

It is easy to say that a community has changed its form of living. Observable proof abounds on every hand. But what significance does such change have for those who are members of the community? If change is to be of any concern to those involved, some idea must be had of where the change is taking the community, and whether the destination is desirable. Stated in another way, what effect does social change have upon the loss or retention of Mennonite principles and practices?

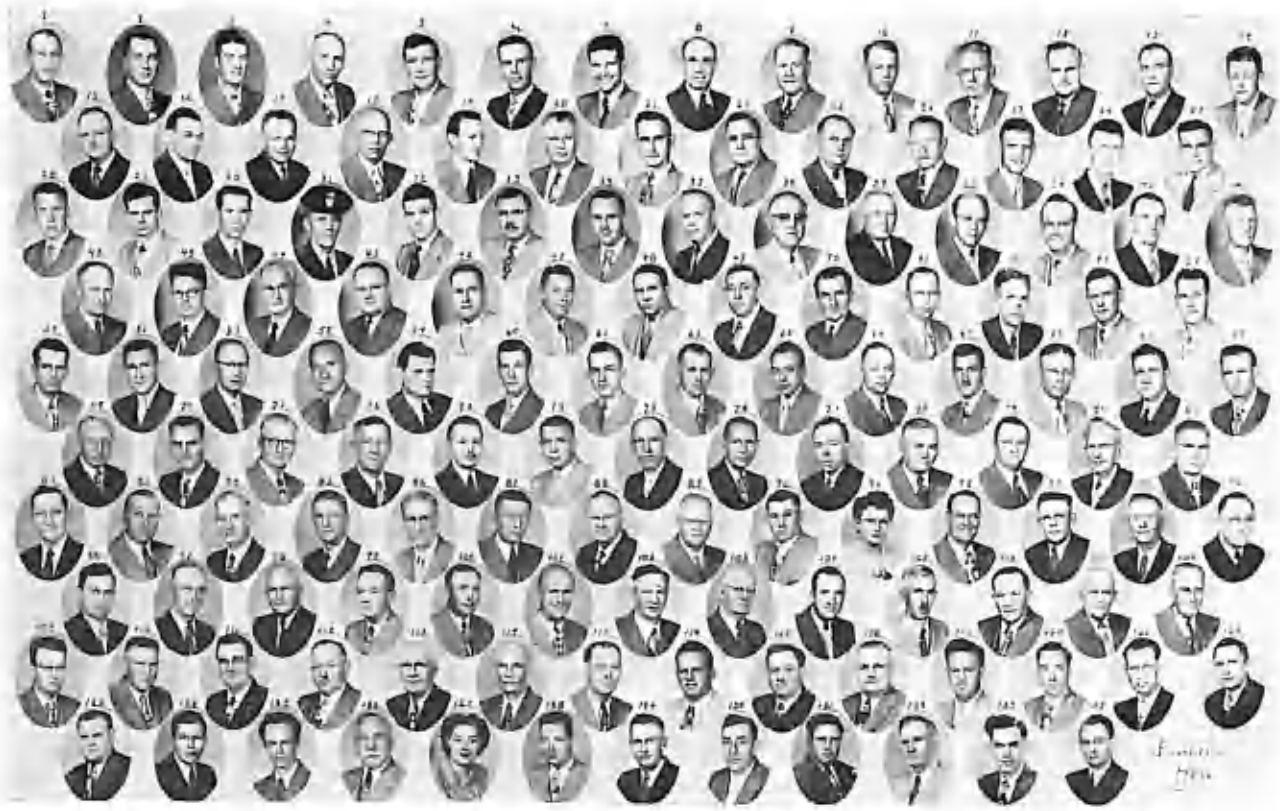
Some observations are listed here which may help in the formulation of "hunches" about the effects of cultural change. A number of changes that have taken place will be presented.

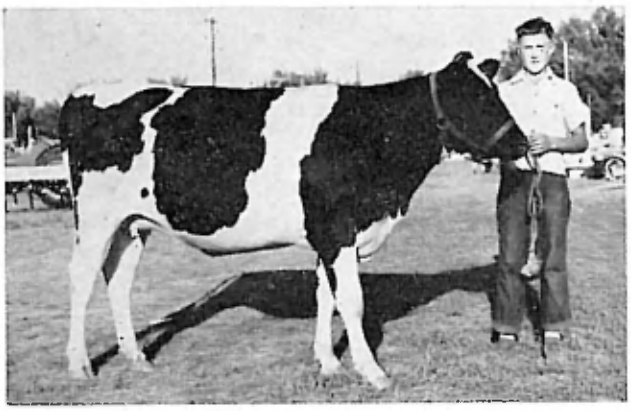
Physical. Geographically, the Mountain Lake Mennonite community has not grown appreciably in the last fifty years, with the exception of the addition of a few

Civic Leaders, Businessmen, and Ministers of Mt. Lake, 1949.

1. Rupert Rempel, 2. Henry J. Niessen, 3. Wayne Starr, 4. Raymond Stolze, 5. John J. Dickman, 6. Clelland Johnson, 7. Dr. D. S. Penner, 8. A. B. Dick, 9. P. G. Wall, 10. Leonard P. Tieszen, 11. George D. Rempel, 12. Cyril Gardner, 13. John D. Heppner, 14. W. J. Kliewer, 15. Menno Wiens, 16. Bayer Ross, 17. Henry Piper, 18. W. J. Franz, 19. Don Ross, 20. John F. Stoesz, 21. L. A. Schroeder, 22. J. Jay Epp, 23. L. M. Jungas, 24. A. S. Dick, 25. H. C. Goehle, 26. John P. Jungas, 27. Walter E. Schultz, 28. Willis D. Schroeder, 29. Gilbert Esau, 30. Theodore C. Janzen, 31. Frank Schimnowski, 32. Dr. Willis Franz, 33. Dr. E. S. Schutz, 34. T. J. Singsaas, 35. L. E. Wetmore, 36. P. B. Dick, 37. H. H. Penner, 38. Leonda Klassen, 39. John A. Stoesz, 40. P. P. Thieszen, 41. Harvey Goossen, 42. Frank Reimer, 43. Art Gottfried, 44. Dr. W. A. Piper, 45. Harry E. Rempel, 46. A. F. Scheibel, 47. E. D. Stoesz, 48. Wm. H. Regier, 49. Emil C. Rupp, 50. Ed. C. Quiring, 51. L. H. Bartel, 52. Melvin T. Gustafson, 53. John Janzen, 54. L. D. Bargen, 55. S. J. Thompson, 56. John A. Wall, 57. N. J. Hiebert, 58. J. J. Vogt, 59. Dr. P. F. Pankratz, 60. Frank H. Janzen, 61. George H. Janzen, 62. Jacob J. Loewen, 63 Art Ross, 64. Will Klassen, 65. Jacob D. Heffele, 66. N. C. Baldt, 67. John P. Wall, 68. George Heinitz, 69. John H. Kliewer, 70. Ben P. Dick, 71. A. P. Balzer, 72. J. A. Ratzloff, 73. W. J. Janssen, 74. Carl Wolf, 75. Ernest F. Schemmel, 76. Geo. P. Neufeld, 77. Harold G. Lund, 78. B. B. Ratzloff, 79. Peter P. Stoesz, Jr., 80. Frank Rempel, 81. G. R. Engemen, 82. D. H. Fast, 83. Jac. F. Eitzen, 84. W. J. Toews, 85. Frank Balzer, 86. D. C. Balzer, 87. Henry G. Kliewer, 88. Henry J. Brown, 89. R. L. Tweet, 90. Floyd Dehmlow, 91. Vivian Dehmlow, 92. Ernest Schelhass, 93. Jacob Peters, 94. J. P. Pankratz, 95. H. P. Klein, 96. Milford Mattison, 97. J. W. Nickel, 98. Dr. R. L. Wenberg, 99. Jac. J. Thiessen, 100. Geo. C. Hiebert, 101. Grant Johnson, 102. Wesley Buck, 103. A. A. Penner, 104. B. A. Munson, 105. B. N. Hiebert, 106. Q. C. Lehman, 107. J. E. Hiebert, 108. H. R. Quiring, 109. Dr. J. R. Schmidt, 110. J. E. Dick, 111. Jacob D. Heintz, 112. P. P. Lohrenz, 113. Pete Hiebert, 114. John J. Franz, 115. P. C. Hiebert, 116. Basil Peterson, 117. John F. Derksen, 118. Harry Paskey, 119. Frode P. Jensen, 120. Reuben Wiens, 121. Rev. Wm. N. Loewen, 122. Rev. John P. Suderman, 123. Rev. Dan E. Friesen, 124. Rev. L. R. Amstutz, 125. Daryl Nazarenus, 126. D. J. Schroeder, 127. Jeanette Gohr, 128. Rev. Bernard King, 129. Werner Laging, 130. Frank H. Neufeld, 131. Rev. Basil Bell, 132. Jac. F. Derksen, 133. George D. Hess, 134. Dr. Erland Waltner.

(Left & top) Main street of Mt. Lake, Minnesota, a thriving Mennonite community established around 1874.





Johnnie and his crowned champion at the fair.

square miles on the south and southwestern edge of the community. The population of the community has not increased nearly as much as the natural reproduction through high birth rates. (Mountain Lake had approximately a reproduction rate of 5.9 per family in 1900.) This fact could have two explanations: 1) a high death rate (which is not the case), or 2) a high rate of migration from the community. The second explanation is the factual one. This migration could have two explanations, both of which likely operate in the local community: a) Mountain Lake has produced able and gifted leaders who have been called into other communities (this is very true, especially in church-related services and in education). b) Mountain Lake has not assisted younger generations economically, and thereby forced the young people to find sustenance elsewhere. The Mountain Lake community is in fact undergoing infiltration by non-Mennonite people at an ever increasing rate, proving that there is no lack of economic opportunity, provided financial means are available to get started.

There are nine Mennonite churches in the community, as there were in 1900. Two of the Mennonite parochial Bible schools have discontinued which were in operation in 1900. The population of the churches has not increased proportionately with the population, since there were approximately 2,000 Mennonite church members in 1900 as compared with 2,390 in 1950.

Cultural. In some cultural areas, many changes have taken place, while in others hardly any at all. The cultural elements which have been retained by the Mennonites include those which did not give the Mennonites a feeling of inferiority as they compared themselves with their surrounding culture. This list includes such things as Russian Mennonite foods, *Vaspa* (lunch), hard work, which has been considered almost a principle of faith by many Mennonites, church social gatherings, etc.

Cultural items which have lost heavily are those things which might serve to make the Mennonite feel inferior to his non-Mennonite neighbor. This list includes such things as the use of Low German, conservative and modest dress and adornment, uncut hair, nonresistance, etc. The tendency had been for the Mennonite to become as much like his American neighbor as possible in things which are significant in his neighbor's eyes. The Mennonite has historically felt inferior, but by assimilating with his American friends overcomes this feeling and becomes "one of the boys."

Areas of Assimilation

Several of the areas which indicate assimilation especially well are those of intermarriage, nonresistance, cutting of hair, education and Low German.

Intermarriage. In 1900 there were about 10 marriages in the Mennonite churches, all of which were with members of the Mennonite fold. In 1950, there were 34 marriages. Of this number, only 19 were marriages in which both partners were Mennonites. The remainder had one partner from non-Mennonite churches. Of the 15 marriages which included one partner from other churches, 8 left the Mennonite church. This statistic not only indicates the rate of intermarriage, but points up the fact that intermarriage is one of the prevalent ways to slip out of the Mennonite church. It further points out that the partner leaving the church evidently does not consider the Mennonite church worth his loyalty or that of his spouse.

Nonresistance. In 1900 there was no emergency to indicate what the men would have done for their conviction against war. There is good reason to believe that the majority was nonresistant. In 1950, the situation was different. Of a total of 116 men belonging to the Mennonite churches in the Mountain Lake area only 41 men or 35 per cent were conscientious objectors, while 75 men chose a branch of the armed forces. It is interesting to note that the community considers itself more pacifistic than it actually is. Of a total of 55 men under 45 years of age answering the questionnaire, 60 per cent considered themselves conscientious objectors whereas actually only 35 per cent went that way in the last war. The strata which answered this question came from the age level which would have served in the last World War.

Long hair. Though never established as a doctrine, short hair for women had been considered undesirable in the church and it became an accepted belief that it was wrong to cut hair. In 1900 there is no evidence to

4-H boys proudly display their products at the annual fair.

indicate that women cut their hair, since to do so meant to become "worldly." In 1950 however, the story is quite different. According to the questionnaire answered by young fathers, many saw nothing undesirable about short hair. In fact almost all of the girls in the Mennonite church now have short hair, some styles being very much up with the latest "fads." Nineteen out of a group of 23 fathers did not hesitate to approve of short hair.

Education. The Mennonite attitude toward education has changed quite noticeably. In 1900, the community had its own church schools and was quite active in the local public schools, for the school board in 1900 was made up of Mennonite church members. Few went on into higher education. The local Mennonite parochial schools were maintained in order to preserve the Mennonite principles of faith. In 1950 the situation is quite different. Only one local parochial school is in operation, though it is flourishing. The local high school processes most of the young people, in which all but four teachers were non-Mennonites in 1950. The school board which was all-Mennonite in 1900 was in 1950 represented by three non-Mennonites and three Mennonites. Most significant of all is the matter of college education. Sixty-three per cent of the local Mennonite high school graduates go on to college. Of those that go to college, only 25 per cent go to Mennonite conference schools while the rest attend schools such as Wheaton, Bob Jones, Taylor, Grace Bible Institute and state schools. Since education is foremost in determining what philosophy the youth shall take, the fact that the student and the parents choose a non-Mennonite school indicates a disrespect for the principles the Mennonite church holds.

Low German. In 1900 the Mennonites knew three languages, namely, Low and High German, and English. They used English when dealing with the outside world, Low German in everyday life, and High German in religious services. Today, the Mountain Lake Mennonite knows at best only two languages, namely, English and some Low German. High German has pretty well vanished. Low German itself is spoken mainly by people over 25 years of age, though many young people try to speak it whenever an advantageous moment arises. It appears that both German languages will bow out completely in the next generation. It was interesting to note that in the questionnaires, the respondents thought High German was more important than Low German, but in actual practice Low German is more prevalent.

There are more illustrations that could be included to indicate that change has taken place. The problem as to what the loss of Mennonite social patterns has done to Mennonite beliefs still remains. It appears that there is some relationship between the loss of cultural patterns and loss of Mennonite beliefs. For example, intermarriage which was strongly avoided earlier, now not only estranges the Mennonite from a cultural relationship with the Mennonite people, but serves also to estrange him from Mennonite beliefs and religious practices.

In all of this discussion the importance of contact with other groups has not been mentioned, but it is assumed as one of the most important influences that tends to induce the Mennonites to forsake their own social patterns for those of the people around them. This might be termed assimilation. The rates and intensity of change or loss of cultural patterns may correspond closely to the laws of assimilation. They are 1) Speed of assimilation varies inversely with amount of isolation, physically and mentally. 2) Assimilation takes place in the direction of the stronger culture. 3) Assimilation is a mental activity which begins when the weaker group feels its own practices are less desirable than that of the surrounding groups.

The above is only offered as a tentative solution. Nothing has been said of the possibility that the social change among Mennonites is not assimilation at all, but rather a rational or non-social phenomenon, or a combination of spiritual, social and other forces.

The Mountain Lake Mennonite community has had regional renown as a locality of "peculiar people" with strange practices and beliefs. There are still many characteristics which make this different, but they are fast disappearing. If the social change continues in the same direction and at the same rate, it seems evident that the "peculiarities" of the community will soon be gone. Even today the Mountain Lake community is better known throughout the region as a basketball players' arsenal than as a citadel of quiet, peace-loving farmers.

EARLY MT. LAKE CHURCHES

By J. JOHN FRIESEN

THE Mountain Lake community is prosperous and has a flourishing church life. We are apt to forget that it was not always so. When the first Mennonites came to Mountain Lake the town was hardly more than a station. Where there are streets and houses today was a wilderness of prairie which stretched to the distant horizon. The countryside of today with its well-kept farmsteads and cultivated fields was then the home of foxes and wolves. The first contingent of immigrants from Russia to Mountain Lake came in August 1873. Other groups, and a few ministers, arrived in 1874 and 1875. A still larger group, and some ministers, came in 1876.

Rev. and Mrs. Heinrich Regier, first pastor of Bethel Church, and Rev. and Mrs. Gerhard Neufeld, first elder of Gospel Church.

Our oldest church records show that the immigrants came from some sixty different communities in Russia. Their problem was not only to build homes but to organize their church life. There were differences of opinion and practices among them because various church groups were represented. In Russia some churches had practiced the washing of feet as part of the communion service and others not; in some churches the sermons had been read by the minister and in others delivery had been free; some were used to silent prayer and others to public prayer; again, singing in some churches had been in unison and in others in parts. There was disagreement even on the question of evangelistic activity. Most of these differences do not seem very important but they were thin lines of cleavage.

From the beginning small neighboring groups gathered in homes for Sunday service, and this for obvious reasons, there were no churches and travel by ox-team was slow.

Background of the Gospel Mennonite Church

The first church organization in the community had its beginning in the spring of 1876. A larger group agreed to ask Aron Wall to give catechetical instruction to ten young people, who had requested it. Because there was no elder among the ministers, Wilhelm Ewert, of Hillsboro, Kansas, was called for baptismal service and to assist in the organization of the church. On September 18, Aron Wall was elected elder of the new church. Church services had preceded and concluded the organizational meetings. When the organization was completed those willing to join were welcome. Many did join, others did not. Probably the chief reason why many held back was the fact that the rite of footwashing was to be practiced, which practice some had not known in Russia. There was a report that a minister was coming, in whose church footwashing had not been customary, and some preferred to wait.

This church, located on the hill north of Mountain Lake, was popularly known as Wall's Church until 1888. The record calls it Hochfeld Church, too. Since 1888 it was known as the Bergfeld Church, and only recently has been renamed Gospel Mennonite Church.

Mennonite Brethren Church

The second church to organize in our community was the church of the Mennonite Brethren. They were a small group of people. There was the strangeness of the new land, the difficulties and disappointments of the first years, and the lack of a minister of their own. But they weath-

Former First Mennonite Church building and (former) Bergfeld (later Gospel) Mennonite Church building, Mt. Lake.

ered the difficulties and on February 11, 1877, came together for the first time as a group to read the Bible. From this time on they met regularly on Sundays, in their homes. In June 1877, at a gathering it was decided that four young people who had requested baptism be examined, and then baptized by immersion. The four were baptized by Peter Martens, a layman, June 10, 1877. The following Sunday, June 17, Martens baptized four more. On July 15, 1877, Heinrich Voth, who had been a teacher in Russia, was elected to the ministry. He was ordained to the eldership November 1, 1885, by Abraham Schellenberg of Kansas. On November 25, 1916, Voth resigned as elder. Upon his resignation he had recommended that N. N. Hiebert take charge of the Mountain Lake congregation.

First Mennonite Church

The Hochfeld, or Bergfeld, now Gospel Mennonite Church, was organized in the fall of 1876 with Aron Wall as elder. The Mennonite Brethren Church was constituted a congregation on July 15, 1877, when Heinrich Voth was elected its leader. But a large number who did not join these groups was left unaffiliated. The somewhat more conservative elements met in 1877 and elected two men to the ministry—David Loewen, a teacher, and Johann Schultz. This was the beginning of an organization which was consummated in 1878 upon the arrival, July 6, of Gerhard Neufeld from Russia. A few months after his coming Gerhard Neufeld was elected elder by this group and was ordained by Gerhard Wiebe of Manitoba, elder of the Bergthal Mennonites.

This was the third congregation established in the Mountain Lake community, in the fall of 1878, and was popularly called Neufeld's Church. It is the First Mennonite Church today.

Most of our people came to America in smaller detachments from larger congregations in Russia. In a few instances whole congregations came with their leaders. Among these congregations was that from the Bergthal settlement in South Russia, which came to America as a body, with their elder, Gerhard Wiebe. Wiebe and the

First building of Bethel Church during Conference, 1905.

majority of his people found a home in Manitoba. Some did not find Manitoba to their liking and homesteaded in Minnesota, northeast of Mountain Lake and north of Butterfield. This group came to be known as the Bergthal congregation, from its home in Russia. When Elder Neufeld took over in Mountain Lake, the Bergthal people became affiliated with his church and were from that time on served by Elder Neufeld and his co-workers.

Neufeld was a man of conservative leanings. There is only a brief introduction to the *Kirchen-Buch* of 1878, but it reflects his character. After a reference to the ordered church life in Russia, and the freer ways of America, the record reads: "Resolved that a church be organized that shall be like the church in Russia, in its rules, its customs, and order." Footwashing was not to be practiced. Neither the Neufeld group nor the Bergthal group had observed it in Russia. It had been customary to read the articles of faith, 18 in number, several Sundays in succession to candidates for baptism. This was done here, too, in addition to instruction in the catechism, which had to be memorized. Neufeld's ministry to church and community extended over more than forty years.

In 1888 a Sunday school of five classes was organized in Aron Wall's church in connection with the morning service. But to some of the older people the noise incident to many voices was displeasing. It disturbed the quiet in the church and they wanted the Sunday school discontinued. Elder Wall called a congregational meeting, thinking that the matter could be peaceably adjusted. But

First Mennonite Brethren church near Mt. Lake, Minnesota, and Alliance Missionary Church, Mt. Lake.

Brudertal Mennonite Church, and Isaac F. Dick, retired pastor of First Mennonite Church, Mt. Lake.

there was opposition. When the Sunday school question was put to a vote half the congregation voted for Sunday school, the other half against it. That seemed to close the door for Wall. He resigned, and left the church. This was due less to obstinacy of will on his part, than to his humble and reserved nature which shrank from opposition. Attempts at healing the breach were made but were fruitless. The result was a three-way split. One group became the Bruderthal Church, another the Bethel Church, and the third was the original church, which is now the Gospel Mennonite Church. The members of the latter church were the more conservative element, opposed to Sunday school.

To take care of its extended membership it became necessary to build a church near Delft, one and one-half miles west of Delft, in 1897. In 1906 this building was moved to the village of Delft, and in 1920 a new church was built. This group was affiliated with the Bergfelder Church till 1940. In that year, July 28, it was organized as an independent body, known as the Immanuel Church at Delft.

The Bruderthal Church (E.M.B.)

After Wall's resignation he left the church with a small group of followers. For some months they met in homes for services. In 1889 they built a small church in the valley one mile north of the church they had left. In this church Sunday school was continued for both old and young. But some changes in form were made. Among these were the following. The customary catechetical instruction was discontinued and the instruction took on a more personal character. The form of baptism was also changed. Instead of baptizing in church it was done out doors. The candidate kneeled in water and was baptized by sprinkling. The nearby brook facilitated this practice. A third change was the introduction of the kiss as the sign of brotherhood and sisterhood. A fourth was the rising for mealtime prayer. The first church building soon proved too small and a larger one was erected in 1893. This was the beginning of the Bruderthal Church (E.M.B.).

Aron Wall had two distinctions. One came by nature—it was his gift of healing, of bone setting. The whole wide community knew the path to his ever open door. His sympathetic eye, his mild manner, and his soothing touch gave relief to the pain and anguish of those who sought his help and received it freely. The other distinction was conferred by his people. Ohm Wall was elected the first of the four pioneer elders of our community. He was also the first of these to pass away.

Bethel Church

Another group, H. H. Regier one of them, felt they could not subscribe to the rules set down by Wall. They included such requirements as nonparticipation in political activity, including county or township elections, and the holding of political office. Because this group could not approve these limitations, and work in the church invited opposition, Regier continued to hold Sunday services in private homes for a time, but a little later in the Mountain Lake school building, with Sunday school as part of the forenoon service. The attendance increased, and on April 15, 1889, J. J. Balzer was chosen as evangelist. Later an evening meeting was held to consider the advisability of organizing a congregation. It was agreed that Elder Christian Kaufman, of Freeman, South Dakota, be asked to assist in the matter. He consented, and on November 8, 1889, ordained J. J. Balzer to the ministry. The next day, November 9, an election was held, and H. H. Regier was elected elder. This was the beginning of the Bethel Church. There were only forty-seven members at the outset. After ten years membership had increased to 260.

During the summer of 1890 the first church was built, 32 by 54 feet, at a cost of $1,695. When the old church

Aaron Wall of E.M.B. Church and Heinrich Voth of M.B. Church.

home became too small it was replaced by the present structure, in 1941.

The church at Butterfield should be mentioned in this connection. This group came here from the Lemberg area, in Galicia, between 1880 and 1883. During their early years here Daniel Brubacher and Heinrich Kintzi served as ministers. A church was built in 1887. Because the group was small it became affiliated with Bethel Church and has been under the care of that church for many years. More recently it has become an independent church unit.

Today the Mountain Lake and Butterfield Mennonite communities have nine Mennonite churches of which four are located within the city limits of Mountain Lake. In 1955 the General Conference had a membership of 1,736, distributed over the following churches: Bethel Mennonite Church, First Mennonite Church, Gospel Mennonite (Mountain Lake), Immanuel Mennonite Church (Delft), Butterfield Mennonite Church, First Mennonite Church (Butterfield). The Mennonite Brethren have 452 members in two congregations at Mountain Lake and Carson. The Evangelical Mennonite Brethren Church (Bruderthal) of Mountain Lake consists (1955) of 255 members.

RUSSIAN BAPTISTS

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of this work, until the Iron Curtain closed the contact with the West. Many of the leaders of the Evangelical Christian and Baptist movement of Russia were in close touch with Licht im Osten and visited it repeatedly. Among them were J. S. Prochanov and Wl. Marzinkowskij.

The delegates were aware of this close contact between the Evangelical Christians and Baptists and the Mennonites of Russia. It was satisfying to note the emphasis on this, particularly in view of the fact that the American Mennonites have at times singled out the Russian Mennonites as having been completely inactive as far as their sense of mission was concerned. However, in the total history of the beginning and growth of the two movements of the Evangelical Christians in the northern part of Russia and the Baptists in South Russia, which merged in 1944 under the name All-Union Council of Evangelical Christian Baptists, the Mennonites played only a minor role. The most significant factor was the Württemberg Pietism transplanted from Germany to the German settlements of South Russia and the Volga region. Revivals within these settlements also reached the Mennonite settlements. In the Mennonite brotherhood, this revival caused a renewal of the Christian life, and at the same time, the founding of the Mennonite Brethren Church. The Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Brethren became more active in missions, evangelism, publication and education. The contact with the newly-organized Baptist movement was particularly maintained by the Mennonite Brethren. Both had much in common, including the mode of baptism. Baptism by immersion was not a practice of German Pietism which gave the first impulse for the revival. The introduction of baptism by immersion was caused among others by J. G. Oncken, the founder of the Baptist movement in Germany. Such Baptist evangelists as K. Benzien, F. W. Baedeker, and August Liebig not only strongly influenced the future Mennonite Brethren churches, but also exerted a great influence on the spread of revival among other German settlements and the spread of the Baptist movement among the Russian population. They traveled many thousands of miles to spread the Gospel in European and Asiatic Russia.

Since Mennonite history in Russia is closely related to the movement of the Baptists and Evangelical Christians now numbering over one-half million, what about their relationship today and in the future? It was gratifying to hear that dispersed Mennonites are finding a church home in Baptist communities and have thus been enabled to fellowship and worship with Protestant Christians in the darkest hours of their lives. The delegation emphasized strongly their willingness to continue this fellowship in the future. They reported about the difficulties which the Mennonites had in establishing their own places of worship and organized churches. Because they are dispersed, they not only have lost their homes, but also their church buildings. To register as a congregation and to find a place of worship is not as simple as it may seem to Americans. According to letters reaching us from Russia, there are definite indications that small groups are worshiping in private homes, electing ministers, and revitalizing their spiritual life.

There are many reasons why Mennonites should be grateful they have found spiritual fellowship with the Baptists and also that they should continue the same, even though times and conditions may change. This fellowship and contact will very likely continue at places where it is deep-rooted and organic. There may also be places where Mennonites are located in large numbers and where there are few Baptist and Evangelical Christians. It would be essential in such cases to establish a Mennonite fellowship wherever and whenever possible. The Mennonites of Russia and of America should be thankful for the opportunity they have to fellowship with the Baptists and Evangelical Christians of Russia, with whom they have had contact for nearly one hundred years. This is particularly important today since the Baptists have a well established organization in Moscow, are in close contact with the Soviet Department of Cults, are familiar with the laws pertaining to religion in Russia, and have obtained permission to publish some literature, etc. Mennonites can only benefit through a close contact with a strong, experienced brother.

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ence Mennonite Church it nevertheless works closely with it, participating in missions and educational work.

The Bergthal Church holds the basic principles of the Mennonite faith. The general form of worship service is similar to most of the General Conference churches in Canada and the U.S.A. Its ministers and bishops (elders) are elected. Baptism is administered by pouring, although members baptized by other modes are accepted. The catechism as the guide for religious instruction and as preparation for baptism is used. The experience of the new birth is essential to church membership and a walk in accordance with the teachings of the New Testament is expected. Evangelistic services are held periodically. Midweek congregational Bible study and prayer meetings are observed. In addition to supporting General Conference mission causes, the Bergthal Church has opened a mission field among the Indians on the shores of Lake Winnipeg in Northern Manitoba and maintains several mission stations there.

The Sommerfeld Church

After the formation of the Sommerfeld Church in 1890 this group worshiped in the rural churches. The first house of worship in Altona was built in the year 1918. This was renovated and put on a foundation with a basement in 1950. The congregation in Altona is a branch of the Sommerfeld Church of Manitoba and Saskatchewan of which there are fifteen congregations with thirteen ministers. The church adheres to the traditional pattern of a lay ministry who preach in a circuit of several congregations in a district and are chosen mainly from rural areas. One elder serves the entire church and is the only person administering the ordinances of communion and baptism. The elder-emeritus of the church is Peter A. Toews who resides in Altona; John A. Friesen of the Kronsweide district near Lowe Farm is the present active elder. The entire membership of the Manitoba church stands at 4,096.

The form of worship in the Sommerfeld church is austere and simple and church buildings are severely plain with no adornments or architectural frills whatsoever. The ministers are dressed in black and wear no ties; the elder wears a long frock-like black coat. Their German sermons are written and read; comments are brief and given mainly in 'Plattdeutsch' (Low German). They have no young people's or Christian Endeavor groups, choirs, Bible-study meetings or evangelistic services. Higher education is frowned upon and officially they have no missionary activities. There is no pulpit fellowship with other churches. This church, along with the Old Colony and Chortitz church represents the most conservative and tradition-bound portion of Manitoba's original Mennonite population, and stands for those cultural values which characterized the Russian Mennonites before their separation in the 1870's. That there seems to be an increasing awareness of the need for a deepening spiritual life is shown by the introduction of Sunday schools in the past few years. The numerical strength of the church has been weakened by two emigrations, in 1926 to the Paraguayan Chaco and in 1948 to Eastern Paraguay.

The Rudnerweide Church

The isolationism and strict adherence to traditional form caused unrest and dissatisfaction in the Sommerfeld Church. This finally led to a division resulting in the founding of the Rudnerweide Church with its own elder, Wilhelm H. Falk, of Schönthal. Members lived largely in rural areas and churches were built in the villages of Bergfeld, Reinland, Eigenhof and Neubergthal. To accommodate local members the Bergthal Church in Altona offered its pulpit to a Rudnerweide minister one Sunday in each month. As the congregation grew the need for a church building of their own began to be felt and in 1951 they purchased the old church building of the Evangelical Mennonite Church at Rosenort-Rosenhoff and moved this to Altona. The local congregation was organized in that year. Three ministers serve the church: Elder-emeritus Falk, the present elder, Jacob H. Friesen, and Jacob Gerbrandt. Membership is about 150 and there are 91 children in Sunday school who are served by ten teachers. The church is concerned with a deepening spiritual life; its interest in missions is great and is stimulated by annual rallies. It participates actively in supporting institutions of learning such as the Mennonite Collegiate Institute at Gretna and the Elim Bible School in Altona for preparing workers for the church. Conversion is stressed as a prerequisite to baptism and church membership. Members are expected to live in a manner pleasing to God and in accordance with the Bible. The form of worship, use of catechism, manner of baptism, doctrines of faith are the same as characterize the Bergthal and other conference churches. They are somewhat freer in their manner of preaching. Evangelical services are held at appointed times and weekly Bible and prayer meetings are conducted. At present they have not joined any of the Mennonite conferences.

The Elim Bible School in Altona is an inter-church Mennonite school supported by the churches belonging to the Manitoba Conference of Mennonite churches and the Rudnerweide Church. There are five teachers on the staff. A. A. Teichroeb is the principal. Enrollment last year was 78.

The Mennonite churches in Altona are beginning to realize their responsibility to the world about them and this is finding expression in a greater mission outreach to the community and to society. There has also been a strengthening of the bonds of fellowship with the Mennonite brotherhood throughout the world.

Should Mennonites Participate In Politics?

By J. WINFIELD FRETZ

This article was the principal lecture at the Conference on Education and Political Responsibility sponsored by the Social Science department, Bethel College in the spring of 1956. *The papers by Esko Loewen and Elmer Ediger grew out of the findings at the end of the conference. We invite our readers to study these contributions on a vital subject and send us their reactions.*

THE EDITORS

American Mennonites have opposed participation in government for both Biblical and traditional reasons. Their sixteenth century forebears did not participate in government and neither did the early Christians in the first few centuries. If one examines the Scriptures, though, one does not find strong teaching against public office holding. In the Old Testament, of course, the Jewish theocracies by their very nature blended religion and government into an organic and philosophical whole. The idea that a devout Jew could not also be a devout king or political leader was unthinkable to Jews. Abraham, Joseph, David and Solomon are but a few examples of Jewish religious political and religious leaders. In the New Testament, too, especially in the Pauline writing, there is considerable support for the idea that there is no basic conflict between the Christian and his government. In Romans 13 Paul sets forth a number of strong statements on this point. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers . . . the powers that be are ordained of God. . . . For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. . . . For he is the minister of God to thee for good." In the famous passage by Jesus: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's" we have further Scriptural evidence that government had its due, even though this passage does not encourage direct participation in it.

One real reason why neither the apostolic Christians nor the sixteenth century Anabaptists participated in government is that they had no opportunity. In both instances they were considered heretics and hence enemies of the then existing state. Furthermore, the monarchical types of government then in existence didn't give citizens any choice in the matter. Citizens in those days didn't "run for political office." If they were members of persecuted minorities they had to run from both political office and officers.

In those days the chief and practically only function of the state was to maintain order within and defend the country against enemies from without. Police forces in the modern sense were unknown. Soldiers in time of peace performed the function of the modern policemen. Since both the early Christians and the early Mennonites were strongly opposed to taking the oath and since they were also nonresistant, it is easy to understand their failure to participate in political life in their respective centuries. Tolerance or respect for minorities was, of course, then not an ideal or a virtue as it has come to be today. Often it meant that the underdog had to flee, or at best remain ultra quiet in order to preserve his life.

What I want to emphasize here is that the arguments against Christian participation in public life in the first and sixteenth centuries are not (ipso facto) sound arguments against it today. There is great worth in tradition as a guide to contemporary social behavior but when tradition becomes the sole authority for conduct, then there is room for criticism. No progress is possible by looking only backward. For this reason it is necessary to look at the political and cultural situation out of which the Mennonite faith and life emerged.

The theory of democracy as a form of government is a long way from the political theory of ancient Rome or of that practiced in the time of the Reformation in Europe. Democracy is government of, by, and for the people. Democracy is indeed considered a great triumph in the field of political theory. Prior to the establishment of the American Republic few men had confidence that the mass of citizens in any country were competent to rule themselves. Some of the fundamental tenets of democracy such as separation of church and state, religious toleration, rights of minorities, government by consent of the governed are indeed in no small measure the fruit of Anabaptist efforts, as modern historians are beginning to point out.

The contemporary democratic state exists for purposes far beyond that of maintaining order and punishing the wicked. The United States Department of Justice is just one of many departments in the modern state. Of the more than 3,500,000 people employed in some government agency, federal, state or local, not more than 5 per cent are engaged in law enforcement service. The major interest and function of our government is public welfare. It is concerned with commerce, industry, agriculture, natural resources, transportation, communications, economic security, health, housing, highways and literally hundreds of similar interests which governments in bygone centuries never dreamed of. And it is interested in these areas because the citizens of the land want it to be interested in them. Our government has become a welfare state not because of an autocratic decree by a dictator but because of popular demand and consent of its citizens.

What then are the objections which have been ad-

vanced against Christians seeking or holding office in such a welfare state? Wherein lies the wrong in being a public office holder in a democratic government? First, is the argument based on tradition, namely "it has always been considered wrong." This point has already been covered so we can move on to the second objection. It is the belief that holding public office, especially elective offices, inevitably results in moral and ethical compromises. This traditional point of view has seemingly agreed with T. V. Smith's definition of politics as "the art of compromise." A third objection has been that it is immodest and unbecoming of a genuine Christian to seek an office for himself. It has been assumed that one's sense of humility would prevent one from advertising his own virtues and promoting himself for office. Other objections to political participation by Mennonites have been the dislike of being "unequally yoked with unbelievers," the fear of being publicly criticized and ridiculed and possibly misrepresented as to character, and the general feeling that "rough and dirty" politics is unsuited to the life and calling of consecrated Christians.

Perhaps the most consistent and vigorous objection today, as well as in centuries past, is the fear that public office holding would demand impossible compromises in regard to the principle of Biblical nonresistance. It has been assumed that anyone employed by the government would necessarily defend it in time of war by violent means if that became necessary. It has also been pointed out that the modern state depends on violence and coercion for its very existence, hence no Mennonite could consistently hold a public office.

In answering the objections to political participation we first of all raise the question as to why politics is singled out as a forbidden vocational area whereas no questions seem to be asked about any other occupation. The field of business, for instance, seems to be approved wholeheartedly as a respectable vocation for Christians. Yet there are about as many ethical pitfalls and temptations to compromise in the field of business as in politics. As Adlai Stevenson pointed out some time ago, for every crooked politician there is a crooked businessman who is seeking to corrupt him. From the standpoint of Christian altruism one may even think of politics as standing a rank higher than business because its primary motives are public service whereas the primary motive of business is private financial gain. Jesus seems to have been far more critical of the evils of money and the corrupting influence of financial power than he was of political power.

If one carefully examines the logic of nonparticipation in a political democracy one is forced to the position of abandoning political rule to the evil, the unprincipled and the unscrupulous. Naturally, if the righteous withdraw from participation, only the unrighteous are left. How then can pure, honest, wise, creative government be expected to result? If the logic of the Mennonites were to be followed by all Christians everywhere it would mean that no Christians would be willing to hold public offices. Hence Christians, who believed in voting, would have to vote for non-Christians only. This type of ascetic withdrawal from assuming full responsibility for the social order in which we live seems to me unrealistic, unwise and in a sense, less than courageously Christian. Jesus did not instruct his disciples to be "sideline coaches" or "grandstand quarterbacks" but rather active participants in the struggle for righteousness.

It is becoming increasingly clear to me that the traditional Mennonite attitude toward nonpolitical participation is untenable in the kind of political system under which we live. Not only is it possible for a Christian to hold public office and be a dedicated Christian, it is the duty of consecrated Christians to hold public office and thus serve both God and man. In a democracy where the people rule and where we are the people, we must assume political responsibility. If we the people don't, the alternative is dictatorship, monarchy or aristocracy of some type, none of which has served the purposes of the Christian religion as well as democracy.

The arena of political life offers genuine opportunities for public service of the highest order. It should challenge men of the greatest skill and of the finest character. For Mennonites who wish to remain true to the basic tenets of their faith there are certain political offices which they could not fill without compromising their ideals. However, the number of such offices is small and the fact that there are some such offices does not justify abandoning any and all forms of public service.

There is a place for the "lone voice" in public life—the man who acts from personal conviction based on broad principle despite the fact that he may stand alone. There is no disgrace about representing a small minority. There is much evidence that many times in history today's minority has become tomorrow's majority. This is due to the fact that the minority is often the creative, growing edge of thought and action in society. Support for such courageous and creative individual public servants often comes from unexpected sources.

Here I have tried to sketch very briefly, and all too inadequately, my thinking on the question of whether Mennonites should participate in politics. In conclusion I wish to make it clear that I am quite aware that participation in politics holds possibilities for moral, ethical, and spiritual compromise. I am however, of the opinion that temptations in this area are not much greater and not much more dangerous than they are in numerous other vocational fields.

In taking issue with the traditional Mennonite position toward political participation, I do so with high regard for the reasons that originally prompted Mennonites to take that position. Nevertheless, it seems to me that because of the fundamental changes that have taken place in society, many of the original grounds of opposition have been removed. My hope is that the foregoing remarks will be thoughtfully evaluated and that they will serve to stimulate creative discussion.

Church and State

By ESKO LOEWEN

THE form of this question raises an issue which has become a subject of major interest and discussion within Christian circles in recent years. That question is the relation between the church and the state. That general subject is now producing a large number of theological studies, especially is this the case in ecumenical circles. Among these, a current book entitled *The State in the New Testament* by Oscar Cullmann is a vigorous Biblical study seeking to find what Christ's attitude and the early church's attitude toward the state really was. Romans 13 alone is hardly an adequate statement, one might add. Cullmann is an eminent Swiss theologian from Basel and his studies are not to be taken lightly. Another study by one of today's most prominent social historians, Herbert Butterfield of Cambridge, entitled *Christianity and History* is one of the most stirring studies this writer has ever read. It is a book of such stature that any Christian group struggling over the question of the relationship of the church to the world should make it a handbook for its study. And, one might add, any group that is serious about being Christian should be concerned over the problem of the church and the world.

Here we must deal with a specific question, should Mennonites participate in politics? The question suggests a certain restlessness with what has been called the traditional position of the Mennonite church, namely to be aloof from politics because politics are mundane and wicked. One could be more dignified and put the question thus, "Should a Christian become a public servant of the state?" I think this is a fairer way of putting the question because it points to that which Mennonites seek to be, namely Christian, and it points to the best in politics, namely its function as public service.

As I see it the stand that the Christian must take on this question cannot be stated categorically in terms of participation in politics as a Christian duty nor withdrawal as a Christian duty. The reason is that the Christian's first loyalty is always to God, thus other 'duties' are tentative and always assumed in the light of his first loyalty.

Having stated this, it becomes evident that to answer this question in terms of democratic theory, or on the basis of political science, or for pragmatic reasons, or just because of common sense reasons would be to beg the question. The reason is that such an answer utterly fails to recognize the question. If the term 'Mennonite' only refers to a religio-cultural group of people, such an answer may have a point. But, if the term 'Mennonite' refers to a group committed to being Christian, then it is an entirely different matter. Then it becomes necessary to seek the answer in terms of Biblical and theological grounds.

It should again be categorically emphasized that a Christian, when he is true to his commitment, gives his first and primary loyalty to God. He has one prime allegiance and that is to the God of Jesus Christ and all other temporal loyalties are subservient and measured in the light of that. Sometimes, the question concerning the Christian's 'political responsibility' is put in such a manner that this primary allegiance of the Christian is not recognized. Indeed, one has the feeling that the state has taken that primary position and if one really wants to fulfill his Christian obligations he will of course enter into the public service. Perhaps that is not even a conscious assumption, but it is quite obvious that such is the presupposition. After all, hasn't this land of ours provided freedom so that you can worship God according to the dictates of your conscience, hasn't this been the land of opportunity, haven't you been provided with the blessings of a secure family life and an abundant economy? Because of these blessings, you owe it to your country to enter its service.

When one is motivated to enter politics on such grounds, it is no longer a question of the Christian entering politics, but a question of the citizen in a modern liberal democratic society performing his duty for the common good. Whether one is Christian or not is quite incidental.

Furthermore, to fail to differentiate between thinking based on popular modern democratic theory and thinking based on Biblical-Christian authority, which the above illustrates, is ultimately both dangerous and disastrous because it deifies the state, and, when the argument for state service is so put concluding that therefore the Christian is obliged to serve, it is Christian blasphemy because it makes one's allegiance to God circumstantial upon one's fulfilling his duties to the state.

It must be remembered that the state, the *polis,* is the present existing political-social-economic organization, the body *politic*. The church is the *politeuma* or the community of the coming *aion* (era). The state is a present, mundane reality. The church is a present reality because it is a future reality. The church is not dependent upon present political fortune but is dependent upon eternity. The Kingdom of God is a reality now because it is eternal. No secular state can make such a claim, not even the most enlightened one. The state is simply the currently existing political entity. In Christian history it has been at one time a theocracy, a monarchy, a rule of the aristocracy, a democracy, fascist and communist, but al-

ways a currently existing political entity. Upon none of these does the Christian or the church depend for salvation. Indeed, some have been more desirable than others, but the church has never depended upon any one of them for her existence, although historically the church has almost invariably resisted change from theocracy to monarchy, to aristocratic rule, to democracy, in each case considering the new form of political rule as diabolic (just as today communism is portrayed as being diabolic).

What I am seeking to point up is that there is a very real tension between being a citizen of a state and being a Christian. There is a tension between the church and the state. The church, when she is truly the church, will of necessity speak prophetically to the state. As a prophet, she will be the critic, just as the prophets of the Old Testament were in the Israelitish theocracy. Never can the church or the Christian look upon his role as primarily being the cement of society or the highest expression of the status quo. Such subservience has all too often been the role of the church. When the church or the Christian sees his status as this, in ultimate terms he becomes a slave of that state and God's judgment upon him is severe. Christian freedom, about which the apostle Paul spoke so vigorously, is a freedom which makes it possible for the Christian to look with complete objectivity upon all lesser loyalties.

At no place does one find in the Bible grounds for denying the existence of the state. Its function is recognized as necessary. But, to base one's Biblical justification of the state simply on Romans 13 is quite inadequate. Revelation 13, which paints a picture quite in contrast to Romans 13, is speaking of the same state. Jesus' reference to Herod as 'that fox' and the rejection of political rule of the kingdoms of the world in his wilderness temptations (Matt. 4) as being satanic temptations, emphasizes this tension with the state although never is its existence denied. Cullmann's book brings this out.

This fact brings us to the ethical aspect of Christian service in public office. It must be remembered that the ethical norm of the state is not a Christian ethic, even in so-called western Christian culture. The reason is that no social or political organization is Christian in its ultimate allegiance. American democracy's ultimate allegiance is the American state. True, American democracy seeks to be 'under God' and such commitments are pious phrases at the point where that allegiance would be embarrassing to the existence of the state. The recent war is said by some to demonstrate the righteousness of the cause of American democracy and the judgment of God upon National Socialist Germany. Such a conclusion fails to recognize that the greatest benefactor from the two world wars has been Communist Russia. Therefore one would have to ask whom God is blessing in the current shifts in power politics. The game of politics is a game of manipulation of power blocs both in internal affairs as well as in international affairs. As such, the ethics of politics is the ethics of compromise.

From this, one must conclude that the ethical norm of the state is one thing while the ethical norm of the Christian is something else. Self-preservation mingled with a certain degree of self-righteousness is ultimately the ethical yardstick for the body politic. (This can be witnessed at the present moment as the two power blocs of American society, management and labor, are loud supporters and deep critics of the present administration. Self-preservation is the motivating force behind the arguments of each and righteousness the handmaiden.) Under the rule of Christ, which rejects self-preservation or self-righteousness as ethical norms, the norm or ethical yardstick is humility and love.

When the Christian enters public service—and I personally do not hold to a position of aloofness or withdrawal from political affairs—he must first and foremost be clear in his mind as to what he is doing and as to where his primary allegiance lies. He must, also, recognize that serving in a democratic state is not going to thereby bring into reality the Kingdom of God. Such nineteenth century liberal thinking is too weak to bear much analysis. He must, further, not assume that people are normally wise and righteous and good. But he must rather proceed on the assumption that since Adam, man is a fallen creature and no political state — not even enlightened liberal democratic states — will be able to construct a system that will permanently avoid the results of man having fallen into sin and as such being unregenerate.

Indeed, it is precisely at this point that the greatest tension between the Christian, whose view of man is radically different from the view of man which gave birth to democratic ideas and the state, exists. The Christian view of man holds that he has fallen from grace, symbolized in Adam being driven from the Garden of Eden, and that he is a sinner in need of redemption. Eighteenth century French rationalism which gave birth to democratic theory, held that in essence man is good and given the right circumstances his goodness will blossom forth and he will progress step by step up to a level where freedom, goodness, and righteousness will reign. Modern history is vindicating the essential truth of the Christian view and the essential falseness of the French rationalist view.

When the Christian assumes public duty without any illusions as to what he is doing, recognizing the agonizing tensions he will have to endure between what he knows to be Christian judgment and the demands of the body politic, and so long as those tensions remain sharp for him so that he is primarily dedicated to serving God rather than man—so that he is in the world but not of it —state service is a possibility for the Christian. In the modern state with its many functions of social service, the public welfare state, those possibilities are considerable and varied—particularly in its public welfare functions. But, responsibility is always and essentially to God and not to man for the Christian. This commitment will likely have quite limiting effects upon his political possibilities.

A Personal Analysis of Two Major Views

A CHRISTIAN'S POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY

By ELMER EDIGER

SHOULD Mennonites take more active part in holding office on the country, state, and national as well as the local level? What problems have our church people had as mayors, school board directors, county commissioners, and state legislators? In the main have the ethical problems been any different from those in business and church life? What if it is the mayor's duty to issue liquor licenses, to designate heads of civil defense, to procure a sheriff? Are Christians willing to become party men who vote with the party against a good bill of an opponent only because they have voted out of step too much already? Are Christians willing to help from the precinct level on up to make the two party system work? Could we visualize a nonresistant mayor coping with the problems of vice and violence in Chicago through creative use of love?

These were some of the practical questions on the surface. For Christians the discussion very soon, however, went below the surface to search for principles and how these were related to our various Christian beliefs. When this happened every Christian in the group, preacher or not, taxed his framework of Christian thinking, that is, his theology.

There was general agreement among those assembled that there has been a significant shift in the total scope of government since the early Anabaptist days and certainly since New Testament times. The welfare and service have become an increasingly greater part of the total function of our modern democratic state. With this shift has come a gradual rethinking of various arbitrary lines of nonparticipation accepted traditionally by most Mennonite groups. Agreeing that such legalistic lines of nonparticipation are no longer adequate for our situation, we as Mennonites have moved, however, in two general direcitons which might roughly be termed two schools of thought, both of which believe in political participation. Though there are good reasons for presenting these as two approaches, some individuals were perhaps partly in one and partly in the other.

First there are those who would emphasize that because of this shift in the total scope of government the matter of Christian participation in government is completely different from what it was formerly. A few might even say that for all practical purposes there is now no problem for the Christian, even the pacifist Christian, only the problem of urging fuller participation.

In line with this some would emphasize that government today is based largely on consent rather than insistence upon obedience through an ultimate use of force. Among the pacifists of this group there is also the assumption that if we in political positions are creative enough in the use of love we can control every evil situation and every evildoer to the satisfaction of society. In fact, most people if not all, will respond favorably to a good approach. This implies a rather optimistic view regarding the nature of man. There is, therefore, very little if any need for speaking of Christian withdrawal at any point of political participation.

Although not explicitly stated, it would seem that this view is motivated by the possibility of accumulating social and economic gains from one generation to the next, thus gradually realizing more and more of the Kingdom. In fact, if you contribute anything to the moral betterment of society through politics or other channels, you are building the Kingdom of God. This then produces a high sense of Christian mission about political participation.

The *second* general school of thought would agree that the welfare aspect of government has increased greatly and furthermore that most laws are carried out largely on the basis of consent. Nevertheless, they would say that the ultimate authority of government is dependent in the final analysis upon the necessity of getting a high degree of obedience. This obedience the government procures by whatever means necessary, if not, government in most situations eventually breaks down.

The methods necessary to get ultimate obedience, whether through some phase of education or persuasion or through the threat or actual use of force, depends upon the moral nature of those being governed. If a given society has a sufficient proportion of Christians, it is conceivable that government could restrict itself to certain non-violent means of police control. When such nonviolent means are sufficient to obtain outward control of the wrongdoer, such a society could conceivably be willing to bear the added suffering caused by the wrongdoer. Rather than inflict violence such a society of Christians should be willing and conceivably could accept the way of the cross.

Society actually, however, includes many non-Christians and Christians willing to use sub-Christian methods. The size and complexity of society tend to compound the evils present. Such a society demands a certain level of effecitve outward control of wrongdoers and invariably such government is ultimately forced to use evil methods of violence even though it may generally use more enlightened methods. In scope of service and preferred methods the modern democratic government varies greatly from earlier governments, yet at the heart it retains a

basic similarity in what it actually does to control the most severe evildoer.

Thus, although this second point of view would readily agree that we must shift to a positive emphasis toward greater political participation, this view would also underscore the Christian's larger mission and the necessity that every Christian in politics have a point of withdrawal. Rather than being forced into a position of directly doing that which he as a Christian considers wrong, a Christian disciple withdraws with a witness to be relevant in a higher Christian sense. This is not advocating a legalistic line of political non-participation at any one point. Different from tradition the principle is not withdrawal, the principle is participation with, however, a clear condition of withdrawal. Though different from much in recent Mennonite tradition, this view nevertheless feels akin to early Anabaptism in that this is a narrow path of discipleship which is in the world but not of it.

Withdrawal, as in the case of war, does create situations where the Christian is benefiting from some values, though short range, achieved by sub-Christian or evil methods. Though the Christian withdraws from certain aspects of political participation, this does not necessarily mean a shirking of social responsibility. In as much as possible he is still responsible to contribute to that area of life through non-political channels. MCC relief, Voluntary Service and Pax are direct contributions to the area of human need. These are relevant to God and society even though non-political. This view would say that the test of Christian social responsibility is whether Christian love is exercised to serve those in need wherever possible. The Christian owes no man anything but to love.

The second approach would say that all such contributions to the improvement of society are, however, a secondary responsibility of the Christian. His greatest contribution to society is evangelized citizens, people changed at the center of their life. His highest loyalty and devotion of energy is to the church. His most lasting contribution to the better moral life and welfare of society through political and non-political channels, though secondary, is a Christian obligation. It contributes to and overlaps with the Christian's primary task of the Kingdom. All work of Christian love is a witness to the King and His redeeming way but it is not directly building the Kingdom. The Kingdom of which the Bible speaks does not consist of high principles injected into society at large, as good as that may be. The Kingdom is not necessarily present wherever man's acts happen to coincide with God's will. The Kingdom consists of citizens; the Kingdom that is enlarged only as more individuals give central allegiance to the King.

To live the Kingdom life in society, to challenge society by its principles can, however, be a tremendous witness for the Kingdom. And thus Christians can be the very salt God expects them to be to help preserve society for its potential usefulness to Him. Thus, social and political service of Christians is not motivated by the hope of thus gradually bringing in the Kingdom but is part of the Christian vocation of love and the witness it represents in our larger mission in the world.

Although there were some basic disagreements between these two schools of approach in terms of the optimism and motivation with which one works politically in society, there were also many points in common: 1. Through the constraint of love the Christian has a real responsibility to society. There is much that can and should be done for the welfare of mankind through political and non-political channels. 2. Although the Christian's first loyalty is to the church, today's democratic state, nevertheless, enables him to make a real contribution through political channels. Both viewpoints would assume there is nothing bad per se about politics. 3. In principle all would seem to agree that either voluntarily or involuntarily there is a point of political withdrawal or removal for every Christian who holds to his Christian standards. 4. Remembering the context of the larger Christian responsibility, the two views are agreed that we should as good stewards of present-day opportunity, nevertheless increase Mennonite participation in governmental and political activity.

To summarize the differences in these two approaches, we should note the following:

1. The nature of man. Underneath these two approaches there is a considerable difference of degree in how far Christian love and nonresistance can become the acceptable way of governing society as we have it, for example in Chicago, London, U.S., or Germany. Will such society accept the way of the cross or demand a greater evil if necessary to control the evildoer? One view is optimistic, the other sees a definite limit because of the probable reaction of man, that is, his basic nature.

2. Nature of the state. Though both see the welfare aspect of the state, one underscores its usual approach, ancient or modern, to control the evildoer with the use of violence if necessary.

3. Christian and the world. Both emphasize the witnessing and preserving aspect of the Christian *in* the world. One tends to identify democracy organically with the Christian mission for the Kingdom while the other sees democracy as more of an enlightened aspect of the world, not as an organic part of the Kingdom. In this context it is understandable that withdrawal from the "political kingdom" is less thinkable to the first and not as crucial in the second approach.

4. Kingdom of God. In the former principles spread the Kingdom into society, in the second the Kingdom grows only through the central allegiance of more persons. In the former democracy, better levels of economic life, are part of building the Kingdom. Political participation is therefore motivated with the Christian hope of progress toward God's Kingdom. In the second, the Kingdom is more often a minority in history yet with the task of being 'light" and "salt" in society and with a clear assurance of the ultimate victory of God's Kingdom.

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