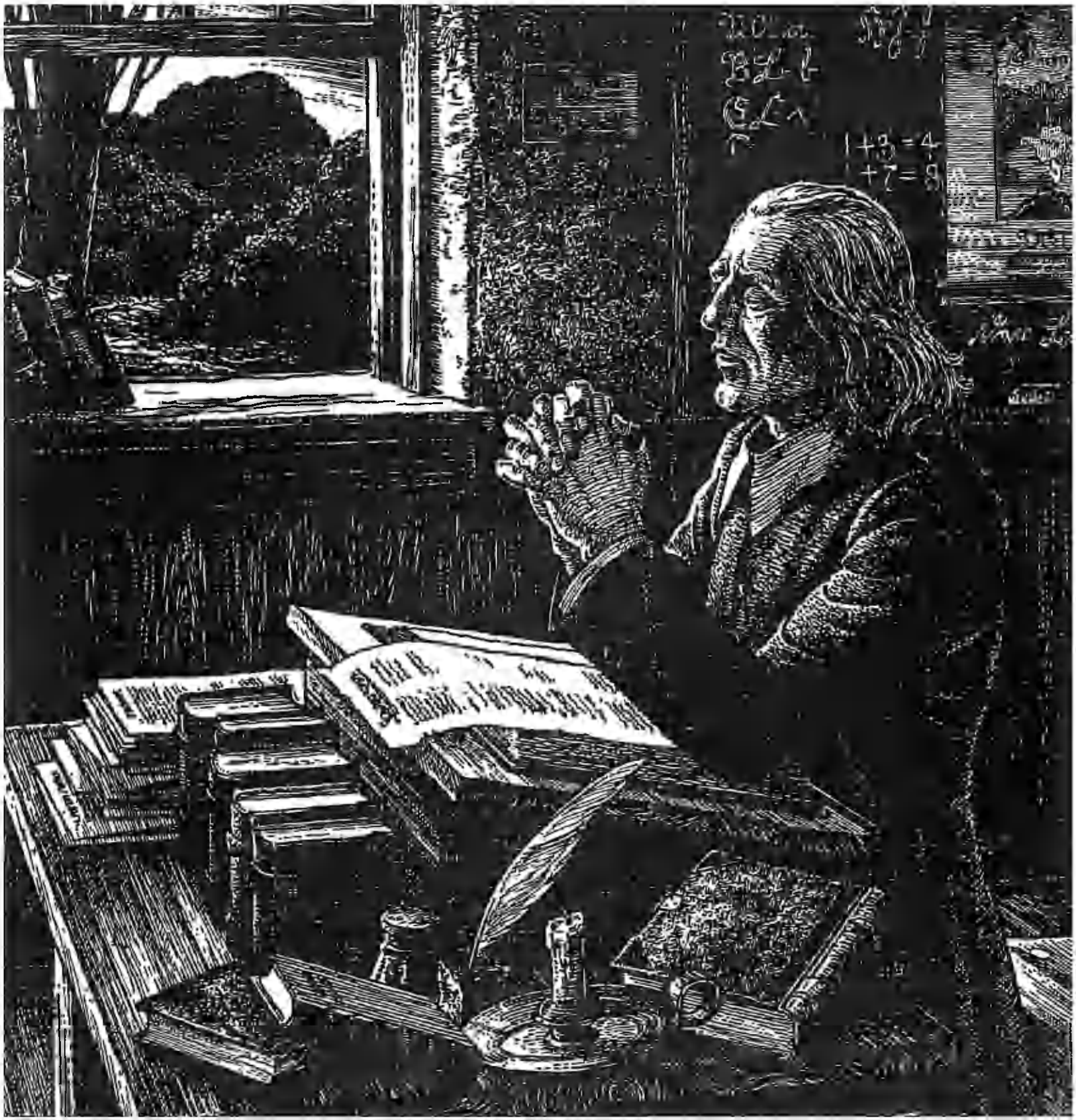
MENNONITE LIFE

October 1960



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

NEW SUBSCRIPTION RATES

For fifteen years MENNONITE LIFE has maintained the low subscription rate of $2 per year and 50 cents per issue. Persons acquainted with publishing costs know that the printing costs of producing a magazine like **Mennonite Life** have doubled since 1946 when the first issue of **Mennonite Life** appeared. Practically all magazines and periodicals have increased their subscription rates to compensate for this increasing cost.

We must, of necessity, therefore, announce to our subscribers and friends a new subscription rate. If you have valued **Mennonite Life,** we are certain that you will continue as faithful friends and appreciate the need for this rate revision.

Your loyal support and interest through the years has been very much appreciated in the editorial office.

Following Rates Are Now Effective:
One year, $3.00; Three years, $7.50; Five years, $12.50.
Single issues, 75 cents.

COVER:

Christopher Dock

By Oliver Wendell Schenk

Dock, known as the "pious Mennonite schoolmaster of the Skippack," died on his knees while praying for his pupils, 1771.

(An 8 x 9 print can be ordered from MENNONITE LIFE for $1).

MENNONITE LIFE

An Illustrated Quarterly

Vol. XV October, 1960 No. 4

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Mennonite Life is an illustrated Quarterly magazine published in January, April, July, and October by Bethel College, North Newton, Kan. Entered as second-class matter Dec. 20, 1946, at the post office at North Newton, Kan., under Act of March 3, 1879.

Contributors in This Issue

(From left to right)






VERNON NEUFELD, president of Bethel College, presented this message at the opening of school (p. 147).
WILBERT SHENK, Eugene, Oregon, did work under the Mennonite Central Committee in Indonesia (p. 154).
HOWARD RAID is professor of economics at Bluffton College, Bluffton, Ohio (p. 163).
DELBERT GRÄTZ, author of BERNESE ANABAPTISTS, is librarian of Bluffton College, Bluffton, Ohio (p. 165).
WARREN KLIEWER is professor of English at Bethany College, Lindsborg, Kansas (pp. 168, 173).
S. S. SMEDING is pastor of Noordhorn Mennonite Church, Groningen, The Netherlands (p. 169).






WALDEMAR JANZEN is professor at Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, Manitoba (p. 170).
MELVIN GINGERICH, Executive Secretary of Historical and Research Committee, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana (p. 175).
WALTER KLAASSEN holds Ph.D. degree from Oxford University and is professor of Bible at Bethel College, N. Newton, Kan. (p. 182).
WALTER H. HOHMANN is doing research in musicology in the Bethel College Historical Library (p. 185).
PETER F. BARGEN, superintendent of schools at Jaspar Place, Edmonton, Alberta, has just received his Ph.D. degree (p. 187).
JOHN HOWARD KAUFFMAN is professor of sociology at Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana (p. 190).

NOT SHOWN

ELIZABETH K. WEDEL, a homemaker at Halstead, Kansas, tells the story of her grandmother (p. 172).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Photos: pp. 150, 151, Willard Claassen, Mennonite Publication Office; pp. 156, 160, 161, Wilbert Shenk; p. 169, Larry Kehler.

MENNONITE LIFE AGENTS

EASTERN USA

Friendly Book Store
Quakertown, Pa.

Herald Bookstore
Souderton, Pa.

Weaver Book Store
1320 G St.
Lancaster, Pa.

CENTRAL AND WESTERN

Gospel Book Store
Goshen, Indiana

Goshen College Book Store
Goshen, Indiana

Mennonite Book Concern
Berne, Indiana

Montgomery News Stand
Bluffton, Ohio

Book and Bible Store
Mountain Lake, Minn.

The Bookshop
Freeman, South Dakota

A. P. Ratzlaff
Christian Book & Bible Store

109 South Grand
Enid, Okla.

Menn. Brethren Pub. House
Hillsboro, Kansas

Crossroads Co-op
Goessel, Kansas

Country Store
Meade, Kansas

CANADIAN

Golden Rule Bookstore
187 King St. East
Kitchener, Ontario

Peter H. Dirks Printshop
Virgil, Ontario

G. D. Woelk
Leamington, Ont.

The Christian Press
157 Kelvin St.
Winnipeg, Manitoba

D. W. Friesen & Sons
Altona, Manitoba

P. T. Friesen Bookstore
Winkler, Manitoba

Evangel Book Shop
Steinbach, Manitoba

Mennonite Book Store
Rosthern, Sask.

J. A. Friesen & Sons
Hague, Sask.

Derksen's Christian Supply
North Clearbrook, B. C.

Henry Nikkel
Economy Corner
Coaldale, Alberta

EUROPEAN

Mennonitengemeinde
Suedwall 19
Krefeld, U.S. Zone, Germany

Annual subscriptions $3.00; Single copies 75 cents; Bound volumes $5.00 (two years in each)

Printed by the Mennonite Press, North Newton, Kansas

At the Beginning of a New School Year

Direction in a Changing World

By VERNON NEUFELD

THAT WE LIVE in a world of change is axiomatic. It often has been said that the only thing which does not change is change itself. Nicholas Murray Butler of Columbia University, we are told, once insisted that in the Garden of Eden Adam must have paused at one point and remarked, "Eve, we are living in a period of change."

Older citizens no doubt can give example after example of changes that they have seen during their lifetime. On the farm, in the home, in business, in the community, in national and international life, tremendous changes have been observed over and over again.

But even within the lifetime of the incoming freshman, a revolution literally has occurred and is continuing to occur. In the brief span of his eighteen years, the incoming student has seen momentous changes. His mother has come to use synthetic detergents in her household duties. His doctor has been able to inoculate him with Salk vaccine. He is able to enjoy the luxuries of stereophonic music, to view the magic of color television. He has seen the age where man can exceed the speed of sound, where he can go faster than the earth's rotation.

But the incoming freshman also has seen other changes and revolutionary events. His age has observed the devastation of Hiroshima by atomic warfare. He has seen the intensifying of the cold war between East and West, he has seen an era when earth and solar satellites are circling about in outer space. He has seen the continuing rate of increase in social disease; a recent FBI report indicates, for example, that during the first six months of 1960 there has been an increase of 9 per cent in all crime categories over a similar period in 1959. He has seen most recently the relative loss of American position, power, and prestige among the nations of the world.

Change Means Crisis

Change always brings with it a crisis. For when change comes, man is obligated to respond, to decide. He may resist a change from the well-worn patterns of his existence; he may be completely taken in or taken over by change; he may be utterly confused by it. But change means crisis.

The experience of ancient Israel is instructive at this point. For the story of the exodus is a story of change—a change from slavery to freedom, from oppression to deliverance, a move from Egypt to the Promised Land. In this story we see that the old patterns in Egypt, though oppressive, had been well established. From this pattern in Egypt, the call came to Moses to enter a new land, to leave Egypt for the land flowing with milk and honey. And between the old pattern and the new land there was tension, there truly was a crisis.

So one may note interestingly the various reactions to this change. Those whom we might call conservative wanted to remain in Egypt; they were content with the security of slavery. Even after they were on their way to Palestine, they wanted to return to the fleshpots of Egypt. They were afraid to proceed, there were too many giants in the land. As a result, there were forty years of wandering, a time when they did not go anywhere.

Then there also were those whom one might call the undisciplined liberals, those who moved too rapidly from the old traditions and patterns. These too readily adopted the gods of the land, too soon followed the unethical and offensive practices of the new neighbors which they had gained in entering the Promised Land.

But there were also the true progressives, such as Moses, who, though with some difficulty, had a vision of the future of Israel, and the place of Israel in the total plan of God. He saw the need for entering the new land and for applying the new law and the new way to help Israel adjust to the new world. There were Joshua and Caleb, who were eager to enter the new land, to move forward, even though there were obstacles and enemies dwelling in the land.

So it is that there always is the problem, in times of change, of living in one's past. It seems to be a natural characteristic, particularly when one grows older, to cling to the past. For change somehow means uncertainty, vagueness, indefiniteness. Change means a loss of the old safeguards and patterns. It means adventuring into the unknown. It means work. Thus even the slavery in Egypt means security, for it is the familiar, it represents one's way of life.

One might say that one of the valid criticisms of our Mennonite heritage is this tendency of living in one's past. Frequently, expressed or unexpressed, one hears "Back to the Anabaptists of the sixteenth century," or "Back to the Bible," when actually we should be saying, "Forward with our faith," "Forward with Christ, with the Bible and its teaching." In time of change there is present the urge to return to the good old days, toward regression and primitivism.

But change also has with it the problem of moving too fast. At the other extreme are those who leap before they look; who adopt new patterns without regard for the old. This is the Israelite who is attracted to

the cults of the new era without consideration for the God of his fathers. To be caught in the wheels of revolution and change without the axis of stability can result only in chaos and anarchy. In times of change one needs to guard against a reckless abandon of history and tradition, or else the baby will be thrown out with the bath. There are certain guiding lines and principles, there are lessons and guideposts, there is the God of our fathers that continues to lead His people, even though there is a movement from Egypt into the Promised Land.

Direction in a Time of Change

So it is that we need to develop a sense of direction in order to have stability, and yet vision and development. We must begin by stating that the old foundations remain. Though we are leaving an older era and moving into a new one, we do not sever ourselves from our past, rather we build upon the old foundations. The larger the structure of our growth, the more important the foundations become. Just as Israel moved into the new territory *with* the God of their fathers, so Bethel College moves into the new era with the faith and the God of our fathers. It is our Christian heritage that gives direction. Seventy-two years of experience of those who have gone before—the insights, the lives which were lived, the successes and the failures—are those things which give light and direction in our future. The work of our forefathers lies at the basis of ours.

So the foundation which is laid, namely Jesus Christ, that foundation which always has been and always will be, this remains the basis upon which we build into the future. Regardless of the change in the world, whether in education, in philosophy, in technology, in science, we build upon the foundation that is laid. The direction we take is controlled and tempered by this basis. So the basic and abiding values established in our past continue to direct our future.

The threshing stone, as the symbol of Bethel College, reminds us of the importance of this tradition. It reminds us of the debt we owe to those who went before, it suggests the pioneer spirit with its ingenuity and persistence, it represents the firm faith and stability of our fathers who settled upon the Kansas prairies, it symbolizes simplicity in living, industry in all things, firmness of character, a wider service. We do not cut off the roots of our past, for from them we have strength, nourishment, and guidance as we move confidently into the future.

Dangers in the Land

Of course, there are dangers ahead. There are many gods and cults in the lands which lie about us and before us.

There is the danger, for one thing, of shaking off, as we already have suggested, the old forms and traditions together with their abiding values. The adolescent spirit of revolution, so manifest in times of change, can cut off mother as well as mother's apron strings. As the Mennonite people and their schools continue to become more and more a part of the conventional scene, there is the ever present danger of losing the vitality of the Christian faith. The usual pattern in the growth and development of institutions of higher learning in America is the gradual but persistent change from a Christian—and church—oriented school to one separated from the church and apart from a Christian emphasis. There is a danger that Bethel might become just another institution of higher learning, coldly intellectual, and not warmly Christian.

There is also the danger in the new world about us to seek salvation in man rather than in God. This sort of humanism is often characteristic of higher learning, for an emphasis upon the mind and reason, upon research and experimentation, can lead one to the conclusion that in man alone lies the hope of the world. The obstacles of the Red Sea and the Jordan River drive the modern mind to rely upon its own resources but to forget the deeper spiritual values which are able to divide the muddy waters. We, thus, do not decry the human mind and initiative, but merely point to the danger at hand. In the moment of crisis occasioned by revolutionary change, one can easily be led to adopt ideologies, patterns, philosophies which stem from human effort as distinct and apart from the truth which God imparts.

There is yet another danger; and this is not merely before us in the land, it is already upon us. This is the wave of materialism which has engulfed us as a nation, for we have come to evaluate worth in terms of things, in terms of property and wealth. And where this touches the nerve of Bethel is at the point of motivation, for some of our students indicate (and this is expressed frequently by students) that they come for self advancement, for better paying jobs or professions, for position and prestige. This emphasis upon the material touches the nerve when success is tritely defined as social position and financial security. It touches the nerve when Bethel is thought of and used only as a professional or vocational school, designed to prepare students for a particular job.

A further danger in the land is that our students may come to harm as they engage in the learning process. It is true that many college campuses produce skeptics, those who become embittered with the *status quo,* who disbelieve what has been taught them from childhood, who become hypercritical in their evaluation of truth. We need to admit that education inherently brings certain risks. When we encourage our students to think critically, it is possible that they will challenge our well worn patterns. Even though we want them to be creative, it is possible that they will move into areas which are unfamiliar to us. We teach them to be individuals, and as a result they may become nonconformist to the philosophy of the masses under which we are living. There is always the danger in education of erecting the golden calves of our own devotion and making. But at the same time we need to say that there is even a greater

danger in withholding the truth, in discouraging thinking, in expecting uniformity of thought and pattern. So we are dedicated to teaching truth to young people in the light of our Christian faith, even though we do so with a calculated risk.

Bethel College is often criticized at this point. But let it be said that we hold Christianity and education to be compatible, for both are dedicated to truth. When in the pursuit of truth a student becomes skeptical of old patterns and beliefs, it is because he has been inadequately prepared, he has been taught faith in a static and unfruitful form, he has not learned the penetrating nature of the Christian faith in all of life. We need to remember that Aaron and the Israelites did not learn the matter of the golden calf on the way to the Promised Land—they brought this with them from their old life in Egypt.

The Need to Move Ahead

So our basic philosophy is that we must move forward, we move ahead, we enter into the Promised Land in order to conquer it. The right direction is before us, not behind us. And this philosophy of moving on to the new eras of our time is not un-Christian, it is not un-Mennonite. In the Reformation period our Anabaptist forefathers were the most progressive, the most far-reaching and radical in the interpretation of their faith for the particular world in which they were living. They recognized the value of the individual, of freedom in interpretation and expression, of nonconformity to established patterns. In this tradition we stand, and in this tradition we move ahead, confidently facing the frontier of the new age.

Therefore, in this time of change, it is the resolved and dedicated purpose of Bethel College—

1. To serve the church by fearlessly confronting, in the spirit and tradition of her heritage, the new frontier of the modern age, accepting its challenge, clarifying its enigmas, dedicated to overcoming its problems.
2. To provide the student with the opportunities to learn and to experience the broad and great body of knowledge so as to give him a meaningful conception of the physical world and the human societies that people it.
3. To train the student in the discipline of critical thinking so that in his search for truth, he will be able accurately to gather material, organize, and evaluate it.
4. To promote an appreciation for and to develop proficiency in the aesthetic and recreational arts and skills so that the student may find and enjoy the deeper values of life.
5. To help the student to communicate his thinking and knowledge in correct and effective language so as to further his contribution to the world community.
6. To develop in the student a sense of community living so that he may have a sympathetic concern for and a lively responsibility to his neighbors in the society of which he is a part.
7. To develop in the student a mature understanding of the Christian faith and to inspire him toward a total commitment to Christ as that integrative resource which unites all of life into a meaningful whole.

Centennial Study Conference, June, 1960

Christian Unity in Faith and Witness

A SPECIAL Centennial Committee was commissioned by the Executive Committee of the General Conference Mennonite Church to prepare and conduct a study conference on the topic "Christian Unity in Faith and Witness" at Donnellson, Iowa, in June, 1960. That particular place and time were chosen because the founding of the General Conference Mennonite Church took place in that community one hundred years ago.

The first item presented here is the Objectives of the Study Conference. After this follow the topics of the lectures given. The first four lectures and an historical tour were of general nature and of great significance for the community as well as for the delegates who had come from all parts of North America. (See April, 1960, issue of *Mennonite Life,* which featured the Mennonites of Iowa.)

The Study Conference itself consisted primarily of the presentation of six lectures, each of which was followed by a response and a discussion period. After the discussion, the group reassembled to listen to the reports of the recorders from each group. A Findings Committee was at work throughout the sessions attempting to formulate the results of the presentations and discussions. The findings of this Committee are also presented here.

The ideal of Christian unity is never fully achieved. It remains our problem and challenge to continue work toward a greater realization of unity in Christ. The Study Conference did not "settle" any questions "once and for all." However, it furnished an excellent opportunity to face issues and questions frankly and openly

(Continued on page 152)

The speakers and delegates of the Iowa Centennial Study Conference, "Christian Unity in Faith and Witness," which convened at Donnellson, Iowa, June 20-23, 1960.

The former Methodist Church building at West Point, Iowa, where the General Conference Mennonite Church was founded during Pentecost, May 28-29, 1860. The Study Conference delegates and guests made a pilgrimage to this building, which is now being used as a garage, and bowed their heads in a short prayer thanking God for the Christian unity achieved through these pioneer efforts and asking for vision, guidance and courage to continue this work of the Lord during the second century of the General Conference Mennonite Church.

Markers erected and dedicated (below) in connection with the commemoration of the Centennial of the General Conference Mennonite Church at Donnellson, Iowa, during the Study Conference sessions, June 20-23, 1960, located on Main Street in the Park (left) and Zion Mennonite Cemetery (right). The plaque made by J. P. Klassen reads as follows: "Site of Zion Mennonite Church building erected 1854 commemorating the founding of the General Conference Mennonite Church. 1 Corinthians 3:11. The General Conference Mennonite Church was founded in West Point, Iowa, May 28-29, 1860, by representatives from Iowa and Pennsylvania to unify all Mennonites and strengthen their efforts in missions, publication and education."

(Continued from page 149)

in brotherly love and to bring closer together those who are not always agreed in all matters of faith and witness.

The task of continuing the discussion and conversation pertaining to matters of a greater Christian unity remains with us during the second century of the General Conference Mennonite Church and after four hundred years of Mennonite history and nearly two thousand years of the Church of Christ. If the burden of a divided church and the challenge of Christ for unity fills our hearts, we will not need to press any particular issues of "joining," but will be growing in the direction of a better understanding and co-operation and a greater love of Christ, which will produce results of greater unity.

The burden of greater Christian unity must be felt on a local level as well as on the level of co-operation within the larger Mennonite constituency and Christendom in general. The experience and the lectures and discussions at Iowa could be very helpful during the winter season when congregations look for stimulating material for their midweek or Sunday evening programs. Information can be obtained from: Erwin Goering, Executive Secretary, 722 Main Street, Newton, Kansas.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY CONFERENCE

One hundred years ago the founders of our Conference were convinced that a greater unity in faith and witness could be achieved through a general conference of Mennonites. In the year of 1960 we are asking ourselves, "To what extent has this unity been realized?" Many feel we are as much in need of true Christian unity in our day as the founders were in theirs. It is now time to make a fresh appraisal of our position, as we face the second century of our General Conference.

Since it is true that:

1. This is the centennial year of the General Conference Mennonite Church which was founded for purposes of greater unity in faith and witness;
2. The Conference has always been heterogeneous as far as its religious and cultural background is concerned;
3. The Conference has undergone many varying influences throughout the century in its religious beliefs and practices;
4. The Conference is dedicated to a church polity of congregationalism on the local, district, regional, and conference level;

It is imperative that we:

1. Examine the biblical and theological basis of unity in faith and witness;
2. Evaluate the accomplishments and failures of our past in this area;
3. Explore possible areas of greater agreement in faith and witness in the General Conference;
4. Clarify our position in relation to the wider Mennonite fellowship and to other Christian groups.

LECTURES OF STUDY CONFERENCE

A. Local Program

"The Mennonites in Southeast Iowa" by Melvin Gingerich

"A Century in the Donnellson Community" by Howard Raid

"The General Conference Mennonite Church: Past, Present and Future" by Olin Krehbiel

"Our Apostleship of Reconciliation" by Erland Waltner

B. Study Conference

"The Biblical Basis of the Unity of the Church" by Vernon Neufeld

"Unity and Disunity among the Mennonites" by William Keeney

"The Problem of Unity in the General Conference" by E. G. Kaufman

"The Future of Inter-Mennonite Co-operation" by William Klassen

"The Contemporary Ecumenical Movements" by Russell L. Mast

"The Mennonites and the Ecumenical Movements" by John Howard Yoder

STATEMENT OF FINDINGS

We are deeply grateful to God for the opportunity in this centennial year of the General Conference Mennonite Church to study the question of Christian unity in faith and witness. We feel it is timely to make a fresh appraisal of our position because:

The General Conference was originally dedicated to a quest for greater unity in faith and witness.

The Conference has always been heterogeneous in its religious and cultural background.

The Conference has undergone many varying influences throughout the last century in its religious beliefs and practices.

The Conference has been dedicated to a polity of congregational government, thus recognizing variety.

The Biblical Basis of Unity

We recognize the imperative to discover afresh the biblical teaching about Christian unity and to apply these teachings to our present-day relationships, for ourselves, our Conference, and for others.

The teaching of the New Testament emphasizes unity as *given*, not something wholly to be sought, "endeavoring to *keep* the unity of the spirit" (Eph. 4:3). In discussing problems relating to unity we need to recognize the unity we possess.

The New Testament teaches that in the early church there was diversity and variation in organization, in practice, and in emphasis of theology, yet these apparent differences strengthened the testimony and effectiveness of the whole. "If all were a single organ, where would the body be?" (1 Cor. 12:19 RSV).

We recognize the centrality of Jesus Christ as essential to an understanding of the doctrine of Christian unity, that in the historical appearance of Jesus, His life, death, and resurrection, and in the experience of all believers with Jesus as Savior and Lord, all Christians are united. "That every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:11).

We recognize that we need the authority of the Scriptures for guidance in our quest for unity, interpreted in the light of Jesus Christ, illuminated by the Holy Spirit.

We recognize that the way of love and mutual concern is the spirit in which we should seek Christian unity.

The New Testament makes clear that it is not Christian experience alone nor agreement about Christian doctrine alone which forms the basis for unity, but rather the personal encounter and positive response of the believer to Jesus Christ as Lord.

Unity Among Mennonites

During this conference we were reminded that there were historical causes for our failure to maintain unity among Mennonite groups. Among these were the practice of church discipline, differences in doctrines and practices, absolutizing particular cultural forms, outside religious influences, cultural pressures, personality clashes (lack of patience), lack of breadth in training and education.

Since its formation was the fruit of a union movement, the General Conference has had a continuing vision for Christian unity. Its developing program of missions, Christian education and publication, and Christian service have tended to unite the brotherhood.

Present differences in culture, language, and geography are diminishing as threats to unity. Among current obstacles to unity in the General Conference is our differing interpretation of the Scriptures. Nevertheless, formal and informal discussions at the conference indicated that these differences have frequently been overemphasized. We look to the study commission appointed to deal with the question of inspiration of the Scriptures as a necessary and important step in solving this problem.

The experience of frank discussion of differences provided delegates to this study conference an example of the process of "speaking the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15). This we believe is needed on all levels. We recognize further that patient love and forbearance are needed to sustain the warm Christian fellowship and unity we seek.

It is our understanding that co-operation is not an option; it is a mandate. Cumulative evidence in the New Testament leaves us no other alternative. Only as we co-operate does the unity with which Christ has blessed us become manifest to the world. To refuse to carry it out is to deny Christ's lordship.

Our failure to realize the ultimate goal of unity is embarrassing and suggests to us the following steps:

a. That we include all Mennonite and kindred groups in our quest for unity.
b. That we continue, with renewed efforts, to cultivate fellowship with other Mennonite groups on the local level and co-operate where we can in worship, relief, and service.
c. That we encourage inter-Mennonite Bible study conferences for ministers and church workers.

The Ecumenical Movements

Since the church in its essential nature is one, we recognize that the disunity which exists in Christianity between denominations and within denominations is contrary to the teaching of the New Testament and therefore unchristian.

We recognize that we as a Christian group have been living under the false impressions (a) that Mennonites are superior to other Christians and (b) that Mennonites have traditionally rejected interchurch relationships.

We are not the only ones who confess Jesus Christ as Lord, therefore we recognize the desirability and the need to enter into conversation or mutual exhortation with other Christian bodies.

We sense there is a concern that we are not ready as a Conference to take specific steps for membership in ecumenical bodies at this time because:

> We are not familiar enough with the ecumenical movement or the ecumenical council to make a decision.
>
> We have strong differences of opinion in relationship to membership.
>
> Nevertheless, in order to make progress toward Christian unity, we should study and supply information concerning the ecumenical movement.

Recommendation

We, therefore, recommend that the Executive Committee of the General Conference be responsible for a restudy of the 1955 statement of the relationship of our Conference to the various councils of churches and, if possible, bring back a report to the next triennial conference.

Mennonite Churches in Indonesia

By WILBERT SHENK

CLUSTERED around the Muria Mountain on a peninsula of the North-Central Java coast is the group of congregations that comprise the Javanese and Chinese Mennonite Churches in Indonesia. Of these Mennonite brethren, we in America have known little until recent years. In this small area—roughly 35 miles square, contained in the Residency of Pati—live more than four million people, a tremendous potential for the Christian church.

I. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INDONESIAN CHURCHES 1847-1940

October 21, 1847, is an important date in Mennonite history. This is the founding date of the first Mennonite mission board in the world—the Dutch Mennonite Mission Society. Prior to organizing their own board, a number of Dutch Mennonites had served on the Baptist Missionary Society board and had contributed money. In fact, a number of Mennonites had joined the Baptist church because of their interest in missions.

In spite of criticism from both right and left, the founders proceeded to make plans for sending out missionaries to as yet undetermined places in the Netherlands' colonies.

The first missionary candidate was P. Jansz, a teacher and author of two successful textbooks for children. He entered a mission school in January, 1849, and by June, 1851, had completed his preparation. Without a farewell service, Jansz with his new bride, sailed from Europe for the Dutch East Indies in July, 1851. The location of his work was not yet known, but it was expected to be somewhere on the island of Java.

The Dutch Minister for Colonies would not grant Jansz permission to go as a missionary, but he was given permission to teach school. After visiting a number of the principal cities and areas, Jansz decided to accept the offer of an American Christian plantation owner to settle on his large plantation near Japara and open a school for Indonesian children.

Thus, the Muria Mountain area became the first Mennonite foreign mission field. The work was slow and difficult. On March 16, 1854, after having labored three years, Jansz was able to baptize the first five new Christians.

In 1856 a second missionary, H. C. Klinkert, arrived to assist Jansz. Klinkert also was denied permission to come as a missionary. His training was as a land surveyor and teacher, and he was expected to find work accordingly.

Pioneers in Java

The work started by these two men was a pioneer work in several ways. There were no Bibles nor was there Christian literature in either the Javanese or Indonesian language. Jansz made the first Javanese translation and Klinkert the first Indonesian translation of the Bible. (Both worked under the Dutch and British Bible Societies in translation work for many years.) Also, this work begun by Jansz and Klinkert is the oldest missionary work still extant in the central Java area. Other larger missions started years later.

Jansz pioneered a new mission method by organizing colonies; colonies were organized where Christian people could settle. He felt not only that it was difficult for the young Christians to live in a predominantly non-Christian society but also that a Christian life could best be developed in a Christian community.

To acquaint the board and people abroad with his thinking, he wrote a book. It was a complete failure. Fortunately, some mission board members finally came to his rescue and paid the printing bill. Jansz never despaired. "People who believe don't hurry," he said. Though Jansz never realized his dream, his son, P. A. Jansz, did put the plan into practice.

Around 1890 young Jansz, without consent of the board, secured land and set up a colony known as Margoredjo (Road to Prosperity). For the next 50 years this place was the center of the Muria Mennonite Mission and church.

The work of evangelization on Java has never been easy. It has been said that the church on Java is "gathered"—one by one. There has never been a mass turning to Christianity as happened on some other Indonesian islands. In 1877, after 25 years of labor, there were only 39 baptized members of the Mennonite church. Fifty years later the number was more than a thousand. This was probably the result of the new colony method.

Sumatra Field Opened

In 1871 a second mission field in Indonesia was opened. Heinrich Dirks, a young Mennonite from South Russia who studied in Germany, came in contact with German missionaries working in Sumatra, so he asked the Dutch Mennonite board to send him to Sumatra instead of Java. Dirks settled at Pakanten.

From the beginning the work on Sumatra was more successful in numbers than that on Java. In one year there was a small group of eight members. By the time Dirks left ten years later, there were already 109 baptized members. An attempt was made to open a mission

A class of the Mennonite Mission School at Margoredjo, Java, prior to World War II.

See January, 1948, issue of MENNONITE LIFE for more articles on the Mennonite church in Indonesia.

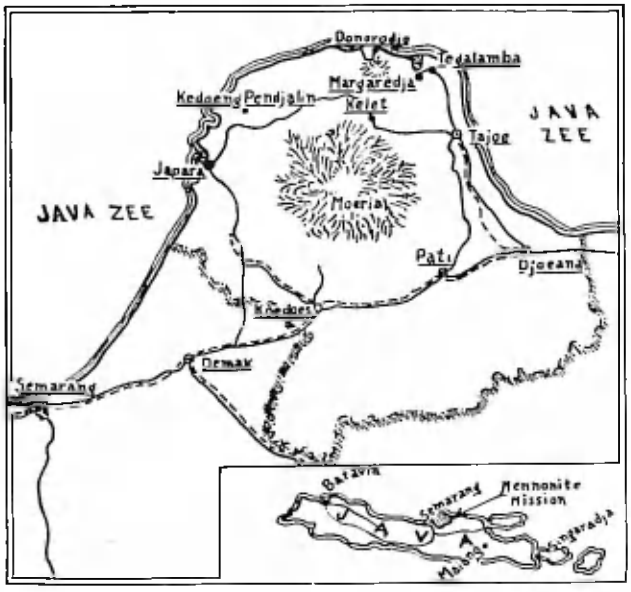
hospital and school at Pakanten around 1915. It proved to be a failure because of the poor location.

The work in Sumatra was supported almost wholly by the churches of East Prussia and South Russia, both financially and with personnel. It has always suffered from insufficient workers. After Revolution in Russia, further support from these churches was impossible. The Sumatra work was transferred to another mission in the early 1930's, because the last missionary, Nachtigal, died in 1928 and there was no one to replace him. At that time there were around 500 baptized members.

Mennonite Cooperative Effort

For the ecumenical-minded, the mission work carried on in Indonesia is of special interest. After 1876 nearly all of the personnel and much of the finances for the work came from Mennonites in various countries, while the Dutch board continued to administer the mission. It is surprising that the churches in Germany, Switzerland, East Prussia and South Russia continued to work through the Dutch board when they were given no representation on it. Perhaps this is best explained by H. van der Smissen of Hamburg who spoke at the golden anniversary celebration in 1897. He said: "This working together reminds us that we are Doopsgezinden —Mennonites as we call ourselves in Germany—brothers, members of one body, who must stay together when we want to do something. Your prayer did not go unanswered. There was an echo. Holland once gave us our

Map of early mission field, Java, Indonesia.



Menno, Dutch Mennonites helped us in times of oppression with love, and now we are thanking you for the start you have given us in working together in this task for Him whom we recognize as our Saviour and Lord." On several occasions attempts were made to get support from the American Mennonites, too; but this was never worked out. The tradition of international working together, however, has survived until the present time.

After the turn of the century, the work in Java broadened out to include hospitals and more schools. A hospital was opened in 1915 at Kelet on the north side of the Muria Mountain. A network of outpatient clinics gradually built up. A gift of money from Queen Wilhelmina made possible a large leprosarium at Donorodjo which opened in 1916. Later another hospital was built in Tayu.

Once the colony was established at Margoredjo, P. A. Jansz built a teachers' school. The school maintained high standards and was well-known throughout Java. Gradually, as young Christians were graduated from the school, elementary schools were opened in many of the church communities. Often the teacher would serve also as assistant pastor in the church.

Chinese Mennonite Church Founded

The Chinese Mennonite church in Indonesia, also located around Muria Mountain, has a unique history. During the years 1917-1918 a man by the name of Tee Siem Tat was ill. Finally in 1918 he felt that he was critically ill and called doctor after doctor to his bedside. Each doctor advised him that there was nothing wrong with him, and the sixth one told Tee that he would be glad to sign a physical fitness certificate so that he could buy life insurance!

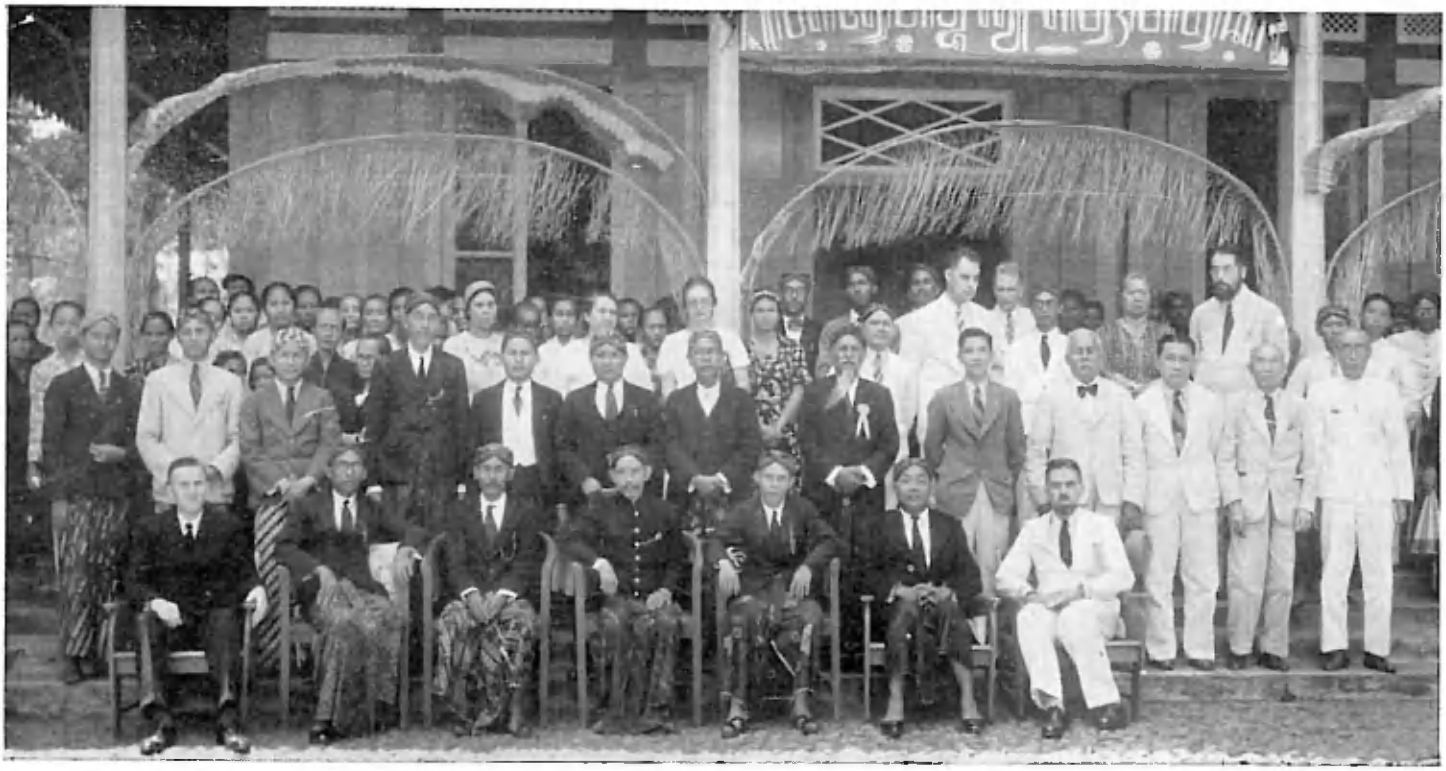
Tee's wife had been reading a Bible for some time, though she did not fully understand it. Every time she would come to the story of the crucifixion of Jesus, she would weep. Finally she persuaded her husband to contact the Salvation Army at Rembang. Tee attended their services several times and felt much better. At his request they began coming to Kudus to hold services in his home.

During this time he was studying the Bible and became converted. For some time he visited various mission groups and missionaries and on one occasion even had various groups come together for discussions. Within himself he came to the conclusion that the teachings of the Mennonite missionary, N. Thiessen, followed the Bible most closely, and he asked Thiessen to baptize him with twenty-five others. This was done by Thiessen on Dec. 6, 1920.

Tee continued to hold services in his house; from time to time one of the Mennonite missionaries would come to baptize those who were ready. Finally Tee asked whether it would be possible for the Mennonite mission to assist with the work among Chinese people. This request was turned down, however.

Tee was a zealous Christian and a man of action. He asked the government for permission to establish a Chinese Mennonite Church. On February 3, 1927, the request was granted. From the beginning the Chinese Mennonite Church has been independent of any mission or outside affiliation, truly indigenous.

Mr. and Mrs. Tee Siem Tat of Kudus, Java, founder of the Chinese Mennonite Church of Indonesia. (Right) Tan King Ien, Mrs. Tee Siem Tat (widow), Mrs. Tan King Ien, and Herman Tan, grandson of founder.



November 24, 1940, the date on which the Indonesian Mennonite Mission Church of Java became independent.

Because of the active personal work of Tee and his helpers, churches were started in surrounding towns within a few years. There were already several hundred members at the time of Tee Siem Tat's death in October, 1940. According to Herman Tan, grandson of Tee Siem Tat, it often happened that even though people became Christians, they were still afraid to dispose of their idols. His grandfather would dispose of the idols for them. At the time of the Japanese invasion in 1942, this large collection of idols stored at the Tee house was burned to make sure that they would not fall into the hands of non-Christians.

Independent Javanese Church

The first Javanese Mennonite congregation to get its independence from the mission was the church at Margoredjo in 1928. Already there were strong nationalist movements, and this had its influence on the church.

For the first seventy-five years of the mission in Java, the missionaries worked primarily among the village people in the rural areas. Around 1922 they began to realize that work must be extended to the towns. Urbanization and rapid social change were taking place. If there was to be a strong church in the future, they had to follow their people to the towns also. It was during this time that the churches in Kudus and Pati were begun. The latter became important as the center of the church during and following the war.

In the late 1930's a number of the missionaries were advanced in years. There were only a few young missionaries. The desire for independence was spreading and gained impetus when it became apparent that World War II was imminent. On May 30, 1940, in the church at Kelet the Muria Christian (Mennonite) Church was formed. There were about 2,000 baptized members at that time.

II. THE TEST OF THE INDONESIAN CHURCHES 1940-1949

"We must clearly understand that the Muria Christian (Mennonite) Church exists only because of the love of God," so said Chairman S. Djojodihardjo (pronounced Jo-yo-di-har-jo), reporting to the Javanese Mennonite Conference in June, 1949. Many members of the church suffered for their faith, first as their country was invaded by the Japanese during World War II and later during the Indonesian revolt against the Dutch.

The Young Church Begins to Work

When the Dutch Mennonite mission stations and outposts on Java were organized as churches on May 30, 1940, there was only one ordained Javanese minister. After the Margoredjo congregation was granted independence in 1928, Brother Reuben was ordained as pastor while missionary Thiessen stayed on as helper. But in all the other places the missionaries continued to supervise the work. By this time, however, there were

lay-preachers and evangelists assisting in the work at each place.

The first decision made by the newly organized conference was to ordain five ministers. The ordination was held in the church at Margoredjo on November 14, 1940. Two other steps taken were: 1) the sending of delegations to each congregation to assist with their problems and help them get established as adult churches; and 2) the holding of a conference of all ministers, evangelists and colporteurs to study their duties and better understand the task which they must now do. A plea was also made that each member of every congregation rally to the support of his church financially.

This was a time of activity. People were caught up in the enthusiasm of the moment. No one anticipated that the strength of this young church would soon be tested by suffering and persecution.

The second meeting of the conference was held on May 27-28, 1941, in the church at Kedugpendjalin. All discussions centered around how to bring the Muria churches to spiritual and material maturity. It was still impossible for local congregations to support their ministers. The mission, then, made an agreement with each congregation to give non-interest loans for pastoral support. Suddenly all this came to an end.

In March, 1942, the Japanese invaded Java, landing east of Pati near Rembang. During this time the Dutch government and forces retreated to the west while the Japanese army headed south. For some weeks a power vacuum existed in the Muria area. This was the opportunity for which the Moslems had been waiting. They set out to Moslemize all Christians and Chinese.

Persecution by Moslems

An important Islamic center on Java is located at Bulumanis, a small village about halfway between Pati and Margoredjo—a distance of 20 miles. At Bulumanis the Moslems were waiting and planning for their "holy war." They intended to force all Christians to renounce their faith and repeat the Islamic creed (There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet) and to circumcise all the Chinese.

Mission hospital of Tajoe destroyed by mob in 1942.

The Amsjor (army for fighting holy war) headed first to Tayu, only three miles away where they wanted to find Dr. Gramberg, Dutch Mennonite mission doctor. Fortunately, the Gramberg family had been able to run the roadblock and get away to Kelet. There was no mercy, however, for the hospital nurses and workers who did not get away. They were bound, beaten and tortured. Dr. Ong, a Chinese doctor living in the town, was attacked with knives and left lying in the street half dead. Then the Amsjor burned and destroyed the Gramberg residence, most of the hospital and part of the new Christian school near by.

Margoredjo Church Destroyed

This done, the Amsjor next started in the direction of Margoredjo a few miles further to the north. They had started out with about a thousand men, but the number increased as they went along shouting, "Sabil, sabil," the Moslem cry of holy war. Before reaching Margoredjo, they stopped to rest and plan in the small village of Ngegel. They sent messengers ahead to warn the Christians that if they did not surrender on their knees, all would be killed and the village burned.

As to what they should do at this point, there was some difference of opinion among the Christians. The younger men wanted to defend themselves, while the older folk, influenced by the teachings of nonresistance, objected. Many of the people had already fled into the fields and forests, but there were still many in the village when the Amsjor came.

Before reaching Margoredjo the Moslems stopped and destroyed the church at Dukuhseti. When the Moslems came to Margoredjo, the young people saw their weapons and knew they could not defend themselves. Upon arriving, the group stopped and the leader made a speech claiming that the Japanese had ordered all people to become Moslems and that the Dutch religion (Christianity) had to be destroyed. The Christian leaders in Margoredjo were ordered to renounce their faith with the promise that if they did so, the church would not be destroyed but would be made into a mosque! If they did not, they would be tortured.

About half of the villagers who had stayed behind agreed to co-operate with the Amsjor. All the Bibles were taken from the church and piled in a heap. The Amsjor leader began to speak again, declaring that they did not need to light the fire, that instead he would call down fire from heaven. After praying long and loud, he went away. The people waited in anticipation, and when nothing happened, they tore the Bibles

in angry disappointment and then proceeded to destroy the church building.

Five leaders of the Margoredjo church were taken to Ngegel and tortured. Samuel, an old man, had half his heavy beard shaved. They were given contaminated rice as food. Two other churches and several schools in this area were also destroyed.

Donorodjo Incident

At this point the Amsjor divided into two groups. One half was to go to Kelet where the second mission hospital was located and the other half to the leprosarium at Donorodjo on the east coast.

Rev. Heusdens, a Dutchman, was in charge at Donorodjo. Gramberg came some days before and pleaded with him to come to Kelet but he refused to go unless the whole village went along. When the bandits finally came, they ransacked and destroyed many buildings, and tortured some of the people who had stayed behind. Heusdens himself was killed and his body dismembered.

By the time the Amsjor reached Kelet, the people there had organized defense measures. A few of the Chinese had guns. The Gramberg family, retired missionary J. Klaassen and his daughter, a nurse at the hospital, were in Kelet.

When the Moslems came, they were warned not to enter the hospital or to ransack anything. When they chose to defy this warning, a Chinese fired a shot into the air. Because no one fell dead, they went on in. Again the Chinese fired, and this time a number of people were killed with a single shot. This caused the Amsjor to retreat from the area. Also, by this time the Dutch had sent help to end the "holy war."

The only other church which suffered similar persecution was on the west side of the Muria Mountain near Petjangaan. This was a new group of Christians who had once been active Moslems. Their church was burned and the people molested. Many fled into the forests. During this time in the forest, they came into contact with more Moslems from nearby Ngeling who, as a result, were converted, and there is now a church at Ngeling.

Japanese Occupation

As a result of the persecution, many of the remaining Christians were afraid; but services were held in all the churches regularly. They found a new feeling of brotherhood. Some of the Christians who were now out of work because of the destroyed hospitals moved to other places.

Although the Japanese occupation restored some measure of peace, the Christians continued to have difficulty. The Japanese frequently played one group against the other to arouse fear and suspicion. During this time, however, the conference met again and decided to send representatives to visit the congregations to give encouragement, strengthen their faith and make an effort to rebuild the churches. Especially the congregation at Margoredjo had suffered spiritually. The task of rebuilding seemed insurmountable.

Mas Ngardjan, hospital attendant and family.

During the next two years the Christians were kept under surveillance. Some of the leaders' homes were raided every day. On one occasion the executive committee of the conference was meeting in the home of S. Djojodihardjo when the police came and arrested the group. They were released after being warned not to hold meetings without permits.

The missionaries who were still on the field could work but little during the Japanese occupation. Anti-European campaigns were staged by the Japanese who posed as the liberator of the Indonesians. For a time the people believed; but the propaganda began to have a hollow ring when the people's rice was taken away.

Clothing couldn't be obtained; people were starving.

During the occupation, retired missionary P. A. Jansz and Johann Hübert and his wife, who were living south of Samarang in the hills, all died. Jansz had been working most of this time on a revision of the Javanese translation of the Bible. He had served in Java more than sixty years.

The Chinese Mennonites in the Muria area had little difficulty during the Japanese occupation. Especially in their favor was the fact that they had never had any connection with an European mission, and the Japanese felt there was little possibility for them to have connections with enemy forces. Their work continued normally.

In August, 1945, following the Japanese surrender, there was a surge of hope. This did not last long. Before Allied troops could reoccupy Java, the Indonesians proclaimed their indepedence and began organizing themselves for revolution.

Again a propaganda campaign was staged against the Dutch. The Moslems seized the opportunity to proclaim themselves as the only true nationalists. They said the Christians must surely be pro-Dutch since their religion was "Western."

This caused a strong reaction and much concern among the Christians, especially the young people. They wanted to positively assert their support for the Indonesian independence movement, too. As a result, an Indonesian Christian party was finally organized. Some of the older leaders were not enthusiastic about this. They were concerned that the Christians always put the church first.

During this time the government changed hands several times in the Muria area. When the Dutch were in control, the Christians were suspected of helping the rebels. When the Indonesian Republic was in power, they suspected the Christians of helping the Dutch. Many of the young people and several of the old preachers were jailed. At the time of the fifth conference in June, 1949, a number of the Christians were still under arrest.

This was a momentous time of severe testing. Would the church survive? Would Christians hold fast to their faith? Would the church have a place in the Indonesia of the future? At the time of the 1949 conference there was a firm conviction that indeed the church must go on and that she had an important work to do in a new and free Indonesia. Though destitute and without any material means with which to work, the conference affirmed its readiness to go forward in obedience to God's call and will.

III. THE INDONESIAN MENNONITE CHURCHES TODAY
1949-1960

The Fifth Conference of the Javanese Mennonite Church in June, 1949, proved to be of great significance. At that time a number of the old preachers were still in jail, the people were poor and undernourished. Many were asking if they should even try to continue working as a church. The war was still not ended.

Decide Future of Church

During the conference a delegation of several Dutch missionaries and Indonesian ministers from the Reformed mission of Southcentral Java urged the Muria Mennonites to join with them. Their offer was especially tempting because of the financial resources they had at their disposal. Already the Salatiga Mission had united with the Reformed group.

The Muria Mennonites, however, were forcefully impressed when their chairman, S. Djojodihardjo, reported about the church and their experiences during the past eight years. Several times during the report there were interruptions for discussion and prayer. They began to see that the hand of God was working in their midst, that He had not forsaken them. Especially the old preachers, the ones who suffered most, were unwilling to disband their own church.

Japara Indonesian Mennonite Church and delegates to the Javanese Mennonite Conference, July, 1959, at Pati.

Group of students from Christian high school in Pati in front of School under construction. (Right) Japara, Indonesian Menn. Church.

Two other events influenced the final voting: The Mennonite Central Committee workers, who had been in Sumatra, were in contact with the Muria area and were beginning to distribute material aid. Secondly, missionary Daniel Amstutz had been able to return to Indonesia and arrived just at the time of the conference. This meant that contact with Europe was still possible.

After listening to the reports and hearing the response of the Muria delegates, F. L. Bakker, Reformed missionary, also privately advised the Muria Mennonites that they were right in continuing to exist as a separate group. Again they prayed about the matter and then voted overwhelmingly that they would remain a Mennonite church. "We believe," they said, "God has helped us during all these difficulties and that our church will now be used by God to do part of the task He has given to the Church in Indonesia."

Commenting on the events that took place during this conference, S. Djojodihardjo says: "This was the moment that the Muria church really became independent." In the time of the mission, the mission was something of a social institution. People could sometimes get loans of money, criminals and outcasts were given protection in the colony. Some of them became sincere Christians. But others of these were only "bread Christians."

Then came the years of persecution at the hands of the Moslems. During the occupation, the Japanese had played the Moslems against the Christians and cultivated enmity between the two groups. So the people had learned that being a Christian is not an easy matter. But they also learned that God still led and blessed them. For the first time the Christians began to see that economic and social advantages were not synonymous with being a Christian. The church was now beginning to understand the meaning of her calling to be independent. God had had to teach her first.

Begin to Work Again

By the end of 1949, the war was over and sovereignty was transferred to the Republic of Indonesia. Late in 1949 MCC Executive Secretary Orie O. Miller visited the Muria area and conferred with the leaders. This was the first concrete answer to the step they had taken in faith earlier at the conference. The Mennonite brotherhood in America and Europe was prepared to stand by them and assist the church.

The most urgent need was for more trained pastors. A number of the older men had died during the war. New help was needed to carry on the work. A theological school was opened in 1950 supported one-third each by the Muria Mennonites, American Mennonites and European Mennonites. By 1955 about fifteen young men had completed their training from this school.

An effort had to be made to educate the churches. Everyone realized that he must begin to actively evangelize in the towns. Up until now Margoredjo, Kelet and Kedungpendjalin, all village churches, were the centers. These were soon to be replaced by Pati, Kudus and Japara as the mother churches of the new era.

Church members had to be urged to increase their giving. The system of using collection plates still had not been introduced. Some felt that passing the offering plate was like forcing people to give money. Gradually they began to accept these innovations.

It was as if they had earlier received the Lord "second hand" from the missionary; but now they were receiving Him themselves. He was calling *them* to do, to work. Like the Samaritan woman, they were now seeing for themselves.

The Muria churches were now awaking to their own responsibility of being a missionary church and of using various means for outreach. Everyone felt that schools were very much needed. The new nation of Indonesia

had a shortage of all kinds of trained people. This was the opportunity for the church to open schools where it could give a Christian education. At this time neither of the groups abroad supported the idea, and the Muria churches struck out on their own. Later on though, the European Mennonites contributed money to build a high-school level teachers' training school and senior high school.

Technically the school venture has experienced many ups and downs. Some of the schools had to be closed subsequently as there were not sufficient finances for all. There was a shortage of qualified teachers who were Christians. Insufficient planning had been done and standards were too low. In spite of the negative things which can be said, the schools have become an important source of new Christians and one of the most effective means of evangelization during the past eight years.

Before the war there was a well-organized system of mission hospitals, leprosarium and outpatient clinics in the Muria area. A part of these were destroyed during the war and what remained was taken over by the government (this happened throughout Indonesia).

No doubt influenced by the long-standing tradition of having a medical services program, the church felt that it wanted to organize a new medical program. There was some hope from time to time that the government might eventually return the church hospitals to the churches. But where were the doctors, nurses, medicines, instruments and funds?

The Muria church requested the Mennonite Central Committee to begin this work by opening an outpatient clinic. Until this time the work of the MCC had consisted of distributing relief aid, but it was agreed to begin the medical project. The first clinic was opened at Margoredjo in 1950. For the next five years the only medical work carried on by Christians in the Muria area was through the MCC-operated clinics at Margoredjo and Kayuapu. This social service was carried out in the name of the church and provided opportunity to the local congregations to bring the Gospel to the many patients who came for treatment.

In 1955 the Muria conference set up a medical commission with a board and the European Mennonite Mission sent Dr. Marthe Ropp of France and Nurse Liesel Hege of Germany (both had served a term in the MCC Indonesia program) to get the medical services program organized and operating. In 1957 the MCC turned its work over to the control of the church board and the two programs were integrated.

The medical work has not been easy. Time after time permission to open a small hospital near Tayu was refused. At last in July, 1958, the permit came. At the present, besides the hospital, there are three outpatient clinics where approximately 45,000 patients are treated annually. The church is concerned that this opportunity be even better utilized for bringing the Gospel.

The conference organized a special evangelization commission. The purpose of this was to promote and explore new methods and to supervise the work that was being done through the clinics and in colportage. More recently a literature project has been started to teach the members of the congregation and also as a means of outreach. In these projects, too, the Muria churches have sought to work with the churches abroad.

Chinese Churches Grow

Similar growth and changes have been taking place in the Muria Chinese church. According to Herman Tan, there is a new interest and consciousness about mission outreach. In the early years when pioneer Tee Siem Tat was busily working, nearly every year a new group was founded. After his death and during the war years, things leveled off. Now once again personal evangelization and outreach is being done.

An important characteristic of the Chinese church is its independence. This dates back to the time when founder Tee organized the church independently and without the help of any mission or other church. They feel wary of outside influences. Consequently, they are slower to accept ideas. For one thing, the membership still is not conscious of hospitals and clinics as a means of evangelizing. They are beginning, however, more and more to build schools—kindergartens, primary and junior high schools.

In September, 1959, a Bible school was opened for the first time to give six-week courses to the young people who have not had much educational opportunity but who want to assist in the work of the church. There is much promise in this new undertaking as a means of building unity throughout the conference, as well as for outreach. There is still a big need for trained full-time pastors.

Rapid changes are taking place in this young country. The needs are many. The church is being challenged daily to give and live the love of Christ. There are constant pressures on the Christians who are a small minority in an unfriendly society. Being a Christian is seen as a liability as well as an asset; becoming a Christian means paying a price. It is as if someone is constantly knocking on the door of their hearts, asking: "Are you a true Christian, or not?" It is a challenge to the Christian church to show that coming to Christ is a far more important thing than the difficulties which it may experience as a result.

The Muria Mennonite Church has suffered, but as a result she has confirmed her faith. She is eagerly accepting God's call. There is a strong sense of "for such a time as this." But she also feels that she is not yet fully equipped to carry out her task. And for this she continues to look to the Mennonite brotherhood abroad for support and guidance. Djojodihardjo said recently: "The Mennonites from abroad have an oppor-

tunity to show the Mennonites in Indonesia, as well as the other Indonesian churches, what it means to witness not only by word but also deed, to show the practical meaning of the love of Jesus Christ."

In a society which has been little influenced by the Judeo-Christian culture, this presents itself as a great task. The task is to make every Christian feel responsible to his neighbor, to adopt the way of love as the way of life. The further task is to demonstrate responsible freedom and to influence the non-Christian society rather than to allow the society to influence the Christian. These are the things of concern to the Muria Mennonites today.

The breadth and depth of the growth and maturity of the Muria Christian churches is perhaps best illustrated by their concern for the former Mennonite mission in Sumatra. After 1928 when missionary Nachtigal died, no Mennonite missionaries were sent again. Since the war, the Java Mennonites reestablished contact with the very small group of Mennonites still in Sumatra. Repeatedly the Sumatrans have called for help. The Javanese were prepared to help and sent one young man there in 1956. Unfortunately, this did not prove entirely successful, partly because of the national situation just at that time. The Javanese church continues to discuss and pray about what can be done to rebuild the work in Sumatra (there are still some fifty members). They hope that the churches abroad will be willing to share in this.

Briefly this is the story of our two thousand Chinese and four thousand Javanese Mennonites in Indonesia. As fellow Mennonites, we cannot fail to be impressed and interested in the way they are living and growing. They are looking to us to share with them some of our resources; and we are convinced that in turn there is much for us to learn from them.

Swiss Mennonites Plan a Museum

By HOWARD RAID

IN connection with the 50th anniversary of Bluffton College a special event called "Swiss Day" was held on campus. At this time a number of local historical items were on display in the Musselman Library. The Swiss people of the community enjoyed the occasion so much that Swiss Day has continued as an annual event.

Out of the committee meetings preparing for Swiss Day from time to time would come suggestions that something should be done about the historical items that are now owned by various families in the local community. The 1951 Swiss Day Committee proposed the idea of establishing a Swiss Museum. Ezra Moser was appointed as a chairman to further study the proposition.

In 1953 the Swiss Committee again asked a number of people in the community to come together to study the possibility of a museum. In 1954 the museum committee held another meeting. At this time, Edwin Zepp, director of the Ohio State Museum spoke to the group. Following this, several members of the committee attended some of the meetings of the State Historical Society held in various parts of the state. These meetings presented a new concept of the nature of the museum. Heretofore the committee had more or less thought of a museum as a place in which items are stored and just put on display.

But professionals who had made a study of it impressed upon the committee that a museum should be a place to tell a story. It should tell the historical story of a community or of a people or industry, depending on its exact purpose. Therefore, a museum should consist of a building with considerable storage space surrounded by display rooms.

These displays would then be changed periodically in order that various phases of the historical development of the community might be told. This would have the added merit of interesting more people and sustaining their interests through the years.

The committee was advised by Carl Guthe of the American Association of Museums that it should look for something distinctive. For example, it would have a natural in the Swiss community. Thus the museum could be based on a cultural idea plus the development of the community. He pointed out further that with the Swiss emphasis this could be a very distinctive museum for there are very few Swiss settlements in the nation.

While these outlines presented the basic concept of the establishment of a museum, the only further activity until 1959 was to receive a collection at each Swiss Day program for the museum. These collections would vary from $50 to $100. By 1959 there was about $600 in the treasury.

In 1959 the Swiss Day Committee again discussed the idea of a museum. It revised the former committee which proceeded to hold meetings and secure information about the incorporation of the society. Here again the Ohio


Swiss costumes adorning young and old on Swiss day. Songs by grandmother Hahn are accompanied on the zither.

State Historical Society was very helpful. It had, on hand, copies of the charters and bylaws of a number of historical societies throughout the state. With these as basis for the beginning of the constitution and charter the committee proceeded to draw up an acceptable copy.

It was decided to form a non-profit corporation under the laws of the state of Ohio. The request was sent to the Secretary of State for the forms to be completed for the filing of such articles. In the state of Ohio, as in most states, these articles can be relatively simple. Involving first, the name of the corporation; the place where the principal office of the corporation is to be located and the purposes followed by a listing of the incorporators who shall serve as trustees until the first annual meeting.

After considerable discussion and numerous trial copies the following purposes were adopted:

> The general purpose and plan of operation of the corporation shall be to investigate and study the history of the Bluffton-Pandora community of the state of Ohio; to provide for the collection, preservation, and dissemination of knowledge and information with reference thereto; to provide for the collection and preservation or display of papers, books, records, relics, and other things of historic interest; to acquire, hold, own, operate and manage property, real or personal, necessary or advisable for the purposes herein expressed and to provide for the marking and preservation of historic sites and buildings; and in general to carry on all activities appropriate for a historical society. It shall be nonsectarian and nonpolitical.
>
> The Society also proposes to co-operate with the schools of the community in the teaching of state and local history, to co-operate with the libraries of the counties in the up-building of state and local history sections, in the establishment of history museums, and the marking of historical places of interest throughout the county, and the co-operation with the other historical societies, organizations, groups or individuals having similar purposes or projects.

These articles of incorporation were presented to a lawyer for his comments and suggestions.. After his acceptance they were duly signed by the incorporators and filed with a $25 fee with the Secretary of State.

A major problem was the drawing up of the constitution to meet the particular needs of the society. This was done using the purposes of the charter and then establishing the organizational structure to achieve these purposes. A board of seven members was elected to largely determine policy and to hold all property.

In addition officers were selected and the following committees established: Administrative Committee to carry out the policies and plans for the society; Financial Committee to be in charge of all the accounting and budgeting and the handling of financial drives. The Operations Committee is to be in charge of the property and to administer the same. The Promotional and Publicity Committee is to present information to the public about the society and to secure members.

The society then proceeded to have membership cards printed and membership sold to interested people throughout the area. They plan to continue to accumulate

Dedication service of marker at the site of early Swiss Mennonite Church in Bluffton-Pandora community, Ohio, 1959.

funds in order that a building for storage and display might be purchased or built. The chief methods anticipated in the accumulation of funds would be the sponsoring of various promotional events in the community at which time there would be opportunity to raise funds. The society recently sponsored the erection of two markers. One is at the site of the first Swiss farm settled by Michael Neuenschwander in 1833 and the other is at the site of the first Swiss Mennonite church founded in 1840. They anticipate marking other historical spots in the community.

The present board of directors consists of the following members: Leland Gerber, Wilhem Amstutz, Delbert Grätz, Philip Hilty, Ezra Moser, and Archie Diller. The Officers are as follows: Peter Diller, president; Gene Benroth, vice president; D. W. Bixler, treasurer; Harry Bogart, curator; and Howard Raid, secretary.

Swiss Mennonites Come to Putnam County, Ohio

By DELBERT GRÄTZ

WE ARE told that a building was erected on this spot in 1840 by Swiss Mennonites for the purpose of a place of worship. We also know that this building was soon too small and that in 1857 this first log church was razed and a larger frame building was built on the same location. It was again enlarged in 1876 and scarcely another dozen years passed until it was also found wanting in space for the ever-changing congregation. So, in 1888 the St. John Mennonite Church was erected and the Old White Church was torn down in a few years. By 1846 this same congregation built a second building for worship just across the road from the present Ebenezer Mennonite Church. This too became too small and a brick church was erected which is the original structure of the present Ebenezer Mennonite Church. As Swiss Mennonites moved to the surrounding villages, the need for another building in Bluffton became apparent. As a result, the First Mennonite Church was erected in 1906. These three churches remained as one congregation with a common ministry until 1917 when the First Mennonite Church became a separate congregation and in 1923 the Ebenezer and St. John churches became separate congregations. The Grace Church was organized independently in Pandora in 1904.

Beginning in Switzerland

This, however, is merely the outline of the history of buildings and organization. These are important, but there is so much more to tell than that. Where did this story begin? As early as 1525 persons in the Emmental and Oberland areas of the Canton of Bern, Switzerland, came to know the message of the Bible, a book which the Roman Catholic Church had closed to the laity for many centuries. The thrill of this discovery and the effect on their own lives caused them to strive to reproduce as nearly as possible the first century Christian church. These fellowships took no name, but members merely called each other Brethren. Their opponents soon gave them many derogatory names, the one of *Wiedertäufer* or Anabaptist was the one that was used most often. Today in Canton Bern they call their own organization of churches *Die Alt-Evangelische Taufgesinnten-Gemeinden* (The old evangelical Baptist minded churches).

They desired to establish a pure church according to Apostolic pattern consisting of persons who had a personal experience of regeneration manifesting itself in a righteous Christian life. One was admitted to membership only on personal confession of faith and baptism. The brotherhood was to be kept pure by scriptural discipline as outlined in Matthew 18. They believed that the church should be completely separated from the world and the state and believed it to be contrary to New Testament teaching to participate in warfare or to take oaths. They believed it was their Christian duty to help the needy and suffering and to tell others of the pure and simple gospel of Christ's plan of salvation for them.

To live a life which such beliefs demand is one full

Markers erected in the Bluffton Pandora Mennonite communities in 1959 in memory of the pioneer settlements. (Left) Amos Hilty, Menno Schumacher, Howard Reid, John P. Klassen. (Right) Hiram Kohli, Harry Neiswander, and Ezra Moser. J. P. Klassen designed the bronze plaques.

of deep spiritual joy, but it is not one of ease. If there are not persecutions, then more subtle temptations come to try to destroy faith. The fire and sword of persecution only cleansed the church. Imprisonment, banishment or execution was the price that many of these sixteenth century brethren had to pay for their faith, which was not in accord with the established state church.

Some found refuge in Moravia during the sixteenth century. Large numbers migrated to the Palatinate in South Germany during the latter part of the seventeenth century. From there many emigrated to Pennsylvania from 1710 to 1760 upon the invitation of William Penn.

From 1670 to 1730 many of the Swiss Brethren from the Emmental found refuge in the mountainous Jura region, some thirty miles to the northwest. Here they were permitted to rent only the high stony plateaus. Some also settled just across the French border near the villages of Florimont and Boron, forming the Normanvillars settlement. Most of them followed the occupations of cheese-making and linen manufacturing.

Migration to America

Extremely difficult economic conditions and the threat of compulsory military service caused about half of the Sonnenberg and Münsterberg congregations in the Jura to migrate to Wayne County, Ohio, from 1817 to 1840, where they founded the Sonnenberg settlement near Kidron. From 1819 to 1835 the entire Normanvillars Swiss Mennonite community left their homes and settled in northeastern Wayne County where they founded the Shippewa (now Crown Hill) congregation near Orrville.

In the spring of 1833, Michael Neuenschwander and his son John, who had left the Normanvillars community in France some ten years before, made a trip to the west in search of good government land. They chose two quarter sections in Putnam County and purchased them on May 6, 1833. During September the entire family moved to their new home where they erected a log cabin.

About a year later Christian Suter, Christian Bucher, John Moser and Ursus Amstutz arrived from Wayne County. Through a letter describing the area in appealing terms, Neuenschwander convinced several families from Normanvillars and the Jura to come here in 1835. With this group came Christian Steiner who had been an active bishop of the Normanvillars congregation. Christian Bösiger, who had lived in Waterloo County, Ontario, for about ten years after leaving Normanvillars, became the first deacon. The congregation was then organized. Christian Suter was chosen as minister. Until the first church building was erected on this spot, in 1840, services were held in houses, barns, or on nice days under the branches of some protecting tree. This first church was also used for school purposes. Before this time school had been held in the Christian Steiner home.

Pioneering in Ohio

By the end of 1837 there were twenty-five families in this new settlement. By 1840, when the first census was taken of the area, there were forty-eight families, including 240 persons.

In 1853 typhoid claimed some thirty victims from this settlement. One of the victims was Ulrich Steiner, who had a short time before been chosen as their bishop to replace Christian Steiner who passed away in 1846. Christian Suter, a brother-in-law of Christian Steiner, was chosen as bishop. He had already served as minister some sixteen years. John C. Luginbühl was chosen as a second deacon. During the early 1840's John M. Amstutz, a minister from Switzerland, arrived here. He served until his death in 1860. In 1853 when Christian Suter was chosen as bishop, John Moser and Christian

Steiner (a cousin of Bishop Steiner) were chosen as ministers. The newly ordained Christian Steiner served only about nine weeks when he passed away. Peter Schumacher was chosen as minister in 1856. In 1864 Christian Suter requested that a second elder be chosen. The lot fell on John Moser who served in this capacity for over 40 years. In 1876 Christian Zimmerli and in 1881 Benjamin Diller were chosen by lot as ministers. Peter Steiner was chosen as deacon in 1874. These, then, were the ministers who, during the years of the existence of a church building at this place, were responsible for directing the spiritual life of the congregation. Not all was easy, not all ran smoothly. There were divisions. The Reformed Mennonite had its beginnings as early as 1844. The American Mennonites formed a congregation. It was not easy to maintain a church life that was vital and spiritual. Church discipline was at times necessary.

It was a time of very hard labor but also of joy. Farming was performed by horse and man power. The joy of seeing progress from year to year in reclaiming the swampy woodland for productive farm land, the joy of close family ties and a close knit church fellowship were real ones.

These were times of growth. This is reflected in the building and expanding of buildings that took place during the first 75 years of our settlement. Much of this growth of membership, to be sure, came from their own group. Most of the children accepted the faith of their parents.

If we could hear the voices of the past that were once heard on this spot, we would hear much of joy and sorrow. We would hear many earnest sermons, not by learned theologians, but sermons by brethren who, through their own study, devotion and experience, gained spiritual insights not attained in any other way; the joy of bringing new Christians into the church, the anguish of church discipline to keep the fellowship pure and the rejoicing as a brother is again restored to fellowship. We would also hear something of the sorrow that was caused by the typhoid epidemic of 1853 when one by one young and old were taken from their midst. We would also hear of the concern during the Civil War when the draft was first introduced, and the struggle to keep actions consistent with Christ's teachings of love and the nonresistant faith. We would also hear of the difficulties of introducing a Sunday school and of the attempt to create interest in organized mission endeavor.

What does the story of our past mean to our Swiss Mennonite churches today? Is it only folklore? Is it only a proud people's harking back to their past? Is it only an antiquarian interest in what once was and no longer exists? I sincerely believe that this story of our past holds much meaning for us today and for the future.

What About the Future?

We must ask ourselves individually and as a group the question: Who am I? What am I doing here? Where am I going? Our heritage is quite clear. It is generally a good one, and the details are fairly well known. What the future holds for our community is not certain. One needs only to point out a few problems that have been caused by a lack of acceptance of the spiritual heritage that is ours. The rate of growth of our number of members, the increase in number and size of church buildings has not kept pace with earlier times. The keen interest and concern of the entire brotherhood with the problems and difficulties of a fellow member does not always exist as it did at one time. Too often compromise is today's method of meeting a problem that deals with faith or Christian action rather than a united burden and common action by the entire congregation. Among some families it would be an awkward thing for a young draftee to state his nonresistant faith and do alternative service rather than to do military service. There is little feeling today of tension with the world. Few are willing to be conspicuous because of a belief or practice that might set them apart from anyone else. The land has become for many a way to make money rather than a way of life that is conducive for the nurture of a Christian family. Too often we see land robbed, we see the father trying to do two jobs, farming and factory work, fair to neither. We see land sold to the highest bidder without a thought of consequences to family or church. We see theological controversy take its toll. Yes, it is easy to enumerate. It is not easy to change.

What does the future hold for our Swiss Mennonite congregations and community? We must occasionally stop a bit and realistically see just where we are and what our situation is and ask ourselves—is this all as Christ would have it? With a sincere search for and a rediscovery of the Christian spirit and concern so manifest in our forefathers, I believe that the settlement is unlimited in its possibilities for Christian growth and witness in the future.

Blowing the alpine horn on Swiss Day.

Reflections on a Millennial Journey to Central Asia

A Pilgrim's Letter

By WARREN KLIEWER

Hutchinson, Kansas, 1888:
Now do we know why we returned to Saratov,
to halt, panting and famished, at the first rest of the journey
from our millennial colonies in Central Asia;
resting from plodding on Turkestan desert camel-paths
which skirted Tashkent and Samarkand, though there was small need now
to warn the young against the city's wickedness,
our skinny sons who hobbled like men of eighty, our daughters—
not the most depraved would leer at those unwashed girls in rags—
we learned that in deserts there is no greater sin than hunger;
yet we enduring as we had suffered deaths of oxen
and tunics in tatters, patched with strips of mended aprons,
enduring as snow suffers sun, diminishing?

And did we know why when we had forded the Volga twice,
we as unwelcome returning as when we first shook the dust,
ancestral and natal, from our feet; we hearing the governor's greeting:
"Well, home again? So did your fertile Asian farms
sprout weeds as well as wheat? Of course. And Mongol bandits?
Certainly you can stay now though it might not be,
perhaps, the best for you, perhaps not best for us";
so sneered from the homes from which we first had exiled ourselves,
enduring the six weeks of waiting for our passports
as we were yet to endure the cramped and smoky boxcars,
the jostling to the black Antwerp terminal,
there to hear the Kansas agent of the land office,
who did not mention wind or snow to emigrants:
we endured as a corpse suffers clods, with a clenched jaw?

Is this why we docked in New York, endured the jolting railway,
to tuck our ice-stiffened knees up under our armpits,
to curl our cracking knuckles into frayed sleeve ends,
to twist stiff necks, to bend heads down beneath thin forearms,
to squat on this gray drifted Kansas railway platform
which by tomorrow wind and snow will obliterate—
so say the natives, shaking heads and clucking tongues,
not feeding us or opening doors or lighting fires,
not giving us blankets, not even selling us old blankets—
yet how could we buy from them, for our flat purses piled
together would yield no more than a dozen paper kopecks?
Perhaps it was for this cause we came—to bow our heads?

Your letter, which advised us to winter near the coast
in Pennsylvania or Virginia, arrived late;
though it was sound advice, to come no farther west
until my people had learned the language and the customs,
to work in the East and wait and practice thrift and save our—
what do you call them, dollars? Yet the letter came
when we had traveled halfway over Indiana.
The black conductor brought it to our crowded coach,
stumbling and pitching over crates and men and trunks
and Mrs. Isaac Suderman's girls, then passed around
the envelope, for he couldn't read your German script.
"Who is this fo'?" he said. "I sho' can't make it out."

But we came west, and the women wept and the men complained
and a girl said, "Mama, are you crying because of your sins?"
not knowing whose was the sin, not knowing the agent in Antwerp
who had sold us tickets all the way to Hutchinson,
who was paid so much a head, per immigrant, to trick us,
to ship the German-Russian cattle into the snow,
who was the only one that would accept our rubles,
while all the other agents wanted Belgian gold.
Yet we thought that ours was kind, that godless, vicious thief
paid to—how do you call it here, bamboozle us?
And we understood the trick when we saw Hutchinson:
Bergthal was no smaller, Berdyansk no dirtier,
and Samarkand no wickeder than Hutchinson, Kansas.
Your letter was in vain. You see, two English words
already I have learned, "dollars" and "bamboozle."

The Brethren had promised to meet and shelter us tonight,
tomorrow help us find new farms: they did not meet us.
The railway men say all the homestead claims are taken:
there are no farms to find. Is it also in vain
to ask your help? The Brethren promised to help as you did.
Or did we only hope—and hope in vain—for help?
Was it in vain that we began, six years ago, to pray and preach
against the worldly practices of those our Brethren
who were to emigrate, transplant their Russian sins,
their kvass, their dances, and their wealth, to the New World?
Vain was our pilgrimage to farms in Turkestan?
Vain was our hunger, vain our waiting for the Lord
to come again unto His own, the trumpet blasts
announcing Him who separates unto Himself,
clasping to Abraham's bosom, the sheep from the goats;
the roll of drums announcing the Battle of Armageddon
which, when the righteous are caught up, shall then be fought
by angel armies led by the Prince of Peace Himself
against the Devil's forces which will be encamped
in 1889 in Jake Rogalsky's pasture,
the smallest one, the one where we had built our church,
eleven versts southeast of Samarkand?
This was my prophecy. How could my revelation
be wrong? If wrong, I cannot say before next year,
the year of the great fulfillment of the prophecy.
And yet my people wait in the snow outside the depot.
They must have food, they must have help, they cannot swallow
my prophecies, although I can and do and will.
O Lord, have mercy on them, for I am not yet humble.

(Editorial note: This poem does not present an historical or factual account of the well-known episode in Mennonite history in which a group of Mennonites moved to Central Asia to meet the Lord at His Second Coming. The author says in a letter: "I have striven to create an imaginary character in an imaginary situation in such a way that the poem creates the illusion of reality rather than an actual account of real facts. I am indebted to Mr. John F. Schmidt for a good deal of historical information about the Mennonite migrations to Central Asia.")

Mennonite flag created by S. S. Smeding, The Netherlands, which was turned over to a Mennonite group of tourists on August 1, 1960, at Groningen. The flag, symbolizing the unity created by the joining of the "Zonists" and "Lamists" in The Netherlands, is located in the Bethel College Historical Library, North Newton, Kansas.

A Unique Dedication

A Mennonite Flag -- Symbol of Unity

By S. S. SMEDING

SOME years ago I heard that the home of the Dutch Mennonite brotherhood, *Fredeshiem,* wanted a flag to be displayed on special and festive occasions. I designed such a flag for the various homes of our brotherhood, and it was graciously accepted by the committee. This made me bold enough to undertake to design a flag for the Mennonite brotherhood the world over. I take pleasure in giving to you, Brother Krahn, as a leader of a group of American Mennonite tourists, this flag.

Of course, a new flag needs an explanation. Not everyone will immediately see the symbolic meaning. I will explain the design in a few words. The ground pattern consists of five horizontal stripes. From the top to the bottom, they are blue, yellow, red, yellow, and black. The symbolic meaning is as follows.

The lowest stripe is black, the color of chaos, disorder, sin and death. It reminds us of the words found in Genesis: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, and the earth was waste and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

Yellow is the color of the golden light. Therefore, this color predominates with its two stripes symbolizing the creation. "And God said, 'let there be light,' and there was light, and God saw the light that it was good."

Red is the color of love and blood, of the fire of the Holy Ghost, and of the blood of martyrdom. This blood-red stripe between the two golden stripes proclaims that the blood of Christ and the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church and that Christian love is willing and able to give its life for Christ and for fellow men.

The upper stripe is the blue of the sky and symbolizes the kingdom of heaven toward which all our endeavors must be directed.

This general pattern could be accepted as a flag by any Christian church. What makes it distinctly Mennonite is the symbol of the sun and the lamb in the center.

(Continued on page 191)

A Fairy Tale by Johannes H. Janzen

A Christmas Fairy Tale

By WALDEMAR JANZEN

THE approaching Christmas season has directed my attention again to one of the favorite fairy tales of my childhood, the *Märchen vom Weihnachtsmann,* by Johannes Heinrich Janzen. The world of phantasy which it opened to me as a child has lost little of its vividness and appeal even now. Something else, a fact which the child could not know, is becoming more and more apparent to the student of literature as he reads the well-known lines: the fact that this Christmas tale is one of the most remarkable literary productions of our Russian and Canadian Mennonite literary tradition.

Mennonites and Literature

Even a cursory survey of Mennonite literature—Dutch Mennoninte writings excluded — will reveal that the world of phantasy is strangely absent. Mennonite life has been characterized by an emphasis on truth and simplicity. It seems as if this has led our forefathers to a very selective and one-sided appreciation of literature: Truth has been defined—consciously or unconsciously—as "factualness" and simplicity as "economy," or sticking to that which has practical usefulness. In everyday life Mennonites have become known as an honest people, opposed to any pretense or show and given to hard work and an economical way of life. In literature the regard for truth, defined as "factualness," has led to a preference for those forms of literature that describe "true" life as it has happened, namely history and biography, or "true" life as it could have happened, namely descriptions of Mennonite life and customs, even though the characters and plot in such stories describing Mennonite life might be imaginary. Fiction of a more imaginative kind is rare.

The second emphasis in Mennonite life, that of simplicity, defined as "economy" or a preference for the practical and useful, has also brought with it a preference for certain kinds of literary production: history, biography, and descriptions of Mennonite ways and customs fulfill the practical function of informing, instructing, and preserving the Mennonite heritage. This preference for "useful" literature is further evidenced by most of the Mennonite poetic productions. They are almost exclusively written with a practical aim in mind, namely that of providing material that would lend itself to recitation at school and church programs and other such occasions. (In contrast to this, the great lyrics of world literature are generally not very "recitable.")

A Mennonite Fairy Tale

Seen against this general background, a Mennonite fairy tale certainly stands out. It is, by its very nature, neither factual nor useful, but highly imaginative and bent only on giving pleasure. The story, told in some 500-600 unrhymed trochaic lines, four feet to each line, can be retold briefly as follows: Santa Claus (*Weihnachtsmann*) has a house far away somewhere in the deep forest where he spends the summer sleeping. Towards winter he awakens, gets up and calls the king of the dwarfs living in the surrounding forests, *Rumpelstilzchen* by name, to tell him that it is again time, as in other years, to begin work on the Christmas gifts for the children. *Rumpelstilzchen* returns to the forest, ascends a mushroom, blows his trumpet, and thus assembles the other dwarfts to tell them of Santa's request. But the dwarfs react with violent protest, decrying the thanklessness of the human children and people generally. *Rumpelstilzchen* reminds them, however, of a previous "strike" of this kind which a hundred years ago had brought them a twenty-five years' exile from the forests of Santa Claus to the barren northlands, where there were no mushrooms, sweet berries, no flowers, no old hollow trees, no warm caves, no gold and silver in the ground. This reasoning breaks the "strike," and everyone goes to fetch his tools and supplies and to march to Santa's big house. Preparing for the accustomed work brings back the enthusiasm for it. Joyful work fills the old house, until everything is finished. Then comes the time to cut the Christmas trees and to get the letters with the children's Christmas wishes from the far-away station. Santa's sleigh is loaded—he had almost forgotten the strap for the bad children—and off he drives, while the dwarfs return to their caves and hollow trees, happily chewing on a piece of candy.

In the meantime the children in a typical Mennonite family—the names are those of the author's own children, for whom the story was primarily composed—wait for Christmas to come. It is Christmas Eve. They have to go to bed early, but not before *das naseweise Lenchen* has caught a glimpse of Santa, but only for a moment. All sleep well except Gretchen, who has a bad conscience, having pinched her brother Hänschen the previous day and, therefore, expecting to receive the *Rute* (strap) only for Christmas. But after waking Hänschen and asking his forgiveness, she, too, falls asleep. The next morning brings many nice gifts for everyone—

gifts which Santa has left during the night. A letter to Gretchen tells her that Santa loves her just as the rest and that he has lost his strap on the way. Everyone laughs.

Background and Content of the Story

Johannes Heinrich Janzen (1868-1917) was a teacher in the *Zentralschule* at Ohrloff, a well-educated and cultured man. One of his special concerns was the introduction of good reading material to the Mennonite public. His fairy tale is deeply rooted in German culture. Santa Claus lives far away from the steppes of southern Russia, we must understand. The dwarfs dwell in forests—forests of the German kind. Santa has to come to the Mennonite home by a long sleigh ride, just as the tale had to come to southern Russia through the cultural contacts with Germany. Its background is to be found in the German fairy tale tradition generally, but more particularly in a work that was most popular during the second half of the nineteenth century: Josef Viktor von Scheffel's *Der Trompeter von Säckingen* (1845).

Scheffel's *Trompeter* is a romantic love story in verse, the same verse form as that of our *Weihnachtsmärchen*. The *Trompeter* (trumpeter) is a wandering student, whose only companion is his beloved trumpet with which he wanders through the country of the Upper Rhine, especially the Black Forest. One of his encounters is with the *Erdmännlein* (dwarf) who leads the *Trompeter* into the inner parts of the earth, the realm of the *Zwerge* (dwarfs).

Janzen doubtlessly received much inspiration for his *Märchen vom Weihnachtsmann* from Scheffel's *Trompeter*: The trumpet reappears in *Rumpelstilzchen's* trumpet. The Black Forest clearly provides the setting for our fairy tale, while the realm of the dwarfs finds its origins in Scheffel's scene where *Trompeter* descends into the cave of the dwarfs (even though the theme of the dwarfs working in the earth is a widespread one; compare the story of Snow-White and the Seven Dwarfs). Even details are taken over: Scheffel has his dwarf say:

Zwar ein ganz klein wenig platt ist
Erdmanns Sohl', doch nur ein grober
Bauer kann von Gansfuss sprechen.

Janzen describes his dwarfts as having

Watschelbeine, Entenfüsse,
—sehen nicht auf's schönste aus.

Scheffel speaks of the undankbare Menschenkinder. Janzen has his rebellious dwarfs go into a long tirade against thoughtless and uncouth mankind.

The greatness of a literary work does not lie in the originality of its theme, however, but in the way the theme is handled. *Das Märchen vom Weihnachtsmann* weaves several themes from the German fairy world and from the *Trompeter* into an original story of remarkable appeal to the interest, the sense of beauty, and the imagination of the reader. German-speaking readers will appreciate the description of Santa's house:

Tief im engen Tal verborgen,
zwischen hohen Felsenwänden,
rings von Tannenwald umgeben,
steht ein grosses, altes Haus,
—'s hat ein breites, hohes Strohdach,
ganz von dickem Schnee bedecket,
hübsch verziert mit Eiszapfen.
—Viele kleine, bunte Fenster
und zwei grosse, breite Türen
sieht man, in den braunen Wänden,
und durch's schneebedeckte Strohdach
reckt sich ein gewalt'ger Schornstein
hoch und dick und schwarzgeräuchert
in die blaue Luft hinein.

The humor of the story is of a friendly kind and arises directly out of the descriptive parts; note the bee humming around sleeping Santa's nose:

Selten nur, wenn eine Biene
in die Stube sich verirrte
und um seine rote Nase
brummend hin und wieder schwirrte,
dann erwacht er auf ein Weilchen,
Gähnend blickt er durch das Fenster,
um zu sehen, ob der Sommer
nicht schon bald vorbeigegangen.

Contemplative scenes alternate with those bustling with activity, as this one about the stormy reaction of the dwarfs to the announcement of Santa's request:

Als der König dies gesprochen,
ging's wie Sturmwind durch den Haufen,
denn die Heinzelmännchen alle
wackelten mit ihren Mützen,
fuchtelten mit ihren Armen
zornig quäkend durcheinander,
grad' als hätt ein böser Bube
in ein Wespennest gestochen.

The names of the dwarfs are suggestive and show a rich imagination on the part of the author: There is *König Rumpelstilzchen,* assisted by his *Heinzelmannminister Vizliputzli mit der Brille.* The heavy-set old *Klumpe-Dumpe mit der dicken Gurkennase, dem der Bart zur Erde reichte* is set in contrast to the little *Wichtelwippchen, er der Wichtel allerkleinster.*

Our story is a *Kunstmärchen,* a deliberately and artistically composed fairy tale, as contrasted with the *Volksmärchen,* the fairy tale arising out of old folklore without traceable author. The vivid freshness in content and language is rivaled only by its purity of thought, a purity of thought that avoids some of the crudities of fairy tales, without hampering the freshness by a cumbersome moral. It is a good piece of creative writing.

Some thoughts come to the reflective reader of the *Weihnachtsmärchen*: It is a product of the time shortly before the great political upheavals in Russia, and it reached small circulation only. In Canada it was reprinted in a mimeographed form by the author's brother, the late Jacob H. Janzen of Waterloo, Ontario, in 1938. Were Mennonites in Russia reaching the time where

they would have been more open to imaginative fiction? Johannes H. Janzen was a highly respected teacher and minister in Ohrloff, one of the cultural centers of the Molotschna colony. Apparently he felt that a fairy tale was not contrary in nature to the ideals of Mennonite life, ideals which he himself fully cherished. Janzen was not an "average" Mennonite, to be sure. The fairy tale was the product of his individual personality, his learning, his background in German culture, his artistic talent—he was an able painter as well—and his great love for nature led him on extensive nature hikes, often accompanied by his children. (His son Hans has illustrated the booklet with appropriate picture sketches.) But often it is the sensitive individual who senses the readiness of a group or age for something new.

Did Johannes H. Janzen sense a new openness of the people among whom he lived to a new appreciation of art other than that of the factual and practical kind? If so, the difficult times that were to follow focused all interest on history and the preserving of the—now largely lost—Mennonite culture in Russia in a documentary fashion. The *Märchen vom Weihnachtsmann* is a signicant phenomenon in Mennonite literature.

I Remember Grandmother

By ELIZABETH K. WEDEL

JANUARY 11, 1918, was a cold winter day in Kansas. It had been snowing and blowing until all the roads were blocked with high drifts. Usually the north and south roads would remain open, but this time the direction of the wind was such that all roads were made impassible. My sister and I were surprised when we came home from school that day to see Grandmother there. How did she get there and why? Father had hitched the horses to the old sled and had gone after her. The only way he could get any place was to go across the fields. Grandmother lived about five and a half miles away, so he had taken several blankets and a feather-bed along for it was really cold.

That evening, as I remember, we moved a bed down from upstairs and set it up in the dining room for Grandmother, so we thought. We couldn't quite figure it out. Usually if Grandmother was there when we got up in the morning or when we came home from school, it meant just one thing—a new baby in the house. We went to bed that evening a bit puzzled.

The next morning, however, there it was—a nine-pound baby brother. No doctor was able to get there because of the drifted roads, so Grandmother of necessity had to play the role of a midwife. Mother and baby were doing fine. I am convinced that many a prayer went up to the "Throne of Grace" that day and night, for Grandmother often said, "The Lord answered our prayers."

Grandmother had a very eventful life. It was on the third of September, 1874, when the ship, THE CITY OF RICHMOND, docked in New York harbor bringing seventy-three families to America from Volhynia, Russia. Among them were my grandmother and her husband. To worship according to the dictates of their conscience was most important to them. That was why they came to this country. What it meant to leave their homes, and in some instances their relatives, to come to a strange land and start all over again only those who have experienced it can know.

Grandmother was married in 1871 at the age of sixteen. A year later their first child was born. While aboard ship, in the midst of the Atlantic Ocean, their second daughter was born. From New York they came by train to Peabody, Kansas, where they stayed for a few weeks. They staked their claim in McPherson County and settled there, as did most of the families that came with them. During their stay in Peabody, however, they buried their oldest daughter. Those pioneer days and years were difficult, to say the least. After having been in America less than four years, her husband passed away leaving with her two small children. This was a hard blow for Grandmother, but she had a faith that could not be shaken. In spite of all the sorrow and hardships, her faith in God seemed only to grow and become stronger.

It was a year later that she married my Grandfather. They made their home on a farm in McPherson County as long as they lived. This marriage was blessed with nine children, two of whom died in infancy. They worked hard and sacrificed much. Grandfather passed away in his early fifties and, for the second time, Grandmother was left a widow. When the second youngest of her sons married, he and his wife made their home with her on this same farm.

Grandmother faced many trials and hard experiences in her lifetime. The way to the cemetery was not strange to her. Death claimed not only her husbands but, one by one, a number of her children as well—some in infancy, one at the age of seventeen, and others later in life. The daughter that was born aboard the ship died at the age of twenty-seven, leaving besides her husband her four small children and a step-son. And only a few years before Grandmother passed away, a daughter and her husband lost their lives in an automobile accident. She often wondered why it couldn't have been her life instead.

No doubt Grandmother couldn't always understand why the Lord was leading as He did, yet deep in her heart she never seemed to question the wisdom of the Almighty. She had a philosophy something like that of Job. We have received much good from the Lord, shall we then not be prepared also to accept that which to us seems unpleasant? Or, for the Christian, all things work together for good.

Grandmother was always busy and active and very seldom sick. She helped wherever she could. I can hardly imagine anyone in the family having a baby without Grandmother there to take care of them. Her son and daughter-in-law, with whom she made her home, had a large family and there too she was a great help. As I remember, one of their babies just wouldn't wait until the doctor got there, so once again Grandmother had to play the role of midwife. Grandmother passed away at the age of 92. For a mother-in-law and daughter-in-law to live together for 33 years and get along as they did is quite a record.

Grandmother was a very unselfish woman. She was always thinking of others and doing for others. Once, as I remember, when she was at our home taking care of mother and a new baby, my brother and I were trying to dig up a hotbed so we could plant some early lettuce. After we had worked for some time Grandma came to see what we were doing. She took the spade from us and started digging. She said we were too young and might hurt our backs if we were not careful; we still had our life before us, but she was old so it didn't matter so much.

We children were arguing one day as to who was the better looking. She just happened to hear us and settled the argument by saying that we were all plenty nice enough to do good and much too nice to do evil.

Grandmother couldn't stand seeing anything go to waste. Picking up corn cobs in the hog pen wasn't just the pleasantest job, but when she helped even that was enjoyable. Often in the summer you would find her out in the yard picking up little scraps of wood that could be used in the cook stove for baking or cooking. The yard where she lived was never messy.

As most grandmothers, she too enjoyed having her children and grandchildren come to see her. We had what turned out to be a custom to visit her on the evening of her birthday. Each family would bring a pie or cake or poppy-seed rolls or something else and we would all have refreshments before going home. We had such an enjoyable time. In her later years even the great-grandchildren looked forward to this event. When we wished her a happy birthday and said we hoped to come again next year, she would say, "As the Lord wills." Needless to say, many of us missed this annual event after she was gone.

Grandmother loved to sing. I am convinced that at times, instead of fretting when things went wrong, she would just sing her troubles away. She would often sing as she did the weekly patching. Never do I remember her moody or out of sorts. She was content and yielded to the Master's will. All who knew her could have no doubts about it—she was truly "A Child of the King." In her later years the songs she sang would indicate the longing in her heart to be with her Lord whom she loved and served. She loved her church and attended services whenever possible. Grandmother's Christ-centered life will always be an inspiration to me. I know I am a better person having been born her granddaughter. Of her it can truly be said, ". . . blessed are the dead which die in the Lord . . . and their works do follow them" (Revelation 14:18).

More Low German Children's Rhymes

By WARREN KLIEWER

CONTINUING a series of articles on Mennonite folklore, the following collection includes ten children's rimes recorded from Low German speaking people living in and near Mountain Lake, Minnesota. All of these rimes, with the possible exception of IIIA, have in common the fact that they are spoken by children to children. Thus, they constitute a class distinct from another group of verses ordinarily spoken by adults to children. (See *Mennonite Life,* July, 1959, pp. 141-2.)

Because of this fact, we are not surprised to find that most of these rimes share a humorous quality. To be sure, the quality of the humor is different in each instance. One rime, for example, becomes funny when two English words are introduced. Some are funny because they are violent or hostile, some because they are vulgar, some because they sententiously state the obvious. But all share the homely, earthy quality of European folk humor.

Likewise, all of the rimes in this collection deal with the ordinary, mundane things to be found in the everyday lives of the children who know the rimes: hunger and food, holidays, riding a cultivator. There are, of course, exceptions to this generalization in the rimes which mention acts of violence—a fact which psychologists might be more willing to comment upon than I.

Yet even this violence seems to fit into the pattern of concentrating upon the basic, elemental facts of life. For in these rimes there is a conspicuous lack of the elements of romance. The rimes do not mention exotic settings or the knights and dragons and magic of fairy tales. We do not hear of kings and queens as we do in such Mother Goose rimes as "Old King Cole" or 'Sing a Song of Sixpence." It is possible that folk rimes containing such romance qualities do exist among German-speaking Mennonites, but so far I have found none.

One other characteristic of these verses should be noted, namely the dependence on heavy rime between lines and even within a line. Though internal rime is common in much German folk poetry, and though heavy alliteration is common enough in English folk verses, one would have difficulty finding an English folk verse with the internal rime of "Aun, spaun aun." Thus, it is probably safe to say that the English-speaking environment of American Mennonites was not strong enough to influence the typically Germanic structure of these verses.

The first rime is a common one known widely in the area in which I collected folklore.

I. Mi hungat,
Mi schlungat,*
Mi schlackat de Buck.
(I'm hungry,
———*
My belly is shaking.)

The next two rimes are occasional pieces incorporating into themselves the names of holiday seasons.

II. Etj sach den Schorsteen roake;
Etj wist woll waut se moake;
Se backte scheene Niejoaschkoake.
(I saw the chimney smoking;
I knew what you were making;
You were baking good New Year's cookies.)

III. Schokel, schokel, scheia*
Ostre eet we Eia;
Pinjste eet wi witet Brot;
Stoaw we nijh, dann woa wi groot.
(Rock, rock, ———*
Easter we eat eggs;
Pentecost we eat white bread;
If we don't die, then we'll get big.)

Two variants change the first line while maintaining the rest of the verses without modification.

B. Hauns, Mauns, Meia, etc.
C. Ringel, ringel, reia, etc.

Three rimes in this group depend for their humor on the use of anticlimax. In each case the listener is led to expect a conclusion which is significant, but instead he hears a statement which is obvious or trivial.

IV. Tjnilla, Tjnalla,*
Rannt em Tjalla,
Hollt sitj een bietje Buttabrot.
(———*
Runs into the cellar,
Fetches a piece of butter-bread.)

V. Peeta
Set op'm Cultiveta,
Helt de Lien enn sajht, "Giddap."
(Peter
Sits on the cultivator,
Holds the lines and says, "Giddap.")

IV. The following rime is a dialogue in which presumably the person spoken to does not know the joke.

"Weetst waut?"
"Nä."
"Wann et reajent, es et naut."
("You know what?"
"No."
"When it rains, it's wet.")

A final group seems to me the most well-developed of these rimes, for each of these verses employs a little narrative. Naturally, each of these is but a rudimentary story, showing no development of plot or characters. But there is enough narrative to bind together each verse into a more tightly knit structure than could be seen in the previous rimes. But it will also be noted that, as in I, III, and IV above, the verses seem to emphasize the riming and alliterating sounds. In spite of the narrative structure, these words recited solely for their sound are more obvious and, one would guess, more interesting to children.

VII. Mitsch, Pitsch, Peepamehl (Peepafrät)
Diene Tjinja fräte väl.
Aule Dach een Doola Brot.
Nem de Tjiel (Aicks) en schloo se doot.
(Marie, whip pepper mill [pepper-mouth]
Your children eat a lot.
Every day a dollar's [worth of] bread.
Take the club [ax] and strike them dead.)

VIII. A. Isaak, Shlisack, Schlentjafoot (-sack),
Schleit een Nast voll Eltje doot.
(Isaac, ————,* slender-foot [-sack],
Strikes dead a nest full [of] gophers.)

B. Isaak, etc.
Schleit sine Fru em Tjalla doot.
(Strikes dead his wife in the cellar.)

IX. Hauns Ularijh,
Wrucke wull 'a nijh,
Tjieltje tjricht hee nijh,
Blivt hee hungarijh.
(Jack Uhlrig,
Beets he didn't want,
Noodles he won't get,
He'll stay hungry.)

(Continued on page 180)

*Nonsense syllables introduced for the sake of rime and alliteration.

Russian Mennonites React to Their New Environment

By MELVIN GINGERICH

FROM 1873 to 1883 about eighteen thousand Mennonites immigrated from Russia to North America. Of these, eight thousand settled in Manitoba. Nearly all of the remaining ten thousand settled in Kansas, Nebraska, Minnesota, and Dakota; Kansas receiving the largest number.[1]

Although this exodus to the American frontier was the first long journey for these eighteen thousand, their forefathers had known migration. A century before they had come to southern Russia from Prussia when Catherine the Great had offered them religious freedom, exemption from military service, and other privileges which they were no longer able to enjoy freely in the land of the Hohenzollerns. Nor had Prussia, up to this time, always been their home. As early as the middle of the sixteenth century, the first of their Mennonite forefathers had come to northeastern Prussia from Holland upon the invitation of noblemen who wanted industrious farmers to improve their swampy lands.

Now from 1873 to 1883, almost a century after their last migration, these Mennonites of Dutch ancestry were once more on the march in search of religious freedom. A few years earlier the Russian government had abrogated some of the special privileges extended to them by Catherine the Great. When compulsory military training was introduced in 1870, the new law produced great anxiety among the Mennonites since the refusal of military service was a primary tenet of their faith.

Considering America

After several delegations had failed to obtain a renewal of military exemption from the Russian government, plans were made to migrate from the country. But where could they go? Leonhard Sudermann, one of their leaders who had already been thrice sent to obtain concessions from the Russian government, was chosen along with eleven others from the various Russian Mennonite colonies to visit America in search of a new home for his people. In his *A Deputation Voyage From Russia to America* he tells us,

> It took great thought to take America into consideration. America, in our estimation, was a place for adventurers and a refuge of law breakers. How could one expect to enjoy the tranquility of a home with vineyards and fig orchards in such a raw civilization? Even people who carried loaded revolvers and are accustomed to the rule of guns would shy of such a place, but we who carried no guns doubted very much the appropriateness of America as a home.[2]

When the delegates returned to Russia with a favorable report, many Mennonite farmers sold their land and made arrangements to leave for America. Plans were made to assist the poor so that no one wishing to emigrate would be disappointed. The Russian government then became alarmed and took various measures to keep her excellent farmers from leaving the country. When government forestry service was offered in lieu of military service, the majority of Mennonites decided to remain in their comfortable homes; eighteen thousand, however, were not satisfied with the official offer and left for America.

It is difficult to conceive the hardships that confronted the first nine hundred Russian Mennonite families who came to Dakota, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Kansas, in the years 1873 and 1874. Here they were on the American frontier, strangers in a strange land. They could not understand the language of their American neighbors, they had to watch constantly that others did not take advantage of them, and they had to cope with new pests, new diseases, and new problems of farming. Problems of fuel, housing, and water supply confronted them. Their resources in most cases were meager and their faith was tested to the limit.

From private letters and diaries, we may piece together the story of the response of many of these settlers to frontier conditions. In reports and letters to a half dozen Mennonite church papers in America and Europe, we can find their reactions. In a considerable number of old settler's stories in pamphlet form or in newspaper articles, we may catch the most lasting impressions of their early years on the American frontier.[3]

Cornelius Jansen Chooses America

Among those who had urged the Mennonites to move to America was Cornelius Jansen, a Prussian consul at the Black Sea grain port of Berdyansk. As a result of his activities on behalf of emigration, he was expelled by the Russian government in 1873. After living in Ontario for a short time, he brought his family to Mount Pleasant, Iowa, in the spring of 1874. From his Mount Pleasant headquarters, he helped his Russian Mennonite friends select farms and buy equipment.

Jansen was one of those whose impressions of America and its frontier were on the whole favorable. Perhaps it was the excellent reception he received in Washington that caused him to maintain an optimistic outlook. In a talk to the Conversational Club of Mount Pleasant, Iowa, in November, 1875, printed in the *Free Press* of that city, he tells them,

> I will never forget how the President Grant . . . listened with sympathy to me and my eldest son when we told him the circumstances of our people, and how he expressed this afterwards openly, for which he certainly could not expect to gain acknowledgment from the selfish world. Also from several kind-hearted secretaries, the senators Windom, Stewart, Cameron, and many other high officers, we experienced much encouraging kindness; even that well-known warrior General Sherman refused not, when we were introduced to him, to answer the remark, 'But you cannot make warriors out of these,' shaking our hands cordially, 'You are heartily welcome here, for you can be useful even if you do not fight.'[4]

Jansen's eldest son, Peter, was much impressed by Mount Pleasant and its people. According to the *Free Press* of November 12, 1874, "Mr. Jansen says that in his travels he has met no town he likes better than Mount Pleasant, no people with whom he is better pleased, and he is glad to return to it after his travels and labors farther west."

The elder Jansen, however, must not have been favorably impressed by the neighboring river city of Burlington, for the daughter confides in her diary that when one of her brothers found employment in that city at fifty-five dollars a month,, "Father told him he did not wish to have any of his children live there." The writer of the diary, too, is "sorry that it has to be in Burlington."

First Steps in Adjustment

The common attitude of suspicion of strangers whose language is foreign showed itself among these people as they met the American in the trans-Mississippi West. The fact that most of them had had few contacts with strangers except with peddlers who called on them occasionally in their Russian homes may be the explanation of the following story. After the Jansens had helped bring a large number of families to Lincoln, Nebraska, Jansen ran an advertisement in the October 1, 1874, *Daily Journal* of that city, stating that the Mennonites wished to buy fifty horses, fifty work oxen, and fifty milch cows. Those who had such to sell should bring them to the Market Square on October 7. Although the sale was well attended, only a few purchases were made. A week later the paper reported that a pair of seven-year-olds with harness and wagon, worth about $425, had been offered for $200. After carefully examining the outfit for an hour, the prospective buyer offered $125. In another case, one of the immigrants offered $25 for a mare worth $125. This was too much for the owner, who said, "Dog-gone you, get away from here and let me go to a white man's country. I've got enough of this."[5]

P. R. Kaufman explains that his people had been used to buying from the peddlers who always asked twice the sale price, and so they tried to do business in this manner in America. One of their men went into a hardware store to buy a whetstone. After a time the dealer understood what was wanted. The immigrant asked the price and then offered half the amount, whereupon the dealer, thinking he wanted a stone only half that size, broke it in two and handed him one half. The embarrassed immigrant, to save further trouble, gave the merchant the full amount and hurriedly left with his half whetstone.[6]

C. J. Janzen, in his series of articles on "Old Reminiscences" in the paper *Vorwärts,* describes how the immigrants sometimes were made the victims of unfair dealings because of their ignorance of American ways and laws. They learned that their property was being assessed higher than that of their non-Mennonite neighbors. Soon some of their young men learned the English language, became American citizens, were elected assessors, and changed the assessments. Nor did they understand the mortgage system, and several of them bought mortgaged land and to their surprise had to pay off high mortgages. Later they learned that information covering these points was on record in the courthouses.[7]

No doubt many of them had feared meeting the Indians. P. A. Flickner, in his story of the immigration and pioneer life recorded in *Der Herold* states that as they traveled through Germany after leaving Russia, people said, "What do you want in America? There one finds robbers, the scum and outcasts of the entire world. And above all are the wild tribes of Indians, who must be fought. They will soon scalp you."[8]

To disillusion his European friends, P. Ewert of Marion County, Kansas, in January, 1875, wrote to the editor of the *Mennonitische Blätter* (Danzig, Germany).

> All the gossip about Indian raids that many of the emigrants had to endure, that is pure invention. Such an event is not to be feared here at all. My children are anxious to see such children of the wilderness, but in spite of the fact that they often travel about, they have never had this luck. I shook hands with them last year up at Red River.[9]

The Deep Furrow

Perhaps one of the most typical reactions of the Russian Mennonite to his American neighbor on the frontier was presented by P. A. Flickner in his articles on pioneer life. He says the Americans were very free with their instructions. They showed them how to keep plows from rusting and then left their own standing out in the yard. They advised the immigrants to plow deeply, but the adviser

> scratches over his a little bit, and lets it go at that. He instructs us how to sow and harvest, but he does his in the American way in all haste, not caring what he leaves behind his back. Time is too precious

The couple usually sitting in the Log Cabin of the Kauffman Museum at Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas, is sitting outside. Charles Kauffman, curator of the Museum, is the creator of the pioneers.

> for him to waste it on gleaning. Time is worth much more to him than these few ears. His motto is 'Time is money,' and yet he cares only to get done hurriedly, so that he can kill the time together with his neighbor or friend. He also knows that one is supposed to be economical. He figures that coal is expensive and that corn is cheap. He should haul the corn to town, but since it takes time to load and unload and since he should then also have to buy coal, . . . he prefers to burn his corn. For them it was too much that we celebrated two days on Christmas, also on Easter and Pentecost or even on Good Friday. They told us that we would never be able to get ahead, but, thank God, in spite of our shortcomings (according to them) we went ahead slowly but surely.[10]

Their experiences with the railroads were in general very satisfactory. The Mount Pleasant, Iowa, *Free Press* reported Peter Jansen as speaking

> in the very highest terms of Mr. A. E. Touzalin, the Land Commissioner and Mr. G. O. Manchester, Assistant Land Commissioner (representatives of the Burlington Railroad), and he wishes to say that these gentlemen acted towards his people, not only from business principles but also from a desire to assist and give them all the necessary information, and that he esteems them both very highly.[11]

There were a few unpleasant experiences. The railroads did not always take them where they wished to go. Sometimes there was confusion in the tickets obtained. One group thought they were going to Manitoba as they left St. Paul. Later they were chagrined to find that a Minnesota enthusiast had placed them on a train headed for Mountain Lake, Minnesota. After discussing their plight, they decided it might as well be Minnesota as Manitoba and settled there in the southwestern part of the state.[12]

In March, 1875, A. Schrag from Turner County, Dakota, carried on a correspondence with David Goerz, representative of the Mennonite Board of Guardians, concerning wagons of the Russian immigrants. Some of their wagons had been missent, but it was learned that three of these Russian vehicles were at Yankton.

Schrag had reported in October that a minister had arrived in Turner County with his Russian congregation.

> A misfortune befell them, however. When they left New York, fire broke out in one of the coaches that contained the baggage and many things were burned. The company paid for it, though not full value by far. They lost much thereby, but otherwise they all arrived here safely."[13]

The Language Problem With Oxen

Perhaps no problem of pioneer life has produced more good stories than the one of learning how to drive teams of oxen. Peter Jansen in his *Memoirs* tells how he attempted to break the Nebraska prairie with his plow and a yoke of young oxen. Becoming impatient, they ran away and finally stopped in a swamp with the water up to their sides. He said, "When I reached the slough, quite out of breath and thoroughly disgusted, I sat down and nearly cried and wished I were back in Russia where I did not have to drive oxen."[14]

A kind American neighbor happened along, however, and helping him get the oxen out of the water, showed him how to handle them.

On another occasion a boy was hauling a load of lumber to their new settlement in Nebraska. When his yoke of oxen saw a stream of water, they headed directly for it and did not stop until they were in the middle of the pool. It was necessary for him to unload his wagon, get it out of the creek, and reload it before he could proceed.[15]

P. R. Kaufman reported in his pioneer stories that when they arrived in Kansas his father bought a yoke of oxen which, unfortunately, did not understand German, Russian, Polish, or Yiddish. On the occasion of their first experience with them, they had difficulty in getting the oxen started. Finally they started on the run, but in a few minutes they stopped and nothing could be done to persuade them to move on until two Americans came along and used effective profane English on them.

P. A. Flickner related how they had traveled rapidly all the way from Russia to central Kansas, and then, traveling by ox team, they covered only seven miles in one half day. Every few feet the oxen stopped to eat grass. They concluded these animals had been thoroughly indoctrinated with the American frontier spirit of "help yourself." Later it occurred to the immigrants that the oxen did not understand German commands.[16]

Often the immigrants would make long trips to town for loads of lumber. Occasionally night would overtake them on the way home, and if the weather were stormy, the oxen would come to a standstill and remain there until morning. The unfortunate driver would then construct a rude shelter and rest under it until the morning light appeared.

Prairie Fires

Many of the pioneers mentioned prairie fires. They had experienced nothing like it in Russia, and, according to their testimony, many would have lost their lives if their American neighbors had not come to their rescue. The February, 1879, *Nebraska Ansiedler*, reported in a letter from Dakota,

> Dear Brother, I am sad because seven of our brethren suffered loss through a prairie fire. The prairie fire came with a great windstorm so that in an hour nearly everything was burned up, leaving only the houses standing, although one brother lost his house, too. The good Lord has punished us severely, but man must endure with patience that which God sends.

In 1874 the village of Gnadenau, Kansas, was saved from destruction when a fire, having come from fifty miles north, was stopped one half mile from the village. An old settler seeing the fire approach rushed to the village and got the people to help him fight it. One of the immigrants said, "We would have been lost if Mr. Risley had not told us what to do, for we were so ignorant. We did not know what a prairie fire was."[17]

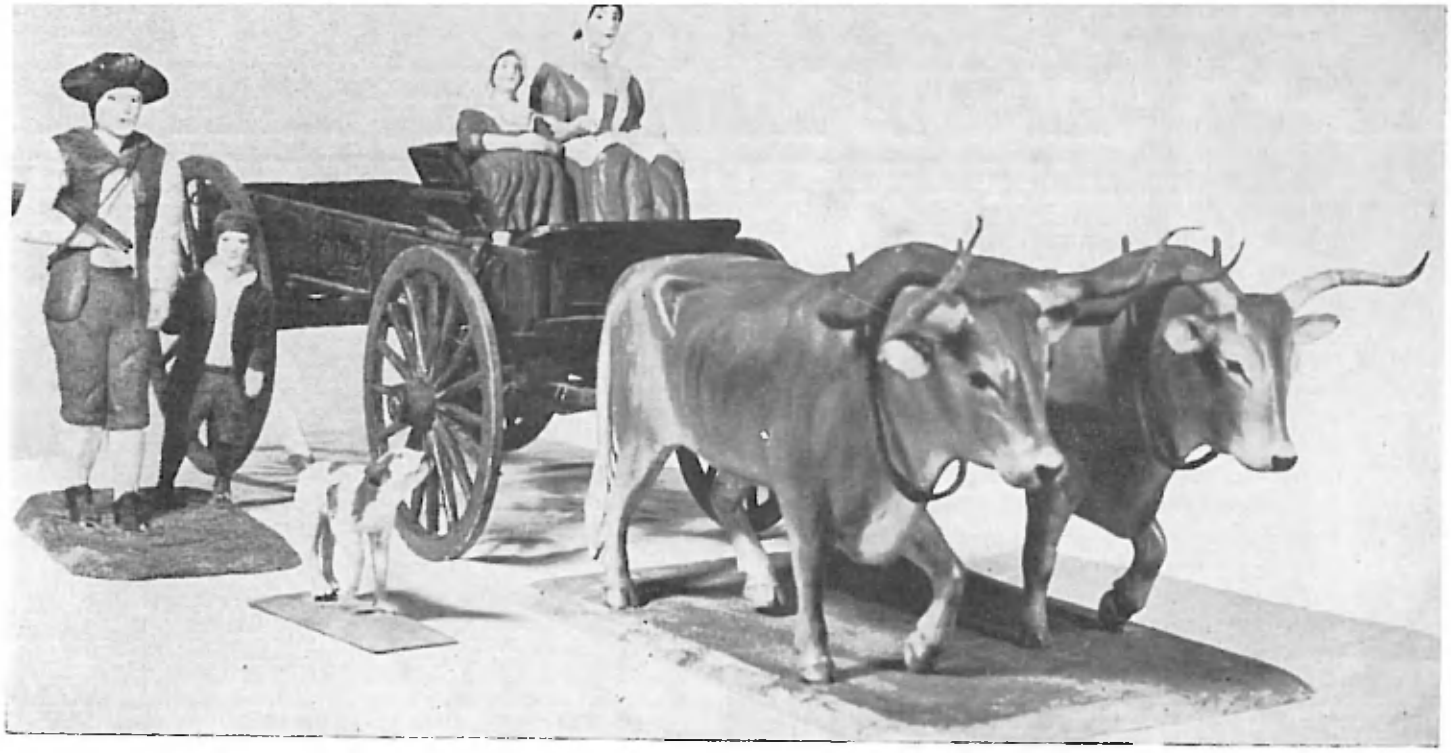
In November, 1875, *Zur Heimath* (published by David Goerz in the interests of the recent immigrants) called their attention to the destructive prairie fires that had destroyed not only hay and crops but buildings as well. Goerz told them it could not be too strongly emphasized that furrows must be plowed around the buildings at a much greater distance away from them than was usually done. Then on quiet days the grass between the buildings and the furrows must be burned.

The most discouraging feature of frontier life in the seventies was the grasshopper menace. The grasshoppers made their appearance in 1873, the year in which the first Russian Mennonites reached the prairie frontier, and after several invasions disappeared suddenly in 1877. H. J. Fast, in his paper on "Pioneer Life Sketches," described the grasshopper plague of 1876 in southwestern Minnesota.

> Suddenly we noticed a dark cloud arise in the north. When it came nearer, we heard a loud rustling and to our terror they were grasshoppers. They came down and covered not only the ground but cloaked the whole north side of the house. We hastened to our well, full of water to its top, and covered it speedily as well as we could in such a hurry, but its surface was already under a thick layer of those nasty gluttons. . . . Of the 37 bushels which we had plowed in spring, we harvested two bushels of wheat of inferior quality.

Perhaps the most graphic description of the grasshopper plague is the letter in the *Mennonitische Blätter* written by a Kansas resident in 1874.

> Such misery as I see about me is terrible to behold. Almost three months without rain and nearly two



A pioneer family in an ox cart is an item which attracts much attention in the Kauffman Museum.

months of grasshoppers! Terrible heat and dust with it. Often enough clouds gather, the lightning flashes, the thunder rolls, the wind roars, but only a few drops of rain fall. Each tree is bare, oak and willow, fruit trees and brushwood, grass and even the weeds, everything green has disappeared. A peculiar sight, November with summer heat. There is not a leaf on our peach trees, no fruit remains, but only the stones of the fruit hang there as sad reminders. The grasshoppers cover them from the top to the roots and are now eating the bark. We can't even go outside the door without them flying up in swarms and blinding us so that we can hardly see anything. In the evening one must pick them off each piece of clothing. They even eat the clothes and the curtains on the windows. When one hangs out wash to dry, one must stay there until it is dry, and not take one's eyes off it a moment, for fear that it will be ruined in a few minutes. One can simply not describe this plague to those who have not experienced it. . . . It often happens that the trains are held up by them. I can not even save my house flowers. My geraniums . . . are gone in spite of the fact that I kept them in the house and did everything I could to save them.[18]

State Rivalry

Other comments from the Russian Mennonite immigrants had to do with the relative advantages of Kansas, Nebraska, Dakota, and Minnesota. Cornelius Jansen and his son Peter were consistent boosters for Nebraska. The younger man was convinced that the grasshoppers were worse in Kansas than in Nebraska, for "where he met one emigrant returning from Nebraska, he met two returning from Kansas. Some of his people had located in the latter state, but he thought they would not be well satisfied. He thinks that state not so well adapted to agriculture, and more subject to drought than Nebraska."[19] The Burlington Railroad, too, in its German pamphlets tried to persuade the Russian Mennonites that Nebraska had the greatest advantages.[20]

Just as the Jansens were boosters for Nebraska, so David Goerz was a booster for Kansas. In 1874 he wrote a thirty-page pamphlet describing the Mennonite settlement on the lands of the Santa Fe Railroad in Harvey and Marion counties, Kansas. The booklet discussed the topography, soil, water, climate, farms, stock farming, markets, industries, building materials, fuel, towns, routes to Kansas, terms of land sales offered by the Santa Fe, and the possibilities of the area as a location for a Mennonite settlement. This pamphlet and his paper *Zur Heimath* must have persuaded many immigrants to select Kansas in preference to Nebraska, Minnesota, or Dakota.[21]

In spite of grasshoppers, dust storms, prairie fires, scheming neighbors, and stubborn oxen, the settlers as a group were satisfied and happy they had come to America. One settler was even optimistic enough to report to his European friends that the grasshoppers would not eat the prairie grass and so their cattle feed was saved. From Dakota it was reported that the settlers liked the land and were of "good courage." An eastern committee visiting the Dakota settlement reported that although many were living in sod houses, the prairie fires had destroyed their crops, and many were suffering from burns received in the fire, yet none wished to return to Russia.[22]

A letter sent from Marion County, Kansas, in January, 1875, to a church paper in Germany declared that they "hope that with God's blessing this part of Kansas will become a flourishing community. All those who came with an idea of what it means to settle on a fresh prairie are very well satisfied; he who came with wrong conceptions will, of course, be disappointed."[23]

These immigrants were not restless wanderers; they had come here to build homes and communities. Their planning and building for the future gave them a forward, optimistic outlook on life. With building houses, breaking prairies, digging wells, planting gardens and orchards, and a dozen other tasks, they had little time for homesickness. Or is there a touch of homesickness for Russia in this request from a Kansas sister to her brother in Russia who was to join her soon, "Please bring gooseberry seeds along, and cedar seeds from David Friesen; cherry pits, rose hops, and tulip bulbs are needed."[24]

The Russian Mennonite immigrants of the seventies, like others before them, had dreamed "the American Dream," and in their simple, restrained language they voiced their deep sentiments of thankfulness and hope. Perhaps none of the letters shows more clearly these sentiments than the following one written by a daughter residing in Kansas to her father in Russia:

> And how long do you want to toil along in miserable Russia, when you could live here in all quietness? I know if you would once be here, you would regret that you hadn't come sooner. Because we all like it here . . . and I know that you would like it here too. . . . We never hear from you that you think of coming here, which hurts me very much. I wonder what keeps you so long in a strange country where nobody asks for you, while here you would be received with a thousand joys by your children and relatives. And wouldn't it be a joy to see all your friends again? All of them ask for you and wish to see you. And why do you want to wait longer? Hurry and leave that miserable Russia and you shall see some happy days among your children who love you. . . . I also believe that if one of us would go there to tell you how much more peacefully one can live here, you would soon come to us. I wonder also about my brother, why he is so afraid of America. He doesn't have to farm here. He can conduct business as well as there or better. He can have a mill here, too, in which he is interested, or another buisness, if only he would want to come here. I don't want to go back to Russia even if somebody gave me a mill there.[25]

Editorial Note: This paper was originally read before a session of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Georg Liebbrandt, "The Emigration of the German Mennonites to the United States and Canada, 1873-1880," *MQR.* VII (1933), 5-41.

[2]Leonhard Sudermann, *Eine Deputationreise von Russland nach Amerika.* (Elkhart, 1897). Sudermann's diary is in the possession of the Mennonite Historical Library, Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas.

[3]Much of the source material used for this paper is in the Bethel College Historical Library, North Newton, Kansas.

[4]*The Free Press* (Mt. Pleasant Iowa), January 27, 1876.

[5]Quoted by Theodore Schmidt in his unpublished master's thesis *The Mennonites of Nebraska,* (University of Nebraska, 1930), 17.

[6]P. R. Kaufman, *Unser Volk und Seine Geschichte* (Basil, Kansas, 1931), 136.

[7]*Vörwarts* (Hillsboro, Kansas), April 10, 1924.

[8]*Der Herold* (Newton, Kansas), January 24, 1924.

[9]*Mennonitische Blätter* (Hamburg, Germany), March 20, 1924.

[10]*Der Herold,* March 20, 1924.

[11]*The Free Press,* August 27, 1874.

[12]F. P. Schultz, *The Settlement of German Mennonites from Russia at Mountain Lake, Minnesota* (Fletcher Press, University Park, Iowa, 1938), 55.

[13]Letter from A. Schrag to David Goerz, October 19, 1874, in the Bethel College Historical Library.

[14]*Memoirs of Peter Jansen,* (Beatrice, Nebraska, 1921), 44.

[15]T. Schmidt, *op. cit.,* 19.

[16]P. A. Flickner, "Pioneirsleben," *Der Herold,* January 31, 1924.

[17]Quoted by C. C. Janzen in his unpublished dissertation, *A Social Study of the Mennonite Settlements in Kansas,* (University of Chicago, 1926), 35.

[18]*Mennonitische Blätter,* (Danzig, Germany), March, 1875.

[19]*The Free Press,* November 12, 1874.

[20]R. C. Overton, *Burlington West,* (Cambridge), 442.

[21]*Die Mennoniten Niederlassung auf den Landereien der Atchison, Topeka und Sante Fe Eisenbahn-Gesellschaft* (St. Joseph, Mo., 1874).

[22]*Friedensbote* (Milford Square, Pa.), November 15, 1874.

[23]*Mennonitische Blätter* (Danzig, Germany), March, 1875.

[24]Letter from Jakob and Katharine Warkentin, Gnadenfeld, Kansas, August 28, 1877, in the Bethel College Historical Library.

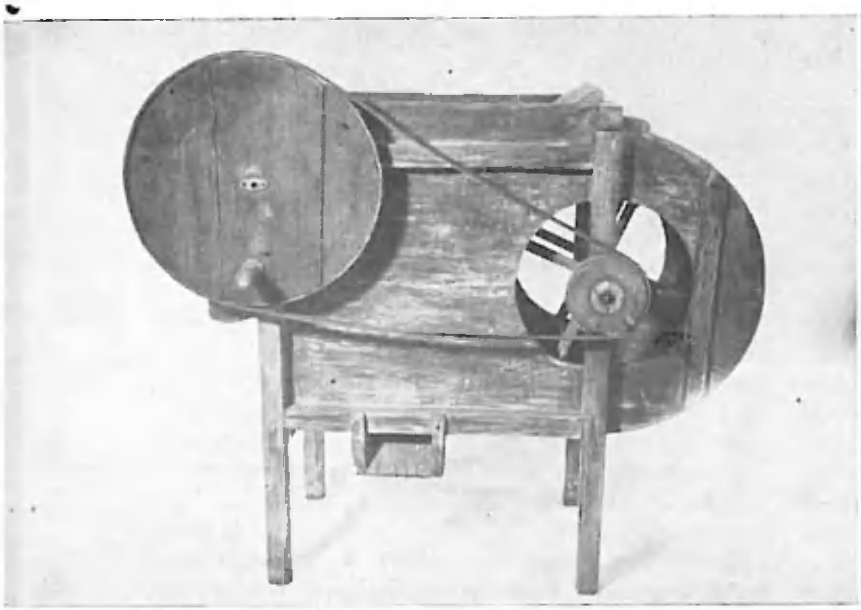
[25]From a letter written by P. P. Wedel's mother to her father in Russia. The P. P. Wedel Collection is in the Bethel College Historical Library.

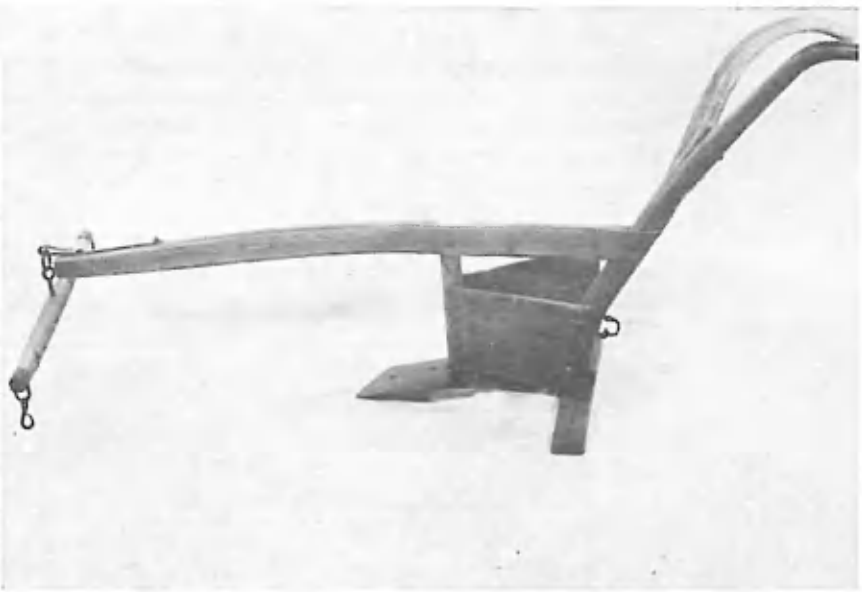
(Continued from page 174)

X. Aun, spaun aun—
Trien, hol de Lien—
Mitsch, hol de Pitsch—
Soa set op een Foa.
(Ann, harness up—
Kate, fetch the lines—
Marie, fetch the whip—
Sarah's sitting on a load.)

Implements from the Kauffman Museum.

On the open prairie the pioneer family lived close to the soil, the source of sustenance. Implements shown on top are first, fanning-mill for cleaning grain; second, horse-drawn weeder; third, yoke to carry water; fourth, fifth and seventh, gardening tools; sixth, hand corn planter, and at extreme right, wooden plow. They are items from the Kauffman Museum.





The Early Anabaptist Thought on

Word, Spirit and Scripture

By WALTER KLAASSEN

ANABAPTIST views on Word, Spirit, and Scripture have frequently been touched on in general surveys of Anabaptist thought. Careful writers on the subject have shown a reluctance to make general statements in this area for lack of broad basis of evidence. The study which follows is essentially the conclusion of a Ph.D. dissertation entitled "Word, Spirit, and Scripture in Early Anabaptist Thought" (University of Oxford, 1960). The dissertation seeks to provide a broad basis of evidence for what Anabaptists believed about these things. From this certain general conclusions can be drawn.

The dissertation is concerned only with the Swiss Brethren and the South German Anabaptists, including the Hutterites of Austria and Moravia. Four separable strains of Anabaptist thinking on this subject are presented in chapters entitled "The Swiss Brethren," "Hans Denck," "The Legacy of Hans Hut," and "Pilgram Marbeck," as will be evident from what follows. The time span covered by the dissertation is from 1525 to 1560.

The one thing that emerges most clearly from the above-mentioned study is that we cannot speak about *the* Anabaptist view of Word, Spirit, and Scripture. The glowing statement of the editor of the *Mennonite Quarterly Review* that Wiswedel's essay, "The Inner and the Outer Word,"[1] "should resolve the debate over the Anabaptist position on Scripture once for all" is premature.[2] Although the present investigation has reached virtually the same conclusions as Wiswedel, it has also proved that a great deal still remains to be done. The definitive statement will come only from a capable dogmatic theologian who will discuss these views on Word, Spirit, and Scripture in the total context of Anabaptist thought. Any statement such as the present one is bound to be incomplete because of concentration on the one subject to the exclusion of all others. This is at least partially unavoidable because of the volume of the source material to be mastered. However, it may indicate some of the lines along which further investigation could be conducted.

Agreements and Differences

Although Wiswedel's work covers the widest possible scope in the variety of Anabaptist opinion as in the use of sources, it does not take sufficient account of the differences of viewpoint among Anabaptists on this matter. He does not ignore the differences, but they have been subordinated to the manifest desire to present *the* Anabaptist view on Scripture.

Differences in the approach to the Scriptures among Anabaptists run parallel to differences in the view of the work of the Spirit. For the Swiss Brethren and Marbeck, the Scriptures were the only rule of faith, the Spirit interpreting them and bearing witness to their truth and dependability. Denck saw things differently, for with him the Scriptures took second place to the Spirit, who alone speaks authoritatively in the heart, and to whom the Scriptures bear witness. The Hut tradition did not distinguish Spirit and Scripture as sharply as Denck, nor was their emphasis on the Bible as the sole authority as pronounced as that of the Swiss Brethren. As the role of the Bible as the rule of faith recedes, so the role of the Spirit as the inner light and guide comes to the fore. It thus becomes clear that what at first appears to be a dogmatic difference is in fact a varying emphasis on the relative authoritative functions of Spirit and Scripture. In the case of Marbeck and the Swiss Brethren, the divine authority is exercised through the Scriptures and less through the indwelling Spirit, whereas in the Denck-Hut tradition the inner Word assumes greater importance.

The one signficant dogmatic difference is to be seen in the contrasting views of Denck and the rest of Anabaptists on the order in which inner and outer Word comes to man. Denck said that the inner is in man long before the outer bears witness to it, whereas the rest of Anabaptists stoutly maintained that the inner Word cannot become the possession of man unless he first hears the outer Word.

After all that has been said, however, the present writer cannot but agree with what Wiswedel does not say but implies, namely that the points of agreement among all groups in the doctrine of Word, Spirit, and Scripture are more important than the points of divergence. There are three points at which all Anabaptists may be said to agree. Firstly, they all agree that Jesus Christ was the original Word of God. He was the self-revelation, self-proclamation of God, and the source of whatever else is called the Word of God, such as the Scriptures, preaching, and the inner Word. The fact that in this respect Denck thought more in terms of the glorified Christ and the rest of Anabaptism more in terms of the human Jesus does nothing to minimize this point, because even Denck could speak of a glorified Christ only because there had been a human, historical Jesus. It is from this vantage point that one must understand Denck's relegation of Scripture to second place; for him, God Himself was the supreme authority, and nothing else could take His place. From here also we can understand the emphasis of the rest of Anabaptism on the

written Word of Scripture, for they believed that through it, God, who is supreme sovereign, had delegated His authority to men. This doctrine of the Word of God is the focal point for all Anabaptist thinking and belief about the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit. Wiswedel's basic problem was that he did not set his discussion into this framework. Had he done so, it would have been easier for him to make sense of and even partially reconcile his findings.

Spirit and Scriptures

Secondly, there is the separation of Scriptures and Spirit, a testimony to Anabaptist belief that the Holy Spirit is free, that He is not bound to the order that He Himself commonly follows, that God can make Himself known in other ways than through natural media. All of them recognized the dangers of this position. Denck countered it by active participation in the building of the visible church; the rest by placing more emphasis on the outer Word, making it the norm for all unmediated revelation. Luther rejected this position on dogmatic grounds. His concepts of the *deus absconditus* (hidden God) and unmediated revelations were irreconcilable contradictions. The Anabaptists, however, read in their Bibles that the Spirit guided men in their work for God (Acts 2:4, 8:30, 13:2, 16:6, 19:21, 21:11), and taught them inwardly what was important for them to know (Acts 2:4, 4:8, 10:1-15, 19; I Cor. 2:13). Luther's rationalistic argument that the early church needed such a visible manifestation of the Spirit, but that after the church had become firmly established it was no longer necessary, had no meaning for them, because they did not believe that God had altered His manner of working. Besides, the arbitrariness of Luther's argument with reference to the point of time when these special revelations ceased is clear. Of signal importance in this connection was the Anabaptist consciousness of living in a restitution of apostolic times. This supplied meaningful context for their belief in the free movement of God's Spirit.

But the separation of Spirit and Scripture had another side to it. This was the Anabaptist fear of an *ex opere operato* view of Scripture. If the Spirit were bound to the Scriptures as Luther suggested, it would mean that whoever read them would automatically have faith and be a regenerate child of God. But all the facts as the Anabaptists observed them militated against such a view. As they saw it, the reason for a widespread hearing of the Word of God during the Reformation and the accompanying absence of improvement in the lives of the hearers was, that although men heard the Word, their lack of response prevented the Spirit from making the Word fruitful. The Spirit did not unconditionally accompany the preached or read Word. Again it must be said that this separation of Spirit and Scripture was not a severance of the two as has so often been thought. They stood in a relationship of necessary supplementation, neither being wholly able to do without the other.

Authority of Scriptures

Third, Anabaptism had a common mind about the nature of the authority of the Scriptures. The difficulty of writing an Anabaptist theology has often been referred to. The Anabaptists were not primarily systematic theologians. Balthasar Hubmaier, as a trained theologian, appears to be in some danger of posthumous expatriation. Denck and Marbeck engaged in theological controversy, but neither of them were systematic theologians, and both made it clear that they had been forced to write because of external attack. The Anabaptist concern was not primarily abstract theology, but life. This is most clearly seen in their use of the Scriptures. For them, this was not a doctrinal textbook but a book about life—first the life of the individual and then the life of the only true community, the church of believers, baptized on confession of their faith. The mediatorial work of Jesus opened the way to the new life, and the Scriptures were the guide for the new life. It was a life of discipleship, the learning from and imitation of Christ, and in the Bible they found the pattern for this life. For Luther the Bible was authoritative by virtue of the message it proclaimed, and he rejected the idea of using the Bible as a rule for living. Most of the Anabaptists held it to be authoritative on both counts, but it was the latter upon which they were all united. For them discipleship implied obedience to Christ, whose calls to discipleship and instructions for the new life they found in the Gospels. Denck, although he believed that genuine Christian faith was possible without the Scriptures, nevertheless held that the Bible was the indispensable guide to that which is required for the life of discipleship, for it contains the explicit commands of Christ. Moreover, the second part of his work *Von der wahren Liebe*, the genuineness of which now seems assured, is a typical Anabaptist writing with respect to baptism, the Lord's Supper, the oath, and the use of force. It is precisely because of its content that Denck's authorship of this writing has long been disputed, but it is also this same writing that shows Denck to have been a man actively concerned with the affairs of the visible church. The social attitudes of the Anabaptists and their church order are abundant proof that they regarded the Bible as a book for life and not merely as a theological textbook.

Immediately connected with this is the problem of their apparently naive and unreflecting literalistic use of the Scriptures. That this was actually frequently the case need not be denied, nor were the Anabaptists the only ones who fell into this trap. But another factor must be borne in mind. All the important figures, Hubmaier, Denck, Hut and Marbeck, insisted that it was not legitimate to take a verse of Scripture out of its con-

text of meaning and interpret it individually. It had to be viewed not only in the immediate context but also compared with other similar or even contradictory verses. This can hardly be called literalism; it was rather the same critical approach that both Zwingli and Luther took to the Scriptures. What looks like literalism was actually the added dimension in their view of Scriptural authority, namely, that the Scriptures were an imperative that demanded obedience, since it was Christ Himself who commanded.

Danger of Literalism

That literalism was, nevertheless, a very real danger can be deduced from the Anabaptist conviction that every believer, learned or unlearned, literate or illiterate, preacher or layman, could interpret the Scriptures, for all believers had, through faith, been filled with the Spirit. As R. A. Knox rightly points out, this was originally also the assumption of the Reformers, but when Luther noticed that men in his own following were doing just this with results that caused him grave concern, he retreated from his early position and insisted on interpreting the Scriptures for them.[5] The same thing happened in Switzerland. At the Bern Disputation the Anabaptists were told that they, as laymen, were not capable of dealing with theological matters. The sheep should not presume to teach the shepherd; they ought rather to go and look after their families and their trades, and leave the interpretation of the Scriptures to the educated.[6] The Anabaptists continued to believe that the Holy Spirit could make the Scriptures clear even to the simple, uneducated person, and their insistence on this right was, as Knox suggests, a more compelling cause for Luther's enmity even than baptism.[7] The subjective notions and imaginings were sometimes mistaken for the inspiration of the Spirit is true enough. On the other hand, it is possible to say that the phenomenal knowledge of the Bible possessed by these laymen gave them a glimpse of the totality of the Biblical revelation beyond the individual text. Their frequent eloquent defense of believers' baptism within the context of their doctrine of the church proves that their use of the Scriptures at its best was determined by the total revelation of God as found in the Scriptures.[8]

The Old and New Testaments

A final problem that requires mention here is that of the attitude of Anabaptists to the Old Testament. Here one cannot speak of *the* Anabaptist view, since the Hut tradition at least did not separate the Old Testament from the New in the way that the Swiss Brethren and Marbeck did. Let it be said at the outset that there can be no thought of Marcionite tendencies in this context.[9] Although they considered the Old Testament to be of less importance than the New, they did not reject it or regard it as uncanonical. Secondly, the fact that the Anabaptist views on this matter developed in controversy means that both Anabaptists and their opponents expressed themselves more sharply than would otherwise have been the case.

The view that the Old Testament should be equal in value and authority with the New was rejected by the Swiss Brethren and Marbeck because in their view it minimized the significance of the person and work of Jesus. They viewed the Old Testament as of a different order and with a different spirit. This did not imply that the two Testaments were against each other or mutually exclusive, but each had a particular function to perform. The Old Testament was the preparation for the New, and the connecting link between the two was Christ. The Old Testament had Him in promise, and the New in fulfillment. He imparted meaning to both Testaments, but since He was personally present in the New, the Old could only be understood by the New. In taking this view, the Anabaptists evidenced an understanding of the chronological position of the Old Testament with relation to the New that was not found in the Reformers.

But this position also had its problems, as is well illustrated by Marbeck's attempt to define the point of division between old and new covenants. Since he considered the common possession of the Spirit by all believers to be the distinguishing mark of the new covenant. Prior to the outpouring of the Spirit, the disciples had an unspiritual understanding of the person and work of Jesus, since they did not yet possess the Spirit. This really means that the historical Jesus belonged to the old covenant, but Marbeck does not draw this conclusion, for to him Jesus is the originator of, and the firstborn in, the new covenant. Furthermore, in the interests of consistency, Marbeck ought to have made the division between Old and New Testaments between the Fourth Gospel and the Acts, since for him Old and New Testaments were coterminous with old and new covenants. These are problems he was not able to solve. A reason for this could be that, not being a theologian like Luther, he was less able to see the whole scope of his position in all its relationships, and was, therefore, unable to prevent the occasional impasse. Again it is certainly the result of polemical exchange in which a man is driven to argue his point to the extreme limits of its implication. Although the Swiss Brethren held the same views about the relationship of Old and New Testaments to old and new covenants, these problems did not arise in the same way because their debate with Zwingli never reached the proportions of the Schwenckfeld-Marbeck controversy.

On the other hand, there were Hut and his followers who did not make this same sharp division between the Testaments because they believed that there was only one eternal covenant. The difference that came in with Jesus was that the eternal covenant was now revealed as a covenant of sonship with liberty, whereas before it had been a covenant of servitude. Because the covenant of sonship was a clearer revelation, the New Testa-

ment was naturally considered to be more important than the Old. Although this is rarely explicitly stated, the relative use of the two Testaments in the writings of the Hut tradition makes this clear. It was a less critical position than that of Marbeck, because it was never forced to defend itself against attack, but it was also less vulnerable since it emphasized the unity of the Biblical revelation.

Thus, it can no longer be said that the Anabaptist views of Scripture and spirit were only naive, uncritical, and sterile, for it was largely because of these views that the Reformation was able to claim a vast number of common folk. Anabaptism was the Reformation among the people. It was to be expected that, in the mouths of farmers, tradesmen, and professional people, these views would find a much simpler and more direct manner of expression, but it was a language that could be understood by peasant and university doctor alike. It actually appears as though the doctors have, until recently, been the ones who have misunderstood. But behind this simplicity of concept and expression there lay a critical acumen that was in no essential way inferior to that of the Reformers.

With the possible exception of Denck, the Anabaptist attitude to the Scriptures can conveniently and clearly be summed up in the words of Emil Brunner when he says in *Revelation and Reason:*

> The Christian Church stands and falls with the written New Testament, and the written Apostolic testimony of Christ is not only the foundation of all the later witness of the Church to Christ; it is also its norm.[10]

This quotation does not imply a negative attitude to the Old Testament either for Brunner or for the Anabaptists. Rather it is intended to highlight and safeguard the centrality and absolute significance of the person and work of Christ. This was the prime concern for Luther and Zwingli as well. That they should have denied the Anabaptists the right to differ from them in the way in which they chose to make this emphasis was a tragedy which, when seen in the context of the 16th century religious and social ferment, was unavoidable.

FOOTNOTES

[1]*Mennonite Quarterly Review,* XXVI (1952), 171-191.
[2]"Editorial," *Mennonite Quarterly Review,* XXVI (1952), 170.
[3]*A Compend of Luther's Theology,* ed. H. T. Kerr (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1943), p. 68.
[4]Georg Baring, *Hans Denck Schriften I. Teil, Bibliographie,* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann Verlag, 1955), 34-35.
[5]R. A. Knox, *Enthusiasm* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950), p. 134-135.
[6]*Bern Gespräch,* 1538, Microfilm of typewritten copy in Goshen College Library, p. 299.
[7]Knox, *Op. cit.,* 135.
[8]See for instance the statement of the Grüningen Anabaptists, *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer in der Schweiz. I. Bd. Zürich,* therausg. L. von Muralt und W. Schmidt (Zürich, 1952), 234-238.
[9]Had this been the case, Hans Denck would not have spent valuable time in assisting Ludwig Hätzer to translate the Prophets.
[10]E. Brunner, *Revelation and Reason,* Eng. transl. (London: SCM Press, 1947), 127.

Did Michael Sattler Write This Hymn?

The Disputed Authorship of an Anabaptist Hymn

By WALTER H. HOHMANN

THE hymn *"Als Christus mit seiner Lehr"* appeared in *Ein New Gesengbuchlen* which was printed at Jungen Buntzel in Bohemia by Georg Wylmschwerer in the year 1531. The manager of the Brethren's printing office at Jungen Buntzel at this time was Georg Styrsa. The preface, which is addressed to the German congregations at Landskron and Fulnek in Bohemia, is signed "Michael Weisse, Ewer Diener." There are 155 hymns, and, according to the preface, Michael Weisse composed or translated all of them. According to a study by J. T. Müller on Bohemian hymnody, which is summarized in John Jullian's *Dictionary of Hymnology,* London, 1908, only twelve of the hymns contained in this book are translations from the Bohemian or Latin. The remaining hymns are authored by Michael Weisse, and *"Als Christus mit seiner Lehr"* is in this group. Müller is aware of the fact that this lyric is in the *Ausbund,* where it is ascribed to an Anabaptist writer. He states, however, that on what basis this ascription is accorded is not known.

The lyric by Weisse is in the strophic form of the quatrain, and the meter seems trochaic with the rhyme scheme aabb. The lyric contains twelve stanzas.

The lyric, as stated above, appears in the *Ausbund; Das ist etliche schöne Christliche Lieder,* etc., of 1583 ascribed to Michael Sattler. In the *Ausbund* the lyric is again in the strophic form of the quatrain; however, the meter seems iambic with the rhyme scheme aabb. Here the lyric contains thirteen stanzas.

The thought content of the twelve stanzas is the same in both books. Stanza thirteen in the *Ausbund* is an ascription of praise to God, to the Son and to the Holy Ghost. This thought pattern for the closing stanza of a hymn lyric is very common in this time period.

This lyric is found in numerous hymnbooks in the centuries following the appearance of *Ein New Gesang-*

buchlen by Michael Weisse.

In 1545 it is found in *Geystliche Lieder,* etc., Leipzig, by Valentin Babst. It appears again in this same book published in 1559 by the heirs of Babst. Its next appearance is in the hymnbook *Geistliche Lieder,* etc. Leipzig, 1552, by Jacobum Berwald. This is not the same hymnbook as the one mentioned above in spite of the similarity of title.

Its next appearance is in *Geystliche Lieder,* etc., Nürnberg, 1558, by Gabrielem Heyn. There are three more editions of this hymnbook in 1561, 1570 and 1573 also published at Nürnberg by Valentin Neuber.

Johann Wickradt of Hamburg in 1558 is the publisher of a hymnbook entitled *Enchiridion Geistliker Leder un Psalmen,* etc., in which the lyric again appears. Its next appearance is in *Kirche Gesäng,* etc., Frankfurt a.M., 1569, by Johannem Wolffium.

Psalmen, geystliche Lieder und Gesänge, etc., Strassburg, 1571 and 1575 by Theodosium Riesel, is the next hymnbook in which the lyric is found. Eucharium Zinckeisen includes the lyric in his *Kirchen Gesäng,* etc., published at Frankfurt a.M. in 1584.

It then appears in *Gross Kirchen Gesangbuch,* etc., Tübingen, 1596, by Georgen Gruppenbach: and *Gesangbuch,* etc., Dresden, 1597, by Gimel Bergen. It is also included in the *Kirchen Gesangbuch,* etc., Strassburg, 1616, by Pauli Ledertz.

Evidently the lyric continued to be used in the hymnbooks of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for it appears in the nineteenth century in *Schatz des evangelischen Kirchengesangs,* etc., Leipzig, 1848, by Gottfried Freiherrn von Tucher and *Zionsharfe,* etc., Stuttgart, 1855, by Dr. Conrad Kocher.

The Bohemian Brethren continued to include the lyric in their hymnbooks after the Weisse hymnal of 1531. Its use is also continued in the *Ausbund* after 1583. In the hymnbooks of the Mennonites of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries the lyric has had varied reception. In the hymnbooks of the Mennonites of Prussia—in the Danzig area—and in Russia, the lyric is not used. Neither do the Mennonites of the Netherlands include the lyric in their hymnbooks. The *Ausbund* seems to be the only Mennonite hymnbook of Europe in which the lyric is found.

The *Ausbund* was brought to America by early Mennonite settlers. Later the lyric is found in the hymnbooks produced in Pennsylvania. In 1803 it is found in *Die kleine geistliche Harfe der Kinder Zion,* Germantown, printed by Michael Billmeyer and in 1804 it appears in *Ein Neues, unpartheyisches Gesangbuch,* etc., Lancaster, printed by Bauman and Cleim. The lyric is not included in *Die Gemeinschaftliche Liedersammlung,* etc., Berlin, Canada, 1836, printed by H. W. Peterson. It is found in *Eine unparteiische Lieder Sammlung,* etc., Lancaster, 1860, printed by Johann Baer's Söhnen. It is not found in the hymnbooks of other Protestant denominations of the United States.

The authorship of this hymn has been the subject of much research. Rudolf Wolkan in his *Die Lieder der Wiedertäufer,* Berlin, 1903, pages 26-40, comes to the conclusion that Michael Sattler is not the author. In *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie,* Leipzig, 1890, volume 30, pages 410-413, Ludwig Keller, in his article on Michael Sattler, is also of the opinion that Sattler is not the author of the hymn. The initials M.S. do not signify Michael Sattler but rather Michael Schneider. Again in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie,* volume 41, pages 599 and 600, in an article about Weisse by Rudolf Wolkan, we read, "Die Hauptmasse aber seiner Lieder—und das ist das Wichtige — sind Eigenthum Weisse's und kein Deuteln kann sie ihm weiter ableugnen; Luther's Wort, dass Weisse ein 'trefflicher, deutscher Poet' gewesen, hat wieder, seine Geltung erlangt."

Philipp Wackernagel, in his *Bibliographie zur Geschichte des deutschen Kirchenlieds im XVI. Jahrhundert,* Frankfurt a.M., 1855, in his discussion of *Ein New Geseng buchlein MDXXXI.,* pages 119-121, calls attention to the fact that Michael Weisse in the preface to this book leaves the impression that all the hymns in the book are of his authorship. Wackernagel also mentions the fact that this hymn appears in the *Ausbund* credited to another author.

In the *Monatschefte der Comenius-Gesellschaft* by Ludwig Keller, volume 3, 1894, on pages 100 and 101, there is a short review of the study by J. T. Müller concerning the Bohemian Brethren hymnbooks. Here, again, the fact is pointed out that in the Bohemian Brethren hymnbook of 1531 by Michael Weisse only twelve hymns are translations and that "Als Christus mit seiner Lehr" is not among these twelve.

Albert Friedrich Wilhelm Fischer in his *Kirchenlieder Lexicon,* Gotha, 1878, on page 39 credits Michael Weisse with the authorship of this hymn. Again—Rosella Reimer Duerksen in her doctoral dissertation "Anabaptist Hymnody of the Sixteenth Century," 1956, concludes that Michael Sattler is not the author of this lyric.

The following is cited supporting the view that Michael Sattler is the author of this lyric. In *The Mennonite Encyclopedia,* 1959, Volume IV, page 434, I find this—"The Anabaptists ascribed to Sattler the hymn *Als Christus mit seiner wahren Lehr* which is in the *Ausbund* of 1583." This quotation is taken from the longer article about Michael Sattler.

The conclusion of this matter can be summarized in this manner. The preponderant amount of evidence seems to indicate that Weisse and not Sattler authored this lyric. The slight variance in the meter of the verse in the two versions may possibly have come about because the primary way of communication at this time was undoubtedly aural. As the lyric was used in different sections of the country, these variations appeared.

It is possible that the Anabaptists used this lyric in

(Continued on page 192)

Mennonite Land Settlement Policies

By PETER F. BARGEN

THROUGHOUT their entire history, the Mennonites have tended to settle in groups, and whenever migration and resettlement have been necessary, as they often were, the Mennonite leaders endeavored to obtain land in "blocks" which would insure group settlement. The motives behind group settlement are simple. The Mennonites have always striven at "separation" from the world in order to preserve the *Gemeinschaft* (fellowship) of the believers. Group settlements, therefore, have been motivated as much by the desire to have the fellowship of those of like belief, as they have been to remain apart from the "sinful" world. On the part of the Mennonites there has always been the justified fear that unless they settled in homogeneous groups, it would be impossible to avoid assimilation with, and absorption into, the main stream of the country's culture. For four hundred years this has been a dominating principle of Mennonite group settlement, and in Canada the pattern has been largely the traditional one. Although economic factors do play a minor part in stimulating the Mennonites to adhere to their own kind, they are only of very minor importance. In Canada the Mennonites have been largely absorbed in an economic sense, but socially and religiously they remain an ethnic group. Fear of losing their faith in the stream of modern, complex culture and beliefs has been, and remains, the dominant incentive to Mennonite group settlement.

In Canada the desire to settle in "closed" communities met with exceptional success. The Mennonite immigrants of the 1870's had blocks of land reserved for their special use. Even today, in the East and West reserves in Manitoba, the Mennonite element is completely dominant. Although such large areas were never again set aside for the settlement of any particular ethnic group, the Canadian Pacific Railway and the large landowners in Canada were greatly interested in settling their large tracts of land with groups of people. The work of settlement, which was begun by the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization in the middle 1920's, was accelerated by the private interests of the railway companies and large landowners. The pre-war and wartime booms have, more recently, become things of the past, and the large landowners in the Canadian West have been eager to reduce or sell entirely their large holdings. There were only two alternatives: either to cut up the large land areas and sell to individuals or to sell entire holdings to groups of families. The latter method was preferred by the owners as being simpler and cheaper and more promising of success for the fundless Mennonites; for them it was an answer to prayer.

The majority of the newcomers of the 1920's settled on Canadian Pacific Railway lands or lands of its affiliated organizations. James B. Hedges, in his book *Building the Canadian West*, has clearly and authoritatively told the story of the colonization of the Canadian West through the efforts of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company.[1] The Company, in close co-operation with the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, put forth every effort to make the Mennonite colonization scheme a success. The Company also maintained the Canada Colonization Association as a "medium for the settlement of private land,"[2] and in order to achieve a greater harmony and unity in the work of settling the Mennonites, the Mennonite Land Settlement Board was organized, which, although containing a Mennonite member, was dominated and directed by Colonel J. S. Dennis of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The Mennonites as a society lacked a consistent and well-defined settlement policy, a fact that was to be detrimental to the plans and hopes of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization. The element of planning which did exist was a direct result of the organization under the direction of the Canadian Pacific Railway itself.

It is evident that the Canadian Pacific Railway has been the most important factor in the settlement of the lands in the Canadian West. After the completion of the railway, the company had 25,000,000 acres of crown lands to dispose of and consequently desired to create in the West a rich and productive farming community which would furnish traffic for the company's struggling rail lines. To aid in this venture and to meet the demands of colonization, the Department of Colonization was formed in 1916 with Colonel J. S. Dennis at its head. In 1930 this name was changed to Department of Immigration and Colonization.

In selecting the land subsidy which the Canadian Pacific Railroad was to receive for constructing the railway, the company was not obliged to accept areas which were not "fairly fit for settlement."[3] As far as the lands in Alberta were concerned, the Canadian Pacific Railway declines to accept the area along the main line between Moose Jaw and the mountains, because the land was too dry and, therefore, unfit for settlement. By 1903 not all land had been selected, and the government issued an order that the balance of the land grant must be selected before the end of that year, the deficiency at that time being 3,000,000 acres. The possibilities of irrigation in the dry belt in Alberta had been investi-

gated under the direction of J. S. Dennis, then the Inspector of Surveys for the Dominion Government. The investigation showed that potential fertile lands were tributary to the St. Mary's and Bow rivers east of Calgary. The Canadian Pacific Railway accepted this block of land and decided to build irrigation works to serve it.

The entire irrigation block was subsequently divided into three sections known as Eastern, Central and Western sections.[4] Although the central section is only now being fitted out with irrigation facilities, the Eastern and Western sections were soon completed. The Western section comprises 1,002,304 acres with 218,980 under irrigation.[5] The cost of the irrigation construction in these two sections amounted to $18,000,000. In 1912 the Canadian Pacific Railway purchased the Alberta Railway and Irrigation Company system, which lies directly south of the main Canadian Pacific Railway irrigation block. This area was first developed by the Alberta Railway and Irrigation Company and is the oldest irrigation area of any size in Canada. It was opened for operation in 1900.

Thus, two types of farming land were opened to the Mennonites when they came West in the 1920's—irrigated land and dry land. Being unfamiliar with irrigation, the pioneer Mennonites preferred the dry land, but it was inevitable that some would come into contact with irrigated land. In 1924 the settlers bought land at Didsbury and Tofield, both situated in dry areas, while the irrigation area around Lethbridge was at first neglected. Slowly the Mennonites also penetrated the irrigation blocks, not as farmers at first, but as laborers in the sugar beet fields. Soon farms were bought and regular Mennonite homes established. The superiority of the irrigation land over dry land was proven in the next decade when drought brought the dry land settlers to the verge of starvation, while the settlers in the irrigated areas prospered. Since the early thirties, the movement of Mennonites to irrigated land has been persistent and today the larger portion of them are situated on irrigable land. Most of the settlements in the dry areas have remained small, while the reverse has been the case in the irrigation blocks. In the dry land, the chief areas of Mennonite settlement are Didsbury and Tofield. Smaller settlements are found east of the Calgary-Edmonton line and in the Peach River area. In the irrigation areas the main Mennonite settlements are Coaldale, Rosemary, Gem, Vauxhall, Brooks and Duchess.

Group settlements were established in Alberta, as well as on the other western provinces. Large tracts of land, owned by wheat farmers or cattle ranchers, were rented or sold to groups of Mennonite families, who then worked the land on a communal basis, at least for the first few years. This scheme met with a fair amount of success but also had its difficulties, the main ones being the individuality and the independence of the settlers. One such group settlement was made in the Carseland-Namaka-Strathmore district where, in 1925, the Russian Mennonites took over a large tract of land from the George Lane Company Ltd., Calgary. The land was to be paid for with one half the crop produced in a period of ten years. The work in the early years was of necessity done communally, and the machinery bought and the buildings erected in the same manner. As among all good individuals, differences of opinion soon brought friction. When one farmer wanted to leave work for a day and go to Calgary, the reply was, *Wann eena no Calgary foat, dann well we aulla foare* (If one goes to Calgary, then we all go). As soon as possible, the land was divided among the families and gradually individual farms arose, until today the communal system here has entirely disappeared. Although many families from here have moved away, mainly to British Columbia, this area still contains a prosperous Mennonite settlement.

A similar story can be told of the Wembley district. The Russian Mennonites arrived in Swalwell in 1925, where they spent the winter under the care of the earlier Mennonite settlers. Land scouts were sent out and had no difficulty in making arrangements to purchase a ranch of twenty-two quarters, with a thousand acres under cultivation, from the Adair Ranch Company. The deal was made for $18.00 per acre with machinery, to be paid with half the crop in fifteen years at 4 per cent interest for the first two years and 6 per cent for the remaining time. The total purchase price was $63,350. Contrary to Mennonite practice, this purchase was made solely by the group concerned without assistance or direction by the Mennonite Land Settlement Board. The latter organization immediately informed other immigrants not to purchase land independently.[6] The first two years the land was worked communally, but in 1927 it was parceled out to the individual families. Today very few scattered Mennonite families still live in the area.

In the Didsbury area another group of eleven families, comprising seventy-four individuals, settled on the Burns Ranch. As in other places, the work was started on a communal basis and later divided into small farms. These cases show clearly that a community of goods is not desired by the Mennonites, although they will "tolerate" such conditions if necessity dictates. The settlements at Irma, Crowfoot, Rosemary, Countess and many others were first settled by groups, many of whom practiced communal ownership in the first years. This was done to insure progress while supplying the means of attaining independence. The large tracts could be bought at cheaper prices than the then existing small farms.

The settlement of the Mennonites on the land was one of the main functions of the Mennonite Provincial Committee. Under the supervision of the *Vertreterversammlung* (Representative Meeting of the Mennonites in Alberta), it watched over the religious, social and cultural development of the infant settlements. This control, however, was very limited, consisting mainly of reports and recommendations to the areas; and the Committee had no force but persuasion to see that its recommenda-

tions were carried out. Its suggestions consisted mainly of encouragement to establish religious and German schools on Saturday and to establish a German library. When a settlement found itself in difficult economic straits, a recommendation for financial help was usually brought at the next *Vertreterversammlung*. Large group settlements were recommended and Mennonites who were living alone in isolated areas were constantly urged to resettle in Mennonite centers.[7]

During the years 1925 to 1932, Jacob Gerbrandt was the Alberta representative on the Mennonite Land Settlement Board. Through his office in Lethbridge, he was kept informed of the settlement possibilities in the province. Efforts were made to settle the Mennonites on land as soon as possible and landless families were encouraged, and often aided, to rent or buy farms. Coaldale has always had the largest number of landless Mennonite families of any area in Alberta, the reason probably being that those wishing to take up farming in the province chose Coaldale as a stopover until land was found. In addition, the irrigation area, and the large acreage sown to sugar beets, provided these families with sufficient work while they waited. In 1932 there were fifty-one landless families in Coaldale alone.

Traditionally the Mennonites belong to the land, and the large number of families without farms caused great concern. There were reasons, however, why the number was so large. Since most of the settlers had come from Russia without funds, the lack of money was the greatest cause of failure to purchase farms.[8] The depression offered little opportunity to better their finances. Many of the areas available for settlement in the 1930's could not be accepted by the Mennonites because of the large amount of cash necessary for purchase. In 1930 the Provincial Committee reported that good irrigation land northeast of Coaldale was available for $45 to $50 per acre. A cash payment of 20 per cent was required and because of this the land could not be purchased for Mennonite purposes.

In 1934 B. B. Janz reported that land was available near the Athabasca River, ninety miles north of Edmonton. The terms were favorable, being $10 down payment and $40 when the title was received. But this area was homestead land and to the Mennonites who were acquainted with the well-equipped farms in Southern Alberta, the thought of clearing bush and breaking land was not very attractive. The pioneer spirit seemed to be lacking and escape was sought from the rigors of pioneer life. At about this time a settlement was started at Irma, but after long years of drought and hail, very few Mennonite families remain in the area. Good open land required much cash, inferior homestead land was not desired, and the number of landless families grew.

The lack of unity among the Mennonites themselves, regarding the best settlement policy, was in itself a detrimental factor in the Mennonite land settlement policy. There was a clear division of thought regarding group settlement. The Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization and the provincial organizations emphasized the necessity of co-operative efforts in which land was found and settled by the Mennonite society as a whole; others thought that the search for land was the concern of the individual only. Although this difference caused difficulties, and the group scheme often suffered because of lack of interest on the part of the settlers, the co-operative method has enjoyed the greatest popularity and success. The individualists received a great boost in their views when, in 1937, David Toews, chairman of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, discouraged over the many failures of this branch of the Board's activities, stated that perhaps it was better that people find land independently of Mennonite organizations.[9] The settlements which found their beginnings in the co-operative method have been mostly successful, although a few failures can be noted.

The Mennonite settlement at Blue Ridge was founded in 1934-35, and it consisted originally of six families comprising thirty individuals. The settlement, situated on the south bank of the Athabasca River northwest of Edmonton, consisted of homestead land and original pioneer conditions existed. Constant appeals for help were made to the *Vertreterversammlung*, with special emphasis being put upon the necessity of more settlers if the success of the settlement was to be assured. New settlers did not materialize, and in 1937 the area was closed to further homesteading by the government.[10] The resident Mennonite settlers were left isolated and by 1942 only two families remained. Today there are no Mennonite settlers in the area.

The story of Blue Ridge is not typical, but it portrays developments in certain other areas as well. In Irma, Castor, Crowfoot, Beaverlodge, Provost, Munson, New Brigden, Monitor, Dawson Creek (B. C.), Gundy (B. C.), and Pouce Coup, small Mennonite settlements grew up in the thirties; but today they have either died out entirely or contain only a few Mennonite families. Most of the settlers in these areas soon became discouraged because of the severe conditions or because their crops were either drought stricken or frozen or were hailed out, and most moved to the southern part of the province, or to British Columbia. During World War II, all active attempts at opening new Mennonite settlements ceased because of the unfavorable attitude of the general public to Mennonite land expansion. The Mennonites considered the situation serious enough without aggravating it by excessive land acquisitions. In 1941, however, a new settlement was started just north of Gem and was named New Gem. This project was carried through because arrangements had been started prior to the war,[11] but were completed only in 1941 when fourteen Mennonite families settled there on bought land. In spite of the help extended to the new settlers by the Eastern Irrigation District and the Mennonite society in general, the settlement failed to grow and the farms were lost through lack of payment. Today the settlement here is very small.

Mention should be made of the Mennonite Agricultural Society established in 1939 in Alberta for the purpose of supplying funds, on a loan basis, to those Mennonites wishing to buy land but lacking the financial means to do so. The Society as a whole was a failure, because it lacked the confidence of the general Mennonite public. The Society was later liquidated and a Credit Union was formed on a sound financial basis. The latter organization had extended large sums to Mennonites and still exists as one of the successful Mennonite endeavors.

Perhaps if the Mennonites had not attempted to organize a body to supervise settlement on land, the failure of their planned land settlement would not be so obvious. It is true that these people did tend to settle in groups, but this was not the result of a conscious policy on the part of the Mennonites, but rather the consequence of a natural adhesion of the Mennonite for his own people and the fruits of the efforts of the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Canada Colonization Association. The Mennonites on their own lacked the unity necessary for success in this field, and the few settlements such as Blue Ridge, which were established as a result of a defined and supported policy, often proved a failure. No small ingredient in this failure is the essential individuality of the average Mennonite who is willing to bear the consequences of his own misjudgment but cannot forget when his ill fortune is due to someone else!

FOOTNOTES

[1]Hedges, J. B., *Building the Canadian West, The Land and Colonization Policies of the Canadian Pacific Railway*, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1939, pp. 370-377.
[2]*Ibid.*, p. 370.
[3]Porter, S. G., "The Canadian Pacific Land Grants and their Administration," *Canadian Pacific Staff Bulletin*, February 1, 1940.
[4]*Irrigation Farming in Sunny Alberta*, 1925, p. 2.
[5]Porter, *op. cit.*
[6]*Vertreterversammlung*, 1936, p. 11.
[7]*Vertreterversammlung*, 1935, p. 11, and 1938, p. 7.
[8]*Vertreterversammlung*, 1937, p. 12.
[9]*Vertreterversammlung*, 1937, p. 24.
[10]*Ibid.*, p. 11.
[11]*Vertreterversammlung*, 1941, p. 19.

Mutual Aid in an Urban Setting

By J. HOWARD KAUFFMAN

FOR Mennonites, a considertion of this topic is something of a departure from the usual or normal. It is true, of course, that there are Mennonites living in cities (of 2500 population or more, to use the U. S. census definition). It is also true that our urbanites belong to our mutual aid societies. But our present mutual aid programs have in nearly all cases been conceived and organized in rural settings and for rural people. We have probably not fully realized that mutual aid in the city, particularly in the large city, may involve us in some radical departures from our current rural-conceived programs.

The Apostle Paul practiced mutual aid in the cities as he spread the Gospel throughout Asia Minor and into Europe. So we have precedent for doing likewise. But as we move from the rural to the urban we find new hazards and new risks. In the rural setting *natural* hazards seem the most common; risks of weather, insects, and disease. In the urban setting the hazards tend more to be those created by mankind; the social and economic hazards, hazards of unemployment, theft, crime, insecurity of old age, financial loss, business failure. These and others, are found in an urban setting to a much greater degree than in the rural. Government insurance and assistance programs have been instituted to offset many of these risks.

As we face the problem of meeting these urban hazards we find that there is a considerable difference in covering risks or providing mutual aid protection against such losses. On property there tend to be larger evaluations and a heavier concentration of risks in one area. However, because of the better fire protection the fire risks may be less. Collision rates for autos are much higher. Hospital costs are higher. Even burial expenses are higher in the city. Risks due to crime are greater. Mutual Aid programs may need to go farther in setting up differential premium and benefit schedules to allow for these important rural-urban differences.

As we recall how we operated in the rural setting we realize that many of our practices developed naturally because of our closely knit community life. As we turn to look at the urban setting, the dispersion of our people into widely scattered areas of the city make it very difficult to develop mutual aid practices in a natural sort of way. For example, many individuals and families in the city have no relatives near at hand. There is no one on whom they may fall back in times of special need. Then there is the problem of physical distance involving the difficulty of driving many miles through heavy traffic. Socially, people are more anonymous. Mutual aid will have to get "nosier" in order to find out about the needs of fellow church members. Furthermore, people in the city operate on a rigid time schedule and thus it is very difficult to get any number of them together at the same time when there is a need such as might easily be served in the rural area.

In spite of all these problems and difficulties that are encountered in the cities, more and more of our people are moving in that direction. This is primarily because of economic reasons, because of the availability of positions in which they might earn their daily bread. Thus it behooves us to ask the question "What are the possible areas for action within the city? What are the new frontiers that we might explore to provide mutual aid services to our people?"

First, since much of this migration is for economic reasons, it becomes important that we help our young people to secure employment positions and housing facilities. Perhaps in our urban centers we could work out a "big brother" service for the new and needy families. There might be a system whereby these who are established in the city could make available their service and information to newcomers to that city. Another area of service might be called "homemaker service," a service where a woman comes into a home to fill in when mother is incapacitated. Since many of the families are far away from relatives this would be especially helpful to younger families. Perhaps when children are born, or when there is illness in the family, a place where people could turn for homemaker service would be greatly appreciated.

A third area to consider would be that of aid for the aged. Especially in the impersonal relations of the city the aged need help in the use of their time, projects for them to work on, programs, maybe even a "fresh-air program" for the aged. A few of our urban congregations are sponsoring "Golden Age" clubs for older persons. These provide worthwhile meetings and activities for aged persons.

Another problem area is that of housing. In a few places we have some co-operative housing for students. Maybe we could buy apartment houses in the cities for Mennonite families. This might be financed with funds from individuals set up in the form of a corporation or in the form of a cooperative. A fifth area is travelers' aid. Travelers to the city would appreciate mutual aid service to help them find lodging, find the way around, to make their stay in the city more pleasant and profitable. The hostel operated by Elizabeth Foth in New York City is an example of this type of service.

A sixth area might be that of helping finance the vocational preparation of our college and university students, particularly those who plan to serve the church in specialized services—doctors, nurses, ministers, social workers, teachers, etc. Urban occupations call for specialized training, often involving many years of study. Student aid has usually been left up to our colleges to provide. But colleges have difficulties in raising enough money merely for buildings and general operation, so student aid often comes in last. Can our church Mutual Aid services do more in this area? Will we have to fall back on government aid programs in this area also?

Another area of development might be that of a life insurance program. Especially in the city where there are no relatives nearby, when the income stops immediately upon the death of the breadwinner, life insurance for those who are left behind would be very helpful. This too is a greater problem in the city than in rural areas.

An eighth area of study might be that of the need for Mennonite day schools in the cities. Public schools in some parts of the city are woefully inadequate. City missionary families are often in difficulty in trying to obtain a good education for their children in a socially and morally safe school environment. I have talked with several of our city missionaries with children about ready to enter school, and they voice a real desire for a Christian school where their children could attend.

We will have to face some of these problems *now* for they are with us. We cannot long ignore them for they will be solved by default, which is really no solution at all. We need to see the possibilities for a mutual aid program within the cities. We need to be willing to alter our practices to meet the peculiarly urban needs, while at the same time preserving the same principles of love of God and love of fellow man which have been basic to our mutual aid programs in a rural setting.

(A paper presented at the 1959 Annual Conference of Association of Mennonite Aid Societies.)

A MENNONITE FLAG

(Continued on page 169)

During the time of divisions and quarrels among the Mennonites of Amsterdam, known as the "War of the Lambs" during the seventeenth century, one group worshipped in a meetinghouse known as "near the sun" and the other one in the church "of the lamb." Long ago these two groups united and, therefore, the two symbols are merged in this flag. This, at the same time, symbolizes that the Mennonites the world over, irrespective of their minor differences, are fundamentally one.

The background for the sun and the lamb is green, symbolizing created matter or nature, while the sun and the lamb are white, symbolizing the essence of all other colors.

I hope that in the year 1961, when we will commemorate the conversion and death of Menno Simons, we will all be united under this flag. The lamb symbolizes Christ, who gave his life for his church, and is also symbolic of peace.

Finally, may I request that you do not take this whole matter too seriously. This flag is not meant to be an idol but a symbol. A symbol stands for something greater than that which can be seen and heard, and that is Christian unity in the spirit of God.

(Continued on page 192)

Contents Volume XV, 1960

JANUARY

APRIL

JULY

OCTOBER

(Continued from page 186)

their services before the compilation of the *Ausbund* and later included it in the *Ausbund*. The ascription of the authorship of the lyric to Sattler in the *Ausbund* was undoubtedly well intended by some individual or individuals, perhaps based on the fact of usage of the lyric by the Anabaptists.

(Continued from page 190)

(Editorial note: This message was presented with the flag at a luncheon at Groningen, August 1, 1960, by S. S. Smeding, pastor of the Mennonite church of Noordhorn, Groningen, in the presence of W. I. Fleischer, pastor of the Mennonite church of Groningen, and a tour group of United States and Canadian Mennonites under the leadership of Cornelius Krahn.)

MENNONITE LIFE

An Illustrated Quarterly

Published under the auspices of Bethel College: Menno Schrag, Chairman; Arnold Nickel, Vice-Chairman; J. O. Schrag, Secretary; Chris H. Goering, Treasurer.

Subscription Price
$3.00 per year

Address:
Mennonite Life
North Newton, Kansas

Mr. and Mrs. S. Djojodihardjo, chairman of the Javanese Mennonite Conference. Djojodihardjo has visited many American Mennonite Churches.