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MENNONITE LIFE

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COVER

View of lower Manhattan from the Brooklyn Bridge. Standard Oil Co. (N.J.).

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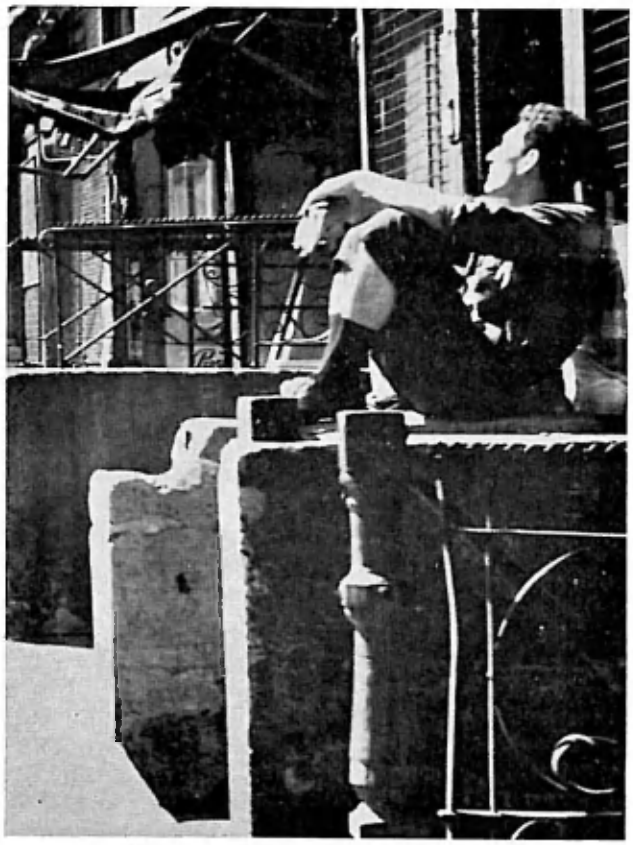
IN THIS ISSUE

When today only 30 percent of the members of the General Conference Mennonite Church are farmers, when therefore many are living in the cities, and when Mennonites have tended to regard rural life as more congenial to the Christian faith than urban life, the issues raised by the contributors are timely indeed. How are faith and culture related? Can they be separated? Should Mennonite churches in the city be concerned only "with the lost sheep of the house of Menno," or should the door be opened to non-Mennonites, and if the latter, of what significance is ethnic Mennonitism? ¶ There appears to be some doubt about the feasibility of taking to the city traditional methods of church organization. How are new methods developed, and what relation does change in method have to the content of faith? What does the Bible say about the city and what ought our attitude to be? What is being done in writing and in action to meet the problems contained in the foregoing questions? ¶ This issue seeks to shed some light on the spectrum of problems confronted by Mennonites in major sociological and ecclesiological change. ¶ Peter Ediger has for several years been involved in city church work. For almost the same period of time he worked in the planning and production of this issue.



What Is The Mennonite Church In The City

By Peter J. Ediger

IT IS MANY THINGS.
Sometimes and in some places it is this; sometimes and in some places it is that.

It is a church awakening to a vision, still rubbing the sleep from its soul.
It is a church being lulled into slumber, entranced by immersion into the affluent society.

It is hungering and thirsting men and women feeding on the Living Bread.
It is satisfied people who know not that they are starving, zealously guarding stale crusts in decorated boxes.

It is conviction and confusion, revival and rebellion and renewal, compromise and courage.

It is a young church, sometimes robust with high ideals and daring vision, and sometimes sick with adolescent self-centeredness.
It is a church in middle-age, sometimes creatively mature and sometimes prematurely senile.

It is a pious church, priding itself on its absence of drinkers and dancers;
and sometimes a sophisticated church, priding itself on its tolerance of drinkers and dancers;
and sometimes it is a Christian church, seeking to redeem both the piously proud and the proudly sophisticated.

It is a church conformed to nonconformity,
and sometimes conformed to not conform to nonconformity;
and sometimes a church transformed by God, conformed to Christ.

It is a church sometimes desperately concerned about saving itself,
and sometimes a church finding itself as it concentrates on following its Lord.

It is a church of many meetings and occasional encounters;
a church of persons engaged in a dynamic program of pilgrimage,
and sometimes a church of programs shackling the upward pilgrimage of persons.

It is a church extending a hand "in the name of Christ" to the brother across the sea;
and sometimes isolating itself from the brother across the street.
It is a congenial church, offering friendship to all who enter its doors,
and sometimes an exclusive church, subtly, conscious of who is "our kind."

It is a church of prodigal sons leaving the Father's house, with some returning to the Father;
and a church of elder brothers, jealous of the Father's prodigal love.

It is a part of the Church Universal, which Christ loves and for which he gave his life.
It is a part of the Church Universal, which some love today, and for which they are giving their life.

It is a part of the Body of Christ, sometimes amputating itself from the larger body and sometimes groping to work in harmony with the other members.

It is a church with prophetic voices calling for renewal;
It is a church with priestly voices calling for peace;
It is a church seeking to hear the voice of the Lord above the voices of men.

THE CHURCH IN A DUTCH CITY

By Hendrik Bremer

WE SPEAK OF AMSTERDAM. The city of Amsterdam is old and has always been radical. Amsterdam has large harbors and wonderful narrow channels; and near the harbor it has some of the largest red light districts of Europe. Fanatical Anabaptists tried to make a second "Jerusalem" of it similar to the attempt in the city of Münster. Amsterdam was the "Jerusalem of the West" where Spanish Jews of the 17th century found refuge, and where a general strike was started when the German occupation authorities began to deport the Jews in 1942. The city, proud of its republican spirit, was quite often in conflict with representatives of the House of Orange. The city has adhered to a radical socialism since 1900 and in 1946 one-third of the population was communist. It is a city where 42 percent of the 900,000 inhabitants are without church affiliation and where 80 percent of the church members seldom or never go to church.

The Church

The Mennonite congregation is the oldest Protestant church of Amsterdam. Fittingly its beginning was radical. Men and women sold their belongings in order to go to Münster to establish the "Kingdom of God." Some fanatics appeared as nudists on the streets; others attacked the city hall. After this followed the punishment. Fanatic Münsterites and innocent lambs of Christ were hanged, drowned and burned together.

After this came the change. The Netherlands rose against Spain. Under Calvinism the Netherlands became a world power. Although the Anabaptists did not participate in this political transformation they were a part of the economic and cultural life of the Dutch Golden Age. They were among the rich merchants, the painters and the writers.

In the Mennonite congregations certain families became influential. Large sums of money were willed to the church. Charity was practiced when Mennonite refugees came from Switzerland and homes for the aged and orphanages were established in large numbers. Amsterdam especially, had families who were supported by the congregation, if necessary from the cradle to the grave.

There was living piety and intellectual courage but also dead tradition. The group that introduced the pietist Zinzendorf to Amsterdam also organized the first Mennonite mission society. On the other hand, theological liberalism brought some spiritual poverty. There was also the good quality of liberalism promoting independent thinking, spiritual change and economic progress. There was a frightening amount of dead traditionalism. Generation after generation of Mennonites joined the Mennonite church because they were members of Mennonite families. Spiritually and economically the families were living off the old investments. Up to 1945 the congregation was prosperous financially as well as numerically. However, many

were members only because "it was the thing to do" and financial well-being urged membership as a good investment.

The Crisis

The crisis started after 1900 but became fully apparent only after 1945. It touched all denominations and shattered the seeming well-being of the Mennonite brotherhood. The withdrawal from the church began with the intellectuals and the laborers. Of the many extremely gifted descendants of the well-known Professor Samuel Muller of Amsterdam, there were in 1960 only one or two who confessed to being Christians.

The poor families began to despise "Christian charity." After 1900 the restless among them became revolutionary socialists and the less radical disappeared from the lists of those receiving charity from the church because the new welfare laws made them independent of the church. Particularly in Amsterdam after 1945, a person can be unchurched without being handicapped economically. On the contrary, to go to church may seem more strange in Amsterdam than in Moscow.

More and more Mennonites intermarried with non-Mennonites. The thousand members in my district of the Mennonite Church of Amsterdam are distributed over 700 families. At times the Mennonite marriage partner is a good missionary who brings his spouse to the congregation, but many times it is exactly the marriage with an unbeliever which causes a spiritual isolation and a deterioration of the faith of the believer. The Mennonite church of Amsterdam has an unusually large number of old people on its membership roll. During the first ten years after the war the congregation has lost a thousand of its 6000 members and only a small number of children of the members become members of any church. Of the members only a small number are attending church regularly. In addition to this, the congregation is suffering financially since 1950 because of continuous monetary deflation.

Under God's Grace in Amsterdam

It is not easy to be a minister in post-war Amsterdam. It is not simple to remain a believer as is evidenced by many rural Mennonite families who move to Amsterdam and in a very short time become spiritually impoverished.

In spite of this, I am grateful to be a minister in *this Amsterdam* where a tradition which had become a hypocrisy and a lie has finally been destroyed. Fortunately many good things can be found here. There is a group of ministers who are determined to work and testify conscientiously in the spirit of the Bible, who believe in the power of God's living word in spite of the spirit of the time and human endeavors.

Our church council is composed of many members who take their personal faith very seriously. Many of the members are of non-Mennonite background. One of them is a lecturer at a Reformed university, one is a leader in a labor organization, one is an ex-communist senator, one a former Nationalist Socialist, one a son of a Jewish musician, and one a mother of a Dominican monk. This is sufficient evidence that the practice that the church council consists of members from good traditional Mennonite families has been shattered. This church council has succeeded in fifteen years to increase the contributions of the members fourfold and has had the courage to strike spiritually dead members off the church roll and what is most important, the members of the church council know that the crucial question of their task is a spiritual renewal of the congregation.

This church council is well representative of the congregation which in this great crisis has lost many members, yet has started to challenge people on the outside. Roman Catholics and Reformed who are disillusioned with the rigid formalities of their church, free thinkers in search of God, young conscientious objectors to war who have heard of the Anabaptist peace testimony, are joining our congregation. Deeply moved and in a very personal way, such people confess their faith. The number of the 18 and 19-year-old young people who were traditionally annually baptized, has become small, but many come at the age of 30, 40 and even 70 and 80 to become members of the church of Christ. Baptism upon confession of faith has again become a reality. Of course it is unfortunate that many who begin will disappoint the church later or become disappointed. It is difficult to remain a warm Christian among many lukewarm members.

Thus, side by side with the crisis and deterioration of the congregation, there also exists an aggressive outreach program. Since 1945, there are six instead of four ministers in Amsterdam. In 1956 a large new church was erected in the western part of the city. For the northern part of the city, plans are being made for a new church. In 1964, a large home for the aged will be erected. The task of witnessing through mission was formerly the specialty of a few orthodox members of the church. Now it is the task of the congregation supported by all ministers and the church council.

It is obvious that our congregation, if she understands her calling, has a place in the midst of the other churches. I am the first Mennonite to function as the chairman of the Amsterdam Ecumenical Council. In 1960, a new paper was begun entitled *In Dit Amsterdam. In This Amsterdam* is the program of the congregation. This city which now can hardly be called Christian and where the traditions of our congregation have deteriorated, but also where new life sprouts, is where we want to stand and work because God has a word for Amsterdam and Christ has died for these Amsterdamers. It is the grace of God which makes us witnesses in Amsterdam at a time like this.

Mennonite Mobility and the Christian Calling

By Leland Harder

At the turn of the present century, to have asked where the typical Mennonite lived or what he did for a living or where he went to church would have elicited simple and straightforward answers. "The typical Mennonite lives in a rural community, he farms for a living, and he attends a country church." So characteristic a part of American Mennonite life had agriculture become that it was included as part of the religious doctrine that was imparted. Farming was part of the Mennonite doctrine of nonconformity, for it was the method by which one remained separate from the world. Farming was part of the Mennonite doctrine of peace and nonresistance, for of all possible environments that of the rural church and community was felt to be the most favorable for the perpetuation of the nonresistant faith.

Today the situation has changed considerably. No longer can it be said without qualification that the typical Mennonite is a farmer. No longer is it true that the typical Mennonite worships in an open country church. No longer is it self-evident that adherence to Mennonite doctrine and ethics requires a rural context.

In this essay we are interested in the present-day phenomenon of Mennonite mobility in the perspective of Christian faith and life. We shall begin by discussing the meaning and extent of Mennonite mobility in our time. Although we will be using materials pertaining explicitly to mobility in the General Conference Mennonite Church, it is reasonable to assume that our findings are applicable also to other Mennonite groups. In the second part, we shall examine the significance of Mennonite mobility in the light of the Christian mission for such a time as this, particularly as it pertains to the Mennonite witness in an urbanized world.

I. *Types of Mobility Among Mennonites*

Mobility for the practical purposes of this essay can be defined quite simply as movement from one place on the map to another. However, the mobility among Mennonites that I am interested in is considerably more involved than this. I am interested in what such movement does to a person's participation in the life of the church. I am interested more specifically in the influence which such movement has upon his self-image as a Mennonite and upon his membership in the Mennonite branch of Christ's church. Moreover, I am interested in the question of who it is who moves, and who it is who remains at home. With regard to the latter, I am interested also in what is happening in the lives of members of our town and country churches who are not moving away but upon whom the influences of urbanization and social change are having their impact.

I have to acknowledge at the outset that I do not know as much as I ought to know to speak meaningfully on all of these questions. In my research on mobility and social change in the General Conference, I took a broad sweeping approach, gathering extensive statistical information about the members and ex-members of 192 congregations in the United States and Canada. In an approach like this, it is difficult to see the trees in the face of the forest. But one has to start somewhere; and this seemed like the most sensible place to begin.

I began by asking my respondents in these 192 congregations to list the names and addresses of all members and all ex-members whose membership was terminated between 1950 and 1960. From this master listing of over 50,000 names, I got a fairly good overall picture of three kinds of population shifts that are taking place in our Conference.

Nonresident Members

First, there are those who are still members of their home church, but who have become inactive, mostly because they have moved away. We might call these people "nonresident members." There were 5,820 persons in this category, indicating that 14 percent of the total membership of the General Conference must be considered to be inactive, largely because they are nonresident. There is not much that I can tell you about these nonresident members. We would like to know how long, on the average, it takes a nonresident person to transfer his membership to a church in his new location. I know of cases where persons have been gone for more than a decade, but are still carried on the membership rolls of their home congregation as long as they pay their annual dues. Is this an indication of loyalty to their home church and Mennonite heritage? Or are they less inclined to be active in a church where they have moved than are those who do sever their ties with their home church and transfer their membership?

Intra-Conference Transfers

A second category of population shift were former members of these 192 congregations who, although they terminated their membership in their home church, did not leave the General Conference. Rather, they transferred their membership to another congregation within the General Conference. We will call these people "intra-Conference transfers." The intra-Conference transfers numbered 3,969 persons between 1950 and 1960. Probably a sizable proportion of these people moved from one established congregation to another established congregation, but it certainly would not have been possible to retain almost four thousand mobile members during this period without also initiating over twenty new Mennonite congregations in urban places to which many have moved. This raises the interesting question of why some mobile members form new churches in their new location, and others do not. We know, for instance, that of the 5,820 inactive members about whom we talked a moment ago, approximately one-third are now living in 123 cities of over 10,000 population in which there are four or more similarly inactive members residing. Among the cities listed were San Francisco, San Diego, Tucson, Phoenix, Oklahoma City, Colorado Springs, Dallas, Miami, Peoria, Baltimore, New York, Washington, D. C., Boston, Detroit, and Fairbanks, Alaska. One might surmise that these are the cities in which there is some potentiality for starting new city churches, since the existence of a nucleus of Mennonites seems to be the most effective urban church extension strategy for our Conference.

Ex-members

A third category of population shift was comprised of former members who have left the General Conference altogether. We will call these people "ex-members." There were 5,537 such persons between 1950 and 1960, representing 15 percent of our total membership in 1950. We will examine the factors associated with their departure from the General Conference in a later section of this essay. At the moment we are interested in ascertaining the geographical direction of Mennonite mobility. For this analysis, "ex-members" and "intra-Conference transfers" have been combined for the thirty-seven Kansas congregations. Of a total of 2,413 ex-members and intra-Conference transfers out of these congregations, 1,801 (75 percent) remained in the state. Of the 612 who moved out of the state, approximately two persons moved westward to every one who moved eastward. The direction of movement is portrayed by the "flow-map" on page —. It is quite apparent that the Pacific

region is gaining mobile members and ex-members out of proportion to that which might be expected on the basis of proximity or strength of General Conference membership in that region. Although no one moved from the Kansas churches to Florida, and only two to the state of New York, 135 moved to California. When we compare with this the fact that the twenty-four congregations of the Pacific District Conference registered a net loss of members during this same period, we observe a condition of incipient leakage of members.

Social Factors in Mennonite Mobility

We have discussed three categories of population shift in 192 congregations of the General Conference Mennonite Church — the nonresident members, the intra-Conference transfers, and the ex-members. We turn, next, to examine some social factors associated with these population shifts.

We would not fully understand the current phenomenon of mobility among Mennonites if we failed to refer to the agricultural revolution of our times. The so-called "farm problem" of our day is largely the inevitable result of increase in farm mechanization and accelerated agricultural productivity, the result of which has been overproduction. In the wake of overproduction came greater awareness of national and international economic interdependency, government controls, and a drastic change in the entire economic structure of our nation. For Mennonites it means a changing world, and the change is not without anxieties because it means dislocation of thousands of our members. Increased horsepower per farmer, larger machinery, possibilities of covering more acres with less manpower, and the high cost of equipment, all seem to point to the conclusion that the small family farm is declining as a profitable economic unit in an industrialized society. Farms are being consolidated, with the result that many farmers are being squeezed out and forced to look elsewhere for employment. The average size of farm in the United States increased from 205 to 242 acres between 1950 and 1957, and the number of farmers decreased more than 20 percent from 1947 to 1954. In short, the growth of urban areas made possible by farmers producing more than they can consume is one of the most significant social trends of the 20th century, and Mennonites are caught in the dispersion resulting from technological change.

Mobility and Occupation

In view of these changes of our time, we can see that a major factor in Mennonite mobility is that of occupation. No characteristic tells us so much about the individual and his position in society as his occupation. In my study of the occupations of members and ex-members of the 192 congregations of the General Conference, I used the classification of the United States Bureau of the Census, so that direct comparisons could be made between (1) members, (2) ex-members, and (3) the total population of our country. This widely used classification is actually a social class scale, in which the occupational category into which a person falls is an index of his social status in the community. The "professionals" rank highest, with "laborers" in last position. The social status of farmers is difficult to assess, since they are really manual workers who are at the same time proprietors of no mean enterprise. Because of the considerable investment in land and machinery and the importance of food production in the national economy, farmers are placed second in the occupational ranking.

In the following table, the percent of gainfully employed workers in 1960 for the United States as a whole, the members of the General Conference Mennonite Church, and its ex-members, are tabulated by the Census occupational categories:

Occupational Category	*Total U.S. Population*	*Members of G.C.M.C.*	*Ex-Members of G.C.M.C.*
Professional Workers	11.8	16.8	29.2
Farmers and Farm Managers	4.1	30.7	13.8
Proprietors and Managers	8.8	6.1	7.6
Clerks and Sales Workers	22.6	11.4	14.0
Skilled Craftsmen	14.2	10.2	13.7
Semi-skilled Operatives	19.4	13.2	13.4
Service Workers	11.7	7.5	4.6
Unskilled Laborers	7.5	4.2	3.7
TOTAL PERCENT	100.1	100.1	100.0
TOTAL NUMBER	61,455,572	19,469	2,249

Several observations can be made with regard to the findings. About one-third of the gainfully employed members of our Conference are still farmers, in comparison to only 4 percent for the nation. An important factor which the table does not reveal, however, is that for both groups, the proportion of farmers is

rapidly on the decline. In 1943, the proportion of farmers in the General Conference was still 54 percent in comparison to the 31 percent of today. In 1940, the proportion of farmers in the nation was 12 percent in comparison to the 4 percent of today.

Up the Ladder?

Into what occupational categories do people go when they leave the farm? In the nation as a whole, the trend in occupational status in the 20th century has been generally upward, with fewer unskilled workers and more skilled workers, sales workers, and professional workers. In the General Conference Mennonite Church, it would seem that members have been entering the professions more frequently than any other category. At least it is evident, using the index of occupation for 1960, that the members of the Conference have a higher social rank than the average for the nation.

When we compare ex-members with members, the picture is even more pronounced. The comparison is quite simple: the frequencies of the first two categories are just reversed. That is, there are significantly fewer farmers and more professionals proportionately among ex-members than among members. Or to put it another way, while we found that members have proportionately more professionals than does the national population as a whole, the ex-members have even more. From this we might be tempted to hypothesize that as members move up the social ladder, they tend to desert the Mennonite churches. There are important qualifications to this conclusion, however, and more information will be needed before we can properly interpret our findings. There is a famous theory, for instance, that the Protestant ethic has been largely responsible for the rise of capitalism. There is little doubt that Mennonites do emphasize certain classical Protestant traits, such as industry and thrift; but the infrequency with which Mennonites become proprietors and managers in the business and bureaucratic world tends to minimize the connection between these traits and the accumulation of wealth. There may be, on the other hand, a connection between the Mennonite preference for the professions and its doctrinal system. It is known that the most popular profession among Mennonites is that of teaching, which probably achieves its attraction for Mennonites, despite the low remuneration, from the characteristic respect for education to be found throughout Mennonite history.

II. *Apostolic Mobility and Christian Calling*

We turn now to interpret these shifts in Mennonite population in the perspective of the Christian faith and life. We can best begin this section by listening to the report of Acts 8:4 and asking what these words mean: "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word."

There is implied in this statement, first of all, a certain conception of the Christian calling. These early Christians believed that all of them were called to a life of faith and witness, which was their primary "vocation." They would have agreed with the editor of *The Mennonite,* who wrote (Feb. 20, 1962): "A Christian's vocation is to be a Christian." There is in this conception of the Christian calling no differentiation between so-called "full-time Christian service" and voluntary service (or whatever is conceived to be the opposite of full-time Christian service). In *New Testament* terms the calling given to one Christian is no more nor less full-time than that given to any other. Moreover, there is in this conception of the Christian calling no differentiation between so-called "church vocations" and secular vocations. Here again the categories are foreign to the *New Testament* writers, for whom one occupation (e.g., pastor) was no more a distinctly church vocation than another (e.g., tentmaking). As a matter of fact, the Christian who had the gift of pastoring might at the same time be gainfully employed as a tentmaker, which indicates that one of the most important ways in which all Christians are Christian is through their occupations, whatever that might be by the leading of God.

The "scattering" that Acts 8:14 refers to is explicitly related to an important and legitimate method of Christian missionary expansion. In his pamphlet entitled "As You Go," (Scottdale: Mennonite Publishing House, 1961) John Howard Yoder describes this method as "migration evangelism" (p. 17). He shows how the modern missionary movement that we are helping to support is rapidly coming to an end in crucial parts of the world, and that migration evangelism may well take over again as the predominant form of church extension which it was until the beginning of the 19th century. He writes,

> Throughout the history of God's people, the Gospel has been brought to new parts of the world primarily by migration of financially independent Christians. In Acts the faith spread from Jerusalem to Samaria, from Samaria to Antioch, and from there to Cyprus before the churches at Jerusalem and Antioch gave any thought to organizing to propagate their message. Christians were dispersed, sometimes because of commercial or family interests, more often because of persecution. Where they went, they took their faith with them, and new Christian cells were planted.
>
> Even the so-called "missionary voyages" of the Apostle Paul are no exception to this rule. Wherever Paul went, he began with the circle of faithful Jews and God-fearing Gentiles who gathered in the synagogue. These Jews had been dispersed, once again for personal and commercial reasons, as well as by a degree of persecution. Thus they were to be found in every major city of the eastern Roman Empire. Since Paul

believed that the Christian church is a continuation of Israel, he was able to come to each of these synagogues as to a potential church, already planted in the city by the migration of God's people. Paul did not do what the modern missionary movement did—enter a country where no one confessed faith in the true God. He completed and nurtured the faith of the scattered faithful worshipers of God, wherever he found them already gathered (p. 12).

Anabaptist Mobility and the Christian Calling

A historical study of Mennonite origins shows the overwhelmingly urban background of the Anabaptists at the beginning of this Reformation movement. In his study of "Vocations of Swiss and South German Anabaptists," (*Mennonite Life*, January, 1953), Robert Kreider tabulated the place of residence and occupations of 332 persons. His study led to five major conclusions, the first three of which were: (1) Initially Anabaptism was an urban movement; (2) The rate of physical mobility among the Anabaptists was comparatively high, and (3) Transfer of occupations among them was quite common (pp. 38-42).

According to the Anabaptist conception of the Christian calling, every Christian must be ready to heed the call to proclaim the Gospel at any time, leaving job, community, and home behind when this is necessary. One of the terms which the Anabaptists used to describe this form of life was "living loose." J. Lawrence Burkholder points out that "Thousands of Anabaptists traveled widely throughout Europe preaching in towns and villages. Mobility became a prime factor of discipleship. Anabaptist literature is replete with letters from members of this movement who were 'on the way.'" (*The Problem of Social Responsibility from the Perspective of the Mennonite Church.* Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1958, p. 120.)

Mennonite Mobility and the Christian Calling

Against the strongly urban beginning of the Anabaptist-Mennonite movement, we are confronted with the enigma of the subsequent agrarian development which has characterized Mennonitism into the 20th century. If persecution of our forefathers drove us to the country, we can say that the identification of the "Mennonite way of life" with agriculture was a historical accident; and now that persecution has ceased, we can move freely again among the masses, witnessing to our faith.

But something has happened to us through the centuries. We have become the quiet in the land, and it is not easy to step out of the quiescent paths of rural homogeneity without losing the nonresistant faith of our forefathers. One of our basic problems in the increasing mobility of our members is that when they move to the city, too many Mennonites *have not been taught to take the "church" with them.* This judgment, if true, is a matter of such great moment that we now turn to an elaboration of it.

By "church" we obviously mean something other than the circumscribed sorts of images that immediately come to mind. We mean more than a specific spot in space, which gives rise to the image of the church as a building for public worship or a parish within which a given congregation's ministry is performed. Nor do we mean some disembodied "idea" of the church, such as the "invisible church" which is sometimes related to the mystical New Testament figure of the "bride of Christ." (As D. T. Niles quips, "Who wants to marry an invisible bride?")

Alternatives Away from Home

When a Mennonite moves out of range of his home congregation, he faces various alternatives regarding his continuing relationship to the "church." On the basis of the geographically circumscribed conception of the "church" referred to in the preceding paragraph, we're inclined to cite three alternatives as an exhaustion of the possibilities: either he becomes inactive, transfers to another congregation within the Conference (which may mean the establishment of a new Mennonite congregation in his new location), or joins a nearby church of another denomination. These are important alternatives, properly conceived; and although most mobile Mennonites fall into one of the three categories, the concept of "church" we have in mind is more flexible and dynamic than can be contained within any routinized set of possibilities as usually defined. One example of this is the report of the Mennonite group in Salina, Kansas, by Orville Voth. In an article entitled "Separatism—Modern Witness" (*The Mennonite Church in the City,* March 15, 1963), Voth explains why, to date, the group of nine families with some twenty children have not felt led to organize a separate congregation in Salina ("If we were to form a separate congregation we would find ourselves struggling with financial, organizational, and other problems which might overshadow more vital concerns"). But neither have they felt led to lose their Mennonite identity by joining other denominations ("At the same time we are anxious to remain members of the larger Mennonite Church and to keep alive what we believe is a unique and worthwhile witness"). The tentative solution in Salina is what Voth calls "a church within a church." Most of them are active in the University Methodist Church in Salina, and regard this as an opportunity for Christian witness which would not be open to them if they organized separately. The group feels that their home congregations should support them in the giving of this witness. "Instead of looking upon absentee members as deadwood which weakens the church, they might be regarded as vital outposts of the

church, acting as leaven, bearing witness to a living personal commitment."

This is not to suggest that the Salina approach is the only or even best form which the "church" can take among mobile Mennonites. Out of my more connectional conception of the "church," the first question that occurred to me after reading Voth's article was, "Just what do they join?" In facing up to the implications of that question, the Salina group might ponder the problems being confronted in the Mennonite witness at Gulfport, Mississippi, where the general format being experimented with in Salina has been tried now for eighteen years. It was the Civilian Public Service dispersion of wartime that brought the first of over 250 young Mennonites to Camp Landon for Christian service in a needy community. Although the Mennonite witness at Camp Landon has been given on the principle that another Mennonite church should not be formally organized in a community that is already suffering from the proliferation of churches, the question posed above has come to the fore with increasing seriousness, As Vincent Harding posed it in a recent report of his visit to Gulfport.

What is the future for Camp Landon in relationship to the churches of Gulfport, Negro and white? Basically, the underlying concern is this: there is no white church . . . where Gulfport people feel that their Negro brothers and sisters would be welcome, and there is no Negro church whose program of preaching, teaching and service is in any way adequate to their minimal hopes for a Christian fellowship. . . . From a very simple doctrinal point of view, how does our Christian understanding of the new family created by God in baptism bear upon all of this? . . . It is our opinion that Camp Landon, for its own inner peace of mind and for the sake of its brothers and sisters—both Negro and white—needs to make some move . . . which will make it possible for them to know the experience of regular worship, communion, and witnessing together with the Negroes they work with each day.

Christianity Is a Movement

While the Salina group feels that it would be a mistake to organize a separate Mennonite congregation at this time, the Gulfport witness may have come to the point when the organization of just such a church is necessary to the carrying out of a more creative witness. Whatever form it takes in different existential situations, the "church" can now be defined as the involvement of a group of Christians in a vital missionary movement that binds them together and compels them to draw others to our Lord and to his way. Christianity is a movement, and people will never understand it if they think of it only as attending a program of worship, or Christian teaching, or special interest-centered clubs that go under the names of Youth Fellowship, Ladies' Aid, and Men's Brotherhood.

The shifts in Mennonite population which we have been examining could turn out to be the demise of Mennonitism as a traditionalized institution, but it could also turn out to be the revitalization of Mennonitism as a creative movement in history, as it was for the Jews of the Diaspra, about whom Ezekiel prophesied, "And they shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall scatter them among the nations, and disperse them in the countries" (12:15). A movement is a group of people with a cause and the leadership to set them in motion to put it across. A movement is always exciting because its participants are mobilized for action and they are in it with heart and soul to the end. Many movements are not worthy of this kind of commitment, but the Christian movement is worthy of nothing less; and one of the saddest spectacles on earth is a domesticated company of Christians who have long forgotten that their purpose for gathering together on the Lord's Day is to rearm for the battle to which their Lord has called them.

There can be little doubt that mobility among Mennonites is in part a disrupting and corroding factor in the church, both as cause and as effect. In his study of why ex-members left the (Old) Mennonite Church, John Hostetler reported that 278 ex-members (1942-1951) gave a total of 660 reasons for leaving. Interpreting the findings, Hostetler asserted that in the majority of the cases, departure from the (Old) Mennonite Church appears to be a function of adjusting practice behavior to beliefs; and when contradictions between belief and practice are maximized, there will be a tendency to leave the Mennonite Church.

The Future—Dusk or Dawn?

We should not jump to the conclusion from this that all those who have left Mennonite churches have deserted the faith of their fathers. There are likely to be both negative and positive factors at work in the choices that ex-members make. No doubt some members leave because of rebellion and loss of faith, and consequently may not give any witness in the larger society that has any continuity with historic Mennonite principles. But there are others who leave because their faith is positive and alive. They may see greater witness possibilities elsewhere than in Mennonite circles. As one Mennonite ex-member put it, "I can be a better Mennonite in the Congregational denomination in Chicago than in my home church in Freeman, South Dakota."

We live in a time, however, when a growing number of birthright Mennonites are becoming involved in a vital missionary movement, not by leaving the church which has nurtured them but by participating in its geographical extension. We live in a time when, through the very experience of being uprooted from their home communities, a growing number of mobile

Mennonites have rediscovered the appeal of the Anabaptist vision in their need for some theological justification for a continuity of religious identity. We live in a time when it is possible for the present generation of Mennonites to see and appreciate the relevance of this vision as a creative witness to God's love in every social situation in a way that may not have been possible for our fathers or grandfathers, or for that ex-member in the Congregational church in Chicago.

In short, we have seen here and there glimpses of the *new* church of our fathers. We have seen it in the most unexpected places—in Boston, Minneapolis, Denver, Phoenix, Toronto, Topeka, Kansas City, Chicago, Fort Wayne, and Philadelphia. We have seen it dependent for its local life upon persons who have been scattered all over the country, who have gathered together with fellow believers to form anew the Church of Jesus Christ.

A truly Christian approach to the dispersion of our time is to move deliberately and devotedly to those places in our world where a new church is needed, in which we can work and witness as we put down new roots. But if this is to happen, the vision will need to be implanted back in the town and country churches where the dispersion begins. I have no doubt that many brethren who are now working in these new urban churches of our brotherhood have taken the vision with them from the churches in which they were first nurtured. And it is evident in Fresno and Minneapolis and Fort Wayne and elsewhere that these urban outposts flourish best when the home churches that sent them their members continue to undergird them with their prayers and support.

Our data has shown that Mennonites have become a people of motion. They are beginning to move so rapidly that they may yet present before the world a picture quite different from the portrait of a quiet and conservative people, introverted and tied to the land. With the purging of God, this people who are "eternally moving" away from the world may become a people who have returned to the world with the witness of peace and reconciliation through Jesus Christ our Lord. God grant that it may be true of us, as it was for those early Christians, "Therefore, they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word."

The Mennonite Community in Winnipeg

By Jim Friesen and Reinhard Vogt

WINNIPEG, AN OVERGROWN prairie town of nearly half a million inhabitants, is the home of some 14,000 Mennonites who are organized into twenty-eight church congregations. The combined church membership is about 5,500.

Only seven denominations have a larger membership in Winnipeg. The three largest are the United Church of Canada, the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church of Canada.

The total membership of 5,500 would seem to suggest a wide variety of Mennonite groups. However, fourteen of these congregations, with 92 percent of the membership, belong to two major church "conferences." Seven belong to the Mennonite Brethren Con-

ference with 39 percent of the total membership, and seven to the Canadian General Conference Mennonite Church with 53 percent of the total membership.

While there is thus considerable unity among the churches, significant differences within a conference are possible. There are congregations within the General Conference, for instance, who in their emphasis on sudden conversion and a strict moral code resemble Mennonite Brethren churches more closely than they do some of the churches in their own conference. A majority of General Conference congregations (accounting, however, for less than half the membership in that conference) have followed the Mennonite Brethren pattern of conducting evangelistic meetings and prohibiting such practices as smoking, dancing, and drinking.

Virtually all the city congregations are characterized by a strong "pietistic" emphasis which stresses "personal" and "inner" change and depreciates social and cultural factors. The impact of 19th century German pietism—as experienced by the Mennonites personally in Russia and as it is experienced today through literature—is still obvious in each congregation. Some congregations show a greater interest in society or "culture" than others, but a conscious integration of culture and religion, of social and religious concerns, is extremely difficult in the present religious climate.

The consequences of this can be seen in a number of different ways. First, there is a virtual neglect of theology, and a depreciation of doctrine. This was stressed by a number of Winnipeg theologians and teachers that were interviewed. What is needed most, said one, "is a co-ordination of 'faith' and action." Many factors militate against a rapid shift in direction. The majority of Mennonite pastors in the city are more inclined to fellowship with Pentecostal and "evangelical" pastors than to engage in dialogue with representatives of the traditional, theologically-oriented churches. Mennonite businessmen continue to see social and ethical questions as side issues when they meet in groups. Approximately 80 percent of the membership of the Christian Businessmen's Association in Winnipeg is Mennonite. Mennonite university students show a preference for groups with a nontheological, nondenominational emphasis.

Also significant is Mennonite opinion of current social questions. In a recent survey of fifty Mennonite homes in North Kildonan, concerning their attitudes toward non-Mennonites in the community, it was found that the level of prejudice among the Mennonites was greater than among non-Mennonites. The ultimate fear expressed was of intermarriage. Reasons for rejection of intermarriage fell into two main categories: religious and practical. God created three races and cursed the black race; it was therefore a duty to keep them separate. Intermarriage creates ambiguity, even chaos. God is a God of order and hates impure blood. It was very strongly emphasized that offspring of mixed marriages, though physically fit, would inevitably be mentally inferior. Other groups are inferior to Mennonites and finally, it is easier to remain with the bounds of one's own group. A failure to exegete the Bible carefully, and an inability to relate scientific investigation (as in anthropology) to religious institutions is revealed fairly clearly in some of these attitudes. This kind of thinking, as we shall see, has had a strong effect on Mennonite outreach in the general community in the past.

It must be noted that efforts are being made to fill the Mennonite faith with content and to relate it to social and cultural questions. The lack of doctrinal clarity is receiving closer and more serious attention in the Mennonite colleges. Exegetical courses are the ones most in demand. The whole area of Christian education is being explored with new vigor by local churches. The first Canadian Mennonite Brethren Christian Education Conference was held in Winnipeg, April, 1963. A semiannual inter-Mennonite Sunday School Conference has also been instituted and has met with enthusiastic response. Within the churches, also, men's organizations are developing which deal with broad social and cultural problems from a Christian point of view. In addition to this an inter-Mennonite and non-Mennonite group of professional and business people has met in the past year to discuss social and cultural concerns on a continuing basis. About forty persons have participated in these meetings with considerable enthusiasm and a desire to continue.

In spite of the positive steps which have just been noted, the adjustment of Mennonite thought to the point where it will form a strong basis for spiritual, cultural, and social outreach in the city community is a long way from being realized.

The churches are often caught in a double dilemma. The city environment has influenced them to the extent that a certain impersonality has crept into their services. In spite of their "personal" theology, they have been led by their environment and by their increasing stress on education to a certain sophistication which may be interpreted by others as coldness. This often means that persons moving into the city from less sophisticated rural backgrounds—even from Mennonite churches of the same conference—feel oddly out of place in the city church. These people make such remarks as: "Why all the Bach in church?" or, "I have been to this church three weeks in succession and no one has ever greeted me." Perhaps just a little less stress on "prophetic" preaching in the city congregation will make such a newcomer feel somewhat out of place. In one sociological study of the Winnipeg situation it was observed: "Many of the newcomers to the city have not found themselves at home in any of the existing Mennonite churches and have attached themselves to those which are more intensely emo-

tional, where the individual appears to be of greater importance . . . it appears easier for them to fit into an entirely new or almost new setting than to try and adapt themselves to a Mennonite church which is different from their home church because of the characteristics it has assumed as a city church" (Church and Society Conference, J-8).

It is not surprising, then, that many persons of Mennonite background are attracted to churches in the city whose theology is basically similar to both rural and city Mennonite churches but whose church life has not been influenced to the same extent by artistic and educational advances. Up to 80 percent of the membership of several large Alliance and Free Evangelical churches in Winnipeg is made up of persons of Mennonite background. It has been estimated that as many as twenty thousand persons of Mennonite background are residents of Winnipeg, and only 5,500 are presently members of Mennonite churches. It appears that some of the very factors which are enabling the Mennonite churches to make a greater impact in the community act as roadblocks for persons with rural backgrounds.

On the other hand, the churches, as we have seen, have great difficulty in relating effectively to the urban environment. "Most of our city churches are still rurally oriented although they have been in an urban setting for some time" (*Ibid.*, J-9). The middle class character of city Mennonites, their inner-directed and "non-worldly" theology and their conservative attitude toward new social situations and to certain widely accepted forms of city entertainment probably account for much of their difficulty in doing effective work within Winnipeg. Very few persons of non-Mennonite background have been attracted to Mennonite churches. A private and reliable survey made in 1958 indicated that in the forty years of Mennonite activity in Winnipeg about 140 persons (or .03 percent of total church membership) have been attracted to Mennonite churches from a different background. The report goes on to say: "The language used seemingly is a very small factor in reaching out. There are sufficient German-speaking people in the city to give ample opportunity even in that language." Certainly the use of the German language cannot be considered a major reason for the lack of Mennonite witness in the city. We have noted other factors that are undoubtedly more basic. If these other problems were overcome, however, the use of German in church would undoubtedly be a limiting factor. An obvious shift in language is taking place. In 1958 there were six churches which used only German in their worship services, but there were only four churches with completely German Sunday schools. At the same time five churches had all English worship services, while eight had all English Sunday schools.

A few Mennonite churches have tried to reach into the community with a spiritual ministry, but with no striking success. Much work has been done with children through Sunday school and Daily Vacation Bible School outreach but extreme difficulty is being experienced in holding these persons once they reach adolescence. It was observed of one minister who had worked in a Winnipeg slum: "If he had the choice and could begin again he would prefer the suburbs to this area every time." Very few Mennonites now live in these difficult areas and the mission stations are quite isolated from the other church.

A comprehensive social and spiritual ministry to persons with problems has not been developed by any of the Mennonite churches. Fuller cooperation with other denominations would be necessary for this. "The city churches are not acutely aware of these people with problems or are not prepared or interested in going out in search of them and provide assistance or services as indicated" (Church and Society Conference, J-9). The report just quoted goes on to insist: "We need a revitalization of our churches through re-education. . . . We live in a world of reality, stimulation through revival is often of short duration, but education for service can result in a life's vocation" (*Ibid.*, J-10).

The Mennonites of Winnipeg are moving through a difficult period of readjustment. Major adjustments, it would seem, are necessary in the fields of biblical study and interpretation, community outreach, social ethics, and integration of cultural and religious values. The stability and cohesion of the Mennonite community should not be underestimated because of the traditional value attached to family, church, and the durable virtues—honesty, thrift, hard work. This should continue to stand the Mennonites in good stead in their changing environment.


Light Housekeeping
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Symposium:

How Can Christian Community be Established in the City

Symposium I

By J. Lawrence Burkholder

According to the editor, the question which we should try to answer in these short essays is, "How can the true church be established in the city?" The question so stated is quite properly ecclesiological, rather than sociological. Ultimately, the formation of Christian community depends not so much upon sociological facts of urban existence as upon the inner dynamics of congregational life. It makes little difference whether Christians live in the city or the country! What really matters is the clarity of their vision, the sense of their destiny and the quality of their commitment.

To be more explicit, the fundamental question at stake so far as the formation of Christian community is concerned is the question of membership. On what basis is the church constituted? What is expected of its members? This is the same as to say, "What does the church stand for?"

To us as Mennonites this boils down to the question of whether we begin by gathering together the "lost sheep of the house of Menno" and by doing the best we can with what we have, or whether we begin afresh with a small nucleus of Christians covenanted together and disciplined for the creation of a fairly explicit ideal. To set the question this way implies, quite frankly, a discontinuity between the disciplined church and conceptions and ideals which Mennonites generally take to the city.

There is a seemingly logical and historical necessity to begin with Mennonites at hand. They need a church home and many prefer to remain Mennonites. Fur-

thermore, they bring to the newly formed church certain presuppositions, dispositions, language and accents which point toward a comparatively high order of Christian community. Certainly this is our experience in Boston. Our congregation, small as it is, consists of some fine Christian people from various Mennonite backgrounds. Our desire to have a church, or, rather, to be a church, is real. The fellowship is stimulating and helpful. The discussions are frequently exciting. The educational level is unique. Most of the members are students or professors at Harvard, Massachusetts Institute of Technology or Boston University. Our fellowship provides a social context which serves as a counterpoise to the anonymity of the city. Connections with the Mennonite Church are maintained. Offerings are taken for the Mennonite Central Committee and mission boards. Our church polity reveals some rather interesting and creative departures from clerical authoritarianism. Decisions are made by the entire congregation with dispatch, and they are reversed with equal dispatch and without apologies. There are no hard and fast distinctions between clergy and laity—all are ministers. Furthermore, this and other experiments demonstrated that new congregations can come into existence spontaneously. They need not be even prodded by church boards. Some non-Mennonites are finding meaningful fellowship with us. Above all, we have an open and forgiving community in which we are able to speak openly and honestly without fear.

Here at Boston we have much to be thankful for. We feel that God has been instrumental in bringing us to where we are.

However, we find ourselves on a plateau—a high level Mennonite plateau, and the question is whether a congregation so constituted from the beginning can move to a creative summit. We have come together out of a common religio-cultural background. We are grateful for the gracious influences that have fed our lives from the past. But we are beginning to wonder whether we can move beyond the common denominator of our Mennonite heritage. Having come together on a basis provided by a common "background," we now need a "foreground" which will provide the basis for the reconstituting of our membership in dedication, discipline, mission and sacrifice. We need a vision of what God wants us to be in this situation. We believe in mission, but we have no clear mission. We have a sense of calling, but we have not heard the clear voice of the Lord. We believe in discipline, but we are not disciplined as a body. We are covenanted to Christ and to each other, but our covenant is not clearly defined. We believe in evangelism, but we have not a single convert so far to show. (Do we really have something substantial to which we can invite people?) We read in Paul's letter to the Corinthians about the charismatic life of the church, but we have done little to elicit, identify and encourage the gifts of the Spirit. We are men and women of faith, but we would have a hard time explaining what we believe to non-Christians of whom there are thousands in our university setting. The church is supposedly first in our lives, but a forthcoming examination or speaking appointment is all too frequently permitted to interfere with church attendance.

The crucial reality upon which Christian community in the city rests is commitment to a clearly understood ideal of church life involving a deep sense of mission and disciplined obedience. Where this commitment exists, and where discipline is practiced, the sociological hindrances to community (distance, occupational diversity, cultural differentiation, racial conflict) are not lethal. Christians need not be together all the time, nor do they have to form a natural community to experience Koinonia. Rather they need to have their lives welded together at crucial points related to their destiny. The issue facing the congregation at Boston is whether it can become a covenanted, charismatic, disciplined community having been organized originally on the basis of "enlightened" Mennonitism by people who have come to the city for professional or educational reasons.

It is the feeling of the author that a better way to bring the "true" church into existence is simply to *send* couples, who have an idea of what they want, into the city. They will live there among ordinary secular people including "undesirable characters" such as drunks and topflight lawyers! Often such people see the point of the covenanted congregation better than Mennonites who may not have gone to the city for drink but for an education or for money. (The latter have their own subtle forms of temptation.) After a while, a small, disciplined congregation may form in a house or apartment. This congregation will have its life centered around service in which gifts of the Spirit and needs of the world are matched. The congregation will come together for worship, prayer, sharing, discerning the "Spirit" and encouragement. Membership will be defined by faithful obedience to a flexible covenant of obligations and privileges. If Mennonites who have wandered to the city would wish to join such a church, they would, of course, accept this discipline.

Symposium II

By Elmer Martens

IF THE FIRST CHURCH is a model of what is to be the Church, then an answer to the symposium question is found at least in part in a study of the book of Acts. One learns, in scanning the New Testament, that the

apostolic church was not only established in the city but that it was characterized by Christian community.

The early church was a church in the city. The experience of Pentecost came in Jerusalem, a city. The group of believers were city people in Samaria, in Antioch, in Damascus.

The foreign missionary enterprise was launched from Antioch, a major city in Syria. Paul established groups of believers in cities throughout Asia Minor. "Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city . . . (Acts 15:36). Setting foot on European soil, Paul went to Philippi, "which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia."

Whatever emphasis one may wish to place in the definition of "Christian community," one must admit that the early church had it. The early church was not a group of people brought together by sociological forces, but by the dynamic force of the Holy Spirit. And he so operated in the lives of the Christians that they were a closely-knit body of people. In one day three thousand souls were added to a nucleus group of one hundred and twenty. For all their differences and even their many points of ignorance, Luke leaves us with the impression that the church was closely tied, intimately bound and spiritually united. This people was marked by unselfishness, love, spiritual fellowship, togetherness, brotherhood, boldness and zeal.

Admittedly the cities of the first century were not industrialized cities. Jerusalem could not be compared to Chicago, or Antioch to Los Angeles. But surely the same centrifugal forces of fragmentization, depersonalization and collectivism were found in cities then as now. Yet the apostolic church in an urban society knew something of Christian community.

How was that community established and maintained? One must note, before answering, that the community had two foci. The unity aspect of "community" centered in the person of the Lord Christ. The communal aspect of "community" focused upon a common task.

The unifying factor appears in Peter's message at Pentecost. "This Jesus hath God raised up. . . . Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:32, 36). The world outside recognized that the center around which the new strange society was formed was Christ. Was that perchance the reason why the Antioch public called the disciples by the name 'Christian'?

The spirit of community revolved about the common task of evangelism and witnessing. The difficulty of the Grecian widows was resolved in terms of the church's major task: "We will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word." The group interests and responsibilities were bent toward the common task of evangelism. Of the Thessalonian church Paul wrote: "For from you sounded out the word of the Lord . . . ; in every place your faith to Godward is spread abroad" (1 Thess. 1:8).

Some regard the church as an extension of the incarnation and accordingly feel that the church's task is to become much involved in the goings on in the world. But the church is an extension of the resurrection and finds its task in bearing witness to a risen Lord.

True Christian community is a matter of one Lord and one work.

As a pastor I am interested in the practical "how" of Christian community. This concern does not for a moment bypass the work of the Holy Spirit, but is asking in what circumstances the Spirit can bring Christian community.

Two principles are suggested in Acts 2:46: "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart."

The large assembly is essential to Christian community. The preaching service is not the whole answer to Christian community, but it is a definite part of the answer. Some suggest that the pulpit ministry is passing. One author views the preaching of Billy Graham as irrelevant. But preaching is a matter of exalting Jesus Christ. The true church is formed in a context of preaching.

In the public assembly, however, that fearful anonymity, so characteristic of an urban society, continues. But the church knows of a balance. The early believers met in small groups. Following Pentecost the church assembled not only in the temple but in the homes. In Ephesus Paul taught publicly *and* from house to house. The church community, then, gravitates about the temple and the house, about the congregation en masse, and the cell groups.

In recent months we have begun to know something of the blessing of cell groups, locally. Four ladies, including a recent Catholic convert, meet weekly to read Scriptures and talk about Christ meeting their problems. Two or three families meet together for Bible study. A professional group of single adults study the book of Ephesians on a Sunday afternoon. Every three weeks the college age youth gather in a home for discussion. A Sunday school class comes together, and upon discussion, agree to pray for one another as to daily witnessing. They discover in the course of some weeks a mutual concern for each other, and find that there has been built a strong tie of oneness.

These smaller groups, the church within a church, bring a new dimension of meaning to Christian community. Here is openness, sharing, individualization of persons, and honesty. Here the urban forces of fragmentization, depersonalization, and collectivism are counteracted. Here the Spirit sheds abroad his love. Here is not an effort to demonstrate piety but an effort

to bring wholeness and perspective to the believer who in this setting keenly senses the supremacy of the witnessing task.

For the church, turned in on itself, even in search of brotherhood, will find that in saving itself it is losing itself. But the church turned outward will discover a melting in the ranks. Each is knit to the other. Together the church exists for him and his work.

Always, but especially in the public assembly, Christ is the unifying focus. Always, but especially in the face-to-face groups, the common task of evangelism serves both to bring and to build Christian community.

Symposium III

By Nicholas Dick

THE METROPOLITAN CITY of Toronto has five Mennonite churches. The Mennonite Brethren Church is located in the northwest region immediately south of the "401," a perimeter highway; it is in a suburban area. The three churches of the (Old) Mennonite General Conference—Warden Park, Morningside, and Danforth—are in the east end, two of them in suburban Scarborough, and the third, Danforth, in the municipality of East York, an older, built-up area of the city. The United Mennonite Church is the only one in Toronto proper, located at the east end, in what is more of an inner city situation than the other four.

In contrast to other major Canadian cities, Toronto has not attracted Mennonites in large numbers; the Canadian census lists some 1200 Mennonites but only a small portion of these affiliate with one of the five churches. Developing a congregation along traditional lines of finding names in the telephone directory, and gathering all persons of Mennonite background, in spite of the known fact that there are these persons who wish to call themselves "Mennonite," does not appear to be the answer for the establishment of vital Mennonite congregations in the city. In fact, the churches are making no major attempt to contact these persons for purposes of building such a traditional Mennonite church, although invitations are extended whenever such persons are met, and have not affiliated with another denomination. The emphasis, currently, is much more on attempting to witness to the community in the vicinity of the church. Morningside, Warden Park, and Danforth have been identifying themselves, in greater and lesser degree, with their communities for some time now. The Mennonite Brethren congregation, which recently moved into a new building, has begun a vigorous Sunday school program for the community children. The United Mennonite congregation conducts several community activities, but has had more problems, partly because of the strong Roman Catholic constituency, but also because all members live elsewhere in the city, making identification very difficult.

In their attempts to establish Christian community in the city the Mennonite churches face mutual problems. People are denomination-conscious; the public image of Mennonitism in Ontario is derived from the Amish community and the imbalanced publicity that the press gives to this religious phenomenon. This image remains firmly fixed in spite of constant attempts to correct it. Secondly, the in-group aura (especially among those of Russian-Mennonite background) seems to linger with us long after the language barriers are gone; we identify ourselves as Mennonites; we visit mostly, if not exclusively with our Mennonite relatives and friends, and attend Mennonite functions at the home communities. Even though we rub shoulders with persons of varying backgrounds, we are still deeply rooted in our Mennonite customs and folkways. This prevents us from "feeling at home" with persons of different origin to the extent that we share our faith with them, and include them in our community of faith. Another problem is the lack of enough association to make community possible; being widely-dispersed throughout Toronto and having various occupations that place a full-time demand on a number of our church members, the amount of face-to-face association is very limited; we do not know each other very well; the ties of loyalty are weakened, and the awareness of each others' need is lessened.

There appears to be no clear-cut formula, or program, that will assure us of a more effective establishment of community in the city. A few thoughts not necessarily final, derived from my own experiences in Toronto may be helpful: (1) There is a need for a more united Mennonite image for the public, not so much to whitewash ourselves as to remove the stumblingblock of something that is not integral to the Gospel. (2) There is an opportunity, in spite of the small size of our congregations, to communicate our discipleship concerns to the larger churches; we can be the leaven of influence on the question of peace and war. (3) We should join local parish programs wherever possible, or assist in community development, social planning councils, etc. We then have the feeling that we are part of the larger Christian community. (4) We should "play down" our cultural background in the presence of others, and emphasize the *religious* heritage of our faith. (5) We should, in the manner of the Society of Friends, join interest groups on issues of social concern and evangelism, thus bringing our Anabaptist convictions into the arena of faith. (6) Our members should see their geographical distribution as a challenge as well as a problem; like grains

of salt they are scattered over a wide area, enlarging the field of witness and influence. (7) We should be willing to alter the form of our worship and life as the Spirit leads, and even lose our own identity as Mennonites if it will contribute to the greater good of all Christendom. After all, there were no Mennonite churches before 1535, and if the goals of a reformed Protestant church incorporate much of what our Anabaptist pioneers believed, is there any reason for having separate Mennonite churches after 1975 or some other date in the future?

Symposium IV

By John Miller

JESUS HIMSELF POINTED to the one foundation on which a Christian community must be established if it is to endure: "Everyone who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock" (Matthew 7:24). He also warned against the wrong way to build a Christian community: "And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house upon sand" (7:26). Both buildings may stand for a while. Looking at them without a discerning eye, one might even think that the house built on sand is a more imposing and solid structure than the house built on rock. But under stress and strain it begins to topple and "great was the fall of it."

The most urgent problems confronting the Christian community, whether in city or country, are not those imposed upon it by any strikingly new factors in the communal structures of society at large, but just those issues of righteousness dealt with so radically by Jesus in his life and teaching: Anger, sexual lust, deception, self-protectiveness, hatred of enemies, pious show, empty, mechanical praying, unwillingness to forgive, mammonism, anxiety, judgmental attitudes, spiritual laziness, faithlessness toward God and selfish disregard toward men (Matthew 5:7). It is not necessary to turn to the most recent sociological analysis of city culture to know where the great issues of our time lie. Close attention to the words of Jesus, a heart open to his spirit and obedience will show us in every circumstance the right foundation, the "rock," on which to build the house of an enduring Christian community.

But Jesus not only pointed to the foundation of enduring Christian community. He left as well some practical suggestions about building on this foundation. In Matthew 18:15-20 Jesus charges every Christian disciple with responsibility for the obedience of his "brother" disciple, and to every Christian community gathered to honor his name Jesus promises authority and power to preserve the integrity of that name through binding and loosing, forgiveness and excommunication. Paul caught the thrust of these words when he admonished the Galatian Christians to "bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). The words of Christ in Matthew 18:15ff. point the Christian community to a way of life involving the most inclusive and intensive "care" of the members one for another. They characterize the church community as a company of people bound together in holy warfare against evil, Christ himself in their midst.

Words like these seem to cry out in our time for a more serious type of Christian community life than that prevalent among Christians generally, whether in city or country. How thoughtlessly men join the church. How carelessly they leave it. How inadequate are its assemblies, wth their heavy accent on lecturing and listening, to deal with the hard issues of obedience and disobedience in the personal lives of its members. How unwilling are its members, with their heady, individualistic spirit, to strive together for a common discipleship. A new earnestness about Jesus Christ will bring a new earnestness about Christian community. And a new earnestness about Christian community must inevitably give birth to more significant forms of social and religious encounter than those which sustain Christian life generally today.

No one in recent Christian history realized this more clearly than John Wesley. Early in his evangelistic endeavors he sensed the critical necessity of introducing his converts into disciplined, sharply focused and radically communal class meetings. In order to catch a glimpse of the low estate into which Christian community has fallen in modern times one only needs to compare the congregational life of a typical city church with the pattern of church into which John Wesley introduced his converts.

Fortunately one can point to efforts here and there even in our own time in which a new earnestness about Christian community finds fresh illustration. A few that have influenced the direction of my life are: The Iona Community in Scotland, the house church movement in England, the Agape community in Italy, the Society of Brothers in the United States and England and the Church of the Saviour in Washington.

Lydia Präger in her book, *Frei für Gott und die Menschen,* mentions no less than forty such brotherhood communities that have sprung up in Europe alone since the end of the war. In this same connection we should not underestimate the significance of such old and oftentimes withdrawn groups like the Amish and the Hutterites. While lamenting the place that human traditions have come to accupy in their midst, and longing for a fuller measure of the living Spirit among them, we can at the same time learn much from them of the meaning of serious community

life in covenant with Jesus Christ.

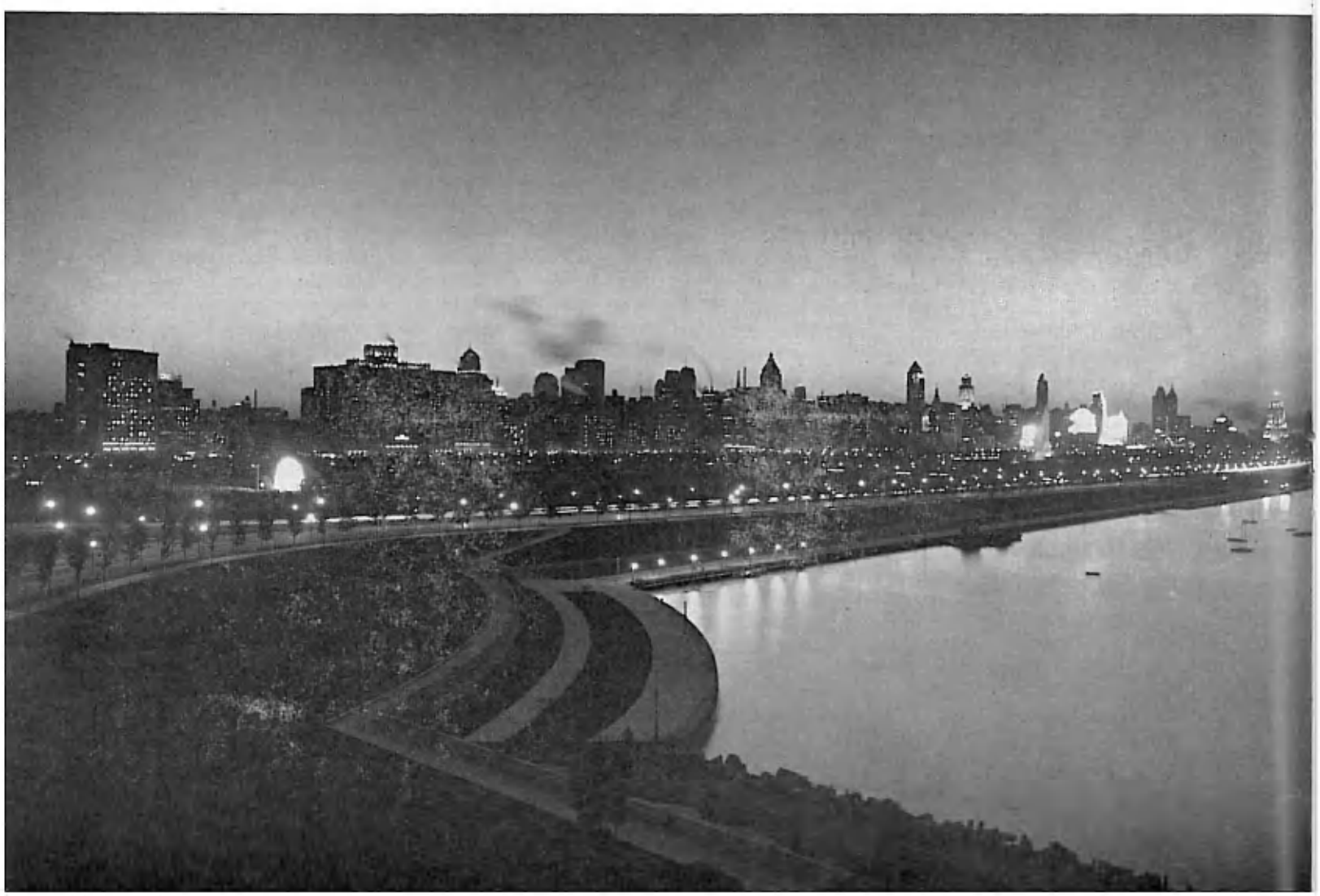
Commenting on the need for a deepening of Christian community in our time, the German theologian, Heinz-Dietrich Wendland, has said: "A church without the formation of new brotherhood communities would be a dying church." Another author, J. H. van Beusekom has said: "Especially in times of social disintegration, the institutional church needs groups to express the covenant structure of God's people, protest against self-satisfied church life, mobilize and collect the unused resources on behalf of the church and penetrate society as the church's *avant-garde*."

There is no doubt that Christian community can be established in those places where Christ wills it. It is also obvious that men and women bearing the name "Christian" are establishing themselves in one way or another, for one reasson or another, in cities. Whether their common life together is really built on the rock of simple obedience to Jesus Christ and whether they are caring for one another in the vital brotherly way commanded by him, is another question. It may be that there have been few times in Christian history when there was a greater need than today for fresh, authentic embodiments of that kind of Christian community Jesus himself spoke of when he said: "Love one another as I have loved you."

Symposium V

By Vern Miller

THE URBAN PASTOR must be more concerned that the church is relevant than that it satisfies a pre-formed concept of relationship types. He is aware that environmental conditions may not be conducive to the type of primary relationships found in rural areas. At this point it is important to realize that Christianity historically has flourished under adverse conditions and regressed qualitatively under seemingly ideal conditions. The true church has never been the captive of any one social system although many have tried to make it so. Her genius has been her ability with Christ as head to function under innumerable circumaccount other equally significant factors. Its rapid of the New Testament church must also take into stances and conditions. Those who stress the intimacy growth, its diversity, its indigenous character, its spontaneity and the importance of its early dispersion. We are inclined to extract and emphasize the features that best suit our historical orientation. The question facing us then is "Are we blurring contemporary reality, or



at least our conception of it, by over-focusing on brotherhood and ignoring other more relevant aspects of the church?" Are we working for the wrong goal and thus losing relevancy to the point of virtual ineffectiveness?

Here in Cleveland we went through five years of rather fruitless struggle to try to establish the kind of brotherhood that seemed to us to be most needed and that would in some ways be unique, thus justifying its right to exist. Or so we thought! Needless to say with the complexity of urban life, the sheer numbers of people in need, the cultural variance and the high mobility rate, the church did not develop along the lines we had previously thought it should. Gradually we began to see that the church had to choose between the number of people it could serve redemptively and/or pre-occupation with the few. In the city one is overwhelmed with the immensity of need, the thousands in spiritual peril. Even so, influenced by our earlier bias, it was most difficult to make the choice. Those who come from small churches like to feel that there is something missing in the larger churches and that any deficiency in numbers in their church is made up in quality. Thus we continued to justify our ineffectiveness. But the immensity of the need in the city is staggering and more and more we came to see ourselves with our light under a bushel rather than on a hill. God was leading us to see that our posture was too exclusive. Would it not be better for the masses to find Christ relevant in a limited way than not to find him at all? Furthermore, other churches also reflected their biases so that in many ways entire classes of people were being ignored. These would be the very people Christ would have sought out! Suppose the church were less unique but more relevant; would anything be lost that could not be regained later?

God helped us to a basic decision in 1956 when he permitted our efforts, which were very much real estate oriented, to topple in the path of another metropolitan reality, urban renewal. He had led us in a series of revelations, most of them circumstantial, to southeast Cleveland where the population and spiritual needs were so diverse that no pre-formulated approach would fit. We had to rely on divine directives as they came to us through experiences of others in the community as well as ourselves. This would be a parish-oriented church capable of creative applications of biblical truth. Its very formation would afford close fellowship and reciprocal inter-action. As it turned out our midweek struggle with a constitution, statement of goals and doctrinal statement drew us all together in a way no other experience could. It also created a spirit of belonging and involvement not otherwise possible. Every attempt was made to erase the concept that "All things are ready, come to the feast." Rather "There is much yet to be done and you are needed to do it." It matters not who you are, what you have previously believed or how you may look. YOU NEED THIS CHURCH AND THIS CHURCH NEEDS YOU. The result was a rather rapidly gathered group of many kinds of people but all with a central spiritual need.

Thus there came into being a sense of community based not so much on our similarities but, quite the opposite, upon our differences. Because we found ourselves so different we clung together for mutual support. We came to see the church as the great leveler rather than as the great divider. We came to be concerned for our unchristian relatives and neighbors and spent the greater part of our energy in trying to help others. Indeed this emerged as our central preoccupation. The result was that the church grew rapidly to over a hundred members and continues to grow. Did we lose something as we grew? (About 30 members transferred from the previous inner-city location.) Perhaps we did. But we also gained a great deal. There is the satisfaction of knowing that more are being helped, that we have broken down some of the walls of sectarianism and race that separate Christians today. The sense of community is there but is not paramount. It seems to be a subdued kind of fringe benefit. We are aware of it but we do not want to choose between a more intense fellowship and a less intense evangelism. Hence it is not overtly obvious. Are we satisfied? Of course not, but we are convinced that the church must have a broader base than community, and we rather think that perhaps in the order of things you do not set out to establish it, you just let it happen. It is only the natural fruit of supernatural experience. If it is anything else it is artificial, forced and lacking in contagiousness.

Churches today are far too introspective in their outlook. They are preoccupied with internal affairs to the point where the real needs of society are being ignored by the church. This has resulted in an ivory tower view of our existence which is not only highly theoretical but overlooks the variety of living patterns extant in today's world. Certainly no uniform expression of community can be devised for all congregations or for that matter all urban churches. People, their culture and their environments, differ widely. What is vital is that in whatever situation the man of God finds himself, he attempts to meet the individual and group needs of that location in the same way Christ would. If his direction is hazy, Spirit-directed persons in and out of the community can be of great help to him.

In summary then, the following observations would seem valid for our experience here in Cleveland. There is no attempt to suggest that these would apply equally well in other situations.

1. The church in the city must be native in its outlook and orientation. It must be relevant to the neighborhood in which it is growing.

2. The church must take its direction in terms of the immediate needs of the people it seeks to serve and harness for witness.
3. The church must provide avenues of personal and group involvement that will enhance the feeling not only of belonging but participation.
4. The church must be first other-oriented in terms of society and its spiritual need and only incidentally concerned with itself.
5. The church must be conscious of its own inadequacies and appreciative of the ministry of others in the city with more experience and greater relevancy than we can possibly achieve in one generation.

Symposium VI (A response to the Essays)

By Elmer A. Martens

IT IS OBVIOUS THAT the essayists approach the issue of urban church community with different emphases. My response and reaction center upon recurring expressions and leading ideas.

Involvement and Relevancy

Vern Miller feels that we are in danger of too much focus on brotherhood, thereby neglecting other areas in which the church should be relevant. I would agree that the sense of community is not likely to come by intently working for it as a chief objective.

Miller believes that the sense of community is a by-product of the church's relevancy. But relevant to what? The society in which the church exists? If relevancy of the church to society is to mean increased involvement, then one wishes still to know the nature of that involvement.

The church today, so it often appears, is not an important factor in modern life. One frequently hears an appeal for increased involvement. By involvement is meant an entry into the stream of things so that the church speaks to the issues of race, war, disarmament, urban renewal, public education, etc. Dick mentions approvingly joining interest groups on issues of social concern. I am bothered by this kind of involvement.

Surely the church addresses itself to social need, but that need arises from spiritual need. The church speaks not to the symptom, but to the cause. The church's message is primarily a life-giving message dealing with reconciliation to God. The church can try to do too many things. It may become a kind of institution with a sense of community, but is it the *church*? If by involvement and relevancy is meant an evangelism and a witness then I concur with the emphasis that Miller makes.

It is of interest to note that John Miller calls attention to strong, community-minded, yet largely uninvolved church groups such as the Amish and the Hutterite. At the same time he quotes Beusekom who refers to the need of groups in the church to "penetrate society." The Amish have a "sense of community" apart from involvement with society; others come to the "sense of community" by means of involvement. For the Amish, involvement with society might mean the loss of "true church community"; for others lack of involvement brings the same result. All of this leads me to ask, "How much of a factor in establishing the church is this matter of involvement?"

Discipline

Discipline is part of the building of the true church. Such is the conclusion of two of the essayists. Here is a necessary emphasis when speaking of establishing the "true church." The early church, as one learns from the Book of Acts, dealt radically with evil, as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira. Their discipline was a concern not only for the purity of the church but for the welfare, even the material welfare, of one another. In this spirit of caring relief was more than once extended by one church to another.

A disciplined obedience is part of the inner dynamic of the church. It relates directly to the Lordship of Christ. It is around the person of the Lord and the new nature he has imparted that the "true" church moves. John Miller states that the church is "a company of people bound together in holy warfare against evil, Christ himself in their midst." Quite so. But the church is not only a huddle maintaining itself against invasion of evil. The church, with Christ in the midst, is a company of evangelists going to every creature with the gospel.

It is a paradox that Christian community should come through dispersion. But it does. In losing itself through positive obedience, the church finds its life and community.

The Ideal Church

The church needs a common denominator. One wonders along with Burkholder whether our Mennonite heritage is adequate as a common denominator. His observations on the need for a "foreground" are succinct. There is an admirable frankness in his statements: "We believe in mission, but we have no clear mission. We have a sense of calling, but we have not heard the clear voice of the Lord. . . ." This description fits so many of us. I agree with him that there is need for an understanding of the "ideal church."

Dick is bold to suggest that we lose our own identity as Mennonites, if necessary. Would to God that we would be that open should the Spirit lead us in that direction! My experience leads me to be sympathetic to the problem of the Mennonite image. If in seeking

by God's grace to build the true church the denominational name stands in the way, what then? One answer is to change the image. Is one justified in expending his energies in the business of public relations? At best this is a slow process. Besides, there is a larger problem to which writers have referred. Is Protestantism a middle-class religion? Some seem to think that in church affiliation there is status consciousness. Have other church denominations more social status than do Mennonites? Such questions one faces in a city. Or has the urban factor little to do with it? Is it evidence of carnality?

It may be a controversial undertaking but we must seek to look with clear and biblical perspective on the question on what it means to be the church.

Symposium VII

By John Miller

I HAVE VERY MIXED emotions as I try to formulate some response to the articles of this symposium. I am especially conscious of the fact that each one who has contributed is investing costly energy and precious years in striving to realize those things about which he writes. Naturally it is the longing of all of us to make these years count for our Lord. So we will no longer debate with one another in quite the same way we might have done five or ten or fifteen years ago. The fight is on and we are each struggling for the right way to fight it. In that spirit of soldiers in a common cause, from one front to another, by way of encouragement and warning, and not to depreciate or judge, I share the following comments and await yours in return!

LAWRENCE: The alternatives you speak of were the ones we weighed at the time we came to the Chicago area five years ago, although at that time we could not have put them so concisely. Nor would we have spoken of "commitment to a clearly understood ideal of church life . . ." if by "ideal" were meant some kind of static, ready-made image. The locus of commitment is Christ himself, and following him has proved to be anything but the realization of a static ideal. However I cannot but concur with your judgment that the very highest and best form of Mennonitism as we see it expressed in its current institutional and religious life, lacks a crucial element: that covenantal binding and discipline, that walking together in the Lord, that welding together of lives "at crucial points related to their destiny" of which you write so forcefully.

We should not underestimate however, what tremendous obstacles lie in the pathway of any young men or women who might heed the call to such a more serious covenantal life and come to the cities seeking to embody that way you describe. "If the salt has lost its season, wherewith shall it be salted!" We greatly underestimate the loss of spiritual wisdom, insight and grace among us as a result of continuing year after year believing in discipline, as you say, but failing to practice it, covenanted to Christ, but not knowing what our covenant really involves. And we greatly underestimate the pain and agony involved in any really significant renewal. The past five years for those of us involved in the Reba Place Fellowship have been filled with blessings, not the least of which has been the repeated humiliation we have had to experience at the realization of our spiritual poverty.

VERNON: Apparently you too, like Lawrence, have come to realize the difficulty of moving from "Mennonitism" to mission in any smooth continuous way. But whereas Lawrence aspires to greater coventantal discipline you aspire to relevance. And for some reason you have come to feel an almost insurmountable tension between the two. This seems to be reflected in your statements: "Would it not be better for the masses to find Christ relevant in a limited way than to not find him at all?" and "Suppose the church *were* less unique but more relevant, would anything be lost that could not be gained later?"

I question whether putting the issues this way can lead to fruitful answers. It is true that the church has often proclaimed a "uniqueness" that has little to do with Christ. But this fact should not drive us into compromising the true uniqueness of Christ and his people. We dare not forget that in Christ's own pilgrimage on this earth many people found him not only irrelevant but offensive, and we are repeatedly warned by him that obedience to his words may well lead us to a very similar conflict and estrangement. I fear a quest for relevance that is willing to "take its direction in terms of the immediate needs of the people," rather than from the Lord of the church as he is witnessed to in the Gospels and as he speaks through a radically covenanted community. A Christianity "limited" in its relevance, like a luke-warm faith, may turn out to be worse than no Christianity at all.

ELMER: Strangely enough just those biblical passages in which you find the most meaningful similarities between the church of "Acts" and the church today, are the ones which awaken in me a deep sense of contrast. I have no doubt that the Sunday morning preaching assemblies which are the mainstay of Protestant life in this country serve a useful if limited function, but I see very little similarity between these "services" and the daily worship of the early Christians at the central sanctuary of world Judaism. One might more logically argue from this early Christian practice that Christians and Jews today should continue to strive for a common worship. And again the "cell

group" movement is undoubtedly doing much good, especially in churches that have known next to nothing of spiritual community in Christ, but the adequacy of a cell group as a bearer of the common life of the church is, in my mind, rather challenged than supported by comparing it with the household breadbreaking and meal assemblies of the early Christians. If one adds to the Acts 2:46 portrait of the "model" church (as you call it) the marks cited by Luke in the verses immediately preceding (fear upon every soul, many wonders and signs, all things in common) the critical contrast between that church and the church today stands out even more strongly. Passages like these, far from supporting us in our sometimes helplessly weak and misdirected endeavors should spur us on to the realization of yet unclaimed promises.

NICHOLAS: Is it not a contradiction to call on the one hand for "a more united Mennonite image for the public" while suggesting on the other the dissolution of the Mennonite church in the not too distant future? Both suggestions strike me as being overly serious about the name "Mennonite." If historical precedent teaches us anything, the chances are the Mennonite church may never be dissolved by official declaration, but it will and must dissolve in that moment when it dawns on us to whom we really belong.

Symposium VIII

By Vern Miller

THE CENTRAL EMPHASIS of all five papers has been the development of the church in accord with God's will. But both the nature of this goal and the methods for achieving it are in a state of flux. Martens of Fresno reflects the practical Biblicism of the average evangelical leader today. His concern for Holy Spirit direction and evangelism is central and we believe rightly so. The need for both the large assembly and the small cell to exist side by side in the same context has been demonstrated. But the difficulty I have observed with so many pastors is that orthodox thinking in and of itself, does not accomplish the task of evangelizing urban man. There exist internal obstacles which we sometimes refuse to admit. Perhaps the obstacles of exclusiveness, sectarianism, segregation and irrelevance have been overcome at Fresno! In most of our churches these obstacles still exist.

Burkholder and Dick are faced with the same dilemma all of our leaders are confronted with who are called to minister to denominational refugees. How do you convince your group and the community that you have any purpose other than self-preservation when this obviously was the initial motivation? Both men have grappled creatively with the problem and both have come up with some good ideas. Dick's concern for our public image and for an ecumenical spirit are commendable. Burkholder's insistence upon the church "standing for something" and for "sent couples" living among all classes are absolutely essential. But the fact remains that few if any of our "refugee churches" have accomplished New Testament community or attracted the lost to Christ in significant numbers. To condone ineffectiveness in outreach while lauding a superior quality of fellowship is inexcusable. (I believe in numerical growth as well as spiritual growth because in the evangelical church the two often are inseparable.) Members of these refugee churches already live among the people, work with them, and to a certain extent carry on some dialogue. Why do these contacts not produce conversions? Perhaps we understand that all members are ministers but have failed to convince ourselves that all members are missionaries. Clearly, the primacy of mission has been displaced by other values in our Christian experience. An overt pre-occupation with discipline can become the very worst form of Pharisaism.

It is difficult to evaluate John Miller's paper because while I knew him as a fellow-student I do not really know anything except hearsay about Reba Place. Unfortunately the same difficulty obtains in all five situations because even words take on different meanings in a variety of contexts. However, one feature of the Jerusalem Church besides its rapid growth was its quick dispersion. This was truly God's will for he wanted the church to be mobile, flexible, outgoing, bi-racial, relevant, and above all, effective. It may well be that the church is large enough to include small, highly disciplined groups and that these groups have a great deal to teach the rest of us in terms of sacrifice and sharing. The final test as always must be the ability or inability of that fellowship group to also be instrumental in reconciling the world to Christ.

It is true that urban man lacks primary relationships and often longs for a more structured societal order. However, this need can also be met by various subgroups (e.g., study night, Sunday school, Fishermen, etc.) within the larger evangelical congregation. It is not fair to imply that all people enter the church lightly, assume no responsibility, and become silent listeners. There is altogether too much of this but there are places that are alive with Spirit-filled lay-activity dedicated to God's service and to the lost. This kind of pre-occupation will avoid the sterility, apathy and formality of the conventional church.

A lot of light on a difficult subject has emerged out of these efforts. We should be able to go on from here in a kind of constructive sharing that will bring out our strengths and eliminate our weaknesses. On the whole the writers seemed to be optimistic. They have reason to be if our self-made obstacles are now more clearly identifiable.

Vacant store serves as church in East Harlem Protestant Parish.

Some Theological Reflections On the City

By Paul Peachey

THE POSSIBILITIES AND the problems posed by the industrial society are profoundly theological in meaning. Both the dazzling achievements and the glaring failures of that society define the questions of human destiny in new terms. No longer the helpless victim of the "blind" forces of nature, industrial man masters his environment. As a result he revises his self-conception upward.

The changing view of man entails also a different conception of God. Indeed there are those who conclude that Christianity, or any religion, is now obsolete. Religion, it is claimed, may have been a useful device whereby pre-scientific man could come to terms with his destiny. Moreover it is argued that organized religion, in our case, the churches, is ensnared in pre-scientific concepts concerning man, the world, and God. The churches are thus regarded as institutional survivals from an earlier era, concerned with the vested interests of survival, and engrossed in trivia.

At first thought this assessment appears to enjoy the support of the evidence. The churches indeed appear to be gripped by severe cultural lag. Yet closer examination discloses this assessment to be superficial despite its apparent sophistication. For we possess no guarantee or demonstration that the current world view is more definitive than the earlier one, nor can the assumption be sustained that views common in "pre-scientific" Europe were implicit in biblical revelation. The challenge of the industrial civilization becomes the occasion, therefore, not for the abandonment of Christian faith, but for its rediscovery and renewal.

Let us take the doctrine of man. In the past, poverty, illness and unmitigated misery constituted an ever ready parable to demonstrate a grim Augustinian view of human depravity. But what of man when he moves from the agrarian village, where he is capricious-

ly ravaged by drought or flood, by famine or disease, to the industrial city which liberates him from such forces? Do we solve the problem by a mere reiteration of human sinfulness? Do our traditional formulations remain faithful to the biblical view of man, in which sin as separation from God is taken with utmost seriousness precisely because man bears nonetheless the image of God?

Or what of our views concerning the nature of man's historical existence? From the earliest times men display ambivalent attitudes toward the city. Repeatedly, within historic times, they have striven to build them, and have yet been haunted by the belief that somehow they sully God's pure creation. In American history this negative note has been particularly pronounced. For it was part of the colonial "myth" that America provided an agrarian escape from the corruptions of urban Europe, and that it was the historic mission of a pure New World to purify the civilization of a corrupt Christendom.

Among Mennonites the preference for rural life was elevated to become an unofficial article of faith. Persecution early drove the Anabaptists from the urban hearths of their movement (the Netherlands afforded some exceptions) to seek refuge in rural seclusion. Already fully agrarian in culture before their arrival in America, Mennonites found their convictions ratified by nineteenth century rural America. Long buffeted by the "world" they developed their own tightly knit society, sustained by a self-contained culture, existing as little islands in the sea of the nation. The Mennonite way appeared to be essentially rural.

The depreciation of the city, and the elevation of rural life, however, is no mere whim. No only, as we briefly noted, is the historical record of urban societies a gloomy one, but in the biblical tradition likewise we find strong strictures against the city. The cities are at once the seat and the symbol of the epitome of the human revolt. From Genesis to Revelation Babylon illustrates the fatal corruption of urban man. In the end, however, this constitutes the minor note in the biblical view of the city. For the industrial society, however misconceived in practice, is clearly implicit in the charge given to man to subdue and to replenish the earth. The thrust of human history is inevitably urban. That a garden is placed at the beginning and a city at the end of the biblical message is not an accident. Man is made by and for community. His destiny is urban. This is not to suggest that we move gradually from our earthly cities to the New Jerusalem, for that city is presented to us as coming down from God out of heaven. But there is something analogous here which dare not escape us. The judgments of God fall, not on cities as cities, but on cities in revolt. We may be compelled to "flee" from particular cities. But the mistaken notion that cities are to be eschewed as such has contributed to many of the ills for which cities are notorious.

Similar problems of understanding arise when we move more directly to *soteriology*, or our concepts and teachings concerning salvation. Against the backdrop of misery which characterized a great deal of preindustrial life, the gospel of hope for a better afterlife offered a strong and authentic solace. The tasks of mercy which the churches assumed in societies failing to succor the ill and the needy became parabolic enactments of the redemptive message. The modern missionary movement to Africa and Asia made its way because it brought medicine and education, services which now become the concern of five-year plans in newly independent nations.

The coming of the industrial society entails a deep crisis for the churches. Once they may have been oases of hope in the midst of the desert. But now the whole desert is to bloom. Science, technology and political reform promise to alter the very conditions which make for misery. Though in many places throughout the world far more poverty or illness or ignorance remain than church and state together can alleviate, the technologically self-sufficient age of mankind has dawned.

What is the significance of such "this-worldly" fulfillment for the redemptive message of the Church? What does it portend for Christian *eschatology*, the doctrine of the last things? How does the great burst of human fulfillment relate to the movement of the Kingdom of God? If we equate them, we clearly secularize the grace of God, and do violence to the witness of his redemptive action. If, on the other hand, we deprecate the fulfillments of industrial civilization because they do not afford true salvation, we jeopardize the other strand of the biblical witness concerning human destiny.

Perhaps the mystery of the *Incarnation* furnishes us at least one clue to the solution of our problem. The reality of sin in the world, and the gospel call to repentance, seemingly entail a negative assessment of the world. Yet the coming of God in the flesh thrusts us into the world. Accordingly, Jesus prays not that his followers should be taken from the world, but rather that like him in this world, they should be kept from evil. Our "dilemma" is thus not a dilemma, but a call to "both-and." Today, as has been variously suggested, the gospel is addressed to man in his strength. As President James McCord, of Princeton Theological Seminary, stated in an address some months ago, our belaboring of human depravity amounts almost to attempts to "blackmail" men into the Kingdom. To be sure, depravity and finitude remain. A false optimism or humanism is to be shunned as earnestly as a false pessimism. Not the biblical doctrine of the Fall is our problem, but concepts of "original sin" shaped by cir-

cumstances which do not now obtain.

In the present setting, however, we are concerned primarily with the *Church.* What bearing has the urbanization of life on the congregation? In what manner or to what extent should churches as churches concern themselves with "urban problems"? How should rural congregations view the rapid disappearance of traditional patterns of rural life? These and many more questions are immediate and practical, and often require "practical" solutions. Land holdings are consolidated. The farming community cannot provide a place for the young people, and farming operations in any case become too expensive for them to undertake. What shall the congregation do? Or a city reaches out to engulf a previously rural community. In a time span of five years farmers must take up new occupations, while new neighbors flood the area. What about the church? A similar shift in city population takes place. Wealthy whites move to the suburbs. Poor immigrants from abroad or from rural areas stream in, usually differing from the original inhabitants in language or culture or race or religion. In the transition many people are uprooted. Social needs are acute and delinquency may set in. What and where is the church?

Certainly in any of these cases there can be no substitute for the mastery of facts and of skills. Frequently communities and congregations fail at precisely this point. Yet enough has been said in these lines to indicate that for congregations as well as for individual Christians the problem remains fundamentally theological. But how often is the congregation a center of dialogue concerning human destiny in the immediate and concrete terms of its own life? How many Mennonite congregations who are now caught up one way or another by urbanization are at work correcting their inherited misconceptions concerning the direction of human history, and are conversing fundamentally about the changes they face?

Again, the "churching" of "unchurched" areas or groups of people has long been a concern of the churches, including Mennonites. Yet how seriously have we taken our own ecclesiology in this regard? What has happened to the congregation as a "sending" community? How often does it occur to members of our congregations who make vocational choices or geographic moves in consequence of urbanization to view this decision as subject to the dialogue of the congregation? What has happened to the Anabaptist view that the migrant artisan initiates the Christian dialogue when he sets up his tent?

Or, as we contemplate the failures at points as these, we are compelled to inquire about present trends in church life. Medieval Catholics, seeking to preserve the sacred character and authority of the Church, attributed to the visible institution qualities which the Church in time does not possess. Protestants, in revolt, rejected any immediate identification of the "visible" with the true or "invisible" Church. Without proposing a formal mediation between these extremes, Anabaptists insisted that the Church constitutes the visible assembly of real people. The visibility, however, was expressed, not in sacramental powers, communicated outside the channels of human experience, but in the action of grace, in the human response to the divine summons, in repentance, in renewal, in reconciliation and forgiveness, in binding and loosing, and in the nurture of the common life.

Mennonite life today still bears the marks of this early heritage. Moreover there are traces of renewal which suggest that the powers of this legacy are not yet exhausted. But the basic direction of developments today is hardly reassuring. Stronger than Anabaptist impulses appears to be the thrust toward "Protestantization." For it is the Protestant model which shapes the mold of Mennonite pastoral recruitment, training, and leadership, as well as the patterns of polity and worship. There is little evidence that Anabaptist ecclesiology is today primarily decisive.

The Protestant clerical pattern, and its corresponding mode of worship, is the product of long and sometimes haphazard development. The eleven o'clock preaching service, combined occasionally with the administration of the sacraments, provides the central image of the Church. In rural and small town settings where the American version of the Protestant image arose, members of the congregation were linked together in networks of workday relationships. Much of the life of the community transpired thus in secular guise. The sermon was an indispensable segment, but only a segment, of a larger whole. In the city, however, this network of relations largely falls away. The pulpit may still be surrounded, as it were, by countless societies and clubs. But without the web of community relations the coffee-klatsch or the bingo party are quite different in meaning from the old country church picnic.

To complain of Mennonite "Protestantization" is not to censor Protestants or to laud disunity. Nor is the reference to rural Protestant patterns intended as an idealization of a rustic past. In any case, the pattern was often inadequate enough even in the rural setting. It is to say, however, that the perpetuation of that pattern in the city, and more particularly, its espousal by Mennonites this late in the cycle, is little short of catastrophic. The cultural lag of the churches vis-a-vis the forces of urbanization is in no small measure due precisely to the absence of a responsible conversation which, kindled by the Spirit constitutes and perpetuates the congregation. So it is that the churches as institutions continue to flail about long after the centers of decision and commitment have shifted to the board of directors, to the clubs and the golf links, and to the Pentagon.

Churches, to be sure, are not mere small group discussions. This analysis does not assume that one simple formula could quickly heal all the difficulties they face. Nor does it propose that a given polity might afford guarantees against sterility. Congregations, gifts and circumstances vary endlessly. Christians can function responsibly within politics as diverse as Quaker or Catholic. But if *the* normative polity cannot be defined, negative definitions are possible and, on occasion, necessary. Any polity which by definition prevents or relieves the congregation from performing its proper functions is to be rejected. But the matter must also be stated positively. Does a given pattern of congregational life foster the fulness of the body of Christ? Does it meet the needs, and express the life, of those who constitute the congregation?

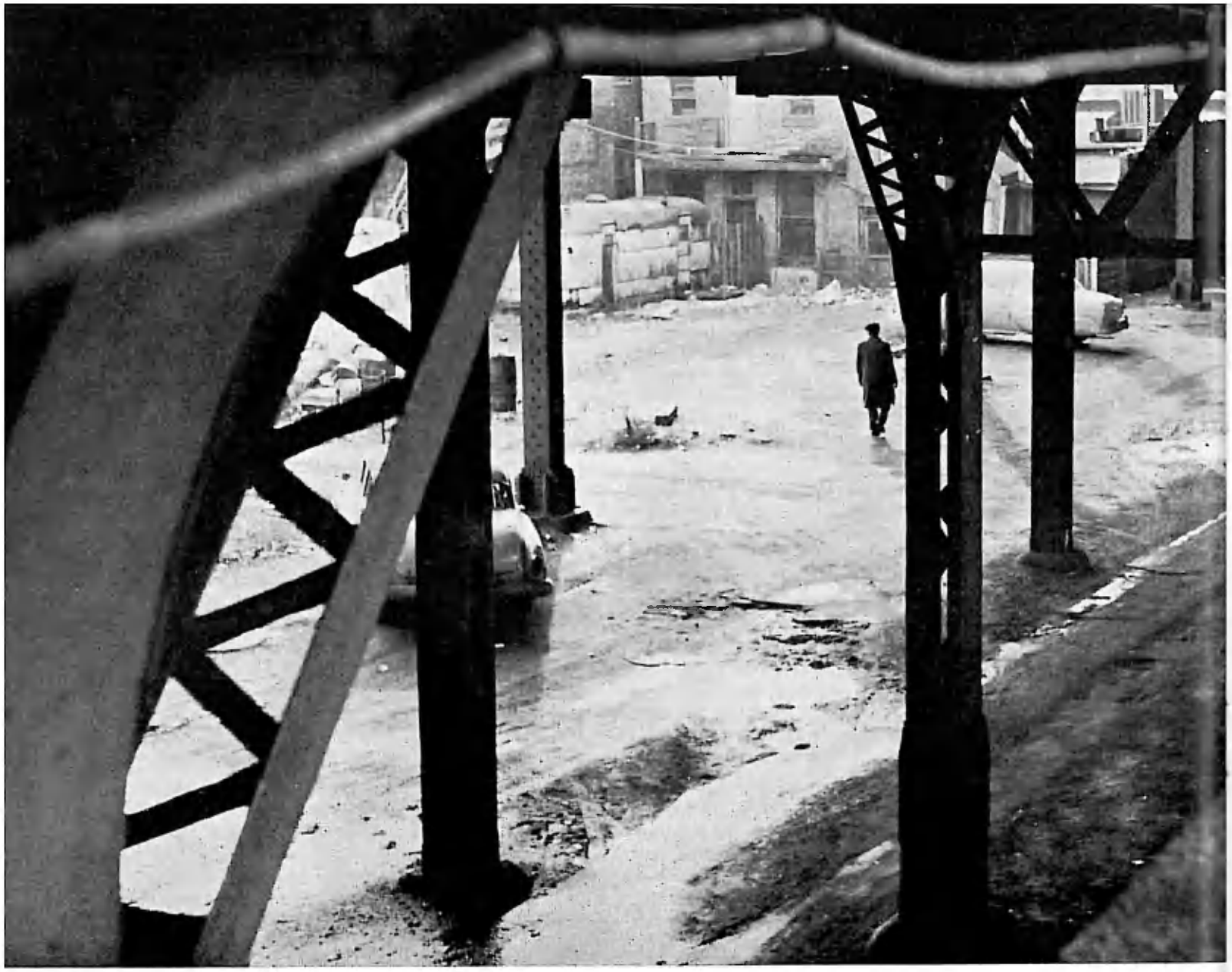
It is at this point that the painful questions must be faced. The weekly assembly of otherwise scattered and disconnected individuals for an hour of liturgy, music, and "preaching" is an extremely defective expression of the Church. Yet these scattered individuals live among people all week long, people who if Christians do constitute the Church locally, and if not, are the concern of the witnessing community. The multiplicity of fleeting, superficial and fragmented contacts which comprise city life may be deplorable. On the other hand, however strange as it may seem in view of our heritage, the freedom and diversity of the city make it a better setting for the "believers' church" than does the closed rural community. For a homogeneous rural community may press people into molds of church adherence without the exercise of free and responsible choice. Cultural and spiritual impulses blend imperceptibly, with the former as the more tangible often not only dominating but also supplanting the latter. Thus some of the features of urban life which we fear as inimical to the Church are precisely points of new possibility.

The primary units and forms of Christian *fellowship* (the word here carries a stronger connotation than mere conviviality) must be recreated, let us say, revolutionarily so. This does not necessarily mean the abandonment of the eleven o'clock service, nor of the building constructed around it. Indeed it must be stressed that the more vigorous the local units of Christian living, the more urgent also the larger concourse, lest the local groups become engrossed in pettiness and lose their awareness of the Church Universal. Yet it must be recognized that the continuation of the old patterns meanwhile impedes our perceptions of primary possibilities. At the least new congregations emerging in the city should resist far longer and more vigorously than they do the tendency to so conceive their life together as to demand at the earliest possible moment the conventional building and mode of public worship.

It is true, of course, that the Church "universal" precedes the Church "local." Any local assembly must recognize that the Body of Christ which it *is*, is eternal and universal in its embrace. It is never "independent" in the "democratic" sense. Any healthy local Christian group reaches out passionately for the larger fulness of the Body of Christ. We would be grossly misunderstood if the present plea were interpreted in schismatic or separatist terms, as though congenial cliques should withdraw to form "pure" churches. But it simply dare no longer be assumed, more or less automatically, that the conventional "church," in supplanting the basic units of church life, exhibits that priority of the universal over the local. Indeed the withering or the nonexistence of genuine local expressions—"house churches" and the like—may well contribute to sectarianism.

We are wont to regard the New Testament church in the house of so-and-so as the natural preliminary stage at the beginning, and hence devoid of deeper or abiding significance. In a limited sense this may be true. Certainly we would err if we sought to make every manifestation of the early church for that reason normative in external fashion. Even the extraordinary burst of life in the first church in Jerusalem, with the unique coming together determined in part by the circumstances peculiar to Jerusalem at that moment, was marked by a house-to-houseness that is hardly accidental. The Church must be actualized at the primary levels of daily life and commitment, and it is these which make possible and sustain the ascending levels of the ecumenical life. This reality is inevitably threatened, if not violated, when "Church" means primarily the eleven o'clock preaching institution, or, what often goes with it, the denomination. Indeed, even in "low-churchly" denominations, centers of responsible initiative gravitate to denominational agencies. Thus most denominations, for example, have "good" statements on race relations. But because there is an appropriate department to deal with these matters, others do not meddle and congregations remain segregated.

It is enormously difficult in most Christian traditions to break through significantly at the house church level. But precisely here lay the Anabaptist genius. The ecclesiology was open to the varied requirements of workshop, street, university and kitchen. This is not to romanticize the movement or to deny the pettiness and dissension which sometimes plagued it. Then, as in New Testament times, and as today, men were human. But it is for this creative openness that the city cries out today, but for which it also creates the exciting possibilities. From this perspective one can view only with sadness the efforts of Mennonites at this late date to replicate the obsolete Protestant institution.



Some Trends in Urban Church Studies

By Paul Peachey

THE CONCERN OF the American churches with urban problems related to their life and witness has produced a considerable literature. During the 19th century, while factual studies were undertaken somewhat sporadically, most of the writing was reformist in nature. The rise of the social gospel, however, reflected in part the growing sophistication and self-consciousness of social science. Spurred by the conviction that conversion must now go beyond the individual to change also the institutions of society, adherents of the movement devoted attention to problems of the industrial civilization such as the needs of the working class, the distribution of wealth and the like. Meanwhile the churches also sought to adapt themselves increasingly to the new urban situations. A notable example was the development of the "institutional churches" in the downtown areas of major cities, late in the 19th and early in the 20th century. These trends were in part interrupted by World War I. Frederick DeLand Leete's *The Church in the City* (New York: Abingdon, 1915), though not intended as a summary, is fairly representative of developments until that time.

Subsequently, the inter-war period constituted a fairly distinct era in city church studies. While a number of researchers worked independently in universities and elsewhere, the most important body of literature came from the *Institute for Social and Religious Research*, an agency related to the Federal Council of Churches under the leadership of H. Paul Douglass. Systematic church studies were undertaken in a large number of American cities. These studies, it may be said fairly, departed from the traditional Protestant distinction between the church "visible" and "invisible." Churches were studied in their community settings quite apart from questions theological or spiritual considerations. These studies analyzed the organization, the programs, the facilities, the resources of the membership, as well as the social and economic factors in their environment which conditioned them. Though the theological premises of these studies were open to serious question, they produced a vast body of valuable information which was available in the development of urban church policies. Ultimately 78 volumes were published, mostly by the Institute. Important among the more general works which summarized these inquiries are Ross W. Sanderson, *The Strategy of City Church Planning* (New York: Institute for Social and Religious Research, 1932); and H. Paul Douglass and Edmund de S. Brunner, *The Protestant Church as a Social Institution* (New York: Harper, 1935).

The time since World War II constitutes a third era. Drastic reduction of the farm population in favor of increased urbanization and industrialization has characterized this period. Inner cities have deteriorated and the retreating population has spilled over into suburbs that have pushed far beyond old city lines. Appalling needs in the inner city and the mushrooming of suburbs have brought the necessity of planning increasingly to the fore, a development which strongly influenced church interests and policies. All this is reflected in a rapidly growing literature.

For our purposes here we may distinguish four categories of literature concerning city church concerns: 1) Journalistic and scholarly articles in a wide variety of periodicals (not to be discussed here); 2) Descriptive or biographical case studies; 3) Sociological studies undertaken by official religious bodies; and 4) Independent or university-based sociological monographs.

Descriptive and Biographical Case Studies

Of particular interest here have been various new ministries in a number of inner city areas throughout the country which constitute heroic chapters in the history of Christian service and witness. Most widely noted no doubt was the "group ministry" initiated by young seminaries in New York City (East Harlem Protestant Parish), an effort which spread to other cities. One of the early participants, George W. Webber, gives a perceptive account of the nature of this effort in *God's Colony in Man's World* (New York: Abingdon, 1960). More recently, Bruce Kenrick, an occasional "participant observer," tells "the story of East Harlem Protestant Parish" in a series of vivid sketches of people and events, under the title of *Come Out the Wilderness* (New York: Harper, 1962). Unusual ministries directed to inner city problems are depicted by C. Kilmer Myers in *Light the Dark Streets* (Greenwich: Seabury Press, 1958) who writes of his own experience as an Episcopal priest working with teen-age gangs in Manhattan's Lower East Side; and John Ehle in *Shepherd of the Streets* (New York: Sloane, 1960), who describes the work of James Gusweller, another priest, on the West Side.

In Washington, D. C., the "Church of the Saviour" has been the center of a great deal of interest since the late 1940s. There an unaffiliated but "ecumenical" congregation was founded by a small group gathered around a former army chaplain in an effort to develop the substance and the discipline so widely lacking in church life. Betty O'Conner, the secretary of the church, tells the story in *Call to Commitment* (New York: Harper, 1963).

Sociological Studies Undertaken By Religious Bodies

Research in urban church problems was stimulated anew by the 1949 national legislation on urban renewal, and by the formation of the National Council of Churches shortly thereafter. Ross W. Sanderson's *The Church Serves the Changing City* (New York: Harper, 1955) is a key study at this point since it

stands on the foundation of the achievements of the earlier era in city church research while also projecting some future trends. In 1955 the Bureau of Research and Survey of the National Council of Churches (NCC), in cooperation with appropriate departments of a number of member denominations, set up a major study project on "the effective city church." (Independent work in this vein had already been done for many years at Garrett Biblical Institute by Murray Leiffer who published *The Effective City Church,* New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1949.) The undertaking assumed that the study of a variety of city churches usually regarded as effective or successful would afford clues which would be suggestive in the development of further city church strategy.

Some work was done directly by the Bureau, but individual studies were conducted, with adaptations, by the denominations concerned. Numerous consultations, papers and articles resulted, and several books have been published. In 1961 the Bureau released in mimeographed form an illuminating sheaf of papers entitled "Some Recent Research Perspectives on City Church Laity." One of the most significant discoveries to come out of this project was the discovery at mid-point that a doctrine of the church would have to be formulated before "effectiveness" could be measured. Thus the theological dimension which had been excluded by definition in the Institute-sponsored interwar research was now recognized as the key to the whole effort. Thus Truman B. Douglass, of the Home Missions department of the United Church, has aptly written, "Most of the genuinely important questions for church planning and research today are not factual and statistical but are basically theological and ecclesiological." The first major publication growing out of the "effective city church" series is Walter Kloetzli's study of eight urban Lutheran churches in *The City Church—Death or Renewal* (Philadelphia: Muhlenburg Press, 1961).

Against the background of increased sophistication in city church research, planning has been taken with increasing seriousness by the denominations and other agencies. Perry L. Norton has edited papers and discussions from two consultations sponsored by NCC departments in *Search* and in *The Relevant Church,* both published in New York by the NCC in 1960. Both give rich insights into contemporary thought among churchmen on these matters. Walter Kloetzli and Arthur Hillman published *Urban Church Planning* (Philadelphia: Muhlenburg, 1958), a widely acclaimed handbook. Perry L. Norton also prepared for the NCC Department of the Urban Church a pamphlet on *The Churches' Concern for the Urban Renaissance* which dealt more particularly with the Church's witness to urban development than with its own needs. This was intended as an interim statement, designed to stimulate thought and response for further development. A bimonthly journal entitled *The City Church,* reflecting the foregoing trends in research and planning, is published by the NCC Department of the Urban Church. Some of these materials are also being interpreted more popularly for educational purposes at the parish level. The Division of Evangelism of the (then) Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., published a pamphlet for this purpose entitled *The City—God's Gift to the Church* which, among other things, seeks to counter the older negative stereotypes in the churches concerning the city. The NCC Department of the Urban Church released "An Annotated List of Readings on the Urban Church and Church Planning" in May, 1960.

Independent or University-based Sociological Monographs and Studies

In the rise of sociology as an independent discipline concern with religion has played an important part, though in recent years, particularly in America, this branch of sociology became very much a step-child. During the social gospel era, however, attention focused on problems of the industrial society. Out of the continental legacy of sociology, chiefly Ernst Troeltsch and Max Weber, and the social gospel experience, has arisen an important tradition of sociological research. More on the side of social ethics than of sociology in the stricter sense, the late H. Richard Niebuhr of Yale shaped a whole generation of thought and research. Perhaps the outstanding sociological study in this tradition, though there have been numerous other valuable undertakings, was Liston Pope's *Millhands and Preachers* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942). This study, however, dealt with industrial conflict and the churches in a Southern textile town, rather than with urban problems as such.

More recently, in another tradition, problems of the urban society figure prominently in sociological studies of religion. A new classic in many regards is Gerhard Lenski's *The Religious Factor* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1961). Part of larger sociological study of Detroit, Lenski's work investigates the consequences of religious beliefs on daily life, in this case, of course, in an urban society. Peter L. Berger, also a sociologist, writes a somewhat more theoretical and journalistic critique of American culture religion in *The Noise of Solemn Assemblies* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1961). Again, though not focusing on the city church as such, the problems he treats are those of an urban society. On the church-and-city theme, Gibson Winter in *The Suburban Captivity of the Church* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1961) proposes a "sector ministry" to overcome the break between inner city and suburb, and the one-sidedness of the churches in the respective areas.

A valuable volume cutting across these several areas, and one every city churchman should possess, is Robert

Let's book of readings, *Cities and Churches* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962). As is inevitable in such compilations the material is uneven in quality and relevance. A few essays, while included presumably because of their classic character, are out of date at points. Passing reference should also be made to Catholic studies in the several areas here treated. Important illustrations are the sociological works of Joseph Fichter, *Southern Parish*; *The Dynamics of a City Church*, and *Social Relations in the Urban Parish*, 1951 and 1953 respectively, both by the University of Chicago Press. Andrew M. Greeley, somewhat less analytical and more "constructive," parallels Winter's study, in *The Church and the Suburbs* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1959).

There is little literature on Mennonite churches which corresponds to the foregoing. For more than a quarter of a century, "urbanization" has been an important theme among Mennonites in studies, conferences, and publications. Study manuals and articles in periodicals addressed themselves to witness in the cities as, e.g., Alta Mae Erb's *Our Home Missions* (1920) and J. D. Mininger's *Exalting Christ in the City* (1937), both by the Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pa. In sociological studies the urban theme usually dealt with urban influences on the rural Mennonite community or on Mennonite values. Thus dissertations beginning as early as Edmund G. Kaufman's *The Development of the Missionary and Philanthropic Interest Among the Mennonites of North America* (Berne: Mennonite Book Concern, 1931), dealing with contemporary Mennonite life, recognize the crucial impact of urban forces on "the Mennonite way of life." However, J. Winfield Fretz in an unpublished University of Chicago B.D. thesis ("A Study of Mennonite Religious Institutions in Chicago," 1940) dealt for the first time sociologically with Mennonite missions and congregations in the city, a study which discloses much of the crisis that urbanization entails for Mennonites.

Urban problems figure occasionally in the bi-annual conferences on Mennonite culture problems held by the Mennonite colleges, with the 1955 sessions devoted in part to Mennonites and urbanism (*Proceedings of the Tenth Conference on Mennonite Educational and Cultural Problems*, held in Chicago, June 16-17, 1955). More recently Leland Harder of Mennonite Biblical Seminary has done considerable work on rates and problems of Mennonite urbanization and church building. Some of his work has been released in the mimeographed newsletter "The Mennonite Church in the City," released by the Board of Missions of the General Conference Mennonite Church, some in articles in various periodicals, and a great deal in his recent but unpublished dissertation, "The Quest for Equilibrium in an Established Sect. A Study of Social Change in The General Conference Mennonite Church" (Northwestern University, 1962). A study by the present writer published in 1963 by Faith and Life Press, deals with Mennonite city church problems and developments in the broader context of American urbanization and the responses of the churches.

One of the encouraging features of the literature on the churches and urbanism today is the greater realism in contrast to earlier utopian accents. The power and the demands of redemption as something other than the mere "progress" of civilization is rather generally recognized. Moreover in research itself one finds a new generation of scientists, men like Charles Y. Glock, Leland Harder, and Gerhard Lenski, who combine with their scientific competence, theological awareness of a high order.

Books dealing with church concerns in urban life today are indispensable and exciting. Unfortunately, they are also the purveyors of fads and misconceptions, and perhaps worst of all, books and the writing of them, can be substitutes for *the doing that needs doing.* The words of George Webber (see above) must be heeded:

"One of the best ways to avoid living by the gospel is to spend time discussing the doctrine of the church. A whole shelf of books has been written on this subject in recent years. . . . Christians are called by God to be and to act, not endlessly to discuss."

Toward a Sifting of Faith From Culture

By John Howard Yoder

THERE CAN BE no such thing as a sifting of faith from culture. Culture is to faith as body is to soul; they can be distinguished verbally but never separated. A faith removed from its culture either dies or creates another culture; a culture robbed of its faith either dies or finds a substitute faith. The title assigned is thus questionable in principle.

Why then keep it at all at the head of this page? Because it does point to two ideas, one true and one false, which together dominate the discussion of Mennonites as they think of the church in any kind of cultural change, but especially in the move to the cities.

Let us begin with the true one. The particular ways of spelling out the meaning of Christian faith and obedience which were worked out over the years by Mennonites in the Jura or the Ukraine, if they were right then, were right because they were arrived at then and there, as new solutions to live problems, found in the situation and fashioned with the convinced involvement of the Brotherhood. These very virtues, which commended the solutions found then and there, disqualify the same solutions for any other time and place. So it is and must be that patterns of language and folklore, of courtship and ownership, of work and worship must change. Even to keep the patterns externally the same by seeking a degree of isolation sufficient to keep them from being too severely challenged, as some of our Old Order and Old Colony brethren feel called to do, is to change the reality of the patterns; for originally they were *not* associated with self-defense or withdrawal, or with social control, but were worked out in living contact with the civilization then dominant.

So there must be change. But Christ does not change; is there not something "once for all delivered to the saints" which can be held aloft unalterable when the streams of change sweep our Germanisms and rural complexes downriver? The answer seems obvious; let us "sift." Let us classify the things which matter; some as "culture," some as "faith." The former may change, the latter not. By changing the former we can overcome our inhibited sense of inferiority and finally be like other people; by holding the latter, the "faith," untouched by time, we can preserve our good consciences in the process.

This idea is what is wrong. It is wrong for more reasons than one can easily enumerate, for reasons psychological, sociological, theological, and just plain logical; let us look at some of the chief of them.

1. The faith that is left unchanged in such a process becomes irrelevant. It is limited to matters of liturgy or doctrine which can make the move to town without

seeming to suffer, since, standing alone, they make little or no difference. For churches of a "liturgical" slant, for whom the purity of the liturgy is a central concern, who believe sincerely that it is better for a hymn to be in God's own Latin than to be understood, or for "orthodox" churches equally concerned for purity of doctrine as itself the focus of God's saving intent, such a capsuling of that central concern is appropriate. But for fellowships of the disciples' church tradition, according to whose conviction God's top priority concern is the saved and saving fellowship of common ordinary people responding in daily life to his working in the world, such a fenced-off faith will not do. If it makes no difference, if it neither changes nor is changed by the way disciples live in their new surroundings, this "faith" should be left at home.

2. A culture, any culture, the old one or the new one, which is not constantly brought anew under the judgment of God's Word, becomes demonic. This is no more true of the urban culture than of the rural; no more true of a changing civilization than of a stable one. Yet the "sifting" approach tends to weaken the critical resources of faith just when they are needed the most, namely when new decisions are being made. By tackling the job as if the "sifting" needed were to distinguish faith from culture, our eyes are drawn away from the real discernment between right faith-culture and wrong faith-culture which needs more urgently than ever to be done.

Is conscientious objection faith or culture? Is congregational responsibility for unmet material needs of members faith or culture? Is parental authority for the moral development of adolescents faith or culture? Obviously, it is always both. If any cultural trait is truly irrelevant culturally (such as worship services in the German language in the inner city, or insisting on borscht in a Chinatown cafeteria), then such a preference is also wrong theologically. Such contemporary adjustments and evaluations as the recent Mennonite tradition has arrived at with regard to the use of alcohol and tobacco and to "worldly amusements," whether they be in every detail right or wrong, are in any case not the production of a specially rural and Germanic mentality, but represent a response toward contemporary challenges of the larger 19th-century culture which was shared with urban and Anglo-Saxon evangelical Christians. Some may think these principles call for review; if so, let them be reviewed honestly in their own right and not confused by the assumption that they represent "rural values."

3. The "sifting" approach hinders rather than helps the adjustment process because its ambiguity glosses over unresolved disagreement. Some feel fundamentally ashamed of their peculiar denominational heritage; to speak of "sifting" enables them to cast it off with a good conscience, putting the largest possible number of embarrassing items in the "culture" hopper, and labelling as "faith" the items shared with "mainstream" Christianity. Others, less estranged from the faith of their fathers, will find in that faith abundant values capable of traveling; they will in fact testify that their special emphases enhance rather than weaken the evangelistic and ecumenical relevance of their work in a new setting. Such persons would consider nonresistance, believers' baptism, and binding fraternal counsel to be matters of faith, sloughing off as "culture" only the most specifically rural of folkloric elements. The differences between these groups of people is deep; yet both are "sifting faith from culture." For one the "sifting" seeks to facilitate adaptation which disavows the ancestral tradition; for the other it identifies in that tradition elements of such validity that they are worth continuing even in utterly changed circumstances.

As example: what should happen to the practice of neighborhood mutual aid in the process of urbanization? Many will say that the barn-raising, the threshing ring and the office of deacon in the congregation were appropriate solutions only in small rural communities; in the city they must be replaced by contractual insurance arrangements for medical costs and survivors' aid. But it can just as cogently be argued that it was only the natural togetherness of rural community life which could permit the churches to give as little attention as they did to the formal structuring of congregational sharing, and to accept as widely as they did the individualistic forms of property management; that in the city where there are no automatic expressions of mutuality, there is need for more, not less attention to congregational sharing, and for less, not more reliance on individualistic and monetary arrangements for security.

The same alternatives present themselves on other levels. In the rural community the church was the major social center; in the city it is not. Some would accept this difference as axiomatic and ask the "Church" as one agency among others within the urban society to concentrate more efficiently on her specific religious duties (sacraments, preaching, perhaps certain kinds of counseling and visitation); others would conclude from the same facts that we must intentionally plan our brotherhood functions in the city, giving them more rather than less time and effort, in order to maintain the kind of mutual fraternal responsibility without which the church is a mere shell, and which can take place with less effort in some other societies.

The question is the same both for church-related social activities and for material mutual aid; does the city call for more or for less mutual involvement? Shall urbanization be the occasion for homecoming more or less like mainstream American religion, or

more or less an intentional community?

4. The frame of mind in which "sifting" is undertaken first concedes the rightness of the convictions of the "home church." This may be sincere conviction; it may be only a concession to avoid argument. In either case it is assumed that the "transcultural migration" takes its point of departure from a "base" which is not challenged. What is "sifted out" in moving to the suburbs or the city is assumed still to be necessary or at least acceptable "at home." This point of departure, assumed with conviction by some, granted perhaps grudgingly by others, is probably the most deeply doubtful aspect of the whole sifting approach. For it is not true that the home base is solid. It is not true that we are fully agreed about what is necessary to discipleship in Mountain Lake or Mount Joy, in Clearbrook or Whitewater.

Mennonite Life recently published (October 1962) the results of a study by Paul M. Miller, documenting from the life of Mennonite churches of one conference group some observations which would probably hold as well for others. Whatever the conference leaders and seminary teachers think, Mennonites at the home base have largely lost their distinctive convictions. When we measure the loss not by the work of specialized conference committees but by what Mennonite Christians talk, sing and pray about every Sunday, it is clear that the sifting has already been done.

In the course of his study Paul Miller identified several different sets of criteria of "official" Mennonite theology, drawn from church organs and statements of different periods, and then measured painstakingly the extent to which Mennonite weekly worship reflected these convictions. The conclusion (which we here oversimplify—the interested reader should refer to the original article) was that major distinctive Mennonite emphases are wholly or largely lacking in the regular diet of Mennonite churches; that in their place there are characteristic elements of what we might call "general American evangelicalism." There is more generalized confession of sin and more attention to assurance of forgiveness, less attention to church discipline, conflict with the world, and social concern, than the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition as interpreted by church leaders would call for. "The attitudes of faith which are not being reinforced or fully underscored within worship services include many of those articles which are crucial to the preservation of that which is unique in Mennonite belief" (page 177).

The basis for this conclusion was a survey of Mennonite worship services. Other indices would likely yield similar results. This being the case, we are hindered in grappling with the issues of discipleship in our day, when these issues seem to arise only, or in the first instance, upon the occasion of moving to the city. "Sifting" menaces distinctive Mennonite beliefs and practices in the city only because sifting or adaptation has already largely undermined them in the country. Ministers and members are diffident about commending these convictions to their neighbors because they are not deeply convinced about them themselves. To disguise this lack of conviction the discussion of urban society may often be only a smokescreen.

A Possible Alternative Approach

If we cannot hope effectively to arrive at a convinced and relevant solution of these problems by turning our inferiority complexes inside out, what then would be a more promising approach toward the questions raised by any cultural change? The theses suggested here are all tentative and are intentionally formulated to provoke discussion.

1. We are speaking of Mennonite mobility and of cultural change in North America, a continent abundantly provided with Christian churches of every description. Our discussion should therefore take into account the existence of those other churches, represented more or less within all cultural realms to which the Christian with differing convictions somehow needs to relate.

2. There are therefore numerous elements, in fact many of the most basic elements, of the Christian faith, which need not be taken to any community; they are already there. Our conversation therefore must legitimately focus upon the identification of those distinctive Anabaptist-Mennonite convictions which can be held to be of sufficient validity that they stand in judgment over any cultural expression, including traditional Mennonite expressions. Here such expressions as "the believers' church," "the way of the cross," and "mutual aid" might serve as feeble pointers in the direction of such valid distinctive convictions. These convictions would of course not separate us from other Christian bodies in the same way; we are nearer the Baptists or the Friends than we are to the Episcopalians.

3. Within the framework defined by the "denominationalism" of American church life, the right of specific Mennonite organizations to exist is dependent upon their commitment in distinctive historically Mennonite convictions. They therefore stand in judgment upon our present faith and culture just as much as upon the faith and culture of any different segment of society into which we might move. We are morally justified in preaching these specific convictions and in maintaining a separate denominational structure only if these convictions remain effectively alive.

We should be aware that "denominationalism" with its broad tolerance for diversity, thus often not distinguishing between diversity which may deny the faith and diversity which enriches it, is itself not a theologically acceptable answer to the problem of Christian discipline and unity.

4. Individuals moving out of traditional Mennonite communities who are not personally committed to their professed faith and missionaries for distinctive

Mennonite emphases would be well advised to seek church homes sympathetic to such convictions as they do have, rather than being burdened by a sense of obligation to represent a tradition which does not carry conviction for them. Such persons are most likely to use the slogan, "sifting faith from culture," to cover up their actual lack of conviction for either the theological or the cultural dimensions of Mennonite nonconformity. The first "sifting" that is needed is that between convinced and unconvinced members.

5. Convinced advocates of the Anabaptist-Mennonite vision will find significant points at which the surrounding society and their own church life fall short of faithfulness to that vision. Our Lord's promise of the guidance of the Spirit, given basically to the Christian fellowship, obligates us to approach every such judgment with the assumption that new ways can be found which will enable Christians to fulfill more faithfully their mission. Both the conviction that any problem has an answer and the assumption that problems must be worked at in community are essential traits of the believers' church vision. Whether such migrating individuals are "followed" by denominational home agencies or not, their concern and that of the brotherhood will be that this process of discovery be a process of sharing rather than a matter of purely individual reactions or purely logical deductions.

6. In the process of transcultural "translation" there is no good reason for assuming that changes may be linguistic but not doctrinal, that they may change the time of meeting but not the type of meeting, that they may experiment with music but not with economics. If faith and culture are truly inseparable, then *the Christian and the Christian community should at every point be at the same time "relevant"* in a discovery of contemporary meaningful alternatives *and "irrelevant"* in the rejection of the ready-made standards and choices which its society offers.

7. What we are looking for is not a gradual and hesitant sloughing-off of traditional patterns of nonconformity to the world, maintaining just enough peculiarity to salve our guilty consciences; we are rather seeking and expecting to discover a newer and more truly relevant kind of nonconformity. The "sifting" mentality assumes that we want to become more like the world, but not too much so. Yet it is a total misunderstanding of the meaning of Christian discipleship to feel that it can be satisfied with a tolerable mid-point on the scale between contemporary conformity and obsolete nonconformity. The assumption that the only way to be nonconformed is to be out of date is itself an expression of worldliness.

LIGHT in the asphalt jungle

By Vincent Harding

I had a dream.
And I saw a city,
A city that rose up out of the crust of the earth.
And its streets were paved with asphalt,
And a river of dirty water ran down along its curbs.
I saw a city
And its people knew no hope.
They were chased and herded from place to place
by the churning jaws of bulldozers.
They were closed up in the anonymous cubicles
of great brick prisons called housing projects.
They were forced out of work by the fearsome
machines,
And by the sparseness of their learning.
They were torn into many pieces by the hostile angers
of racial fears and guilt and prejudice.
Their workers were exploited.
Their children and teen-agers had no parks to play in,
No pools to swim in,
No space in crowded rooms to learn in,
No hopes to dream in.
And the people knew no hope.

Their bosses underpaid them.
Their landlords overcharged them.
Their welfare workers despised them.
Their churches deserted them.
And all of life in the city seemed dark and wild,
like a jungle,
A jungle lined with asphalt.
And the people sat in darkness.

II

I had a dream.
And I saw a city,
A city clothed in neon-lighted darkness.
And I heard men talking.
And I looked at them.
Across their chests in large, golden letters—written by their own hands—
Across their chests were written the words:
"I am a Christian."
And the Christians looked at the city and said:
"How terrible . . . How terrible . . . How terrible."
And the Christians looked at the city and said:
"That is no place to live,
But some of our people have wandered there,
And we must go and rescue them.
We must go and gather them, like huddled sheep into a fold;
And we will call it A City Church."

So they built their church.
And the people came,
And they walked past all the weary, broken, exploited, dying men who lined the city's streets.
Year after year they walked past,
Wearing their signs: "I am a Christian."

Then one day the people in the church said:
"This neighborhood is too bad for good Christians.
Let us go to the suburbs where God dwells,
and build a church there.
And one by one they walked away, past all the weary, broken, exploited, dying men.
They walked fast,
And did not hear a voice that said: ". . . the least of these . . . the least of these. . . ."
And they walked by, and they went out, and they built a church.
And the church was high and lifted up,
and it even had a cross.
But the church was hollow,
And the people were hollow,
And their hearts (their hearts?) were hard as the asphalt streets of the jungle.

III

And just as the night seemed darkest,
I had another dream.
I dreamed I saw young men walking,
Walking into the heart of the city, into the depths of the darkness.
They had no signs, except their lives.
And they walked into the heart of the darkness and said:
"Let us live here, and work for light."
They said, "Let us live here and help the rootless find a root for their lives.
Let us live here, and help the nameless find their names."
They said, "Let us live here, and walk with the jobless until they find work.
Let us live here, and sit in the landlord's office
until he gives more heat
and charges less rent."
They said, "Let us live here,
and throw open the doors of this deserted church to all the people of every race and class,
Let us work with them to find the reconciliation God has brought."
And they said, "Let us walk the asphalt streets with the young people, sharing their lives,
learning their language,

playing their sidewalk, backyard games,
knowing the agonies of their isolation."
And they said, "Let us live here, and minister to as many men as God gives us grace.
Let us live here,
And die here, with our brothers of the jungle,
Sharing their apartments and their pains."

And the people saw them,
And someone asked who they were,
And few really knew—
They had no signs—
But someone said he thought they might be Christians,
And this was hard to believe,
but the people smiled;
And a little light began to shine
in the heart of the asphalt jungle.

IV

Then in my dream I saw the young men,
I saw the young men and women,
Those who worked in the city called Chicago,
Cleveland,
Washington,
Atlanta,
And they were weary,
And the job was more than they could bear alone,
And I saw them turn,
turn and look for help,
And I heard them call:
"Come and help us,
Come and share this joyful agony, joyful agony,
Come as brothers in the task,
Come and live and work with us,
Teachers for the crowded schools,
Doctors for the overflowing clinics,
Social workers for the fragmented families,
Nurses for the bulging wards,
Pastors for the yearning flocks,
Workers for the fighting gangs,
Christians.
Christians who will come and live here,
Here in the heart of the darkness,
Who will live here and love here
that a light might shine for all.
Come."

I heard them call,
And I saw the good Christians across the country,
And their answers tore out my heart.
Some said, "There isn't enough money there."
Some said, "It's too bad there. I couldn't raise children."
Some said, "I'm going into foreign missions, where things aren't quite so dark."
Some said, "The suburbs are so nice."
Some said, "But I like it here on the farm."
Some said,
Some said . . .
And one by one they turned their backs
and began to walk away.

At this moment my dream was shattered
by the sound of a great and mighty whisper,
almost a pleading sound;
And a voice said:
"Come, help me, for I am hungry in the darkness."
And a voice said:
"Come, help me, for I am thirsty in the darkness."
And a voice said:
"Come, help me, for I am a stranger in this asphalt jungle."
And a voice said, "Come, help me,
for I have been stripped naked,
naked of all legal rights and protection of the law,
simply because I am black in the darkness."
And a voice said:
"Come, help me, for my heart is sick with hopelessness and fear in the darkness."
And a voice said:
"Come live with me in the prison of my segregated community, and we will break down the walls together."

And the voices were many,
And the voice was one,
And the Christians knew whose voice it was.
And they turned
And their faces were etched with the agonies of decision.
And the dream ended.
But the voice remains,
And the choice remains,
And the city still yearns for light.
And the King who lives with the least of his brothers
in the asphalt jungle
yearns for us.

STRATEGY QUESTIONS FOR THE MENNONITE CHURCH IN THE CITY

By Nelson E. Kauffman

THE DICTIONARY DEFINITION of strategy is "The science and art of employing the armed strength of a belligerent to serve the objects of war—the science and art of command exercised to meet the enemy under advantageous conditions." Strategy then seems to be a word used largely in military combat. Our use of it in discussing the development and growth of the Mennonite church in the city would indicate that we assume a real struggle against opposing forces and that we may concern ourselves with the best techniques of overcoming these forces arrayed against us, as well as in accomplishing our ultimate purpose.

Strategy then would imply clear objectives, an awareness of the enemy and his territory, the resources available to overcome him, and the limits of the program of activity employed. The use of a strategy assumes a strategist, who is competent as well as experienced. In the book of Acts the strategist behind the scenes and very active in deploying his resources is the Holy Spirit. We believe he holds the same position today, and any effective strategy emerges from him. The strategy questions troubling us are neither new nor troublesome to him. It shall be our purpose to learn from and follow him, as we think through the strategy questions of our time.

Objectives and Strategy of Church Building

It is true as well as tragic that many of our congregations have no clear objectives upon which program is built and administered. No real program strategy for a church in the city is possible unless it is first clear, what kind of a church and congregation is to be built. We must first ask the theological questions—What is the essence of the Church? What is the minimum requirement for a church, how many of what kind of people, who relate to each other in what ways?

Our strategy in the past has often been, based upon the assumption that we begin with education of children in Sunday school or summer Bible school, and therefore we must secure some facility or real estate, around which to work, and success is determined by the numbers which will come to the building. If only few come out to the meetings, progress is poor, if many attend the public meetings, success is gratifying. The temptation is to develop statistical reports that stretch truth, and use every possible strategy to secure numbers.

Our image of a church in the city is formed by what we have experienced in the past in our rural and/or small town congregations. We use the strategy with which we were familiar, and are less than gratified and elated with the results. The disappointments in our results are almost inevitable because the objectives are inadequate as well as unclear. Our first strategy question, therefore is this, what is our purpose in the

city? The clarification of purposes and goals for the Mennonite church in the city is an absolute necessity.

Some of the questions which must be answered are the following. Are we planning a people's church where the pastor is a director of a group of workers, or is it to be a church which hires a pastor to serve it and do most of its work? Is the church to be a group of good people giving a message down to a lower needy class, or is it to be a group of sinners saved, sharing with unsaved sinners how Christ saves sinners? Is it to be a church reaching out to and through children, or a church making its primary contact on the adult level, while not neglecting children? Is the church to be for Mennonites only or for Mennonites also? Can it be a real Mennonite church if we do not have in it a strong element of Mennonite background people? The answer to these questions will enable a congregation to develop a strategy.

The Field or Community and Strategy

Strategy questions are inevitably related to the type of city, community, and people in which the church is to be built. Our Lord as well as the apostles adapted the strategy used to the people to be reached. In some cases Jesus went to the people, in other cases the people came to him. When he wanted to reach Jews he went to the synagogues. When he wanted to reach publicans and sinners he accepted invitations to their dinner parties and earned the stigmatized title of "glutton" and "wine bibber."

When Paul wanted to meet Jews he used the same strategy as Jesus, he went to their synagogue. When he turned to Gentiles he changed his strategy and went to the market places, and to the assembly of philosophers on Mars Hill. In both cases his strategy was meeting people on their grounds. He did not expect them to come to him.

Will we in building a church in the city need to change our strategy, and do more going to people? We must realize that they will likely not come to us, until we have gone to them enough to establish acquaintanceship and confidence! To what extent do, and in the future, will the weekend habits of people affect our strategy? Is it possible to have drive-in church services, as some now do, or is this strategy of reaching people completely incongruous with biblical and Anabaptist-Mennonite concept of church?

May we need to develop a mealtime ministry, when we preach, teach, worship and pray, as two or three meet at lunch, and have encounter with God and each other? Will our concept of church need to involve every fellow member and brother reaching the world in witness in this or similar weekday encounter, and the use of the Lord's Day for congregational, renewal, for another week of witness evangelism? May the day be past to expect the meeting house to hold as large and inclusive place in church life as in the past? May the meeting place need to be less expensive and spacious, if church is to develop a strategy that puts greater emphasis on individual witness, teaching of the Scriptures in the home, with less emphasis on the group meeting, and organized education, done in a central facility on Sunday?

Strategy and Our Resources

It is quite easy in our day to develop a strategy of church building that demands resources both of personnel, money, and time which are beyond our present abilities or attainments. Here strategy questions must be realistic with our resources, or we will suffer frustrations. Some very perplexing questions face us.

To what extent have we made, or must we make our church building program dependent upon real estate we do not have and cannot afford to buy? To what extent must our strategy of church building follow the traditional line of Roman Catholic and Protestant emphasis on architecture and building, and to what extent may we be able to use the techniques of the sects, such as Jehovah's Witnesses? Must our meeting houses, if we decide they are essential to church building, be of the type, shape, etc., that is traditional and expensive? These questions are not easy and any break from the traditional strategy pattern may entail both faith and suffering.

There seems to be a shortage of personnel trained and able, to meet our requirement. To what extent are our standards for leadership standing in the way of progress in church building? Might it be possible that we are developing a strategy of providing personnel that is built upon an institutionalized concept of the church which will break down by its own requirements and weight? Could we develop a strategy of training leaders for church building by building churches as well as, or in addition to, training them in our institutions? If our requirements for receiving training are greater than potential leaders can meet, could there possibly be a strategy developed which could move forward with church building with what we have and where we are? May there be ways of utilizing team or group leadership, as well as trained professional individuals? Here again our concept of church is involved deeply.

In this day of tight budgets it is easy to tailor every vision of opportunity and responsibility to the money available. There is no thought in mind that funds are not necessary and often determinative. But is it not possible that church building has become enslaved to a subtile materialistic mentality, that attempts to measure every human endeavor in terms of dollars? Is there an area of possibility of developing a church building strategy somewhere between the techniques Paul used, and that which require great sums before

even planning can be done, let alone initiation of a project? We may need to develop more skill to show us what things we can do without, and how much we can do with what we have.

We believe there may be some value in brain storming, but the Lord of the Harvest must be involved in any camparable activity that has as its goal church building. But have we really explored and tried methods which at first may seem impractical, before we say "it can't be done"? There are those we know we cannot use, which other groups can and do. But have we really explored the possibilities as we should?

Strategy and Church Organization

Strategy questions are usually resolved in the light of policy decisions and these are, according to our church structures, the responsibility of those in positions of ecclesiastical authority, who are often quite removed from the urban church building program of the denomination. Because of this there is often misunderstanding, if not tension, between the church builders and the policy makers. The policy makers and administrators feel called to and responsible for maintaining the faith and practice of the group, and the church builders often are not really at variance with the standards, but propose to work at and arrive at them in a way which seems to the administrators to threaten their standards.

This conflict is as old as the first missionary movement which built churches in new territory. While the strategy used then may not be intended to be normative it can at least be instructive.

Could not a strategy of church building be developed in which those who carry chief responsibility for building new urban churches also be involved in policy and practice decisions? If there is danger of bias on one side, might it not be equally true on the other side also? Should not the purpose of the brotherhood be closely related to and concerned with both, the faith and the new church? We would no more want to build new churches and lose the faith, than to keep the faith but build no new churches. Can we use a strategy that permits real autonomy for new congregations, and retain the confidence of "those over us in the Lord"? To what extent can administrators trust the Lord of the Church to direct his church or the members of a new church to obey their Lord?

It is of great interest and significance to those carrying major responsibility in building new churches in urban centers today, that in New Testament times, the chief policy maker for new churches was at the same time the chief spirit active in building those new churches. When those leaders in the oldest churches endeavored to set the policies for admission for new members in new churches, there was difficulty not easily resolved. Should not our strategy be reviewed in the light of the basic principles set forth on this matter in the Book of Acts? Was not the strategy which developed influenced by the Holy Spirit through evidence that the policy applied was producing results in the lives of people and that God was working through the policies being used?

Another strategy question we face in building urban churches today is the question of how to relate to other Christian groups and their congregations. To what extent should our strategy envision building strong denominational congregations? This obviously depends again upon the policies of our brotherhood. Assuming that our aim is to build Mennonite congregations, would a strategy of cooperation with other groups, endanger the realization of this aim? Is a strategy of strong denominational emphasis, inconsistent with a strategy that recognizes other denominations as Christian, encourages their members to loyalty to their church, yet seeks to cooperate and/or share with them in common community goals? Should we use a strategy that seeks to divide and conquer others, or use one that assumes that strong congregations of various evangelical denominations in an area really strengthen each other? Should we use a strategy that assumes that we really are the only true church, and that cooperation with any other is compromise and therefore dangerous?

In Summary

After all that may be said on the various aspects of strategy, the fact remains that the one most significant question by far is, "What is the objective of the endeavor?" It is not enough for one generation or leader to make a decision. Each church builder of each generation must, not once, but constantly review, restate, and sharpen his objectives or he will be operating a program with little or no strategy direction. He may intensify his efforts to compensate for his lack of sense of direction and so exercise a strategy of desperation.

The objectives and strategy questions to be effective must be shared by the congregation. If this is to be realized, the group participating in church building must be involved in arriving at decisions which determine objectives and the consequent strategy. These principles of operation, while they may delay action, emerge from the concept of the church as an organism, a body of which Christ is the head, and of which all of us in the body are members one of another.

The April and July 1964 issues of *Mennonite Life* will be devoted to a study of the nature, authority, and interpretation of the Bible. The contributors are all Mennonites writing for Mennonites. It is hoped that these two issues can be used as a manual on the Bible by pastors, Sunday school teachers, and youth group leaders.

From Farm to City

The quest for equilibrium in an established sect: A study of social change in the General Conference Mennonite Church.
(A doctoral dissertation submitted to the Graduate School of Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, June, 1962, published in multilith form by the author).

It is highly appropriate to include a review of Leland Harder's dissertation in this issue devoted to the theme of the Mennonite church in the city. Harder's interest in the urban Mennonite church is reflected in numerous articles and speeches, in his work with the Committee on City Churches of the General Conference, and particularly in his formative guidance of the newsletter "The Mennonite Church in the City." One might well expect that his scholarly research would make a further contribution to the self-understanding of the chursh as it seeks to be faithful to its calling in a setting dominated by the shift from rural to urban life.

We are not disappointed in this expectation. All too often academic theses are conceived and executed in an atmosphere that smacks of conspiracy, in which esoteric vocabulary and methodology, even the theme itself, limit the potential usefulness of the research to a few specialists. Not so in this case. Harder moves with ease in the conceptual framework of the sociology of religion, yet his work offers a wealth of information and suggestion for the practical churchman as well as the professional scholar. In this review, our concern is to set forth the main lines of Harder's argument, with an eye for its contribution to the discussion of urban church work.

The study skillfully incorporates a massive body of empirical data into a larger historical and theoretical framework. The data came from an extensive 1960 survey of the membership of the General Conference Mennonite Church (hereafter GCMC), with returns comprising 68.8 percent of the congregations and 79.2 percent of the North American membership. (Aspects of social change are documented through comparison with the S. F. Pannabecker survey in 1943 with Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University). The theoretical orientation for the dissertation has its roots in the classic church-sect typology employed in the sociology of religion, with particular reference to the work of Max Weber, Ernst Troeltsch, H. Richard Niebuhr, and J. Milton Yinger. (In the preface, Harder explains that "sect" is not a derogatory but a technical term; in fact, as Troeltsch used it, it is complimentary to historic Mennonite self-understanding.)

Harder begins his theoretical formulation with a suggestive grouping of church-type and sect-type characteristics under three headings (orientation of values, system of ethics, basis of organization). He then points to the problems of studying mobility on the church-sect continuum, and of accounting for social change in a given sect, if one is limited to the usual conceptualizations. In order to get beyond this level of analysis, Harder proposes to define the sect as:

> A *voluntary* religious group whose reasons for existence are *separation* from the ethical compromises found in the secular society and its institutional churches, and the establishment of its own uncompromised group of believers. The *voluntary* dimension of this definition tends to give the sect a *conversionist* character as it seeks to propagate its principles among all men, thereby altering them for membership in the body of believers. The *separatist* dimension tends to give the sect an *avoidance* character as it seeks to divorce itself from worldly evils. In their subsequent development, sects tend to sacrifice one of these dimensions in the preservation of the other (page 334, underlining inserted).

The concept of "structural disequilibrium," basic to the development of the thesis, is expressed in this tension between voluntarism and separatism. Put in other terms, there is a precarious balance between the stated aims of "mission in the world" and "opposition to the world." If evangelism declines, the sect tends to become an isolated folk society, perpetuating itself only by reproduction. If the note of dissent to the world weakens, the sect tends to become assimilated in the larger society.

Harder views the continuing tension between two basic norms as an important source of social change in the sect. He sets the conception of "structural change," which focuses on change-initiating factors within the group itself, over against the more generally accepted theory of "cultural change." This latter view emphasizes external factors—contact with the environment—as determinative in producing change. The strictly external frame of reference led to the concept of the "sect-cycle": a sect originates in a creative movement of protest, but becomes gradually reassimilated into the society from which it emerged.

Previous studies of social change in the GCMC (Harder reviews the studies by Robert Friedmann, E. G. Kaufman, and C. F. Pannabecker) have used the "culture contact" theory, with only passing potice to the potential for change found in tensions within the group itself. While allowing that many aspects of Mennonite social change can indeed be accounted for by processes of accommodation to environmental influence, Harder seeks to demonstrate the usefulness of the theory of structural disequilibrium in explaining important developments in Mennonite history. This theory provides the interpretative theme for the three central chapters (III, IV, V) of the study, dealing with historical and theological aspects of the Mennonite situation: the 16th century origins of the sect, the contemporary tension between norms and practices, and the formative themes in GCMC history.

In his treatment of the Anabaptist period, Harder concentrates on the problem of legitimation of authority and social organization as he relates the "routinization of charisma" (Max Weber) process to the theory of structural disequilibrium. He suggests that as the sect deals with the organizational problems of succession, subsistence, and reproduction, latent contradictory tendencies come to the fore. This chapter owes much to Paul Peachey's research ("Anabaptism and Church Organization," *MQR*, July, 1956, pp. 213-28), but Harder's sociological analysis goes beyond the inadequate contrast of "essence" and "form" in conceptualizing the questions of church organization.

This chapter also introduces the crucial problem of the relation between Anabaptist-Mennonites and the rural environment. Why did a movement so decidedly urban and heterogeneous at birth so quickly turn rural and homo-

geneous? Was this shift an historical accident—the consequence of merciless persecution—or was it due to the inherent logic of the sectarian position? Harder quotes Paul Peachey, who observes that Christianity as a founded religion is in conflict with the solidarity of the natural community, and therefore "if the genius of Anabaptism is the creation and perpetuation of the distinct religious community, and is thus involved in social heterogeneity, then the urban environment provides a more congenial setting for a vital Anabaptism than does the rural." ("Early Anabaptists and Urbanism," *Proceedings of the Tenth Conference on Mennonite Educational and Cultural Problems,* 1955, p. 82.)

Although it seems clear that persecution rather than deliberate intention led to the ruralization of the early movement, the change was accepted and even defended in later generations. This is an example of the contradiction between norms and practices, or in some cases the conflict of norms, which Harder discusses in Chapter V. Eight postulates illustrate the tension, with the original norm in each case tending to be qualified in actual practice, and the aberration justified by appeal to other norms. For example, voluntary membership tends to be replaced by the ethnic community, evangelism by indoctrination, brotherhood by hierarchy and inequality, prophetic witness by quietism.

In the next chapter, the Oberholtzer schism, the founding of the GCMC, and its subsequent history are reviewed in light of the question: Do these instances of change reflect uncritical accommodation to the "world" or are they efforts to restore the lost equilibrium between norms and practice, between voluntarism and separatism? Without denying important environmental influence, Harder compiles evidence for the latter interpretation, that is, acculturation alone cannot explain what is to a large extent the "recovery of the Anabaptist vision."

Basic to the whole study is an analysis of the differing concepts of "separation from the world." Does it mean spatial *isolation* (Hutterite or Russian Mennonite communities), mechanical *insulation* (distinctive dress or language), or is it primarily a matter of *ethical norms?* Although the biblical basis for separation suggests that it is essentially an ethical doctrine, the historic Mennonite tendency has been toward geographic isolation, with the consequent shift from a voluntary religious group to ethnic communities. Harder calls for distinguishing *dissent*—consistent and serious protestation demanding serious social interaction with the world—from *seclusion*—withdrawal both geographically and socially. Since there can be no mission to the world (voluntarism) without social interaction, dissent (ethical separation) is the only possibility of maintaining equilibrium.

Harder notes that some sectarian groups have moved into mission and sacrificed dissent; others have abandoned mission in favor of seclusion. He concludes that although both these tendencies are present in the history of the GCMC, the "main course has been to affirm both facets [mission and dissent] and to attempt to transpose the dilemma by a conscious, self-critical, and planned approach to social change" (p. 219). (Harder restates these leading themes in "Tension in the General Conference," *The Mennonite,* March 5, 1963.)

It is possible only to glance at the wealth of data presented in chapters VI, VII, and VIII. The demographic survey of the GCMC membership, with particular reference to social status, documents the ethnic homogeneity, the "upward mobility," and the comparatively rural base of the membership. We learn that 15.2 percent of the 1950 membership terminated in the decade 1950-60, and that these ex-members tend to be of higher social standing (occupation and education) than the membership average. Harder asks to what extent cultural contact (secularization) or structural disequilibrium (religious frustration) account for these terminations, but his data do not permit any definite answer.

Chapter VIII uses the 1943 and 1960 surveys to index social change. Both cultural and structural aspects are noted. In the 17-year period, the proportion of members supported by farming decreased from 54.1 percent to 30.8 percent. The proportion of members recruited from non-Mennonite parentage increased from 6.1 percent to 11.5 percent. Use of the German language in worship services is almost completely extinct, except for the Canadian Conference. The percent of drafted members in alternative service increased from 1944 (27.4) to 1960 (43.7). Thus, although there is significant change due primarily to acculturation (the rural to urban shift), there is also evidence for progress in both mission and ethical dissent.

The voluntarism/separatism disequilibrium is illustrated by a comparison of the proportion of members recruited from non-Mennonite parentage and the proportion of conscripted members registered as conscientious objectors; when ranked by regional conferences, there is an inverse correlation. Further, in comparing rural and urban churches, it appears that "the *more* urban a Mennonite congregation, the *less* likely a member to register as a war dissenter; but the *more* urban a Mennonite congregation, the *more* likely it is to recruit members from the non-Mennonite world" (329-30). Harder notes, however, that in overall terms the GCMC has not lost ground in faithfulness to the two norms of evangelism and nonresistance; they have been inculcated with increased vigor since World War II.

Has Harder proved his thesis? Although too often he strains to interpret ambiguous evidence in favor of the structural rather than the cultural theory of change, he has demonstrated that it is no longer possible to interpret the dynamics of the GCMC solely in terms of the "sect-cycle." Future studies of sects interpreted by structural disequilibrium will need to refine the dimensions and levels of specificity; as Yinger and Nottingham point out, *all* religious organizations that seek to influence behavior face the dilemma of discipline and expansion.

With these themes from Harder's study before us, allow me to suggest some implications for contemporary mission strategy. Who responds to Mennonite evangelism, and why? If John A. Hostetler's study of (Old) Mennonite evangelism is comparable, social factors figure most prominently as reasons for joining—proximity to church, friendships with members, intermarriage. Specifically sectarian religious concerns are infrequently mentioned. It may be assumed that these responses are largely the result of a "parish" approach to evangelism, and that the GCMC efforts follow the same pattern.

But if voluntarism and ethical separatism are basic criteria, congregations should logically be "gathered" rather than "community" churches. That is, converts should respond not simply because they live close by and enjoy the singing, but because they have embraced a rigorous conception of Christianity.

Several postulates for sectarian strategy from this analysis:

1. The sect, as pure religious community, has *no geographical parish.*

2. The evangelistic call must include *explicit commitment* to discipline, brotherhood, and nonresistance.

3. If separation is ethical rather than spatial or mechanical, there must be effective *discipline*—a modern equivalent of the *ban.* (Although he quotes an Anabaptist confession which makes the ban constitutive for church order (p. 74), Harder apparently overlooks its necessary correlation with ethical separatism.)

Adherence to these principles would no doubt eliminate the discrepancy between evangelism and nonresistance noted above. It would probably also mean that growth would decline; even the membership of one's children could no longer be taken for granted. In the religious marketplace of a pluralistic society, the Mennonite church would function as the haven for the highly committed disciple; those less seriously concerned would worship elsewhere.

These are "hard sayings"; they may raise more problems than they solve. Is the full biblical concepts of the church adequately expressed in these sectarian terms? Particularly in a time of ecumenical awareness, is there no distinction between "separation from the world" and "separation from other Christians"? Is meaningful family life possible with the rigid separation of natural and religious communities? Can the distinctively religious community be realized within the usual forms of the congregation?

We may be confident that Leland Harder will not allow us to ignore such questions as we share in the church's continuing quest for faithfulness in its mission.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY *J. Richard Burkholder*

The Church in the City

The New Creation as Metropolis by Gibson Winter. New York: Macmillan Company, 1963, 152 pp., $3.95.
The Church in the City by Paul Peachey. Newton: Faith and Life Press, 1963, 115 pp., $1.95.

These two authors are concerned about the same things. There are differences, to be sure: Winter presents a design for the Church's task in an urban world without respect to denomination; Peachey is speaking primarily to Mennonites under the auspices of the Institute of Mennonite Studies at Mennonite Biblical Seminary. Winter reflects a sacramentarian view of today's urban world as the means of divine creation; Peachey reflects an Anabaptist tension beteween "in the world" and "not of the world" motifs. Winter is building on his prior writings on the subject, particularly his book, *The Suburban Captivity of the Churches;* Peachey comes to the subject as a novice who had to begin by searching for "a frame of reference" (p. 9). In view of these variances, the parallels are even more remarkable, as indicated by the following quotations arranged according to their common themes:

METROPOLIS IN THE WILL OF GOD—

Winter: "Metropolis is the possibility of a unified human society arising from the chaos of our massive, urbanized areas. Metropolis is the mother city, the nurturing totality of interdependent regions and municipalities where children may find a climate conducive to growth, where education may enrich life as well as capacities, where men and women may have opportunity to participate as members and receive their rewards, and where advantages may be distributed with equity" (pp. 2-3).
Peachey: "In many respects, the Hebrew world is a pastoral world. . . . Despite this seeming rural bias, however, human history, in the larger perspective of biblical eschatology, moves from the garden to the city, from Eden to the New Jerusalem. . . . The symbol of fulfillment is the new city rather than the restored garden" (pp. 19-21).

THE DRAG OF CONSERVATISM IN THE FACE OF METROPOLIS

Winter: "The inherent conservatism of religious institutions casts them too readily in a reactionary role. The task of discerning the world in the making, appraising the divine intention within this process and invoking the claims of the Kingdom in the new society are thus a central work of the Church's mission in our time" (p. 2).
Peachey: "In the final analysis the error of the churches is seen to be, not in the mistaken vision of a Christian culture, but rather in the expectancy that that culture would be rural at a time when history has entered an urban phase. The verdict of failure, thus, is pronounced on the churches because they have failed to exercise the same formative power in the new urban culture as they are thought to have exercised in rural America" (p. 51).

THE CHURCH'S CAPTIVITY TO MIDDLE-CLASS SUBURBIA—

Winter: "We verge now on the creation of two cultures in the metropolitan areas: a culture on the periphery which enjoys affluence and privilege; a culture in the central city which suffers discrimination, underemployment and deprivation" (p. 5). "Christian preoccupation with the private world of suburbia is not a demographic accident but an explicit apostasy. Residential Christianity is the acme of secularism, the rejection of man's responsibility for mankind in history" (pp. 47-8).
Peachey: "Today a tension has arisen . . . between what might be called the ecclesiology of the inner city and the ecclesiology of the suburb. The former represents 'a theology of failure'; the latter, 'a theology of success'" (p. 89). "Suburbia may well become a major concern for Mennonite churches. . . . Suburbia is the most likely setting for the urbanization of rural Mennonites. But what is Christian discipleship in suburbia?" (p. 37).

AN IMAGE OF CHRISTIANITY AS LAY MINISTRY—

Winter: "The emergence of the laity as the ministering center of Christianity is the creative response of Christianity to this social and cultural estrangement. The institutional crisis may be the moment of birth for a new form of Western Christianity—a new image of the Church—the servanthood of the laity" (p. 7). "A laity who participate in the

processes of society and develop theological sensitivity form the only possible Church in a mass society." (p. 10).
Peachey: "By definition, Mennonites form a 'lay' pattern of Christianity. This means not primarily the mere absence of priestly caste, but a fundamental notion of Christian life and community. Christianity . . . is not an adjunct to life, serviced by a sacramental institution of a professional elite. Rather, the Christian community or congregation is the matrix of life itself, embracing the whole existence of every member" (p. 102).

THE ENTRENCHMENT OF THE PROFESSIONAL MINISTRY—
Winter: "The shift in the character of ministry can be dramatized thus: the ministry is usually conceived today as the work of clergymen with auxiliary aids among the laity; ministry in the servant Church is the work of laity in the world with auxiliary help from theological specialists. At present, men prepare for the role of religious specialist as though they were to be *the ministers* of the church. At every step of their preparation from the initial struggle to share in a private language up to the donning of special clothes or a peculiar liquidity of intonation, the religious specialist is separated from the historical struggle of the world" (pp. 93-4).
Peachey: "It can be said, without qualification, I believe, that the professionally religious person, whether administrator, priest (including pastor), or scholar, stands always in the most precarious and ambiguous position of all the members in the church. Biblically, every member of the body receives his gift. That a gift might entail service of a full-time nature, requiring financial support by other members, is recognized as a possibility, but is regarded nonetheless, as far as I can see, as the exception. It is certainly not a matter of programed expectancy that can be registered on the job market" (p. 91).

GOD'S WORK IS IN THE WORLD—
Winter: "The Church is no longer an institutional structure of salvation alongside the worldly structures of restraint. The Church is that community within the worldly structures of restraint. The Church is that community within the worldly structures of historical responsibility which recognizes and acknowledges God's gracious work for all mankind" (p. 55).
Peachey: "The vigor of Anabaptism lay not, as its enemies or its adherents in later quiescent periods supposed, in withdrawal from the world, but in a radical acceptance of the thrust of redemption as reordering the total existence in the world" (p. 98).

THE CALL FOR NEW FORMS OF THE CHURCH—
Winter: "This new world of metropolis calls for new forms of the Church if there is to be a mission to the metropolitan world" (p. v). "Once the Church accepts her calling to be a living testimony of the Spirit in the world, she has to forego a safe anchorage in the cultic body or confessional assembly" (p. 66). "This is her mission and opportunity in the emerging metropolis, but she cannot belong to this future and share in this ministry without the loss of her traditional structures and their false security" (p. 145).
Peachey: "Should a frontier faith that could pioneer in the delta of the Vistula, the steppes of Russia, or more primarily on the spiritual frontiers of Christendom, suddenly be powerless on the frontiers of the metropolis? Is it not a problem of shaking off our own habits and stereotypes—as well as those that press upon us from the dominant Catholic and Protestant traditions—thereby achieving the freedom to go the new way that the church must go in the modern city? (p. 100).

This reviewer found himself concurring with most of the socio-ecclesiastical assertions of these two authors. Unfortunately the major source of this sympathetic reaction is a sense of frustration and ambiguity. As a teacher in a denominational seminary, I am painfully aware of the difficulty of defining "ministry" in traditional terms, especially when the very nature of the "church" itself is scarcely seen clearly. Must the residential church give up its present structure if it is to be transformed? Frankly, I don't know.

Such frustration is also the source of my biggest disappointments with these books, of which there are chiefly two. The first concerns the problem of the Christian in the world. Winter insists that human interdependence being total, Christians have to take total responsibility for transforming the corrupt urban structures into the new creation as metropolis. His sacramentarian conception of world is not conducive to posing the ethical question, "What can Christians do?" It is clear that any hesitation on theological grounds to "baptize" any portion of the societal structure would be suspect by him, even though he talks about "servanthood" rather than about "baptizing." Peachey is more Anabaptist at this point in his appeal for a "living nonconformity," (p. 99), but he is too preoccupied with purging our Mennonite rural bias to spell it out in terms that make sense in a urban world.

The biggest disappointment with these two books has to do with their major thrust: new forms of the church. An idyllic image of new forms is there, but how do we create such forms? Where can we find models for them? Winter points to such "foretastes" as lay academies, the small group movement, and "the field of personal, pastoral care" (pp. 85-6), but he fails *totally* to specify what it is in these renewal movements that is constitutive of the authentic Church. We can forgive him for his esoteric language from beginning to end, but we find it difficult to excuse his failure to bridge the chasm between his metropolitan Shangrila and the faithful plodding of innumerable servants in the residential churches which he condemns. In Peachey there are hardly any foretastes at all—little hint that perhaps in Denver or Minneapolis or Fort Wayne or Evanston, there are genuine clues of what the true Church is in our too conventional, born-that-way Mennonite churches. We can't really blame him for that since he had to begin somewhere, and it seemed best to him and the advisory committee to begin by constructing a frame of reference that seemed biblically and historically valid.

We thank these men, then, for pushing us, and pushing us *hard,* to test the validity of what we are doing by the standards of the "new creation" and the Anabaptist vision; but it seems fair now to ask of them one thing more: "Come over into Macedonia and help us."

MENNONITE BIBLICAL SEMINARY *Leland Harder*

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Epitaph

He stepped forward,
tousle headed, eager
to shoulder the burden.

Zeal burning,
too young to consider the costs,
propelled by the will to do,
he expended himself joyously
doing for his country.

Withholding nothing,
he entered the arena of struggle,
a hostile world.

Ambition wedded to high purpose,
he assumed the leadership
with an utter confidence
that astonished the nations.

Men asked: Is it arrogance?
Is Alcibiades riding again
to lead us to destruction?
Can we trust this youth?

But his confidence was not feigned,
nor was it self-induced;
it nourished on intimacy
with Providence.

The exercise of power,
the use of authority,
was to him an extension
of the will of Almighty God—
"And I John F. Kennedy
am his tool."

He stepped forward, a volunteer;
he took firm hold of the flag
the old warrior handed him.

He struggled up the hill of his destiny;
he planted that flag on the crest.

And those who observed it carefully
saw there a cross.

Jacob Suderman
Nov. 22, 1963