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COVER

Return of the Prodigal Son. Rembrandt, 1636.

BACK COVER

Christ Preaching. Rembrandt, about 1652.

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IN THIS ISSUE

The first articles are devoted to contemporary problems of a religious and cultural nature, which Mennonites as well as other concerned Christians face. The article presented by J. Harder at the World Conference deserves serious consideration. In our day it is imperative that Christians work together on tasks of such magnitude that none can do alone. The paper by Peter J. Klassen was also presented at the Conference. Echoes and responses to the last issue devoted to the Mennonite World Conference in Amsterdam can be found on page twenty-two. Our readers are invited to participate in the discussion of topics, statements, and problems presented on the pages of *Mennonite Life* by writing to the editors. ¶ The article by J. Lawrence Burkholder presents an effort to make suggestions on how the gospel and Christian life can be realized or made meaningful in a secular society. The paper was presented at the Believer's Conference in Louisville, Kentucky. J. G. Ewert is presented to the readers by James C. Juhnke as a person who expressed modern Christian and social concerns seventy years ago, when most of the Mennonites were living in a tradition-bound environment. Robert W. Regier reaches back to the Dutch Golden Age, showing how the Mennonites participated in the appreciation and creation of cultural values more than three hundred years ago, while John F. Kauffman, on the basis of a thorough study, relates what the attitude of Menno Simons was toward the government. ¶ In "Good Old Days" John B. Toews presents a document describing life during the dreadful pioneer conditions in Russia, while Gerhard Wiens reminisces in a poetic Low German about the days of the Russian Revolution fifty years ago. Elaine Sommers Rich introduces a Japanese Mennonite poet to the readers. Under "Books and Issues" another Japanese writer is being introduced whose book on the practice of the "community of goods" includes the first study of the Hutterites in the Japanese language. Special attention is called to the Dietrich Bonhoeffer books reviewed in this issue.

Overcoming Mennonite Group Egoism

By Johannes Harder

In sociology many studies have been made pertaining to "groups" and "sects." A group exists because of a certain "in-feeling" and always consists of only a portion of society. The group that sets itself apart from society aims to be "ideal." A characteristic of the group is its aggressiveness and its criticism of the society from which it has isolated itself.

The Group in Isolation

The group aims to maintain its isolation and uniqueness, if there are no other reasons, in order to perpetuate itself. Conditions in a progressive public life threaten the isolation of the group and compel it to maintain and defend its basis. With the loss of contact with public life and society at large the group perpetuates its life in a ghetto and ultimately is in danger of deteriorating.

The rule of certain norms and fixed principles which are perpetuated and practiced by the group can cause all original good insights to be petrified in legalism and the real life to be frozen. This is the negative result of traditionalism. The original commission and meaning of the group is then lost and the challenge and corrective for the society at large has failed. Under certain conditions the group not only repeats the mistakes of the surrounding society, but even cultivates bad practices.

From a Christian point of view, one can say that the group as a fellowship or church is possible only in relationship to the total society. She has good reasons to be orientated by the total society, especially if the separation and origin of the group has been forced upon it. The norm of the gospel is unity because Christ has called out and brought together lost and lonely people. By living and dying for them he was giving his life for the kingdom which consists of various provinces and groups as well as "many dwellings" but knows of no final separation from the realm of God.

The Sin of Separation

All separations without deep pain and real concern for the whole, are sin because they are divisive and segregationist. The message which calls *out* and *together* and challenges all to go out *into* the world does not excuse anyone even though there are many who are lost or have become backsliders. We Christians have been made responsible for their predicament. God has, without exception and unconditionally, made himself available to all. If discipleship is a call to surrender one's own will and self-assertion, what about the desire to be always right and self-righteous? That egoism which claims to have the whole truth bottled up in one group divides truth and tries to usurp it. Every "special" Christianity that sows suspicion and defames others is atheism in a Christian wrapper which is in conflict with God's gift and which breaks up the mercy of God into parcels.

A healthy Christian group depends much more on the total than is usually realized and admitted. The minority profits from the growth and decline of the others—that is those who are rebuked and avoided. The history of theology since the Reformation demonstrates that the fruit of honest labor was also reaped by those who had not sown. If this were not the case each group would sooner or later vanish or merely vegetate.

Consequently each group, small or large, must recognize that it exists only because there is a group at large. No one can be more than a member of the body of Christ. We are never closer to the intent of Christ than we are in our relationship to our brother. Regard-

less how peculiar our brother may be, he is beloved by God. The unconditional love of Christ does not make practiced love dependent on situations and convictions.

Among us as Mennonites

As Mennonites we ask ourselves how it happens that after four hundred years we continue to divide into smaller and smaller groups. Our history tells us more about divisions than about the common basis of our faith. Now that we are tolerated by the large and state churches, do we continue to express our uniqueness and negativism by separating from each other? Are we so ingrown and self-centered because of our separation from the large churches that we are blind to the world around us; and did we not do this at the expense of losing the challenge of the Great Commission given to us during the sixteenth century? How long did it take us to revive this interest?

It is not our concept of the church that is at fault. The epoch of the lay ministry now drawing to a close had, among many advantages and accomplishments, its problems. The theological isolation, a sour pietistic note and a watered-down rationalism and humanism have contributed their share. Are we startled by the "modern" theology because its preceding history has remained unknown to us? Is it not because of the lack of contact with the total Protestantism that we have become entangled in a web of divisions? I believe that many Mennonites of Germany would not have been led astray in the days of Hitler if they had known about the existence and the courage and struggle of the Confessing Church.

I ask whether we have suffered losses because we lost the grain of salt that is to maintain peace among us in our soup. Since we did not fellowship with those outside of the Mennonite fold it would have been to our advantage if we would have at least recognized the members of our family as "cousins," if not as brethren. The identification of Jesus with the poor and helpless goes far beyond the boldest ecumenical expectations.

"Family Church" or Living Church?

A "family church" is a contradiction in itself even though a group spirit can produce good qualities. In any event a room with all comforts is not a house and single children are not always well adjusted.

It is refreshing to know that the work in missions, for example in Africa, has broken the monotony of our ethnic composition. Even though this will cause some sociological and psychological problems and decisions it will also force us to face completely new situations and thus help us to catch up with developments we have missed.

Whoever forgets the prayer for unity is in danger of being caught in the wheel of the world around him and becoming a prey of mistrust and petty fights. We are called to live in a fellowship of love and to fulfill the Great Commission of the Lord given to his church and not to waste our time in legalistic interpretations and manipulations of the glad tidings. We will either stagnate in egocentric and stubborn principles and thus promote the process of decay in the world or we will be an open living stream of water which on its way through the desert of time supplies the living water to the thirsty. Wherever we stand we should investigate whether a look in the direction of the sons of greater freedom would not help us to leap over the petty little things which have delayed our progress.

Are we not disturbed by the fact that the original Anabaptist basic views such as the concept of the church, believers' baptism, nonresistance, etc., are now being seriously discussed by those who formerly persecuted us? Should not our contribution in this dialogue in which Protestantism seeks a reorientation be much more convincing and stronger than it is? This should particularly be the case because the former territorial and state churches have been forced to sever their relationship with secular states and a world that has become autonomous. As a historical free church we Mennonites should not only take notice of this fact but should be on advanced guard of this development and make our full contribution as our forefathers did many years ago.

We Are Servants of a Great King

To take this into serious consideration may be the first step in the direction of overcoming the group egoism under which we have suffered too long. He who is in the service of a great king will not sit in judgment over his "cousin" but be more modest and considerate than has been the case in the past. A little more awareness of our own history would help. To live without history leads to indifference and a lack of gratefulness toward God and what he has done for us. For the Christian there are no happenings which are insignificant or accidental.

We should be aware of the fact that a common basis has been created through the channels of the Mennonite Central Committee which needs to be developed and strengthened. This practical cooperation must become a bridge over all divisions which must lead to a togetherness in thinking, praying, thanking and living.

We can consider ourselves fortunate because the gospel does not permit the slightest fanaticism or group patriotism. The Lord embraces all in his arms. He is not forcing us but his love draws us together.

Let us be consoled by the fact that in the sight of God our walls are merely chalk lines which he constantly modifies by making the last ones the first ones, and the first ones the last ones.

We have no reasons to surrender as long as we are together, even if it is only for one week at the Mennonite World Conference, to talk to each other and to plan together and to praise the Lord together. This means, regardless of how divided we are, that we not only have, but also strive toward a fuller realization of one common future. It is in this future that a torn world expects our common help. For this reason we should clasp our hands tighter and move unitedly into this future.

I am far from prescribing recipes for brotherly cooperation. I would like to call attention to the fact that solutions (*Lösungen*) to our problems can come only from the true understanding of salvation (*Erlösung*). We are called not only to preach salvation but to live it. I conclude with a word by Hermann Kutter. "It does not matter what kind of pants the little boys wear when they go out. The only thing that is important is that they come home."

Editor's Note: This message was presented in the German language at the Mennonite World Conference in Amsterdam. This challenge as well as the one by Hans-Jürgen Goertz (October issue, pp. 156-58), deserve our full attention today and in the years to come. Responses from readers are welcome.

A People in Community—Contemporary Relevance

By J. Lawrence Burkholder

Our Approach to the problem of the contemporary relevance of the idea of community in the believers' church depends initially upon what we mean by the believers' church. The believers' church may be interpreted in minimal or maximal terms. It may be reduced to skin and bone by claiming for it only a few essential ideas of church order, or it may be freighted with implications until it takes on the proportions of a total point of view. We may put the options in the form of a question: Do we mean by the believers' church a way of conceiving church order (i.e., the practical life of the church), taking into consideration primarily structural and communal implications, saying as little as possible about the theological content of faith? Or, do we mean by the believers' church a comprehensive view of Christianity?

What is a Believers' Church?

There are advantages in both ways of thinking, depending upon whether one's purpose is normative or constructive. As a normative concept, it is wise to keep it minimal. For only a few ideas abstracted from the past can be transplanted into the present. It is rarely possible to recover entire systems. Even though one could argue for a wide association of ideas as may justify the term, "believers' church theology," it is impossible to recover that theology as a package. That is to say, although the believers' church in its classical expressions took the form of comprehensive views of Christianity, it would be an anachronistic impossibility to recover them in their totality. We must, therefore, be selective and give reasons for our selection.

If we hesitate to appropriate arbitrarily certain elements of an early view of the believers' church while discarding others, this is precisely what happens anyway in history. History has a way of loosening the believers' church from its original theological and cultural moorings and latching it onto other theological and cultural developments. Accordingly, the believers' church tradition has been influenced by nearly all of the major developments of Protestantism. Regardless of their original theological positions, the believers'

churches have been fundamentalist and liberal, pietistic and rationalistic, individualistic and communistic, dispensational and nonhistorical, pacifist and nonpacifist, segregationist and integrationist. The obvious implication is that as a matter of historical fact, the believers' church idea is not a self-sustaining idea, able to go it alone. It always becomes associated with other ideas in an infinite number of combinations, and for this we can be thankful, even though the possibility of compromise is very real.

If, then, we were to ask, what are the normative ideas of the believers' church, we would hold to such practical ideas as believers' baptism, covenantal ethics, discipline, congregational decision making by consensus, prophecy, spiritual discernment, and witness. But we would hesitate to list specific doctrines which may be said to belong inextricably to the concept of the believers' church. We would emphasize the openness of the believers' churches to theological development.

However, if our purpose is to be constructive as well as normative, i.e., to formulate a view of the believers' church which is relevant to contemporary life, then we must think fairly comprehensively and concretely. We cannot simply test the possibility of this or that essential of church order independently of theological content and cultural bias. We cannot simply say, "Let us baptize believers," regardless of what is believed, or "Let us make decisions," regardless of what is decided, or "Let us discern the truth," regardless of the kind of truth that is considered worthy of discernment. Therefore, we must take up, in conjunction with such normative marks as believers' baptism, discipline, etc., the whole question of the central problems around which the believers may gather today. If church people gather together today, it will be for a purpose. What is it?

The Gathering of the Church

It seems to me that people will gather together into a believers' church for two reasons: (1) to know how to respond as Christians to what is going on in the world, and (2) in order to understand how to cope with problems of personal authenticity and need for wholeness. There is, in other words, an external problem—the problem of the meaning of history, the eschatological problem, the problem of the future, and an internal problem variously stated as the problem of alienation, estrangement, and guilt. It seems to me that the believers' church is the church which may be in a position to meet these issues. In doing so, the believers' church would become a prophetic community and a healing community. The challenge to the so-called believers' churches today is to seek to bring these purposes into conceptual and functional unity.

It is tragic that the church has no adequate way by which the problem of the external world and the individual soul can be seen and worked at together. Congregations respond to one or the other but seldom to both. Congregations are split down the middle on whether the church's job is to bring in the Kingdom of God or to save souls. This is a split which also divides theologians between those who would save the city and those who would save the individual—between theologians who are sociologically or existentially oriented. We are all aware that those who would save the city not infrequently despise those who even acknowledge ontological concern. They are criticized as remnants of a tribal culture or of Bible belt piety. Sometimes they are described as sick people. Pietists, at the same time, deplore social action as secular outrage against established orders which should be left to the "divinely appointed" lawmakers. This is a split which has its counterpart in the younger, *avant-garde* generation—between the "Hippies" and the "Squares." The Hippies seek to heal their brokenness through the psychedelic trance, while the Squares make peace with the *status quo*. Another way of stating the cleavage is between those who value an "experienced faith," and those for whom religion is no more than to "do justice and love kindness."

Pietism and the Social Gospel

But this cannot go on. I believe that we have reached the theological and cultural moment for a new formulation of the faith which will join two major influences, heretofore considered antithetical. I refer to Pietism and the Social Gospel. Both Pietism and the Social Gospel have deeply influenced the believers' churches. They go further in describing the inner life and piety of the believers' churches than the idea of the believers' church itself. But instead of complementing each other, they have preyed upon one another. The current question, therefore, is whether what is intended by these interpretations of Christianity can be joined. They must be brought together if the church is to survive. They must be brought together because the Gospel is incomplete without them, and because modern culture poses problems for which the characteristic emphasis of Pietism and the Social Gospel are equally relevant. Pietism stands for authentic existence in the face of ontological and moral alienation, and the Social Gospel stands for justice at a time of revolutionary change. If the churches limit their task to one or the other, the Gospel is truncated, and the churches lose their point. Salvation is both individual and social. The churches must, therefore, find ways to express this fact both theologically and practically.

If Pietism and the Social Gospel are to be joined, they will both have to be reinterpreted in the process. Neither is helpful unless it can be reconstructed. Fortunately, they offer considerable latitude, since neither is a closed system of theology as such but an

approach to Christian life. What is intended by these ways of viewing Christianity is more important than the forms which they have taken. Pietism is concerned primarily with authentic existence. It has relied upon biblical symbols such as the new creation, perfection (completeness), forgiveness, sonship, and reconciliation. It has emphasized the necessity of right relationships to God and neighbor. Certain existentialist theologians have attempted to find modern psychological equivalents for the language of Pietism. Hence, Tillich speaks of the "new being," "reunion," "authentic existence," "the new reality," and "ultimate concern." Furthermore, Pietism has upheld the idea of "experienced faith." Religious experience is a necessary accompaniment of faith. The emotions and the will join the mind in affirming the Gospel. Emphasis upon the "heart strangely warmed" is one of the permanent contributions of Pietism, and when the church neglects this dimension, secular outlets are bound to appear.

The Social Gospel will also have to be reinterpreted. It will have to be purged of its tendency to obscure differences between the church and the world, its abhorrence of the cultic, its one-sided historicism, its superficial optimism, and its obsession with relevance. But having said this, the Social Gospel opens before us the possibility of social salvation and reinstates the hope of the Kingdom of God as God's universal reign. This is the avenue by which the churches join universal history, looking to the time when "God may be everything to everyone." The Social Gospel thus stands for the fact that it is the world which is to be saved, and that salvation history (*Heilsgeschichte*) and world history, man and the new man in Christ, the church and the world somehow participate in the same divine purpose.

The Groaning Creation

But you may ask whether it is possible to find a language and a piety which will bring into theological and practical expression all that is meant by personal and social salvation. At this point, I am emboldened by biblical precedence to suggest that it can be done. We would not insist that all that appears in the Bible represents a single point of view. Nevertheless, one may be encouraged by the way in which individual authors of the New Testament hold together different and far-ranging realities. A precedent for the synthesis of such inward and outward concerns as are represented by Pietism and the Social Gospel is found in Romans 8, where Paul links worship with the universe. Here Christians are depicted as suffering with the universe and this suffering is expressed in the gathered fellowship, literally and audibly by "groans."

"We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies" (verses 22 and 23).

Here is an insight into the *pietism* of early worship by which the local assembly responded intellectually and emotionally to the universal hope of salvation. Thus, the worshipping assembly saw in one sweeping image the correlation of its own destiny and the destiny of the world. The spirit enabled them to participate in the drama of cosmic salvation. Here the dichotomy of sizes and spheres was overcome. It was not a question of whether the primitive assembly should pay any attention to the totality of existence—the church was caught up in the total process of redemption, although the Christian community and creation were at different stages of redemption. The Christian community literally "groaned" with creation, thus linking religious experience with all that lies outside the church. If the early church could identify religiously with creation, could not the Twentieth Century church identify in some such manner with society?

Also, we find in the Pauline corpus a connection between personal salvation and Christ's defeat of cosmic powers. What is more unlikely (when you stop to think about it) than a connection between cult and cosmos? Yet Paul placed worship in a cosmic setting.

The Total Witness

Are we able in the Twentieth Century to construct a theology and experience a piety which, while making proper distinctions, brings into a single conceptual framework the salvation of the individual and the salvation of the social order? This has not been done by the Free Church tradition to my knowledge. Can we think of a way by which evangelism and social action, pastoral care and prophetic witness, personal morality and public witness participate in the same spirit and express the same redemptive purpose?

Before setting forth something of a practical model of the believers' church today in which what is best in Pietism and the Social Gospel may be combined, I would like to point to the fact that a paradigm of the believers' church may have appeared among us in recent years, in unexpected places. I refer to the early days of the civil rights movement, when, under the direction of Martin Luther King, Jr., a number of Negro churches in Montgomery and other places brought together, in a unique way, evangelical piety, prophetic speech, and social action. It strikes me as a unique religious phenomenon that in many Negro churches evangelical theology, language, songs, preaching, and feeling were interlaced with political analysis and social witness. In many religious assemblies on civil rights there was, oddly enough, no such thing as a conscious transition from the religious to the

secular, from this world to the next, from the call to Christ and the call to prison. Social protest was grounded in a theology of the cross. Social action was not an artificial appendix to religious thought, but an evangelical religious act. Hymns depicting heaven were used to prepare the spirit for a free society, prayers for eternal salvation and civil rights were said in the same breath. The Bible informed social action as much as personal evangelism.

Not only did the civil rights movement inject into evangelical piety a social dimension, but it also became the occasion for a new form of congregational life. I recall Augustine, Florida, when Hosea Williams of Martin Luther King's staff gathered us together in a Methodist church. He preached a sermon on Amos and closed with a moving appeal to the suffering of Christ and His way of nonviolence. Then came the proposal to march. This was followed by discussion, prayer, singing, decision making, and then action in the streets and jail for over 300 people. This was for me a paradigm of the believers' church, for nearly all of the elements of Free Church life were present—prophecy, discernment, congregational decision making, singing, prayer, commitment, social action, and suffering.

It occurs to me that one of the tragedies of our time is the fact that the churches, especially the so-called believers' churches, have not been able to see in the civil rights movement an occasion for the revolution of the churches along the believers' church pattern. The civil rights issue is a moral issue which is real enough and sufficiently complex for many churches to require for its resolution a new and radical view of the structure and life of the church. Here is an issue in which people are so deeply involved emotionally and morally that its resolution on the local congregational level not infrequently requires a process of discussion, Bible study, spiritual discernment, political awareness, and corporate decision making along the line of the believers' churches. The civil rights issue constitutes the test case today for many churches of the believers' church tradition. If the churches would face the race issue honestly on a local level, they would either be made or broken as believers' churches. As it is, many so-called believers' churches evade this and other moral issues by a thousand evasions and thus perpetuate the "establishment." Shall we call them "established" Free Churches?

The Discerning Community

But let me cite an exceptional case. About four years ago, I spoke to 300 ministers in Cincinnati on the theme of the church as a "Discerning Community." I was upholding what is essentially a Free Church ideal. The response of the ministers was one of skepticism. They claimed that I was unrealistic. The churches are simply incapable of discerning the truth, they said. Ordinary people have neither the faith nor the intelligence to know what is really going on, and how to respond in a Christian way.

However, I was saved on this particular occasion by a minister who rose and described an event in his congregation which had transformed it, incidentally, into a believers' church. The question was whether this church, just south of Cincinnati, would open its doors to Negroes. The sentiments were high against integration, but the minister laid the groundwork for the resolution of the problem by preaching a series of sermons on the Holy Spirit, citing cases in the Acts of the Apostles. He emphasized the Holy Spirit as a leader and teacher of the church in making such moral decisions as inclusions of the Gentiles. At the close of the series of sermons, the minister asked the congregation whether they believed the following propositions: (1) that God has a will on moral issues; (2) that he is able to reveal his will to his church; and (3) that the civil rights issue is a moral problem. The congregation (pietist) rose in acceptance of these propositions, with some hesitation regarding the third. Thereupon, the minister proposed that on the following Sunday morning the church should assemble at the regular time to seek the will of God regarding integration, with the understanding that they would remain together in church until God made his will known. The congregation accepted the proposal and the people spent the following Sunday until midnight (without recess except for potluck lunch and sandwiches for supper) praying, arguing, accusing, forgiving, threatening, rehashing old problems until at about twelve o'clock at night the members, most of whom remained, concluded that God willed that the congregation should be integrated, and a new style of church life was born in the process. The church experienced renewal with a social dimension added to its life. By this example, I am not suggesting that theological "frame-up" should be listed among the marks of the believers' church! But I am suggesting that a crisis in civilization, such as the civil rights crisis, is the kind of occasion, which, if approached with evangelical presupposition and social vision, may lead to a new conception of Christianity (combining Pietism and the Social Gospel), and may lead at the same time to the renewal of the church in the form of the believers' church.

One may say, parenthetically, that the tragic course of the civil rights movement may be due in part to the fact that the churches at large have been unable to relate evangelical faith to social reform. Hence, some churches have undergone conservative reaction, holding on to individualistic faith, while others have joined the movement with, at bottom, secular attitudes and presuppositions. The pietists have failed to participate in the vision of a free society, and the social gospelers

have failed to undergird social vision with genuine religious experience. Hence, the civil rights movement has been taken over by the secularists. The Free Churches simply were not with it.

Let us now sketch briefly a kind of believers' church which may incorporate in its community the intentions of Pietism and of the Social Gospel.

A Prophetic Community

I have in mind a church which is organized first of all as a prophetic community. This is a community which may be called a prophetic community because of its emphasis upon the central concern of prophecy, namely, the will of God, and because it is informed by prophetic faith, especially with reference to the revelation of God in history. Furthermore, it may be called a prophetic community because it is open to the possibility of prophecy today. It is a community of which prophecy is an organizing principle.

Although such an ideal church stands in the tradition of Old Testament prophecy, it takes on such communal dimensions as would make it resemble New Testament prophecy. It resembles New Testament prophecy because it assumes that prophecy is the responsibility of the entire community, even though some individuals may be more prominent in this regard than others.

". . . yea, and on my menservants and my maidservants in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophecy." (Acts 2:18)

The question which the prophetic community asks is: "What is God doing in the world today?" This is one way of asking, "What is the will of God?", as his will may be revealed in history.

It is obvious that the prophetic community runs the risk of asking a question which cannot be answered. To ask specifically what God is doing or what God really wills in the present is to become existentially involved in the problem of religious knowledge, in the particular form which it takes in biblical faith. History may not be absurd as the existentialist philosophers say it is, but it is ambiguous. Nevertheless, the prophetic community, if it is true to its own presuppositions, believes that God does reveal his will in history. The community is, naturally, reserved in its claim to be the recipient of that revelation. But the community remains open to the possibility that God may speak, and it encourages the members to prophesy as they are moved and to participate in a process of testing called "discernment."

Christian prophecy moves on two levels: (1) the attempt to understand the facts, and (2) the attempt to interpret the facts from a Christian point of view. Understanding the facts is a Christian responsibility. All scientific methods which have been developed by the modern world are employed insofar as they may be available to the Christian community. This means that the community is a community of study. The second level is the level of spiritual discernment by which the community exercises its Christian judgment regarding the will of God. It is impossible to say here exactly what goes into Christian judgment—this would require a course in Christian ethics. But most certainly the revelation of God in the historical Jesus is the main clue, together with the wisdom of the church in previous ages and whatever pragmatic factors may seem to apply.

The capacity for Christian judgment based upon the knowledge of redemptive history is one which according to the New Testament grows with Christian commitment and experience. Thus Paul writes in Romans 12:2:

"Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may attain to the *dokimazein,* the capacity to distinguish what God's will is."

According to Oscar Cullman, "this 'testing' is the key to all New Testament ethics." But testing is not simply or primarily a personal gift of the Spirit; it is rather the activity of the Spirit in the community. The church is a discerning community—one which is organized to "test" ideas and possibilities governing Christian conduct and the course of world history.

At this point we would draw a distinction between *gnosis* and "discernment." *Gnosis* frequently appears in the New Testament as private, often esoteric knowledge. *Gnosis* is, to be sure, a legitimate phenomenon; the possibility of even private revelation is not absolutely excluded in the New Testament. But *gnosis* is suspect as long as it does not submit to *dokimazein,* i.e., the critical examination by the community. Then it becomes Gnosticism in the bad sense. The New Testament church was severely threatened by men who claimed to know something about the will of God that the community was incapable of knowing or which lay beyond the judgment of the community The practical problem behind the letter to the Colossians is precisely that—Christian philosophers with esoteric wisdom seeking to influence the church without their having engaged the church in a process of corporate examination. Regardless of whether the problem at Thessalonica was gnosticism or false prophecy, or both, the resolution recommended by Paul was spiritual discernment.

"Do not quench the Spirit, do not despise prophesying, but test everything."

The mode of *dokimazein* is conversation. One is tempted to say that nothing is more crucial to the prophetic community than the quality of its conversa-

tion within the *koinonia*. The community which is organized to test the spirits must be a community in which conversation is both free and required. The prophetic community is one in which each individual is viewed as a channel of the Holy Spirit. Hence, that quality of freedom which elicits speech assumes theological importance. For one's speech could be the Word of God for the occasion. The possibility that God may be speaking makes speech a serious phenomenon in the eyes of the community. An old Anabaptist baptismal formula is the following: "Will you give counsel and receive counsel?" This formula presupposed a communal approach to problems in which every baptized person was expected to participate.

The quality of speech and the quality of *koinonia* go hand in hand. It is a fact of life in the believers' church tradition that the condition of the church depends almost entirely upon an atmosphere of honesty and openness. At the same time, it would be less than candid to hide the fact that the structure of the believers' church lays almost inhuman demands in this regard upon the community, and it is evident that such practices as conversation and discipline are difficult to accommodate at the same time. And yet, the solution to the problem of brokenness is primarily communication with discipline.

In this connection, it may be pointed out that adult baptism is upheld not only because of a believers' church view of sin and salvation, but because prophetic discernment presupposes maturity. The question put to the candidate for baptism should not only be, "Have you received forgiveness?" but, "Will you participate in the attempt to understand what is the meaning of the age?"

This leads to the further comments about where the prophetic community focuses its attention. Suffice to say that in this regard it attempts to stand in both the Old Testament and the New Testament traditions. In the Old Testament, prophecy is directed primarily to the nations, whereas in the New Testament prophecy is more directly concerned with internal problems of the Christian community. To say that the prophetic community must address itself both to the problems of the world community and the community of believers is not only sound theologically, but it is a practical necessity. For it is becoming increasingly impossible to separate personal and social problems—especially under urban conditions.

The only general rule that can be laid down for the focusing of attention is the necessity of concentrating on important matters. Trivia is the death to the believers' churches. Furthermore, believers' churches must wrestle with crucial current issues. If they do not, their character is altered. Although we would not concede that the believers' church must move from crisis to crisis in contrast to the established churches who move from grace to grace, we would acknowledge that the believers' churches need the stimulus of a dynamic world in order to exist. Since their reliance upon organizational structures is minimal, and their concept of grace is nonsacramental, they need to struggle with the present world while being motivated by an eschatological vision of the future. The world in which we are living—urban, revolutionary, violent, technological, meets the believers' church need to be kept on its toes and a bit off balance.

In speaking about the relation of the prophetic community to the political order, it should be pointed out that prophecy as a working concept is felicitous for the believers' church. It is felicitous because it implies involvement, even emotional involvement, with the world. Nevertheless, it implies a transcendent loyalty to God, which results in sharp selective opposition to particular public policies which are deemed immoral. The prophet is not sectarian in the sense in which that word is sometimes used. He is not opposed *en toto* to the world; he is indeed a man of the world. However, he is free to oppose what needs to be opposed and equally free to support what needs to be supported. The prophetic community is a community for which discrimination is a way of life. The function of the prophetic community is to sharpen the powers of discrimination.

One should not conclude the description of the prophetic community without at least raising the question of whether there is any sense in using the term, prophet, today. This is a most problematic issue. We use the word, prophetic, with a wide variety of meanings. Sometimes it means no more than radical criticism, striking social biases, avant-garde sympathies, or bearded mumblings. We use the adjective, prophetic, with an abandon with which we do not use the noun, prophet. We have no prophets. At least we have no prophetic office as such. The problem seems to lie in the realm of prophetic inspiration.

A Healing Community

I feel that we need not be held up by this difficulty, however. Let us frankly admit that today's prophets will come to their conclusions largely on the basis of historical analyses and scientific understanding rather than direct inspiration. But this use of the reason will proceed, we trust, from a sensitive spirit and a believing mind. Furthermore, it will represent the spiritual struggles of a believing community. The reluctance to say, "Thus saith the Lord," in many cases may actually be a necessity in a secular state.

The believers' church today must also become a healing community. It must seek to heal those who have lost touch with reality and long for authentic existence. The healing community will endeavor to meet the crisis of man as his sense of identity and wholeness is broken and as traditional identity-bestowing

realities are swept from him by a technological society. It will try to create a community in which the plight of the individual may be freely discussed. In that freedom, the community will offer manhood by reinterpreting traditional symbols and by offering a new set of relationships.

What is needed today is a community which is designed to accomplish, under modern circumstances, what Pietism has traditionally accomplished, especially through revivals. Many believers' churches have depended upon revivals to supply the basis for their life. Revivals have been the way by which churches have intensified pietistic religion. In the pietistic tradition, the revival has been the means by which the churches have articulated the message of forgiveness. The revival has been the occasion for the individual to receive his identity as a child of God and as a member of the community. We are not likely to exaggerate the significance of the revival. The revival has been the instrument of Pietism through which converts have seen themselves as people who have been accepted by God and the community. In many villages and rural parts of America, conversion has even carried with it acceptance into the community at large.

But in recent years, the revival has been losing its function as a means for the intensification and realization of faith. Hence, many so-called believers' churches are caught in a whirl of unreality. What is needed, therefore, is an alternative to revivalism which will be no less effective in meeting the religious needs of the individual. It must be an alternative which makes it possible for modern man, given his peculiar problems of self-understanding and acceptance, to find God, himself and his neighbor.

I personally believe that an alternative lies in a new conception of *koinonia*. Such a *koinonia* would address itself in biblical and modern psychological terms to the problem of being a Christian human being in a technological society. It would try to understand why people feel and act the way they do, and it would attempt not only to understand the underlying problems of existence, but it would provide the kind of fellowship which is in itself at least a partial answer to the problem.

I would suggest that an anthropological revolution is occurring, a new concept of man is emerging, to which the theologian must respond with an appropriate concept of the New Man, and to which there must be found no less an ecclesiological counterpart. The typical institutional church, with its center in preaching, may have been adequate in a less pluralistic age, when communication was possible within a commonly accepted idiom. But today, especially within the city, what is needed is a somewhat less pretentious form of communication in which vastly different views, born of modern specialization, interests, and activities enter into dialogue. Church life must increasingly take on the quality of a search among a multitude of Christian alternatives and possibilities with the Holy Spirit as the teacher and guide.

I wish that it were possible to set forth at greater length the main lines of the conception of a prophetic and healing community. If there were time, I would discuss decision making, consensus, discipline, the congregational meeting, and mission. I would also like to show a positive link between "binding and loosing" and the "new morality."

The Believers' Church in Our Day

But we must turn to the question of whether this and other variations of the believers' church have a chance in the contemporary world.

My feelings are unsettled. It would appear that the believers' church in the pure sense will not become a widespread phenomenon in our time. Very few congregations of the American establishment are likely to be transformed into congregations which incorporate all or even most of the marks of the believers' church. Among the marks which are most unlikely today are consensus in belief and discipline. Our culture is pluralistic and individualistic, and, consequently, it is extremely difficult to expect theological consensus except on vague generalities, and in a day of ethical relativism and behaviorism, our congregations are less and less prone to hold people morally responsible for their actions. Furthermore, the believers' church is just too demanding for the masses. For most people today, the believers' church implies a level of commitment and sacrifice which exceeds in their minds the benefits of the church. Others feel that the church as an institution, regardless of its form, is no longer in touch with the great centers of power and decision making in the modern world. The church has been displaced by the university as a source of ideas, and such think tanks as the Rand Corporation are more relevant to the world than the church will ever be. Still others could not care less.

This is not to say that the believers' church is technically impossible, or that it should be abandoned as an ideal. Sometimes it is claimed that the believers' church is discounted by urban society. But the city is not ultimately decisive. The existence of the Church of the Savior defies all those sociological "laws" which are supposed to make genuine community impossible. Its members are scattered. They come from different backgrounds. They represent diverse occupations, races, classes, and temperaments. Yet this church not only exists, but it has risen up to challenge the very foundations of American church life. Thousands of pastors and laymen visit the Church of the Savior each year, and many churches throughout the nation have been influenced by this disciplined congregation of 80 members. It may be expected that other similar experi-

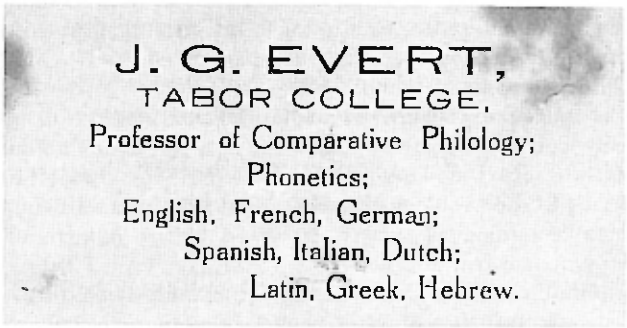
ments will appear during the present period of ferment, but it is indicative of the problem that all attempts to duplicate the Church of the Savior have failed. Radical congregations which attempt to bring into organic unity all or nearly all of the classical marks of the believers' church are few and far between.

However, this is just part of the picture. While it is impossible to point to many kosher believers' churches, it is one of the exciting facts of our time that many ideas and practices which have been emphasized by the believers' church are being introduced piecemeal into the established churches—Protestant and Catholic. I refer to the renaissance of the laity, study groups, discussions, and missionary outreach. The World Council of Churches' study of the "Missionary Structure of the Congregation" is reminiscent of the Anabaptist search for missionary outreach. I trust that I am not presumptuous in suggesting that almost all that has been discussed under the rubric of "renewal," except liturgical renewal, points in the direction of the believers' church.

Just what the end result will be, we cannot tell. Rigid ecclesiological systems are breaking down, and we are seeing what would appear to be strange combinations of ideas and practices. Believers' church ideas and practices are no longer center in the believers' churches, but they are being dispersed in all kinds of organizations and structures. Oddly enough, the people who are most excited about such ideas these days are the Catholics. The Catholic Church is undergoing a revolution in which renewal is being greeted with integrity and passion. Renewal among the Catholics is not just a rebellious child of secularization, or a frantic search for the latest gimmick, or an attempt to join the avant-garde. Rather, it is the discovery of ways by which faith may express itself. I trust that I am not sanguine when I suggest that one can detect a religious quality about Catholic renewal which is becoming increasingly absent among the Protestants. We must, therefore, wait with thankful hearts and open minds for what emerges from the injection of believers' church ideas into structures which were once considered foreign. Will there emerge in history ecclesiological structures which will make such distinctions as "church" and "sect" or believers' church and the "established church" appear outmoded? Will the Catholic Church find ways by which the strength of its massive institution, with its authoritative structures and ecclesiastical powers, may be combined with believers' church practices, thus joining the values of the institution with the *koinonia*? This is another way of asking whether the future of the believers' church lies in the local congregation or in the *ecclesiola in ecclesia*.

J. G. Ewert—
A Mennonite Socialist

By James C. Juhnke



Jacob Gerhard Ewert was one of the most remarkable personalities among central Kansas Mennonites in the Progressive era. Born in Poland in 1874, Ewert came to Hillsboro with his family at the age of eight. As a bright young student he determined upon teaching as a career. He attended Bethel College from 1895 to 1897 where he specialized in languages and theology, taught some classes on his own, and found time to collect and classify nearly four hundred plants for the Bethel herbarium. Four months before the completion of his college course, he was attacked by a paralytic disease which nearly ended his life and left him a bedfast cripple for the remaining quarter century of his life. He died in 1923.

Although his paralysis was almost total, Ewert's powers of speech and mind were unimpaired. He undertook private tutoring and teaching of classes, later becoming a member of the Tabor College teaching staff. He wrote pamphlets of religious and social concern and newspaper articles on a variety of subjects. In 1909 he took over editorship of the Hillsboro *Journal* and within two years, increased the circulation of the paper from about 1250 to nearly 3600.[1] Forced to give up his editorship because of physical and mental exhaustion and because of rheumatism in the fingers of his only mobile hand, Ewert continued writing, teaching, and corresponding with a worldwide circle of friends. By 1910 more than six thousand

J. G. Ewert, Hillsboro, Kansas, born in Poland, 1874, died in 1923.

visitors had recorded their names in a book which he kept near his bed.[2] During World War I Ewert was the best informed man in the community on the draft question and scores of Mennonite young men streamed into his room for advice on how to fill out their registration papers. In the post-war period until his death in 1923, Ewert was active in the organization and administration of the Mennonite relief program.

While other Mennonites were caught in the busy narrowness and isolation imposed by the Mennonite version of the Protestant work ethic, Ewert on his bed had time to read about the world, to consider its wretched condition, and to imagine together with the great minds of his age that there might be grand solutions to human problems. He became the mediator of Karl Marx, Leo Tolstoy, and Walter Rauschenbusch to an unreceptive community. The cosmopolitan spirit came to Hillsboro through the most obviously limited man in town.

"Capitalism, militarism and alcoholism," wrote Ewert in the wake of William Howard Taft's election in 1908, "are three of the greatest enemies of civil peace and therefore also at the same time of practical Christianity."[3] The defeat of this demonic trilogy, Ewert believed, would come through Christian Socialism, Christian pacifism, and Christian temperance. True politics and true Christianity, far from being antithetical as many Mennonites seemed to assume, were the members of a natural alliance for the achievement of Christ's prayer, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Ewert achieved an integration of political views and religious doctrine which was unprecedented in the Mennonite community. It was because he grounded his Socialism, pacifism, and temperance in religious doctrine that Ewert could get an audience in the community and demand that his questions be answered.

Ewert began as a typical Republican Mennonite and came to his Socialist ideas after much reading and reflection. His first publication after his illness was the allegorical tale of a courageous knight, "Fides," who met and slew the giants "Indolence," "Selfishness," "Untruthfulness," "Hatred," and "Pride" in decidedly individualistic and unpacifistic combat.[4] The allegory reflected Ewert's struggle with his paralysis as triumph of personal will against the onslaughts of evil and suffering, but in succeeding years Ewert came to an understanding of how the strivings of oppressed man might be aided through social cooperation. He summed up his Christian socialist credo in a German pamphlet dealing with Christianity and Socialism.[5]

Ewert chose the generous and benevolent elements of Socialism for his interpretation of the movement to the Mennonites. Socialism, he wrote, was the introduction of "common work and universal brotherly love" in the place of "capitalism and competition." Profits, rents, and interest should be eliminated and income determined by actual work done. People's ownership of all industries and means of transportation, already foreshadowed in the postal system, highways, and consolidation of trusts, would achieve the new order. Ewert admitted that inequalities of opportunity were not as obvious in the sparsely settled West as in the industrial East, but he pointed to wealthy absentee landlords as examples of the inequalities of the capitalistic system in which the idle wealthy man exploited the poor working man. Ewert had the caution and good manners not to suggest that Mennonites also sometimes reaped unjust profits.

Ewert's greatest concern was to demonstrate the harmony between Socialism and Christianity. He quoted examples of social justice from Hebrew law and prophecy. He pointed to the community of goods in the early Christian community and suggested that the Socialist call for the abolition of class distinctions conformed to Paul's statement that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free. To those who worried because Karl Marx and other Socialist leaders were Jews, Ewert reminded them that "salvation cometh of the Jews."[6]

The rival Mennonite newspaper at Newton, *Der Herold*, edited and managed by the brothers C. E. and H. P. Krehbiel, could not let Ewert's Socialism go unchallenged. H. P. Krehbiel claimed particular horror over what he termed Ewert's defense of Eugene Debs' attack on the anti-socialist clergy. Krehbiel could not understand how any true Christian could condone,

Two of the 500 plants of the Department of Biology processed and classified by J. G. Ewert while he was a student at Bethel College.

J. G. Ewert spent 25 years sick in bed.

much less defend, such a man. As for his personal objections to Socialism, Krehbiel mentioned two: (1) the emphasis on "overthrow" (*Umsturz*) and (2) the nationalization of production. ". . . the first brings ruin and the second leads back to slavery. Man is made for freedom and not for personal or paternal slavery."[7] When Ewert was bold enough to charge that "Capitalism is, in a certain sense, the antichrist," Krehbiel neglected to offer a full defense of Capitalism but criticized the Socialists for trying to equate their program with Christianity.[8]

Ewert took great encouragement from the increases in the Socialist Party vote in the United States and other countries but he had little to report of news about Mennonite conversions to Socialism. The "Mennonite" vote for Socialist candidates in state and national elections never rose above two percent before World War I. Mennonite wartime frustrations were expressed in the slightly larger vote for Socialist presidential candidates Allen L. Benson (6.0% in 1916) and Eugene V. Debs (9.3% in 1920), and in the vote for Socialist gubernatorial candidates E. N. Richardson (3.8% in 1916), George W. Kleihege (16.7% in 1918), and Roy Stanton (9.3% in 1920).[9] Only four Mennonites, all in Marion County, ventured to run for county political office on the Socialist ticket. In Harvey County G. B. Ruth ran for county superintendent of public instruction in 1906 and for county commissioner in 1912. In Marion County Emilie Wedel and her brother Hugo of the Hillsboro First Mennonite Church ran for county superintendent in 1910 and 1912 respectively. John J. Janzen, a Mennonite farmer, ran three times for clerk of the district court and twice for register of deeds between 1910 and 1918. His nephew, Ferd F. Janzen, ran for county clerk in 1914, 1916, and 1918. None of these Socialist candidates received more than a handful of votes in Mennonite townships. Most Mennonite voters apparently were able to dismiss J. G. Ewert's Socialist appeals as easily as one Hillsboro lady who commented, "Learning politics from a sickbed is different from learning it in life."[10]

Ewert's campaign against alcohol was less radical and therefore had greater community support than his opposition to Capitalism. Prohibition was an immediate political issue in Kansas and the sinful saloons were to be found even in Hillsboro where Ewert wrote.

Although Ewert believed that the most important task of the Christian for temperance was the personal influence of his good example,[11] he also believed that it was part of being one's "brother's keeper" to forbid the sale of liquor through prohibition laws.[12] He tempered his prohibition appeals, however, with the warning that drunkenness was not the only evil to battle in this world and that finally "each should follow his own conscience and knowledge" (*Erkenntnis*) in the matter. The stumbling block for Bible reading Men-

nonites in the prohibition movement was the place of wine in the Bible, and Ewert's continual return to this problem bespeaks a not completely successful attempt to convince himself and his community that the biblical wine was unfermented.[13] For several years Ewert was general secretary of the Kansas Prohibition Movement.[14] In general elections he did not hesitate to endorse both the Prohibition and the Democratic candidates, a position which confounded Republican politicians who saw Ewert's support for Bryan in the 1908 election as a betrayal of an earlier promise to support the Prohibition candidate.[15] But Ewert saw no reason why idealistic commitment to Socialism and prohibitionism precluded involvement in debate between the main party candidates. He was realistic enough to realize that the Mennonite community had little inclination to vote a third party Prohibition ticket and that his political voice would be most effective if directed to the real choice which votes would make on election day between the Democratic and Republican candidates.

Ewert was a pacifist before he became a Socialist, but he incorporated both ideologies into his scheme for the new social order. Already in 1899 he published a German translation of an exchange of letters between pacifists Leo Tolstoy and Adin Ballou dealing with the Christian doctrine of nonresistance.[16] Later in his Socialist tract he suggested that the elimination of a standing army and all unnecessary expenditures would not only be a step toward peace but would also release money to compensate capitalists whose property was nationalized.[17]

In the 1908 election Ewert acclaimed William Jennings Bryan as the peace candidate and William Howard Taft as the "Secretary of War who was proposed as a candidate by the warlike Roosevelt." The peace issue alone, Ewert wrote, should be decisive for Mennonites "who came to America because of European militarism."[18] Four years later Ewert reminded dissatisfied Republicans that he had warned them against Taft and now he warned them against the "Bull Moose" Roosevelt as "the biggest incarnation of the war spirit in our country." He also resurrected the old charge of Roosevelt's public disdain for nonresistant groups.[19] But the Mennonites were no more persuaded by the ideological appeal to nonresistance as a politically relevant doctrine in 1912 than they had been in 1900 when they had a chance to vote against McKinley and imperialism. They gave a solid majority to Taft in 1908 and a strong plurality to Roosevelt in 1912. Nonresistance was still a narrowly conceived doctrine of refusal to take direct part in war.

The coming of the World War and the military draft forced Ewert's peace interests inward to a focus on the immediate problems of Mennonite drafted men. Although his bedfast condition prevented him from taking an official position on the church committees formed to deal with wartime Mennonite problems, Ewert was among the most active of Mennonite leaders in counseling young draftees, providing news about the war and the draft through the newspapers, and in defending the Mennonite position to government and to the public. While the progressive reform spirit in the United States was transformed and subverted by the great war, Ewert's broader social vision was similarly narrowed by his new preoccupation with the problems of Mennonite wartime pacifism. He had the consolation, however, of knowing that he had become more useful to his church than he had ever been before.

Ewert did not carry the Mennonites with him into the Socialist camp, but he was not therefore a loner in the community. His significance lay in the fact that he was accepted and loved by his fellow brethren in spite of his dissenting views. It was a reflection of the Progressive era's optimism and self-confidence that the Mennonites in this period not only produced and accepted an outspoken Socialist, but also gave him the editorship of one of their leading newspapers, asked him to teach classes in one of their colleges, sent their young people to him for counsel, and had him instruct Saturday night classes for Sunday school teachers. Ewert's acceptability in the community was aided by public sympathy for his physical condition, by his disarming good-naturedness and integrity, and by his unrefuted claim that his reform ideas were grounded in the Christian gospel. The combination of imaginativeness and productivity which marked Ewert's life was a tribute to the man, the community, and the times.

FOOTNOTES

1. *Vorwaerts*, Hillsboro, Kansas, July 14, 1911.
2. *Vorwaerts*, July 8, 1910.
3. Hillsboro (Kansas) *Journal*, December 4, 1908.
4. J. G. Ewert, *Der Gute Kampf* (Elkhart, Ind.: Mennonite Publishing Co., 1900).
5. J. G. Ewert, *Christentum und Sozialismus* (Hillsboro: Hillsboro Journal Press, [1909]). An enlarged second edition was printed in 1914. Ewert occasionally spelled his name with a "v," especially when writing in English.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
7. H. P. Krehbiel, "Sozialist Debs ueber Religion und der Hillsboro Schriftleiter als Verteidiger," *Der Herold*, Newton, Kansas, June 2, 1910.
8. *Vorwaerts*, June 3, 1910; *Der Herold*, June 9, 1910.
9. Voting statistics were derived from records of fourteen predominantly Mennonite townships in McPherson, Marion, Harvey, and Reno counties, Kansas.
10. Mrs. J. V. Friesen, Hillsboro, Kansas, interview with the author, May 2, 1967.
11. J. G. Ewert, *Die Bibel und die Enthaltsamkeit* (Berne: Christlichen Maessigkeitsverein, n.d.), pp. 30, 31. This pamphlet appeared in two undated editions with a total of ten thousand copies.
12. J. G. Ewert, *Christentum und Prohibition* (n.p.: n.d.), pp. 7-8.
13. J. G. Ewert, *Die Bibel und die Enthaltsamkeit, op. cit.*
14. "J. G. Ewert, 1874-1923," *Vorwaerts-Kalender* (Hillsboro: Mennonite Brethren Publishing House, 1925), p. 48.
15. See the bitter exchange between Ewert and Ferdinand Funk in the Hillsboro *Journal*, Oct. 30, Nov. 20, Dec. 4, 11, 1908.
16. *Die Christliche Lehre von der Wehrlosigkeit*, trans. J. G. Ewert (Hillsboro: n.p., 1899).
17. J. G. Ewert, *Christentum und Sozialismus*, p. 5.
18. J. G. Ewert, "Ist Bryan unzuverlaessig?" *Der Deutsche Westen*, McPherson, Kansas, Oct. 22, 1908.
19. J. G. Ewert, "Warum ich nicht fuer Roosevelt waehlen wuerde," *Vorwaerts*, Oct. 25, 1912.

The Anabaptists and Art
The Dutch Golden Age of Painting

By Robert W. Regier

EVERY POSSIBLE reason has been advanced as an explanation for the unbelievably productive "Golden Age" of Dutch painting. Any source that attempts an explanation wholly in terms of either religious forces, economic circumstances, political changes, or social upheaval should be suspect. All these factors were interwoven and formed the environment out of which the surging productivity of Dutch artists came.

The purpose of this article will be to expose as clearly as possible one facet of the religious dynamic of the time—Anabaptism—and assess its significance in relation to Dutch painting. While doing this we need to resist the inevitable tendency to exaggerate its importance. Yet, Anabaptism as a part of the Dutch Protestant mileau, is generally overlooked or incidentally treated. It deserves closer analysis. To the extent that religious forces helped shape the environment for artistic activity, Anabaptism inevitably must assume some significance because of its role in the Protestant history of Holland.

The climate of religious instability in sixteenth century Holland created a receptivity for heretical ideas. Lutheranism and Anabaptism were the two earliest sources for these ideas. Later Calvinism made its impact and assumed the authoritative religious position in Holland. The matter to note, however, is that Protestantism dominated Holland for forty years before Calvinism took its prominent position. This pre-Calvinist period was influenced to a large extent by the Anabaptists. In fact, the Reformation and Anabaptism were for a time nearly identical in Holland.[1] Lutheranism never gained hold on the Dutch mind. Between Lutheranism's wane and the Calvinist ascent, Anabaptism made its entry into the fabric of Dutch religious thought. Dosker says, "Let us therefore beware of underestimating the initial success of Anabaptism in this part of Europe. It came almost with the shock of a spiritual impact. It spread like wild-fire among the masses of the people."[2]

A movement which spread like leaping flames throughout the country in the early sixteenth century, which was controversial enough to invite some of the most bitter criticism in the history of the Christian church, and which finally became a stable church in the seventeenth century with large segments of the population of major cities among its adherents, had to become an important part of the fabric of the "Golden Age." The individualistic tendencies of the Dutch which found expression in the struggle for political and economic independence and the highly developed world trade system (e.g., Dutch East India Company), were fed and strengthened by the Anabaptist view of the individual. Though barely tolerated on the surface, much of Anabaptist thought was sympathetic to the Dutch temperament. Personal freedom, a cherished Anabaptist value, had its political implications. Though Anabaptists had no direct concern with civil government, the ideal of individual freedom fit well with the Dutch drive to throw off the oppressive yoke of Spanish authoritarian rule.

Specifically, the Anabaptists, particularly the liberal wing, including the Waterlanders, made a broad contribution to Dutch life and culture. The end of persecution allowed Anabaptist traits of frugality and industry to emerge and many Anabaptists made marked achievements in the business world. An unusual number found their way into medical science. Mennonite authors were numerous. The great Dutch poet, Joost van den Vondel, was a Mennonite,[3] and many artists confessed the Mennonite faith.[4] However, the Anabaptist-Mennonite involvement in painting is the specific topic of this article.

Anabaptist Themes

We can start with the obvious, and that is to look for explicit Anabaptist subject matter in the painting of the Golden Age. This kind of search is not very fruitful and not too significant, but a number of works

One of Rembrandt's etchings of Cornelis Claesz. Anslo, Mennonite minister.

Detail of Cornelis Claesz. Anslo of a painting by Rembrandt of "Anslo and his Wife."

Detail of wife of Anslo of a painting by Rembrandt of "Anslo and his Wife."

should be mentioned. C. C. Anslo, a wealthy merchant and a lay preacher among the Waterlanders, was painted, drawn, and etched by Rembrandt, who was a close friend. A double portrait in oil of Anslo and his wife was painted in 1641 and is located in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin. Rembrandt painted other portraits of Mennonites. Three definitely identified are Lieven Willemsz van Coppenol, a noted Mennonite teacher; Tryn Jans, wife of H. J. Rooleeuw; and Nicolaas Bruyningh.

Gozen Centen, a regent of the Amsterdam Mennonite Old People's Home, was painted by Govert Flinck. Another double portrait of a Mennonite couple, Lucas de Clercq and wife, was painted by Frans Hals. Less known painters of Mennonite portraits were M. J. Miereveld, Lambert Jacobsz, Hendrik Sorgh, and Cornelis van der Voort. Sorgh and van der Voort were painters of wealthy Mennonite families.

Paintings of events in Anabaptist history are totally absent. An exception in the medium of prints would be the work of Jan Luiken (1649-1712) who prepared a series of 104 copper engravings for the second Dutch edition of the *Martyrs' Mirror*, published in 1685. This book was a record of the deaths of Anabaptist martyrs and was illustrated with the visual realism of Luiken.[5]

Anabaptist Painters

An area of greater interest is to note those painters who were identified as members of the Mennonite church in Holland. It is difficult to determine in most cases whether this membership meant active participation within the church. However, being that Anabaptism demanded an adult, conscious decision for membership we can assume that Mennonite identification was not accidental or inevitable.

The following painters claimed Mennonite membership: Michiel J. van Miereveld (1567-1641), Dirk van Hoogstraten (1596-1640), Lambert Jacobsz (1598-1636), Salomon van Ruysdael (1600-1670), Jakob Adriaensz Backer (1608-1650), Govert Flinck (1615-1660), Abraham van den Tempel (1622-1673), Samuel van Hoogstraten (1627-1678), Jacob van Ruisdael (1628-1682), Vincent Laurensz van der Vinne (1629-1702), Adrian Backer (1636-1684), and Jan van der Heyden (1637-1712).[6]

While many of these are less known, several important artists are included. The greatest Dutch landscape painter Jacob van Ruisdael and his famous uncle, Salomon, are included. Podesta speaks of Jacob's ability to express "a vision of the world pervaded by a profound melancholy, together with a pantheistic upsurge of love for all things."[7] To what extent this expressive character could be attributed to his religious faith can only be conjecture. According to Shipp. Jacob van Ruisdael died in Haarlem in the hospital of the Mennonite sect to which he and his family belonged.[8] Miereveld and Heyden were well known, the former for his portraits and the latter for his townscapes. Heyden was the first painter in Amsterdam to paint townscapes.[9]

Govert Flinck was one of Rembrandt's most outstanding pupils. His parents were very devout Mennonites and strongly discouraged his interest in art, believing that all painters were libertines and of low morals. Only after meeting Lambert Jacobsz, a Mennonite minister as well as painter, were the parents convinced that Govert could follow his first love without drastic consequences. Flinck became a Rembrandt pupil in 1634 and worked with biblical subjects, portraiture, history and mythology. He received many commissions and became a prosperous painter.[10]

Several other Mennonite individuals associated closely with painting should be mentioned. Carel van Mander (1548-1606) assumes an important position in Dutch art history for his publication *Schilderboek*, the first Dutch history of art. Hendrik van Uylenburg (1584-1660) was an art dealer and important collector of the seventeenth century. He was also a leader of a famous art school and a close friend of Rembrandt's. He was a cousin of Rembrand's first wife, Saskia. There is reason to suppose that there were many other Mennonite art collectors during the early part of the seventeenth century.[11]

Rembrandt and the Mennonites

Though some early biographers have flatly stated that Rembrandt was a Mennonite, recent scholarship indicates that he was only in sympathetic association with them. For this reason he was not included in the previous list. However, because of his importance in seventeenth century Dutch painting and because of his known close association with Mennonites, he deserves special consideration at this point. Much has been written about the fact and the meaning of the association. This will simply be an attempt to summarize what seems to be the most reliable scholarship on the subject. Two areas should be considered; evidence for or against actual church affiliation, and—more important—his religious ideas and attitudes.

If Rembrandt had affiliation with any group the two possibilities would have been Mennonite or Reformed. Balet considers both options and rejects them, concluding that "there is . . . no ground whatever for the acceptance of Rembrandt's churchiness."[12] He goes on to try to establish the point that Rembrandt was basically irreligious. However, some of his logic used in coming to this conclusion is so much in error that one cannot take the conclusion itself too seriously. For example, as evidence that Rembrandt could not have been a Mennonite he cites, among other things, Rembrandt's marriage to Saskia, his clothing, and Mennonite hostility to art. Marriage to Saskia, being Reformed, would have represented a marriage outside the group—something Balet says Mennonites did not

allow. Rembrandt's clothing was elaborate, and Mennonites, according to Balet, believed in simplicity of dress. All three points reflect a lack of knowledge of the Mennonite movements of the time. It is true that Balet reflects the stereotype. But the critical group to consider here are the Waterlanders. They were the liberals and allowed marriage outside the group. Many of them were very much in the world and grew wealthy. With this wealth they probably grew as ostentatious as their neighbor. Commissioning paintings, particularly portraits, was not unusual. Balet's logic is cited only to show that in an area like this it is quite easy to manipulate facts in order to support one's preconceived bias.

Baldinucci, one of the early Rembrandt biographers, states that Rembrandt was a Mennonite. As his authority he used Bernhard Keihl, a pupil of Rembrandt from 1641 to 1643. Kühler and Hendrik van Loon also call him a Mennonite. H. M. Rottermund says "it is probable that Rembrandt at the end of the 1650's either belonged to or stood close to a freer circle of Waterlander Mennonites."[13]

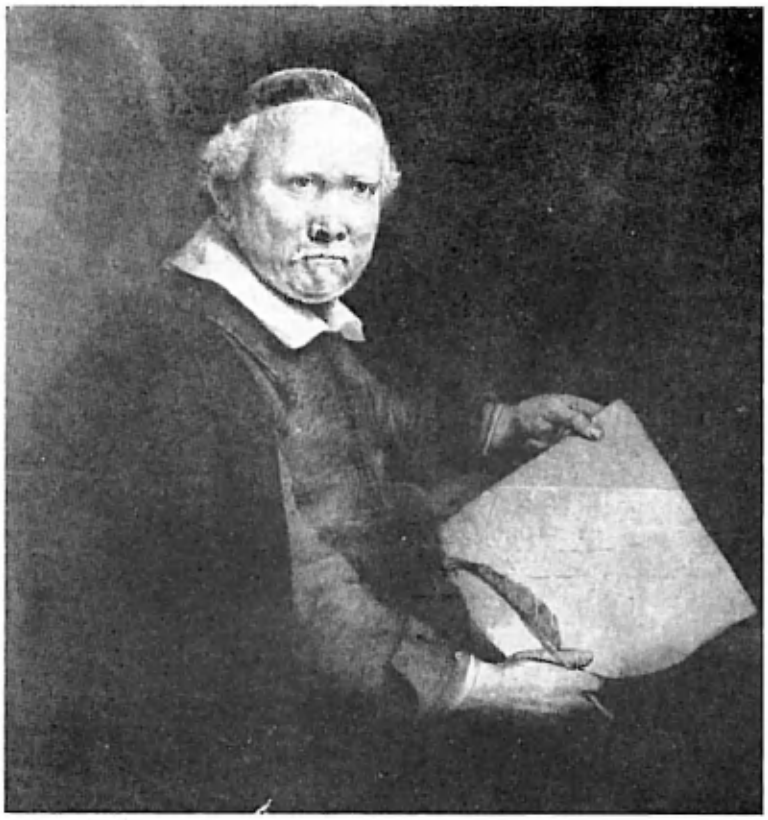
Rosenberg's views will serve as a summary here on the matter of church affiliation. He states that "the documentary evidence for his adherence to the Mennonite creed is fairly positive."[14] He goes on to say, though, that "with all the evidence, outward and implied, that can be brought together to prove Rembrandt's sympathy toward the Mennonites, it would be a false assumption to consider his religious art as based exclusively upon their creed. . . . One may speak of a spiritual affinity with the Mennonites, but should guard against identifying him too closely with them."[15] If he was a Mennonite, according to Rosenberg, Rembrandt would have belonged to the liberal wing of the church in Amsterdam—the Waterlanders.

What Rosenberg says in addition to the matter of affiliation is perhaps more important: "What really counts is Rembrandt's spiritual affinity to this sect, with which he shared many basic beliefs, far more than with Calvinism."[16] Shipp states, "His religious art must be seen in this light [association with Mennonites]. His concern is always with humanity, and usually with humanity in its deeper or tragic moods."[17]

This brings us to a brief consideration of a more complex problem, that of finding a relationship to Mennonites by establishing an affinity between the expressed content of Rembrandt's work and Mennonite thought. Rosenberg is convinced a strong relationship exists and uses this as evidence for Rembrandt's associations with them. He maintains that a study of Mennonite literature, and Menno's writings in particular, reveals a close tie between Rembrandt's biblical representations and the spiritual attitude of this sect.[18] What specifically would Rosenberg point to?

He points out that the Mennonite faith went directly to Christ's teachings. It stressed inward attitudes, not external creed and dogma. The major emphasis was on man's heart and conscience. Inner experience was the essence. Outward conduct was simply an expression of this inner experience. Emphasis was placed on the "poor in spirit" and that God was no respecter of persons. In Rosenberg's own words, "such freedom from any church cult, such disregard for social distinctions, such directness and sincerity in the interpretation of the Bible, and above all, the 'simple and warm spirituality' of Menno and his followers must have attracted a nature like Rembrandt's. With him, too, Christ the teacher and healer of human suffering was the center of the religious world, not the formidable idea of God which Calvin had derived from the Old Testament. Rembrandt shared with the Mennonites an indifference to all dogmatic notions and institutions, seeking, as they did, to go back to the simple truth of the Bible. All in all, one gains the impression that the truly evangelical simplicity of the Mennonites, their sobriety, sincerity, and humility are reflected in Rembrandt's religious art much more than Calvinism, with its highly abstract and dialectic theology."[19] Rem-

Drawing by Rembrandt called "Groote" Coppenol, Mennonite mayor of Amsterdam.



brandt minimized theology, as did the Anabaptists. He was more concerned with a deep psychological penetration of the human-divine encounter. The emphasis was strictly on the dramatic and the tragic in human experience. This quality of inwardness—a concentration on essentials—was the original feature in Rembrandt's religious art, and certainly could have been stimulated by Mennonites who know firsthand what such fundamental notions as humility and a sense of the tragic were.

One final matter of evidence in establishing a "content" relationship between Mennonites and Rembrandt is the fact that Rosenberg observes a close parallel between Rembrandt's favorite themes and the stories emphasized by Menno in his writings.[20]

Anabaptist Influence

To this point only relationships have been observed between Anabaptism and painting of the Golden Age. Certain painters were Anabaptists. Rembrandt knew Anabaptists and his religious view and Anabaptist thought had much in common. But the matter of influence takes us a step further—a much more hazardous step. Did Anabaptist associations influence the work of painters? Did Anabaptist thought shape the Dutch environment to the extent that its artists were affected, positively or negatively? Documentation is difficult, but several items should be mentioned for consideration.

Protestant attitudes. The point has been made that in Holland Anabaptism played a major role in shaping the Protestant environment. In fact, a quote by H. S. Bender in *The Mennonite Encyclopedia* states, "All that Protestantism has contributed to the cultural life of the Netherlands especially with respect to art can be traced in principle and in its essence to this Anabaptistically determined Reformation. In this realm Calvinism could contribute nothing new; it merely took over."[21] In light of this it is difficult, if not impossible, to isolate Anabaptist-Mennonite influences from Protestant influences. So our first task is to see in what way Dutch Protestantism affected painting.

In the religious, social and political revolution that shaped seventeenth century Holland some very practical considerations affected the art world. Foremost among these was the fact that artists lost the patronage of the Catholic church and the royal court, the two primary sources of patronage up to that time. With Catholicism completely uprooted as a result of the Protestant reformation, the first question is whether Protestant patronage replaced the Catholic patronage. The obvious answer is "no." In a negative way we can say that Protestantism limited and impoverished art. The church drops out of the picture as an art center. According to Calvin, painting should be concerned only with the rendering of the visible world. Its purpose should be the decoration of private houses and civic buildings. He denied to the fine arts any right to serve religion. Calvin felt that figural representations of God and Christ degrade the Divine through humanization.[22] The Dutch Mennonite art historian, Carel van Mander, lamented, "It is our present want and misfortune [ca 1600] so that few figurative subjects can be painted in our Netherlands, whereby an opportunity would be given to our young people and to painters to achieve distinction in the presentation of allegory or in the treatment of the nude. For what there is to paint is mostly pictures according to nature."[23]

The negative attitude of the church toward art patronage compelled artists to seek fresh subjects. This lack of religious patronage formed the basis for seventeenth century Dutch realism. The devotional picture became nonexistent. Artists began to paint life around them. Daily life became their main source of inspiration. So, positively, the Protestant attitude preserved Dutch painting from becoming a mere appendage to Italian or Flemish art and helped it become one of the most significant turning points in the history of painting. Realism replaced symbolism. The ordinary replaced the heroic.

Hauser comments, ". . . even more typical of Dutch art than the choice of subject matter is the peculiar naturalism by which it is differentiated not only from the general European baroque, with its heroic attitudes, its austere and often rigid solemnity, and its impetuous, exuberant sensualism, but also from all earlier styles based on fidelity to nature. For it is not merely the simple, pious, reverent objectivity of the representation, not merely the endeavor to depict life in its immediacy, in the familiar forms, which everyone can confirm for himself, but the personal experience implicit in its outlook, which gives this painting its special quality of truth."[24] The Protestant rejection of painting's religious role helped turn Dutch painting in new, creative directions; and the personal experience about which Hauser speaks stems from Protestant individualism, perhaps its main positive contribution to Dutch painting. The Mennonites can share in this. The significance of the individual was at the heart of their religious thought. Protestantism cannot claim a monopoly on injecting individualism and personal experience into Dutch art, but it certainly encouraged and intensified its development.

The Anabaptist Contribution. Anabaptists, like the Calvinists, objected to the use of art in worship. With emphasis on simplicity, sincerity, and humility, art seemed artificial, pretentious, dangerous, and wasteful. It is not clear if this negative attitude was based on the second commandment, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image." A Danzig Mennonite portrait painter Enoch Seemann, Sr., was placed under ban in 1697 specifically on the ground of violating the second commandment by painting portraits. He could be

reinstated, however, by promising to limit himself to landscapes and decorations.[25] It should be remembered, though, that Dutch Mennonites, particularly groups such as the Waterlanders, were exceptions to the general Mennonite attitude toward art. In the seventeenth century all opposition faded away and was replaced by a genuine appreciation for art. Apart from the evidence of Mennonite aritsts, this is also evidenced by the many portrait commissions given by Mennonites and the numerous collections of paintings and art objects in the homes of wealthier Mennonites who were frequently friends and patrons of artists.[26] As a modest Anabaptist contribution we can say that Dutch Mennonites kept pace with the rest of the Dutch citizenry in showing interest and patronage in the arts.

If we seek for evidence of the influence of the Anabaptist faith it must be found indirectly in the philosophical outlook of artists affected by it, rather than any direct influence on the manner of painting. The most possible direct influence might be in the choice of biblical subjects by David Joris, Lambert Jacobsz, Govert Flinck, and Rembrandt. These men were affected by Anabaptism. It must be remembered that biblical subjects in seventeenth century Holland had to be a personal choice of the artist. None would be commissioned.

This makes the fact that Rembrandt used biblical subjects in 160 paintings, 80 etchings, and 600 drawings all the more remarkable. Biblical content obviously was a suitable vehicle for Rembrandt's personal expression. And we can probably conclude that this expression was significantly affected by his Mennonite associations. These associations did not necessarily cause him to turn to biblical subjects, for his religious views were capable of permeating all his work. But perhaps the most unique seventeenth century Anabaptist contribution to Dutch painting was the sustenance its thought and its adherents gave to the greatest Dutch painter of that century.

Without being able to offer any definite proof, I would pose for consideration that Anabaptism, though on the surface suspicious of art activity, actually was a strong factor in enlarging the sphere of freedom for the seventeenth century Dutch painter. After centuries of subjection of the individual to the church or to the court, the dignity, worth, and independence of the individual were realized. Life that the painters personally knew became legitimate subject matter, and through these intimate experiences the painter was free to inject a personal subjective dimension not before known. The Anabaptist traits of directness, sincerity, and integrity; and the emphasis on inner experience and quality rather than external pretense, creed, and dogma, helped produce the environment for a new personal subjectivity in painting. This, according to Hauser, makes Dutch painting of the seventeenth century "the most important turning point on the way to the present situation, in which all objects appear as mere impressions and experiences of the subjective consciousness."[27] As it is today, art in seventeenth century Holland was an affirmation of the individual.

See also "List of Mennonite Subjects in Rembrandt's Art" by Irvin B. Horst in October 1956 issue of *Mennonite Life*, p. 154.

FOOTNOTES

1. *The Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Vol. I (Scottdale: The Mennonite Publishing House, 1955), p. 169.
2. Henry Elias Dosker, *The Dutch Anabaptists* (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1921), p. 48.
3. Although at the age of 54 Vondel joined the Roman Catholic Church. See *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Vol. IV, p. 851.
4. C. Henry Smith, *The Story of the Mennonites* (Newton: Mennonite Publication Office, 1957), pp. 200-205.
5. *The Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Vol. I, pp. 165-167.
6. Cornelius Krahn, "Art Among the Early Dutch Mennonites" (unpublished), Bethel College Historical Library, North Newton, Kansas, pp. 9-10.
7. Attilia Podesta, *Seventeenth Century Dutch Painting* (London: B. T. Batsford Limited, 1961), p. 92.
8. Horace Shipp, *The Dutch Masters* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1953), p. 97.
9. Peter and Linda Murray, *A Dictionary of Art and Artists* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1959), p. 150.
10. Cornelius Krahn, "The Artist Govert Flinck," *Mennonite Life*, Vol. XII (April 1957), pp. 52-54.
11. *The Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Vol. I, p. 169.
12. Leo Balet, *Rembrandt and Spinoza* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1962), pp. 170-173.
13. *The Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Vol. I, p. 170.
14. Jacob Rosenberg, *Rembrandt*, Vol. I (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1948), p. 109.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 112.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 110.
17. Shipp, *The Dutch Masters*, p. 54.
18. Rosenberg, *Rembrandt*, Vol. I, p. 109.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 111.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 112.
21. *The Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Vol. I, p. 169.
22. Rosenberg, *Rembrandt*, Vol. I, p. 99.
23. *The Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Vol. I, p. 169.
24. Arnold Hauser, *The Social History of Art*, Vol. II (New York: Vintage Books, 1951), p. 213.
25. *The Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Vol. I, p. 167.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 168.
27. Hauser, *The Social History of Art*, Vol. II, p. 224.

Rembrandt and Dutch Mennonite Artists in *Mennonite Life*

"Rembrandt and the Mennonites" by H. M. Rotermund, January 1952, p. 7. "Rembrandt, the Bible and the Mennonites" by Cornelius Krahn, January 1952, p. 4. "List of Mennonite Subjects in Rembrandt's Art," October 1956, p. 154. "Rembrandt Knew Mennonites" by Irvin B. Horst, October 1956, p. 148. "Rembrandt van Rijn" by N. van der Zijpp, October 1956, p. 147. "Art Among the Early Dutch Mennonites" by Cornelius Krahn, in *Proceedings of the Eleventh Conference on Mennonite Educational and Cultural Problems*, 1957, p. 55.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

The October issue of *Mennonite Life* with its report on the Amsterdam World Conference of the Mennonites is before me. I read it in its entirety and am anxious to let you know how much delighted I am with both text and pictures. This is an excellent piece of Mennonite journalism; I almost feel as if I had been present in Amsterdam. Congratulation! I appreciate particularly your own contribution ("Crossroads at Amsterdam"), and those by V. Harding and H. J. Goertz. But also the section "Echoes" was welcome, illustrating the different reactions of some attenders. V. Harding is certainly coming out on the top, and rightly so as he, though ethnically not of Mennonite stock, represents the best of the genius of the Mennonite Church—what I would call "existential Christianity," that is, a type of concrete faith, lived by.

Allow me to add a few more remarks on some of the recent issues of *Mennonite Life*. The magazine has improved tremendously in the last several years when you began to produce issues devoted entirely to special topics, such as Bible, mission, martyrs, race, and the like. This gives so much more substance to the publication than the former way of just reporting how farmer so and so or industrialist so and so managed to be thrifty. This is all right, too, but remains somewhat provincial. Now principles are discussed and the dynamics of the church's *Anabaptist legacy* is felt, becoming a real subject of concern and self-searching. In other words, it poses the basic and healthy question: why a Mennonite and not something else?

I remember Rev. J. P. Jacobszoon at his Menno Simons Lecture last year when he called quite challengingly for a more *prophetic* note within the church. Else it is bound to get stale and no longer worth all the effort. If *Mennonite Life* will heed this call (as it seems to do), then I have genuine hope for both the journal and the Church it serves.

Cordially yours,
Robert Friedmann, Kalamazoo

Dear Editor:

I am very pleased with the way you summarized and interpreted the Mennonite World Conference in the last issue of *Mennonite Life*. Nowhere else have I seen it presented as convincingly and balanced. You are right that there will be quite a bit to be done when all the papers presented will have been published. Many of the challenges should be pursued.

Not only among us, but also among Lutherans there is much talk about "revolution." The contributions in commemoration of the 450th anniversary of the Reformation are overwhelming. It is startling how sympathetically the idea of the "revolution" is treated without an exact understanding of it.

You have fittingly portrayed the change among the Mennonites along this line from the days when B. H. Unruh presented a paper on "Revolution and the Anabaptists" (1925) and now when Vincent Harding spoke on the same topic. It is clear that we cannot superficially sympathize with "revolution" as this is the case among Lutherans. Thomas Müntzer and the Peasants' War are too close to the Anabaptists. When the Lutherans speak in a positive sense about "revolution," this does not imply an upgrading of Thomas Müntzer. It indicates, however, that Lutherans are taking social change into consideration. We could speak with more justification about a revolutionary influence of Anabaptism. The revolutionary influences and impulses, not the objectives are of greatest importance. It is in this realm where the distinction between Thomas Müntzer and the Anabaptists should be sought.

We must without prejudice draw Müntzer into our historical discussions and investigations. He breathes a different spirit than the one that inspired the Anabaptists. Certainly, there are impulses, which influenced the Anabaptists as Walter Klaassen has pointed out. However, they did not fully understand Müntzer's theological background. We will have to make renewed effort in the study of the relation between the Anabaptists and Thomas Müntzer. We cannot follow H. S. Bender, and we will have to go beyond the findings of Walter Klaassen and H. J. Hillerbrand.

Very sincerely yours,
Hans-Jürgen Goertz, Hamburg

[The writer has just published a book entitled *Innere und äussere Ordnung in der Theologie Thomas Müntzers* (Leiden, 1967). See p. 44.]

Menno Simons and Secular Authority

By John F. Kauffman

THIS ARTICLE IS in part a response to the challenge, is there any reason why the Mennonite Church should continue to exist? Does that group of Christians which traces its heritage back to the Anabaptist movement in the sixteenth century, to the radical left wing of the Reformation, have a distinct contemporary message for a highly secular world?

Gordon Kaufman recently re-stated this challenge. With a hint of anticipation, Dr. Kaufman said, "It may be that we as Mennonites have some special mission to perform in the coming years for the Christian church at large and for the world, that our unique past and our peculiar understanding of the Christian faith has prepared us for a task for which no others are similarly equipped."[1] If we have a task, what is it?

Dr. Kaufman not only asked the question, but also indicated where the answer to this question may be found. "It is essential, then, that we seek to understand the meaning of our past," said Kaufman, "what we have been and are, and that we open ourselves to the present world in which we live, so that we may, hopefully, better discern what is our proper work in the future that is opening before us."

Finding the answer to a present challenge in the past is the clue which Cornelius Krahn also indicates. In the April, 1967, issue of *Mennonite Life*, Dr. Krahn said, ". . . generally speaking, the heirs of a great tradition have not yet uncovered all parts of their hidden legacy."[2]

This question, what hidden parts of our Anabaptist legacy may be relevant today, invites us to look at both the present and the past: to the present to see what particular problem faces the present bearers of the Anabaptist witness and to the past to find a man who might have confronted a similar situation in his own day. A significant figure in the early development of the Anabaptist movement is Menno Simons. Did he speak to a situation in his day that resembles what the Mennonite Church in North America faces today?

Today, the Mennonite Church in the United States is in the midst of a country torn by internal controversy over Civil Rights and Vietnam. Increasingly the Mennonite Church is being forced to speak to these situations by a generation of Mennonites which has achieved self-awareness in the midst of a Cold War under the threat of a nuclear holocaust. The Mennonite Church is being challenged to become involved in the secular world.

Without further analyzing the present controversy, and perhaps it cannot be analyzed since we are in the midst of it, this article attempts to consider these questions: In what situation did Menno find himself and what was his reaction then? Can what he said to his situation help to alleviate ours?

The Purpose of Menno's Writing

On April 7, 1535,[3] an incident occurred which helped to bring about a change in the life of Menno Simons, a Catholic priest in Witmarsum, a village in the Dutch province of West Friesland. Nearly three hundred men, including Menno's brother, were killed on that day. They were part of an unorganized group derogatorily called "Anabaptists," and associated in most minds of the time with the Münsterites.

Prior to this time, Menno had had doubts about Roman Catholicism and in his teaching had already become a biblicist. His actual break with the Roman church came about nine months after the episode at Bolsward,[4] when he decided to give guidance to the group of people whom he saw "willingly give their lives and estates for their doctrine and faith."[5]

Menno did much to unify the Anabaptists through his itinerant preaching; however, his writings were also very influential. One of the most important of his early works was the *Foundation of Christian Doctrine*, written in 1539. The purpose of this booklet was twofold, as indeed were all of his writings.

The primary purpose of this book, ". . . in Menno's mind, was to serve as a handbook for his fellow believers in matters of faith and practice in the church."[6] His first purpose was to unite the Anabaptists and secondly, he wanted to defend the Anabaptist doc-

trines in the eyes of the theologians and government authorities of his time. "Menno hoped that thereby persecution would be brought to an end and toleration would be granted to his congregations."[7]

It is in relation to the second situation that Menno directly addressed those men with political authority in the various provinces and cities where Anabaptists were to be found. The question needs to be raised at this point, on what basis could Menno, speaking from his position as the leader of a small group of persecuted Christians, address complaints to those men in places of political authority?

Basis for Addressing Secular Authorities

Menno wrote first simply to individuals who were no different, in spite of the fact that they also held political office, from the Anabaptists they persecuted. Menno reminded the rulers that "Together with you we are descended from one father, Adam, and from one mother, Eve, created by the same God. We are clothed with the same nature, yearning for rest and peace, for wives and children, as well as you, and by nature fearful of death as are all creatures."[8]

While Menno addressed himself to individuals rather than to institutions, he also made the optimistic assumption that those individuals with authority could become ". . . a pious, reasonable, yes, a God-fearing magistracy . . . followers of Christ and His Word."[9]

This assumption substantiates the fact that Menno wrote to individuals; a follower of Christ is not an institution. However, Menno did not consider the rulers as being part of some evil order or kingdom in which the Word of God did not apply. Rather, Menno said that the secular authorities should be followers of Christ. Perhaps if he would have spoken directly to this question, Menno may even have admitted that followers of Christ could hold civil office.

At any rate, Menno's concern was for those in political office, no matter how insignificant their position. In 1539 Menno wrote that he desired for all secular authorities "that they may be so taught and trained by the Spirit and Word of God that they may sincerely seek, honor, fear, and serve Christ Jesus, the true head of all lords and potentates: so that they may rightly administer and prosecute their office. . . ."[10]

At the same time, however, Menno warned the secular authorities not to "boast that you are mighty ones upon the earth, and have great power, but boast in this rather if so be you rule your land in the true fear of God with virtuous wisdom and Christian righteousness to the praise of the Lord."[11]

In fact Menno called on those holding political office to acknowledge their allegiance to God. "Do not usurp the judgment and kingdom of Christ," said Menno, "for He alone is the ruler of the conscience and besides Him there is none other. . . . You must hearken to God above the emperor, and obey God's Word more than that of the emperor."[12]

The basis, then, for Menno's addressing the secular authorities and one of the reasons why Menno expected the rulers to operate within the Christian ethic was his belief that all authority comes from God, authority not only in the church and the spiritual conduct of Christians, but also authority in the mundane operations of secular society. Menno wrote to "Illustrious lords and princes, you who are appointed of God to be heads and rulers. . . ."[13] He called upon them to "Acknowledge your superior, Christ Jesus, who is made to you a Prince and a Judge of God Himself. The heavens, even the heavens are the Lord's, saith David, but the earth hath he given to the children of men."[14]

Obey God Above Men

Christians should obey the Word of God whether it applies to either sacred or secular matters. In relation to the obedience of secular authorities Menno stated simply that ". . . we resist neither the emperor, the king, nor any authority in that to which they are called of God; but we are ready to obey to the death in all things which are not contrary to God and His Word."[15]

We must remember that one of the chief reasons for Menno's apologetic writings was an effort to stop the persecution of the Anabaptists. In 1552 he wrote a booklet titled, *Reply to False Accusations*. The second accusation to which Menno responded was "they say that we will not obey the magistracy." His answer was pointed: "We publicly and unequivocally confess that the office of a magistrate is ordained of God, even as we have always confessed, since according to our small talent we have served the Word of the Lord. And moreover, in the meantime, we have obeyed them when not contrary to the Word of God. We intend to do so all our lives."[16]

At the same time, however, that Menno insisted that the Anabaptists obeyed those with political authority, he continually emphasized that this obedience is in effect only so long as the "civil regulations . . . are not contrary to the Word of God."[17]

What did Menno include among those things contrary to the Word of God? First of all, what is the Word of God? Quite simply, Menno referred to two distinct concepts when he spoke of the Word of God. One of these is the written word, which he called the Gospel or the scriptures. Indeed, the use which Menno made of the scriptures is immediately apparent to anyone who reads any of Menno's writings! Rare is the paragraph which does not either quote, paraphrase or allude to a biblical passage.

On the other hand, Menno more specifically referred to Jesus Christ as being the "living Word of God." Menno's first writing after renouncing Roman Catholicism, a booklet titled *The Spiritual Resurrection*, presented the thesis that an individual can know if

he is a Christian by comparing himself to the image of Christ. The Word of God is not only something written, but also a living example. ". . . all those who are born and regenerated from above out of God, through the living Word," said Menno, "are also of the mind and disposition, and have the same aptitude for good that He has of whom they are born and begotten. For what the nature of God or Christ is, we may readily learn from the Scriptures."[18]

The Christian is presented with an example, the living Word as Menno said, so that the Christian can know how to live. "So Christ is everywhere represented to us as humble, meek, merciful, just, holy, wise, spiritual, long-suffering, patient, peaceable, lovely, obedient, and good. . . ."[19]

The Anabaptists therefore obeyed the civil authorities in everything except those regulations which would require them to misrepresent the image of God, the living Word, which among other things is just, merciful and peaceable.

The position of Menno is clear on the point of civil disobedience if a civil regulation is inconsistent with the Word of God. "Oppression and tribulation for the sake of the Lord's Word" provides for one of the "true signs by which the Church of Christ may be known."[20] This necessary persecution is inevitable in face of Menno's insistence that if the rulers ". . . wish to rule and lord it above Christ Jesus, or contrary to Christ Jesus in our consciences, according to their whim, this we do not grant them. We would rather sacrifice possessions and life than knowingly to sin against Jesus Christ and His holy Word for the sake of any man, be he emperor or king."[21] However, the opposition to the demands of the rulers when they go contrary to the Word of God is not carried out through physical force, because ". . . it is forbidden to us to fight with physical weapons."[22]

Although God will take care of the destruction of His enemies and has forbidden the Christian to fight with physical weapons, Menno insisted that ". . . Christians should fight, namely, with the Word of God . . . ."[23]

"We do not contend with carnal, but spiritual weapons," said Menno in a *Brief and Clear Confession* to John a Lasco in 1544, "with patience and the Word of God, against all flesh, the world, and the devil, trusting in Christ. Nor shall there ever be found any other weapons with us."[24] Menno's example on this point is Christ Himself. "If Christ fights His enemies with the sword of His mouth," reasoned Menno, "if He smites the earth with the rod of His mouth and slays the wicked with the breath of His lips; and if we are to be conformed unto His image, how can we, then, oppose our enemies with any other sword?"[25]

The Conscience of Society

Menno made clear his belief that the Christian should oppose those in authority when they misuse their God-ordained office. When the Christian is responsive to the Word of God he must serve as a conscience to society and to those in authority. Menno presented a basis for this Christian function of social conscience by insisting that ". . . love compels us respectfully and humbly to show all high officials . . . what the Word of the Lord commands them, how they should be minded, and how they should rightfully execute their office to the praise and glory of the Lord."[26]

Menno did not waste any words in reminding the authorities what their God-given function was. "Therefore, dear sirs, take heed;" said Menno in his *Foundation of Christian Doctrine*, "this is the task to which you are called:

> namely, to chastise and punish, in the true fear of God with fairness and Christian discretion, manifest criminals, such as thieves, murderers, Sodomites, adulterers, seducers, sorcerers, the violent, highwaymen, robbers, etc. Your task is to do justice between a man and his neighbor, to deliver the oppressed out of the hand of the oppressor; also to restrain by reasonable means, that is, without tyranny and bloodshed, manifest deceivers who so miserably lead poor helpless souls by hundreds of thousands into destruction. . . . In this way, in all love, without force, violence, and blood, you may enlarge, help and protect the Kingdom of God with gracious consent and permission, with wise counsel and a pious, unblamable life.[27]

Note that even the state, or those individuals with secular authority, is "to restrain by *reasonable* means, that is *without* tyranny and bloodshed." Again, this is based on Menno's assumption that the rulers could become "followers of Christ and His Word."

To serve as the conscience of secular society goes beyond reminding authorities what their functions are. Implied in the act of reminding is the criticism that something is not being done right. Obviously Menno would not take it upon himself to remind the authorities what their duties are unless he felt that they were not meeting their obligations.

Call to Repentance

The particular situation to which Menno addressed himself was the persecution of the Anabaptists. It was at this point that Menno most strongly felt that the authorities were not doing their duty. Therefore, after reminding the rulers what their God-given authority covers, specifically, the protection of the innocent, Menno pleaded with them in several of his writings, to study the doctrine of the Anabaptists for themselves and decide for themselves what is the "pure doctrine, testimony, and scripture of Christ Jesus."[28]

The extent to which Menno personally felt concern for both the persecuted and those doing the persecuting is great. He indicated a two-fold reason for his request

that the authorities examine the doctrine of the Anabaptists:

We would have you know exactly what kind of doctrine we hold to, what kind of faith we have, what kind of lives we lead, and how we are disposed—the things on account of which we have to bear and sufler so much, be imprisoned, exiled, robbed, derided, defamed, and slain as poor innocent sheep. This we would have you know in order that you may sincerely lament and weep over your former bloody deeds before God and with greater circumspection guard and keep yourselves from such things and from now on be a pious, reasonable, yes, a God-fearing magistracy; not oppressors and destroyers, but fathers and guardians of all miserable and wretched persons; not exterminators but defenders of righteousness; not persecutors but followers of Christ and His Word.[29]

As Menno asked the authorities to judge, on the basis of their own evaluation, the soundness of the Anabaptist doctrines, he also called them to repentance. The conscience of society not only reminds individuals what their duties are and speaks up when proper duties are not performed, but also calls these individuals to repentance. "Dear Sirs, seek God;" admonished Menno, "fear God; serve God with all your might; do justice to widows, orphans, strangers, the sad, and the oppressed; wash your hands of blood; rule your lands with wisdom and peace."[30]

"Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God . . . awake, and repent . . ." cried Menno. "Repent sincerely with a repentance acceptable to God, wail and weep with David, put on sackcloth and raiments of hair, scatter ashes upon your heads; humble yourselves with the king of Nineveh, confess your sins with Manasseh; die unto your ambitious flesh and pride."[31]

Those magistrates who would not repent would get their punishment from God himself, warned Menno, not by the hands of Christians, but as he revealed in *The Blasphemy of John of Leiden*, by other non-Christian magistrates. And the fact remains that the rulers who continue to persecute the Anabaptists will find a people that refuses to fight back physically, but which must remain true to the Word of God and respectfully and humbly serve as the conscience of their persecutors.

It was to the authorities who properly fulfilled their obligations to their subjects that Menno could pronounce his personal benediction:

May the great and merciful Lord Jesus, who is a Lord of lords and a King of kings, grant your Noble Highnesses and Honorable Excellencies, altogether rightly to know the truth, faithfully to walk in it, piously to rule your cities and provinces in happy peace, to the praise of your God and the salvation of many souls! This we wish with all our heart. Amen.[32]

A Message for the Sons of Menno

Does Menno say anything to the younger generation spoken of initially that demands for the Church to become involved in the secular world? For the young Mennonite who finds the basis for his action in the love ethic of Jesus Christ, does a study of Menno reveal any heritage that can speak to the present controversy over Civil Rights and Vietnam?

Nonresistance is often the only link with the Anabaptist heritage for many young Mennonites today. However, this doctrine often serves as a means and not as an end. That is, nonresistance does not mean noninvolvement with a world in need of the dynamics of love; rather, nonresistance has become a means whereby the young Mennonite can join the stream of humanity and encounter a man where he is.

The disillusionment of some young Mennonites with the present stand of the Mennonite Church on questions of working for equal civil rights for minority groups or of criticizing government foreign policy is tempered by the thought that the historic peace church is based on a strict separation of the Christian from the world. The church, as a group of believers, is to have no dealings with the state, as an evil institution in existence only for the sake of providing temporary order.

However, Menno wrote booklets addressed to men holding political office. He told the authorities what their functions were. He called these authorities to repentance if they did not meet standards set up for Christians to follow.

Perhaps the argument can be presented that Menno criticized the authorities for their persecution of the Anabaptists and that we can criticize our government only when we are wrongly persecuted. Menno said nothing about Negroes or about Vietnam. Therefore, we cannot refer to Menno to substantiate any contemporary position on these issues.

It needs to be said, however, that Menno only had one concern to write about and it was in relation to a minority group. The actions of civil authorities in the situation in which Menno found himself were unjust and he criticized them. He spoke to his situation on the basis of what he found in the Word of God and we today can do no better than Menno in placing the basis of our own lives upon the "living Word." Menno's motto, placed on the title page of each of his writings is 1 Corinthians 3:11: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

The point of this is that Menno does not advise us to become involved in secular activities nor does he tell us to withdraw from these same secular activities. Menno did criticize in his own situation those things which he felt to be contrary to the Word of God, and this is what he tells us today. If, on examining the Word of God, we find injustices, Menno gives us a

historical precedent for speaking to the situation. In fact, Dr. Krahn has suggested, "So often the sons of Menno should be the first to call attention to injustices in their communities and in their country and be consistent in their witness."[33]

FOOTNOTES

1. Gordon D. Kaufman, "A Vision for a Mennonite College," delivered at the Inauguration of Orville L. Voth, Eighth President of Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas, on February 5, 1967.
2. Cornelius Krahn, "Toward a Restitution of the Witness," *Mennonite Life*, XXII (April, 1967), p. 51.
3. Harold S. Bender, "A Brief Biography of Menno Simons" in *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons* ed. by John C. Wenger (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1956), p. 11. Hereafter as *CW*.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
5. *Reply to Gellius Faber* (1554), *CW*, p. 670.
6. Cornelius Krahn, "Menno Simons' Fundament-Book of 1539-1540," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, XXII (October, 1939), p. 225.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Foundation of Christian Doctrine* (1539), *CW*, p. 117.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 106.
10. *Why I Do Not Cease Teaching and Writing* (1539), *CW*, p. 304.
11. *Foundation*, p. 206.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 204.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 118.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 118.
16. *Reply to False Accusations* (1552), *CW*, p. 549.
17. *Foundation*, p. 200.
18. *The Spiritual Resurrection* (c. 1536), *CW*, p. 55.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 55-6.
20. *Reply*, p. 743.
21. *The Cross of the Saints* (1554), *CW*, p. 604.
22. *The Blasphemy of John of Leiden* (1535), *CW*, p. 45.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
24. *Brief and Clear Confession* (1544), *CW*, p. 424.
25. *Blasphemy*, p. 44.
26. *Reply*, p. 549.
27. *Foundation*, p. 193.
28. *Not Cease Teaching and Writing*, p. 292.
29. *Foundation*, p. 192.
30. *A Pathetic Supplication to All Magistrates* (1552), *CW*, p. 529.
31. *Foundation*, pp. 119, 206.
32. *Pathetic Supplication*, p. 530.
33. Cornelius Krahn, "Toward a Restitution of the Witness," pp. 51-2.

The Anabaptist View of the Holy Spirit

By Peter J. Klassen

ANABAPTIST THEOLOGY frequently reflected the fact that the movement was not a homogeneous entity, but consisted largely of more or less autonomous congregations. Geographic, cultural, and linguistic differences accentuated theological diversity, so that no simple scheme of classification can be applied to the movement as a whole nor to its various teachings. Helpful attempts to categorize Anabaptism, as illustrated in the work of scholars such as Ernst Troeltsch, Karl Holl, George H. Williams or Robert Friedmann, demonstrate the wide range of belief and emphasis that characterized the movement.

It is therefore not surprising to note that there is not only one Anabaptist view of the Holy Spirit; one cannot speak simply of the Anabaptism doctrine of the third person of the trinity. Indeed, differences among Anabaptists in their view of the role of the Holy Spirit in the salvific experience have elicited descriptions of the movement as being bibliocentric, Christocentric, or pneumatocentric. Yet, despite different emphases, Anabaptists shared many beliefs in their understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit. Throughout Anabaptism there was a profound conviction that the Spirit was at the center of Christian experience, enabling him who had chosen to follow Christ to rise above a slavish legalism to the transforming life of joyful obedience.

Anabaptists did not concern themselves with producing a systematic analysis of the nature of the Spirit; they were more concerned with how he worked in the life of the believer and the church. Propositional formulation, where it occurred at all, was in harmony with classic Christian definition,[1] but was regularly subordinated to existential expression. Anabaptists cared little for such matters as the procession of the Spirit; for them there would be no *filioque* debate. Instead, interest centered on how God and man might be brought together through the Holy Spirit so that man might be re-created in the image of God.

The Holy Spirit and the Building of the Church

Anabaptists believed that the church was built through the action of the Holy Spirit. It was the Spirit who convicted man of his need of salvation, and who then worked the miraculous transformation of the new birth, not simply declaring man righteous, as in forensic justification, but rather bringing about an actual ontological change within man, so that the regenerated person became a participant in the divine nature itself. Peter Riedemann maintained that through the Spirit,

man is made "one with God,"[2] so that humanity participates in divinity, even as the Incarnation, the Holy Spirit brought divinity into humanity. For Dirk Philips, the Holy Spirit infused into man "divine power, giving faith, love, hope, and all divine virtues,"[3] thus effecting a new creation.

This newness of life, which the believer shared with all those in the church who had accepted and were continuously accepting the call to discipleship, could come only through the agency of the Spirit. Of himself, man was powerless to free himself from the bondage of sin, and human reason alone could not dispel man's spiritual blindness. Menno echoed typical sentiments when he asserted that divine love and grace "cannot be rightly grasped and understood with the blind eyes and the foolish wisdom of the flesh, it must be grasped and understood with the inward eyes of the mind and through the unction of the Holy Ghost."[4] Other leaders such as Balthasar Hubmaier, Pilgram Marbeck, and Peter Riedemann agreed that the Holy Spirit is the indispensable agent in the new birth.

While Anabaptists agreed that only the Holy Spirit could transform man into a child of God, they held various views concerning the reception of the Spirit. Opponents of the Anabaptists accused them of maintaining that the Holy Spirit was given to man without "the outward word, through their own preparation and works."[5] Luther contended that the Anabaptists rejected outward ordinances by which the Spirit comes to man; instead, they constantly stressed "Spirit, Spirit, Spirit." Yet such a view reflects a distorted image of Anabaptism, for many of the leaders of the movement insisted that the Spirit was given to man through the external ministry of preaching.[6] Marbeck, Riedemann, and Leopold Scharnschlager agreed that the Spirit came to man through the hearing or reading of the word. This, however, did not mean that the Holy Spirit was always given to man whenever preaching occurred, for the rebellious heart could not receive the Spirit; rather, the normal pattern was that the Spirit was given to him who had positively responded to the preaching of the word as it was faithfully declared by someone whom the Spirit had prepared to convey the message. Thus, both preacher and hearer were instruments of the Spirit.[7]

Other Anabaptists, such as Hans Denck, placed more emphasis on the subjective dimensions of faith. Denck, with his strong tendencies toward mysticism, rejected the belief that the Holy Spirit must have media such as preaching, sacraments, or even the written word, to impart himself to man. Rather, Denck suggested that the Holy Spirit communicates directly with the spirit of man. Furthermore, in his *Was geredt sei*[8] Denck contended that the Spirit of God is in all men from birth; however, if man persists in hardening his heart and rejecting the Spirit, the divine-human relationship can be broken.[9]

Anabaptists agreed that those who responded positively to the inner voice would find that the Spirit would be their guide in the *Nachfolge Christi*, empowering them to bear confident witness to their faith and to endure the reproach of the cross. This joyful awareness of the indwelling Spirit, who inspired and led them, enabled the Anabaptists to accept a discipleship that often led to persecution and death. At the same time, Anabaptists were convinced that there could be no genuine Christianity apart from this submission to the will of the Spirit. Felix Mantz observed that only by recognizing the authority of the Spirit could the believer become "perfect (*vollkommen*) in God,"[10] while Marbeck assured his associates that all could experience the reality of divine direction, for the Spirit would lead the child of God into the truth of the divine will and pleasure.[11]

For the Anabaptists, the essential evidence of being a child of God was not participation in any sacramental, liturgical, or ecclesiastical act, but rather "walking in the will of the Spirit."[12] Such a view found frequent reiteration, as in the Schleitheim Confession, in the Zofingen Disputation, in the writings of Menno, *et al.* This obedience to the Spirit was evidenced by the fruits of the Spirit. He who did not have the fruits did not have the Spirit, for the Anabaptists recognized as genuine only that faith "through which the Holy Spirit and the love of God come into the heart, and which is active, powerful, and operative in all outward obedience and commanded works."[13] Anabaptists, denouncing those Reformation leaders who failed to recognize the unity of belief and life, emphatically rejected theological views reflecting an anthropology that denied the reality of the Spirit-transformed life.[14] They were convinced that the Spirit produced an ontological change within the believer so that he could overcome evil with good, thus demonstrating love in all human relations and thereby giving proof of his faith, for "where love is, there is a Christian."[15]

The possession of the Spirit was regarded as the mark of the new covenant. Swiss Brethren at the Bern Disputation in 1538, defending a view common to Anabaptism, sharply distinguished between the promise of the old covenant and the fulfillment of the new. This fulfillment, in essence, was the Spirit active in the life of the community of believers. And just as the New Testament church had been characterized by the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit, so now the community of believers was to recapture the early reality that had authenticated the new covenant.[16]

The Holy Spirit and Scripture

One of the charges frequently leveled against the Anabaptists was that they stressed the "inner word," direct inspiration and revelation from God, and thus depreciated the outer word, the Scriptures. Justus

Menius expressed the sentiments of Luther and Melanchthon, as well as numerous other reformers, when he charged that for the Anabaptists "No Scriptures are of any consequence, but alone divine dreams, visions, and the heavenly revelations, through which the glory of God speaks to and deals with these saints, teaching them things far higher, holier, more spiritual, and more ineffable than are to be found in the Scriptures."[17] Modern scholars, such as Karl Holl,[18] Gorden Rupp,[19] and Lydia Müller[20] have expressed similar views, alleging that for the Anabaptists "The *regula fidei* are not the Scriptures, but the Spirit speaking in the *Seelenabgrund* of the elect."[21] At the same time, some scholars of today have attempted to demonstrate that the Anabaptists were pre-eminently men of the Bible, "biblicists" who were bound by the letter of the Scriptures.[22]

Yet Anabaptists defy simple classification, either as "biblicists" or as "spiritualists." There were within the movement members who held every conceivable position on the continuum between a rigid, literalistic biblicism and a highly individualistic, inspirationist spiritualism. In spite of this, however, it should be noted that the preponderance of source materials indicates clearly that for the majority of Anabaptists, a very high view of Scripture prevailed. Walther Koehler has described the Anabaptists as "Bible Christians," while Leonhard von Muralt has noted that they were bound by the *"Schriftprinzip."*[23]

No doubt, this reliance on biblical authority sometimes led to an undue bondage to the letter. Thus, the Swiss Brethren, determined to reject everything not specifically commanded in the Scriptures, were sometimes driven to take a legalistic position that derived from an arid biblicism, and reflected itself in unfortunate attempts to defend views from the silence of the Bible.[24] Similar traces are to be found in Menno.[25]

Usually, however, the Anabaptists were less concerned about viewing the Bible as the objective deposit of truth, complete and adequate of itself, than they were about emphasizing the role of Scripture in divine revelation to man. The Scriptures were regarded as the channel through which the Word of God could come to man, and it was precisely at this point that the role of the Spirit was crucial.[26] Only the Spirit, the "teacher of a true understanding and apprehension of blessedness,"[27] could interpret the written book. Without the divine interpreter, the Scriptures must remain a barren book. Failure to let the Spirit illuminate his word would lead to heresy and unbelief.[28]

Since the Scriptures could not be understood simply by reason, they could not be measured by rational standards. Denck pointed out that anyone who would rely on human reason would encounter difficulties and contradictions in the Bible. In his *Wer die Wahrheit wahrlich lieb hat,* he enumerated various contradictory passages. But these statements appeared contradictory only to reason; Scripture is not bound by the dictates of reason, but by the interpretation of the Holy Spirit. Only he who has the Spirit can understand God's message through his written word.

For the Anabaptists, the teaching of the Scripture was inseparable from the witness of the Spirit. While the divine-human encounter could be facilitated in various ways, including observing the revelation of God in nature, the role of the Spirit remained crucial. The Spirit might speak to man without the written or spoken word, but these media, if not made alive by the Spirit, must remain barren. At the same time, Spirit and Scripture could never be in opposition; rather, the Scripture served as a norm to prevent claims of extra-biblical revelation. Ordinarily, Anabaptists agreed that the Spirit spoke through the Scriptures, but even in Anabaptists such as Denck, who insisted that the Spirit was not bound to the Scriptures, there was no thought of permitting direct, personal revelation to supersede the written standard.

The Anabaptist attempt to maintain a creative tension between Spirit and letter is well illustrated in the debate between Marbeck and Schwenckfeld. To spiritualists, such as Schwenckfeld, who regarded Anabaptism as excessively bound to externals, including the written word, Marbeck replied that the Spirit uses precisely such media to communicate with man. At the same time, Marbeck warned some of his fellow-Anabaptists not to be too narrowly bound to the letter, for such an attitude could easily degenerate into a legalistic biblicism where divine grace was supplanted by human effort, where love was displaced by human commandment, and where dynamic faith was superseded by an ethical system. For the Anabaptists, salvation was not to be found through Spirit or word alone, but through their vital interrelationship. Leopold Scharnschlager pointed to the indispensable work of the Spirit: "If the Holy Scriptures in their meaning and understanding are not opened in the heart by the Holy Ghost, then not only the Holy Scriptures are dead, but Christ himself with His teaching, His life, suffering and death, yea, even His resurrection are dead; they are of no use to a man to eternal life, even granted that he reads and studies as long as he likes."[29]

The Holy Spirit and the Community of the Church

For the Anabaptists, the unity of believers did not consist in adherence to theological propositions, held in common by the body of the faithful. Indeed, doctrinal rectitude, important though it might be, did not constitute the *sina qua non* of living faith; rather, doctrinal orthodoxy was less important than the evidence of the Spirit's indwelling of the believer.

Those who were indwelt by the Spirit were bound together by that Spirit, who thus became the basis for

and bond of fellowship. Those who had the Spirit were one—one with God and one with each other. Thus, there arose a dynamic community, centered in the Spirit, and bound together by living relationships of the members, first with the Center, then with each other.[30]

Since all believers shared this divine possession, all members of the faithful community were entitled to consideration and respect. Fellow-believers recognized that of God in others. Thus, members of the congregations encouraged each other to speak and act as the Spirit directed, and recognized that the Spirit did not manifest himself in identical ways to all believers. Similarly, congregations stressed the right of all members to participate in spiritual sharing, so that all might benefit from a knowledge of the Spirit's working in the individual.

Such an attitude had profound implications for Anabaptist ecclesiology, since it led logically to the conviction that the locus of the living Word was the congregation, not a particular ecclesiastical office. Thus, in the congregation of the faithful there was no one, no minister, who alone acted as the channel through whom God spoke. All who had the Spirit were voices of the Spirit, entitled to participate in the experience of sharing and examining.

In the believers' congregation—the assembly of those bound together by a common participation in the Holy Spirit—each member assumed responsibility for the well-being of all. When selfish desire of the individual distorted the message of the Spirit, the united witness of other members brought recognition of error, thus permitting the development of a theology in which prophetic and mystical elements were held in balance.

The united witness of the congregation was thus instrumental in protecting the believer from the excesses of subjective inspirationism, while the Spirit within the believer freed him from bondage to a wooden literalness of the written word. At the same time, the Scriptures remained the norm by which the individual and collective spiritual experience could be measured within the context of *Heilsgeschichte*.

Anabaptists were convinced that, while the Spirit indwelt all believers, each person remained an individual, and his spiritual experiences were not simply a duplication of those of another. Thus, each believer had something to gain from, and contribute to, the shared life of the congregation. No member of the congregation could be overlooked, for the Spirit was not bound by human ability and human criteria. Recognition of the dignity of the individual was strengthened by the conviction that the presence of the Spirit gave nobility and worth to all.

Most Anabaptists believed that the Holy Spirit expressed himself through the consensus of the believing community, the local congregation. As the members shared their lives with each other, the Spirit, operating within them, moved them to particular truths and insights. The faithful member was expected to share the sentiments of Menno: ". . . if I err in some things, which I hope by the grace of God is not the case, I pray everyone for the Lord's sake, lest I be put to shame, that if anyone has stronger and more convincing truth he through brotherly exhortation and instruction might assist me. I desire with my heart to accept it if he is right. Deal with me according to the intention of the Spirit and the Word of God."[31]

This emphasis upon subordination of the individual to the group, and this adherence to a consensus theology did not imply rejection of formal leadership within the group; rather, Anabaptists recognized that leadership was not to become a pretext for authoritarianism, for the reality of fellowship made even the leader a servant rather than a master. Authority rested in the living community of the faithful. In prayer, in free discussion, in study of the Scripture, the group prepared for the continuing experience of divine self-revelation, so that, in keeping with the apostolic tradition, they could say, "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us." Such an experience afforded a basis for fellowship with others, not only in the immediate congregation, nor the larger brotherhood, but with all those who were prepared to participate in the sharing of a greater measure of the dynamic of the Holy Spirit.

1. See, for example, Peter Riedemann's statement on the Trinity in his *Account of Our Religion, Doctrine and Faith*, tr. Kathleen Hasenberg (London, 1950).
2. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
3. *Enchiridion* (Scottdale, Pa. 1910), p. 377.
4. *Complete Writings* (Scottdale, Pa., 1956), p. 328.
5. Confessio Augustana, art. V.
6. See William Klassen, "The Hermeneutics of Pilgram Marbeck," unpub. Th.D. dissertation, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1960.
7. *Das Kunstbuch*, pp. 293f.
8. (1526), p. 32.
9. *Bekenntnis* (1525), 23.
10. Leonhard von Muralt und Walther Schmid, ed., *Quellen zur Geschichte der Taeufer in der Schweiz*. Erster Band: Zuerich (Zuerich, 1952), p. 219.
11. *Das Kunstbuch*, p. 150.
12. Von Muralt, *op. cit.*, pp. 236f.
13. Pilgram Marbeck. *Verantwortung*, quoted in H. S. Bender, "Walking in the Resurrection," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, XXXV (1961), p. 101.
14. Cf. T. F. Torrance's assertion that "Luther's doctrine of *Aufrichtung* . . . means that the believer does not really learn to live on the resurrection side of the cross" (*The Theology of the Reformers* [London, 1956], p. 72).
15. Menno Simons. *Complete Writings*, p. 917.
16. Walter Klaassen, "The Anabaptist Doctrine of the Holy Spirit," *M.Q.R.* XXXV (1961), pp. 132-3.
17. *Der Wiedertaeufer Lehre und Geheimnis* (Wittenberg, 1530), quoted in Wilhelm Wiswedel, "The Inner and Outer Word: A Study in the Anabaptist Doctrine of Scripture," *M.Q.R.*, XXVI (1952), p. 173.
18. "Luther und die Schwaermer," *Gesammelte Aufsaetze zur Kirchengeschichte*, I (Tuebingen, 1923), pp. 420-467.
19. "Word and Spirit in the First Years of the Reformation," *Archiv fuer Reformationsgeschichte*, vol. 49 (1958) pp. 13-26.
20. *Der Kommunismus der maehrischen Brueder* (Leipzig, 1927).
21. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
22. See, for example, John C. Wenger, "The Biblicism of the Anabaptists," *The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision*, ed. G. F. Hershberger (Scottdale, Pa., 1957), pp. 167-179.
23. Quoted in Wiswedel, *op. cit.*, pp. 176, 177.
24. Harold S. Bender, *Conrad Grebel* (Goshen, Ind., 1950), p. 176.

25. Cornelius Krahn, *Menno Simons* (Karlsruhe, 1936), p. 135.
26. A stimulating discussion will be found in J. A. Oosterbaan, "The Theology of Menno Simons," *M.Q.R.*, XXXV (1961), pp. 187-196; 237.
27. *Das Kunstbuch*, p. 307.
28. Wiswedel, *op. cit.*, p. 179.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 180.
30. Cf. Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (New York, 1958), p. 45.
31. *Complete Writings*, p. 65.

"The Good Old Days"
A Russian Mennonite Document from 1835

Introduction and Translation
By John B. Toews

THE FOLLOWING REPORT, translated from a German version dated June 23, 1835, was addressed to "Herrn Sudermann auf Kaldowa." The document was found among old papers by Philip Cornies early in 1923. Cornies served as the vice-chairman of the *Verband Bürger Holländischer Herkunft* at the time. The organization's negotiations with the Soviet Government had reached a very critical point, and a portion of its correspondence was secretly sent abroad via German Diplomatic mail. In February, 1923, Cornies dispatched the document to B. B. Janz in Kharkov, then chairman of the *Verband*. It eventually reached B. H. Unruh in Karlsruhe, who sent it on to the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization in Rosthern, Saskatchewan. Here it was deposited in the files of A. A. Friesen. After his death the files were willed to Bethel College Historical Library. The document was discovered in these files in the course of my research on the Mennonite emigration from Soviet Russia.

The author of the report cannot be identified. In a footnote Philip Cornies conjectures that it was Johann Cornies. He argues the surviving copy (the original was lost) was sent by the author to his friend, a certain Mr. Sudermann, perhaps living on a Mennonite estate in Prussia. The original may have been addressed to the "Fürsorgekommittee in Odessa," or the "Gelehrtenkommitee in St. Petersburg," since Cornies worked in close relationship with both committees. Certainly the "Black Year" of 1833 was long remembered in the Mennonite Colonies, but whether this account came from a prominent leader such as Cornies, or simply an interested observer is difficult to ascertain. Whatever the case may be, its value as a historical document is beyond question.

The translation itself attempts to simplify the involved sentence structure and archaic usage found in the report. In order to ensure a better rendition into English, the translation is rather free. Parts of the account contained excessive description and appeared repetitious. These were reduced by leaving out those sections which in no way altered the narrative. Such omissions are indicated by several dots at the end of a sentence.

Brief Report on the Conditions of Cropfailure During the Two Years 1833 and 1834

I. About the Weather and its Consequences

For some time now our Molotschna Mennonite settlements have suffered from the lack of full productivity.

The absence of any early rain has especially reduced the growth of the winter wheat in the entire colony, an area of approximately 1,200 square verst.[1]

The year 1830, with its continuous early summer drought and constant high easterly winds, threatened complete crop failure. At last a few showers arrived and gave the farmer a meager harvest which was hardly sufficient for men and animals. During the summer of 1832 high temperatures brought a complete crop failure; rains and dew completely disappeared; winds withered all vegetation to its very roots, and everything was wrapped in an atmosphere of thick dust, which the sun's rays, even at high noon, could barely pierce.

Only a pale disc was visible through the darkened atmosphere, and it appeared that nature had shrouded itself in a cloak of mourning and wanted to serve as

a messenger announcing the catastrophe of the coming year. When fall arrived the winter seed was planted as usual. It was planted in completely dry soil and could not germinate because of the continuing drought during fall and winter. In place of the usual snow storms in our steppe regions, the air was daily filled with clouds of dust throughout the winter. The already loose topsoil became pulverized through the dry but moderate night frosts. It was carried by the wind from the grainfields, grazing lots and hay fields like smoke. It rose as high as the clouds and was so thick that often the neighbor's house, 35 or 40 steps away, could not be seen. The dust cloud, driven by great wind, found its way through the windows and small cracks in the houses, covering the furniture with thick layers. Dust accumulated along the village roads, in some areas reaching the height of fences. In our Mennonite villages, where houses are surrounded by gardens and fences, it does not look as forlorn as in our neighboring Nogaie and Molokan villages, which lack fences and orchards. These present a sad picture with the sand dunes pressing against the houses, resembling the Arabian huts in the great sand deserts.

The continuous dust clouds and smoke produced an extraordinary phenomenon providing an astonishing and magnificent sight. During the calm night of October 31, 1832 a general inflammation of the atmosphere occurred at approximately 2 o'clock in the morning, continuing until daybreak. The whole sky was engulfed by brilliant flames of fire which in the form of balls or in long narrow or wide flashes shot down from the sky, being accompanied by distant thunder. This continued all day and was visible in many parts of Europe.

During the spring of 1833, summer grain was again planted in all the regions of our colonies and in the surrounding area. It was sown into a soil resembling burnt ashes and which naturally did not produce germination. Despite this the farmer did not loose hope. Finally at the beginning of May, after ten months of drought, a gentle rain fell and the seed did germinate. The farmer was encouraged, even though the winter wheat had suffered great damage and only a very small harvest could be expected. Unfortunately, all hope for a good harvest soon disappeared when the beneficial results of the rain evaporated with the renewal of the destructive east wind. It was accompanied by an abnormal heat of 28° Reaumur in the shadow, which soon withered the tender shoots that had germinated. A second rain fell on the Whitsun-holiday, May 21, but even this did not improve the farmer's prospects.

In short order the ruination of all vegetation set in with temperatures of 28 1/2° Reaumur which rose to 29 1/2° towards the middle of June. All hope of a harvest was destroyed. Only the fruit trees defied the fury of the searing easterly winds and the suffocating dust clouds and remained green. They provided their caretakers with a fair quantity of small but immaturely developed fruit. Even these frail plants suffered severe damage in 1834 when the unkind weather and an unprecedented worm plague stripped the trees of all their foliage. Our orchards have, however, continued to survive, as have our newly planted forests, even though not without considerable damage. They seem to invite their growers to return with renewed courage to their forestry and orchard work. They promise to be an indispensable asset for the future by providing shade, fruit and wood.

By the end of May (1833) all the grass on the pasture land had disappeared. The cattle suffered severely, allowing the community only one choice. It had to find pasture land for its animals in other districts. This became a great expense. Later there was a direct loss for the herds of horned cattle suffered from contagion. Only milking-cows and a few draught horses were kept at each farm. Together these constituted a small herd in each community which was now fed the carefully hoarded hay to save it from starvation. There was no hay to cut except that found in the beds of dried-out creeks, rivers, and ponds. Normally disregarded, this growth, together with reeds and rushes, was now carefully collected for winter feed. The cattle suffered severely from hunger despite the fact that their numbers were reduced and more pasture was available per head. During the evenings they came to the farmyards and consumed the dry straw of the old thatched leantos which they could reach.

There would not have been the slightest hope of obtaining the necessary winterfeed on our fields if the merciful fatherly hand of God had not been extended over us once again. On July 1 He provided us with a beneficial rain. It refreshed the fields sufficiently to allow them to produce a type of prickly growth (called *Kurei*) which grew everywhere on the cultivated fields and pasture land. It flourished despite the reoccurrence of the hot eastwind, which arrived shortly after the rain and soon tried to change our entire district into a bleak desert. The drop in temperature and cessation of the wind gave men a new ray of hope, which, however, turned to disappointment when the raging wind was heard once more. *Kurei* was not only pasture for the animals and allowed for a satisfactory milk production, but on the former grainfields even gave a good yield of winterfeed. This, mingled with a few wheat and barley stalks, had a far healthier and substantial nourishing value than had been imagined. If havested before it was overripe it was not too hard despite its thorns, particularly if it was dampened with a little water at feeding time. . . . In many of the barns, however, the cattle had to be fed so poorly that they could hardly stand upright and produced very little milk. . . . Towards the end of January a cold wave of 20° Reaumur penetrated the almost empty barns and killed the weakest cattle. Finally the long-awaited spring of

1834 arrived. Instead of the hoped-for balminess and fruitfulness, the raw weather conditions killed the few remaining cows in the fields. Of the 9,032 head of cattle in the Molotschna Mennonite settlement a year ago, only 5,011 remained.

The horses were even harder hit than the cattle. These were driven to a large steppe in the direction of the Black Sea, where the poor animals had to remain in their corrals for days without food. . . . When the community received news about the sad plight of the horses it made preparations to take the surviving animals home. The loss of horses through this winter pasture varied, some owners losing half, a third, a quarter, and some all. Even at home additional horses were lost reducing the total number of horses from 7,348 a year ago to 4,986 head as of May 1, 1834. We were far more successful with sheep than with cattle and horses. . . . The entire flock of sheep in our district on May 1, 1834, amounted to 98,892 head which could be sheared. This brought the community 64,753 pud and 259,882 rubles in cash. As of May 1, 1834, I have brought the animals into the harbor of safety, since this year did not bring too much suffering. Our settlement, however, again suffered crop failure. Our community also kept pigs, and in this year lost 1,367 head, but in comparison with the other animals, this loss was not as important. I will not return to the problem of land-cultivation which I had discontinued with the total crop failure of 1833.

Our community continued to show an admirable inner strength, and was in no way broken in spirit. They used their savings to again cultivate and plant their fields with winterwheat in the fall of 1833. Because of the continuation of the drought only a portion of the grain germinated, but enough, to give promise of a harvest the following year. The winter brought good weather and the much needed rain and snow.

The farmers received their first setback in the spring, when they realized that the rye for which they had paid such a high price the previous fall, was old and of poor quality, and only a small amount had germinated. The fields looked very sparse. To avoid the possibility of another crop failure, summer grain was hastily sown, and a mild wet spring gave hope for a good harvest.

Nevertheless, 1834 was again a year of crop failure. This time it was not due to the lack of moisture, but because of the intense June and July heat wave 29 1/2° Reaumur, and also the continuing east wind. This second crop failure in comparison to the previous year was, thank God, much smaller. Of the 926 farms in our community the 390 on the east section who had received scattered rain had a fair harvest of summer wheat. The 405 on the west section had enough grain for their needs, but the remaining 127 farmers had only enough for seeding. Because our community still had some reserve funds we were in a far better financial position than were our Nogaier and Russian neighbors. These were unable to seed any of their fields during these hard times.

About the Arrangements Made to Save People from Starvation

During the fall of 1833, our people butchered a large number of horned cattle. They bought 2,000 head of cattle from the Nogaiers. At first they demanded high prices, up to 60 rubles, but later were willing to sell a cow for 20 to 16 rubles. Only a few families were able to fatten their pigs for butchering so as to use them for lard and the meat for salting or smoking. The poorer families had to substitute beef and melt the suet for lard. A great shortage of bread existed, and some families were near famine. . . .

The efforts to secure the much needed bread for the entire community and especially for saving of the destitute from death by starvation presented many obstacles for officials. Our district, because of the complete lack of pasture, was cut off from all contact with freight wagons. The crop failure, which according to official reports encompassed 21 districts, forced our drivers to travel long distances to obtain grain. The intensifying crisis compelled a decisive undertaking, since it promised imminent famine unless corrective measures were initiated on time. The main difficulty related to the transportation of wheat. No fodder or pasture land existed for great distances and the poor weather in late fall did not permit any hay storage along the way.

The district office was assigned the care of the destitute families. For this task it received a sum of 46,000 rubles, advanced in part by the wealthier members of the community. The capital was distributed to some of the accredited men in the community who took it upon themselves to obtain bread. . . . What sad results in those villages where the wheat did not arrive on time, especially in the Nogaier and Russian communities! Though the governor-general issued strict regulations to ensure for the care of the needy, and though our most gracious monarch sent four representatives with large sums from the imperial coffers for the needy villages, the grain failed to reach the villages in time due to transportation difficulties. Thousands of inhabitants lost all, left their homes and through begging near and afar saved their lives. . . .

In addition to the already mentioned 46,000 rubles, another 357,000 rubles had to be spent. Although it was mainly used for the support of people, some of it went to feed the livestock. . . . For the sake of posterity I cannot refrain from mentioning that the harvest-failure of 1833 . . . caused a loss of over one million rubles in our constituency. Once the food supplies arrived in the community a four-man commission was set up to care for the poor. Investigation showed that 535 families, numbering 3,163 persons, needed some degree of

assistance. The commission, in cooperation with the district offices, decided to offer help to every person in need. . . . In this way the people in our communities were, through the care exercised by their superiors and through God's visible help, kept alive and in good health. Now in 1835 each has carefully tilled his field and is looking forward to a rich harvest to compensate for the unhappiness suffered. God's visible help also showed itself quite clearly insofar that the weather remained fair until after the grain-transports had arrived in the colonies in the fall of 1833. . . . Furthermore, the epidemics, which took their toll in neighboring villages during the spring of 1834 and caused thousands of deaths, hardly touched our villages. May all this serve as a reminder for instruction in the future. When all the land is plagued and God's judgment comes, God chastises for the betterment of the human race. Man is obligated to place his courage and trust in gracious providence and to continue steadfastly in the profession God has given him. In the end he will be crowned with heaven's blessings, according to the promises so clearly contained in the Word of God.

June 23, 1835

FOOTNOTE

1. A square verst is equal to 2.6 acres.

Low German Poetry

By Gerhard Wiens

Translated by Jack Thiessen and Charlotte Kennedy, nee Reimer

Although a Low German dialect[1] is commonly spoken by a majority of Canadian Mennonites, little indeed has been written that could be said to contain anything resembling literary value. The short stories, limited in number, deal mainly with scenes altogether too restricted in their message to appeal to anyone not Mennonite. The reason for this is an appalling lack of linguistic sense or, more aptly, *sprachliches Bewusstsein*. A dialect to most people is not a dignified means of communicating and not worthy of retaining.

As early as 1928, Viktor Schirmunski, when studying the Mennonites, had this to say about their language and their attitudes to their dialect. *Die deutschen Kolonisten haben also meistens ihre Bauernsprache aus Deutschland mitgebracht und in der neuen Heimat, wenigstens in den Hauptzügen, unverändert erhalten. Aber auch im allgemeinen ist das verächtliche Herabblicken auf die Bauernmundart als auf eine "verdorbene" Schriftsprache nur Ausdruck eines städtischen Gebildetendünkels und wissenschaftlich durchaus nicht zu rechtfertigen. Eher könnte man im Gegenteil behaupten, die Mundart sei die eigentliche, die "natürliche" Sprache, und die Schriftsprache entstehe aus ihr als ein künstliches und ziemlich spätes Produkt der menschlichen Kultur.*[2]

A notable exception to this dearth in Mennonite letters is the contemporary German-Canadian Mennonite artist and narrator, A. Dyck, who is a master of observation and wit in both High and Low German. Readable poetry in the dialect is even more scanty: either it is watered down romanticism dealing with innumerable "Odes to the Moon" or it is a maudlin treatment of "Deserted Graves." A happy exception are the two poems penned by a contemporary American professor, Gerhard Wiens, Norman, Oklahoma, who uses the dialect to perfection in depicting two scenes which transcend both time and space. These two poems were chosen by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation as the Mennonite Low German contribution to Canadian ethnic poetry. They were translated by J. Thiessen and Charlotte Kennedy, nee Reimer.

FOOTNOTES

1. The Low German dialect of the Mennonites is a Lower Saxonian or Low Prussian dialect with numerous loan words. See J. Thiessen, *Studien zum deutschsprachigen Wortschatz der kanadischen Mennoniten*, (Marburg/Lahn, 1963). Can be ordered through *Mennonite Life* ($6.00).

2. Viktor Schirmunski. *Die deutschen Kolonien in der Ukraine*, p. 41, (Moskau, 1928).

LOW GERMAN ARTICLES
in *Mennonite Life*:
See July, 1967 issue, particularly list of articles on p. 116.

Sien Wiedeboom

By Gerhard Wiens

Aune Molosch wear 'et wada Farjoa jeworde.
Enne Sonn wear 'et aul scheen woerm.
Daut Ewa wea noch blottich, aoba daut Waota em
Ditj wea so kloa aus em Ama.
Enn de Walljes jlitzade enn blitzte enne Sonn.

De Jung stunt aum Ewa enn freid sich to de Sonn
en dem Jlitzre en dem Blott.
Nu wurd hee uck bold wada angle tjenne,
Hee wea em Winta acht jeworde, nu wurd hee vleicht
uck aul maol 'n grooten
Fesch tjriee, 'ne Koap vleicht, so lang aus sien Oarm!

Hee rannd daut Ewa entlang enn freid sich.
Stunt stell enn lacht.
"Platztje schmiete! lachd'a
Hee maok sich tjleene Schiewtjes ut dem Blott,
Betjt sich en schmeet de Schiewtjes äwa't Waota,
daut dee mau so sprunge,
En, twee, dreemaol,
Fiefmaol! Säwenmaol!
Hee lacht en rand wieda en sprung, aus wann hee
selwst'n Platztje wea.

Biem oolen Wiedeboom bleef a staone,
Maol 'nopklautre!
Hoach baowe saut hee enn sung "Stille Nacht"!
Hee schneet sienen Naome em Staum,
Schneet sich uck 'n Austje auf enn klautad rauf.
Aum Ewa stund hee dann en späld met dem Stock
em Waota
Enn wundad sich, woarom de Stock sich emma 'n bät
omboach
En doch wada gaunz jlitj wea, wann'er am ruttrock.
Aoba Haunstje, du Foatjel! schull Mutta, aus hee verre
Hinjadäa sich daut Blott vonne Feet schliesad.
Paupe lacht, naum den Bassem enn fäajd dem Jung
de Scholi rein.
"Daut's aoba 'n schmocka Wiedestock, Haunstje.
So'n jlitja.
Weetst waut, Jung? Statj dem maol doa hinge
im Goade enne Ead,
Brinj'am jieden Dach 'n bätje Waota.
Enn dann pauss maol op, waut dee done woat!"

His Willow

By Gerhard Wiens
Translated by Jack Thiessen and
Charlotte Kennedy

It was springtime in the Molosch.
Once again it was warm in the sun.
The banks were black and muddy, but the stream was
clear as limpid water in a pail.
Glancing ripplets flashed and sparkled in the sunlight.

The boy on the river bank revelled in the glory
of sunshine, dazzling water and muddy shores.
Soon it would be time to fish again.
In winter he'd had his eighth birthday;
perhaps this year he'd catch a big one,
maybe a carp as long as his arm.

Exulting, he raced along the water's edge,
Stopped short and laughed aloud.
"Slinging mudpies!" he chortled gleefully.
Scooping up wet dirt he fashioned tiny weapons,
Leaned forward, sending mirey missiles skimming across
the waters till they fairly danced.
One, two, three,
Five, seven!
He whooped and cheered, bounding along as if he too
were a mudpie set in ecstatic motion.

By the old willow tree he came to a standstill.
'Why not shinny up?'
Perching in the topmost branches he sang
"Silent Night,"
Then carved his name in the ancient trunk,
Cut off a puny branch and clambered down.
On the bank he dawdled, plunging his willow bough
into the water,
Puzzling over its curved reflection,
Gazing thoughtfully at its unbending length when he
pulled it out.

"Haunstje, you little pig!" Mother scolded when he
slung the mud from his shoes at the back door.
Paupe laughed, picked up the broom and swept the
boy's feet.
"A good willow shoot, Haunstje, straight as a die,
Know something boy? You plant it at the back
of the garden there,
Take it a little water every day
And watch things happen!"

Haft sich de Jung aoba vewundad, aus aulawäajes
aum Stock tjleene,
rotjreene Blädatjes rutkaume.
De Blädatjes worde jieden Dach jrata,
en boolt weare daut aul rechtje Astatjes.
Enn em Hoawst wea de Stock een Boomtje.

Em Farjoa schloach daut Boomtje wada ut,
aus wann doa nuscht pesseat wea,
Aoba em Hus schloage de Rode den Vaoda,
en ut dem Staul naume see sich de baste Pead met.

Em Hoawst, aus daut Boomtje sich aul toom
Wintaschlaop reedjemoakt haud,
kaume de Machnowze enn schoote dem Broda doot.

Op'et Farjoa schloage sich Rode enn Witte em Goade,
aoba daut
Boomtje wisst nuscht doavon.
Nao 'n poa Joa kaum de dreaje Somma.
Op'e Stapp vebrennd de Weit.
Aoba Haunstje brocht sienem Wiedeboomtje Waota.
Daut Boomtje woss en wea nu aul meist een Boom.

Haunstje wea muckrich enn schwack, aus hee dann em
Farjoa sienen jungen Boom besocht.
Aoba aus hee dem aul utschlaone sach, donn wisst'a:
Daut Schlemmste es vebie,
nu woa wi aul nich vehungre.

Haunstje vehungad nich,
Hee wort wada stoatj,
Hee woss en wort met de Joare een langet Strämel.
Aoba sien Wiedeboom wea noch väl jrata jeworde
Enn tjitjd mau so von Baowe op am rauf.

Dann kaum daut groote Jletj—Amerika!
Haus durft aul met sienem Onkel utwaundre,
Elre enn Jeschwista musste noch wachte.
Hee naum Aufscheed von sienem Boom:
"Wauss mau wieda! Du kaunst uck bi de Rode wausse.
Fe Mensche es de Loft hia nich mea jesund."

De Elre enn Jeschwista sent aoba niemaols rutjekaome.
Eenmaol have see Hauns een Bild nao Amerika
jeschetjt:
Elre, Jeschwista enn aul äare Tjinjatjes em Goade
unja eenem Boom,
Eenem grooten Boom,
Sienem Wiedeboom.

De Elre sent dann jestorwe.
De Jeschwista worde noam grooten Tjrich nao Sibirje
veschetjt.
Aune Molosch gauf et tjeene Dietsche mea.

The boy's amazement grew as tiny red and green leaves
burst out all over the willow rod.
Day after day the leaves unfolded and soon
they were dainty branches;
And that fall the bough had become a sapling.

Next spring the fledgling tree sported burgeoning shoots
As if nothing had happened;
But in the house the Reds brutally beat the Father,
and out of the stables they took the best horses.

That autumn after the Willow had made ready
for winter's repose the marauders came;
they shot Haunstje's brother.

By spring the garden had become the field of combat
for Reds and Whites;
the sapling stood by unstirred, unknowing.

A few years sped by; then came the big drought.
In the parched fields the wheat slowly shrivelled;
But Haunstje watered his little willow
And watched it grow; soon it would be
a full grown tree.

Haunstje was lean and frail when early the following
spring he sought out his young tree.
He saw it beginning to bud and knew the worst
was over.
They would not starve.

No, Haunstje did not starve,
He soon regained his strength
And in a few short years he was a tall gangling stripling.
But his willow had long since outgrown him
And from its lofty reaches peered down at him.

Then, the opportunity of a life time—America!
Hauns was allowed to emigrate with his uncle;
Parents, brothers and sisters would follow later.
He bade his willow tree farewell.
"Grow, Willow, Grow! You can thrive even in Red
territory;
For humans this atmosphere is no longer wholesome!"

Parents, brothers, sisters—they never came out.

Once they sent a photograph to Hauns in America
Showing the whole family and their little ones
in the garden under a tree,
A great spreading tree,
His weeping willow.

Then Father and Mother died.
After the big war their sons and daughters were shipped
to Siberia.
In the Molosch the German tongue was stilled.

Jistre haft Hauns siene Sesta ut Sibirje jeschräwe:
"Naobasch Peta (dem tjannst Du noch) es nao de
Molosch jefoare enn haft ons dann väl von Tus vetalt.
Doa es nu aules framd.
Dienen Wiedeboom haft de Kolchos aufjesoacht
enn ut dem Holt habe see Scheffle jemoakt.
Daut wea de jratste Boom em Darp jewese."

"De Hunj!" schreach Hauns.
"mucht' an doch de Scheffle vesure!
De rode Diewels!"

Aus hee sich dann aoba 'n bät beruhigt haud,
docht Hauns:
"Na, woväl Scheffle habe dee woll ut mienem
Wiedeboom jemoakt?
Woll jenoach ferre gaunze Wolost.
Goode Scheffle woare daut senne."

Dann stalld hee sich väa, wo de Kolchosniki sich
aufrackre motte,
Joarut, joarenn,
Aone Haopninj,
Een grauet Läwe.

Enn dann freid sich Hauns, daut hee doa aune Molosch
eenen grooten
Wiedeboom fe de Kolchosniki je plaunt haud.
"Nu habe de oame Mensche doch weens aunständje
Scheffle."

Yesterday Hauns heard from his sister in Siberia:
"Peta from next door (remember him?) revisited
the Molosch and brought us news of Home . . .
Everything is changed there;
The Kolchos has hewn down your willow tree;
shovels have been chiselled from its branches.
It was the tallest tree in town."

"The hounds," cried Hauns
"May their shovels turn to gall!
The red devils!"

At last Hauns regained his composure, then wondered
How many shovels his Willow would have yielded . . .
'Enough,' he supposed, 'for the whole commune.
Good solid shovels, too, without doubt.'

His thoughts turned then to the unbearable lot
of the Kolchosniki,
Hard labour year in year out
Without hope.
A cheerless life.

Hauns was glad then that he'd provided a giant willow
In the Molosch for the Kolchosniki.
"At least those wretched peasants have decent shovels!"

De Buaschsan

By Gerhard Wiens

Sinnowent noameddach
Doarop haud de Professa sich aul de gaunze Wäatj
jefreit
Nu mau fex den feinen Aunzug auf,
Enne korte Bechse 'nen
Enn rut op'em Hoff,
Graus hauwe!

He foat met de Meschin en't Graus 'nen,
daut'et mau so stifft.
Daut Sonntje brennt am op'em noaktjen Ridje.
Ea de Somma vebie es, woat he so brun senne aus'n
Indiauna,
Freit sich de Professa.

The Farmer's Son

By Gerhard Wiens

Translated by Jack Thiessen and Charlotte Kennedy

Saturday afternoon.
All week the Professor had been anticipating.
Off with academic vesture now
And into short pants!
Out into the yard
To mow grass.

With vigour he lashes into the tall grass till the dust flies,
Enjoying the sharp sting of the sun on his bare back.
Before the summer is spent he will be Indian-brown.
The Professor is happy.

Hundat Schoh breet es sien Hoff,
Enn tweehundat deep.
Doa es Rum fe Graus, Beem enn Bescha,
Fe Bloome enn sogoa 'n bät Jetjäatjs.

He vepust sich enn tjitjt sich om op sienen schmocken grooten Hoff.
Stolt es he op sienem Hoff.
He sett doa nich so 'nenjetjwatscht aus siene Noabasch,
He haft Rum.
Na, Paupe wurd je woll äwer am jelacht habe,
Daut he op dit Fletjstje Laund so stollt wea.
"Hauns", wurd Paupe jeschmustat habe,
"Bi die kunn etj je nich maol met de Droschtje omdreie,
Veschwiess noch met 'em Ladawoage!"

Hauns sitt sienen Hoff nich mea.
He sitt de Vollwirtschauft aune Molosch,
Woa he opjewosse wea,
Wiet wajh en Russlaund.
De Fiastäd sitt he, so groot,
Daut dis Hoff doa tweschen Dwäaschien enn Strohhupes wird goot
Rum jehaut habe.

Daut Graus es auf.
Natta sitt 'et dem Hoff nu aul,
Aoba dem saul et noch väl natta seene.
De Scheea hea!
Nu maol aulawäaje den Raund betjnipse,
Enn uck rundom de Beem.

De Professa tjrippt op Tjneeis den Raund delänj,
Enn betjnipst daut Graus so kratjt,
aus wann he sienem Jung daut Hoa schneet.

Wann Paupe mi nu seene kunn! simleat Hauns,
De wurd wess wada 'n bät jnerre:
"Soon Hofftje,
Soon Fletjstje Graus,
Betjnipst daut met'm Scheeatje!"
Daut Tjlanste, waut Paupe biem Graus bruckt, wea 'ne Sans.
Enn uck de bruckt he mau länjs de Hatj,
Woa he met de Meschin dem Graus
nich rajht biekaome kunn.

Dann nemmt Hauns daut "Bassemhoatjstje"
(Waut sent de Amerikauna doch fe praktische Lied!")
Enn fäajht daut Hei vom Graus.
Fäajht et en tjleene, natte Kopitze toop,
Tus enne Plauwenj länjs de Molosch,
Doa haud he uck aul aus Jung biem Heioplaode Hei toopjehoatjt.
Aoba doa weare daut breede, schwoare Hoatje.

His yard is a hundred feet wide
And two hundred deep.
There is ample room for grass, trees and shrubs,
For flowers and even a row of kitchen greens.

To catch his breath he pauses; surveys his special stake on Earth
With the glow of pride.
He's not hemmed in like his skimpily-landscaped neighbours:
He's got space to breathe in.
Paupe surely would have laughed to see
Him so delighted with his meagre plot.

"Hans," Paupe would have snickered,
"On your scrap of land there wouldn't be room to turn my buggy 'round,
Much less my hayrack."
The prized bit of property fades from view;
The Professor is swept back to the farmstead in the Molosch
Far away in Russia,
Where in the broad acres his own little plot would barely have filled the space between haystacks and machine shed.

The grass is cut;
The grounds look neat and trim—
But they'll look a lot tidier yet.
The clippers here.
Now to snip the scraggly edges
And circles 'round the trees.
On hands and knees the Professor crawls
And clips his borders painstakingly as if he were cutting his son's hair.

'Could Paupe see me now,' thinks Hans,
'He could hardly resist jeering a little.
Tiny plot!
Little patch of grass!
Trimming it daintily with scissors!
The smallest article Paupe used to cut the grass was a scythe,
And that only along the hedge
Where the machine was too cumbersome.
Hans picks up the scratcher,
(What fastidious folk are Americans!)
And sweeps the clippings from his lawn,
Sweeps them into little tidy heaps.

Back home in the Plauwenj along the Molosch
He had learned as a boy while loading hay to make neat stacks;
But there his tools were heavy awkward rakes.

(Doa musst eena emma oppausse,
Sest foar eenem de veflaumde Hoatj
met de spetze Tinje enne Hacke!)

Dann hoalt Hauns de Koa enn loat de Kopitztjes op.
Ditt Koatje es uck wada mau haulf so groot aus tus
de Mestkoa.
Enn daut Feedatje, daut he doa 'noptjricht,
Daut's doch wertjlich mau toom Lache.
Paupe weens wurd secha jelacht habe.
Jao, dem siene Heifeedasch, daut weare Feedasch.
Enn de Weitfeedasch, de Weitfeedasch!
Biem Broakweit boage sich de Ladre!
Hauns tjitjt sich sien Feedatje aun enn lacht.
Jao, Paupe, lach uck mau!
Waut es daut uck fer'n Feeda
Fer'n Buaschsän!

"Guten Tag, Herr Professor!"
Hauns tjitjt sich om.
Doa foat sien Student vebie.
Ah, dis Student, daut's eena vo'ne Baste!
De Jung haft den gooden Welle.
Enn uck den Kopp, doamet waut auntefange.
De woat onse oame Welt noch moal toom Säajen woare.
Enn dem haft he Dietsch jeleat, freit sich Hauns,
Enn am doabie dann uck sest woll noch Hoat
enn Jeist 'n bät wieda aopjemoakt!

"Na Hauns", sajht Paupe,
"Daut es je dann uck woll dien Broakweit".

(He'd always had to be cautious
Lest the darn prongs
Lodge in his heels!)

Hans fetches the cart to load the sweepings.
This little gadget, too, is but half the size of the old
wheel-barrow.
And the tiny mounds which he loads,
They really are a joke!
Paupe, at least, would have chuckled.
Yes, *his* stooks of hay, those were stooks!
And the shocks of wheat, what shocks!
The slender slats of hay ricks bulged with the weight
of Paupe's summer fallow wheat.
Yes, Paupe, you may laugh!
What kind of a yield is this
For a farmer's son?

"Good afternoon, Herr Professor!"
Hans swings on his heel.
One of his students is driving by.
This boy is one of his aptest pupils,
He has a will to work
And the brains to go far.
He'll be a blessing to the world one day.
The Professor is glad he's taught him German
And that he's played a part in the development
of so keen a mind.

"Hans, my son," says Paupe,
"That young life is your summer fallow wheat!"

Transcendence

By Jacob Sudermann

If man should fashion him a god
to vault his own mortality,
to leap beyond its bar,
he would commit insanity
and plunge a broken star
his flaming arc along,
but limitations recognized
still leave him climbing space
to rise above his measured self
and clasp the lifting hand of grace.

In the Lonely Night

By Elmer F. Suderman

Remembering the blameless and
Upright man of Uz
Tossing in the lonely night,
God's terrors arrayed against him,
I am less afraid
When night gives me a long look
With no end to it.

Yorifumi Yaguchi
A Japanese Mennonite Poet

By Elaine Sommers Rich

YORIFUMI YAGUCHI, the grandson of a Buddhist priest, teaches English at Hokusai University in Sapporo, Japan. In *They Met God* (J. C. Wenger, Ed., Herald Press, 1964) he tells of his pilgrimage to Christ. Of his boyhood he says, "We loved the Shinto gods. Their stories were a sort of lullaby to us." At a certain time in his youth he wished to become a Buddhist monk. "Sitting at the foot of the mountain. . . I tried many times to kill all my earthly desires and tried to be one with nature. I wanted to feel the impulse which is believed to be working in nature. I heard that, if we practiced, it was possible for us to be conscious of the fall of one leaf from a tree a hundred miles away. And I tried. I wanted to achieve the Enlightenment."

In an article entitled "Impressions of Churches in the USA" (*Japan Christian Quarterly,* Winter, 1967) Yaguchi says, "Had I not met a peace-loving Christian in Japan, I would never have become a Christian. God worked on me through him." That Christian was Ralph Buckwalter, formerly of Hesston, Kansas. Yaguchi received his B.A. from North Japan College, his M.A. from International Christian University, and his B.D. from Associated Mennonite Seminaries, Goshen, Indiana. He is a member of Yuai Mennonite Church.

It is perhaps not surprising that Yaguchi has written many poems on the theme of war and peace. His book *A Shadow* includes 18 of them.

Father

Sudden, rain-like gun shots
Sewed the ground around us just now,
Splashing the sand. And
Father fell down
Onto the ground,
Father who had been standing before us
Like a huge rock
Fell down
So easily like a rotten tree.
Blood begins to gush out of him
Like a fountain,
Dyeing the soil around him.

He is dying,
Father is dying, who
Believed in the holy war, who
Believed Japan would surely win.
He, who seemed to be as strong as
An iron bar, falls down and now
Lies motionless before our eyes
And is fainting like a small girl.

"A Shadow or Hiroshima" has appeared in *The Mennonite* (1966) and in *The National Poetry Anthology* (National Poetry Press, Los Angeles, 1965).

A Shadow
Or Hiroshima
Look
At this stone step,
Look at this
Shadow, man-shaped,
Printed on this stone.
Someone was resting here
In the shape of the "Thinking man" of Rodin,
And perhaps he was
Thinking,
Thinking deep something else,
Tired out by war, and was
Resting at 9:10 a.m.
On August 6, 1945.

Now here,
Only his shadow is
Left
Exactly in his shape.
It is left
Here,
As the image

Left in our heart,
Which will never,
Never die out.

The poem "It Was in August" describes poignantly a group of school children standing in line on a hot August day to hear a voice on the radio. "With a dull, withered voice/ With a sluggish intonation . . . That man was weeping while speaking." The teachers also begin to weep, and the poem concludes with the following lines:

"But someone began to say here and there
That the war was over, that Japan lost it,
And this rumour spread like a fire
Among students, who were wondering
Why the gods did not intervene for Japan."

Yaguchi, however, does not confine his poetry to one theme. He looks down at the sea from a cliff and compares sunny days with foggy ones when he sees "fishing boats full of flags/ Of various colors of extravagancy/ Approaching toward the harbor one after another." Or he writes of the sound of the mukkuri, a simple small musical instrument of the Ainu, a primitive people of Hokkaido.

Mukkuri

Water begins to flow
In the room, which soon
Comes to be a big stream, and
We are sitting in the water
Like rocks, around which fishes
Are swimming with fins rustling,
And from the upper stream
Down flowing is a canoe
With an old Ainu and a girl.

In "Tea Ceremony" he utilizes as poetic material a traditional cultural practice of the Japanese. The tea ceremony forms the background, for example, for a novel *Thousand Cranes* by a well-known Japanese novelist, Yasunari Kawabata. In "the art of tea" every utensil and every motion is said to have philosophical significance. Yaguchi describes it in this poem.

Tea Ceremony

Any action of making the tea,
Any action of tasting the tea is
The dance
Producing eternal stillness,

While through one or two
Leaves of words
Birds are flying from one heart
To the other most
Frequently in this small
Tea hut made of
Thin branches of trees and of bamboos,

In which lies something big as
The ocean, and the time born out of the
Stone is turning slowly around the silent two.

"In the Wood," too long to be quoted in its entirely in this article, reveals a creative imagination and an almost Keats-like sensitivity to nature, evident also in the two poems above. Although not in the traditional haiku form, the poem has about it what critics of Japanese literature call a "haibun quality." This literature records a high moment; it depends on suggestion; it gives an outline picture which is to be filled in by the receiver. In reading aloud the second stanza one hears sibilants suggestive of the sound of rustling leaves.

In the Woods

a.
I have happened to come to myself
Among wave-like sounds of leaves,
And I have found that
Trees were continuously whispering to me
And that I was nodding to them continuously.

b.
These branches
And those branches
Are sounding continuously like waves . . .
No, these are not the sounds of leaves
But the secret throbbings of hearts of
Children who are hiding among trees.

. . .

g.
Children are climbing up
Climbing up and up the tree.
They never stop in the middle,
But climb up toward the higher top.
They are never scared to stop
On a thin top, but
Are climbing above it,
Climbing up and up straight into the sky.

h.
Children are secretly
Looking at me
Among branches,
Behind leaves,
With their crystal eyes
Shining.
There, just above
My shoulders, just
Beside my foot, they
Are looking at me,
Hiding themselves, and

I can hear their breath
More clearly than a wind.
i.
Children, children, you
Run like an echo
Into the interior of the wood,
With a shout of joy which I cannot hear,
Leaping into the world, into which
I cannot go, and your voices are
Coming toward me as if
From a world of a thousand years ago.

In August, 1967, Yaguchi's *The Myth in Winter*, a collection of poems in Japanese, appeared. He is currently helping to nurture in Japan an English-language literary magazine, *Poetry Nippon*.

Thy Kingdom Come

By Elmer F. Suderman

The Lord's Prayer
flows from facile worshipers
like TV voices
recounting the worries of the world
and the wonder of deodorants.

Lacking a congregation
since all are
praying to themselves
or to impress the rest
God seldom has a thing to do
or anyone to listen to.

Quietly he waits
to catch a man
who wants to find
but has not found
the meaning of
"Thy will be done."
One such is worth
a thousand dissembling
"Thine be the glories"
to an idol god.

Patiently God listens
for a troubled saint
with nothing
but a sense of sin
to lean heavily
on his pew
praying "Lord have mercy"
and yearning
for the kingdom
that is yet to come.

Adam in the Garden

By Elmer F. Suderman

Adam in the suburban garden
Among the television trees
Tasting the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge
Carelessly tosses the core over his shoulder.

It explodes, brilliant as a million acetylene torches,
Deafening as a million sonic booms.
It shatters the picture windows and knocks
The cross of First Church out of the sky.

The sun hides his face behind a mushroom cloud.
The clock on the Federal Building and Loan Office
No longer reports the interest rate
Or flashes the time and temperature.

The net alert station is silent,
Huntley and Brinkley fail to report the flash,
Church bells are silent. Sermons on
Unilateral disarmament have been cancelled.

God, abandoned, lonely, obscured by smoke,
Stubs his toe on a steeple
Buried in the ashes of the garden and
Calls, "Adam, where are you?"

Books and Issues

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945)

A Review of his Life Story

Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*: Theologe, Christ und Zeitgenosse (Christian Kaiser Verlag, München, 1967) 1128 pages, DM. 46.—.

The anticipated biography of Dietrich Bonhoeffer written by his friend and pupil as well as editor of his writings has now appeared. Only a brief review of the book consisting of 1128 pages is possible.

One can read this presentation as I have done as a survey of the Evangelical Church in the Third Reich, of which Bonhoeffer was a key figure. This approach presents insights into the happenings of that time and describes details of many personalities, which surprise even those who have experienced those days. Church historians will be grateful for this account but also criticize some aspects.

The Unusual Life

Secondly, the book can be read as a biography. Three phases of the growth and development of this unusual German theologian can be observed: that of a theologian, that of a Christian, and that of contemporary. A broad presentation informs us about his ancestors, his family, his study in Tübingen and Berlin, his stay in Barcelona as an assistant pastor (1928), his assistantship at the University of Berlin (1929-30) and his year in the U.S.A. (1930-31). Next we find Bonhoeffer in Bonn (1931-32) as a minister and lector at the university, which is followed by contact with the ecumenical movement at Cambridge.

According to the author, a decisive turn in Bonhoeffer's life, from that of a theologian to a Christian, took place in 1932. He discovered the church as a fountain of theology and ethics. In 1933, he taught at the University of Berlin, was ordained minister, assumed responsibility as a student pastor and became the international student secretary of the ecumenical movement. During the same time, he entered into a critical dialogue with a National Socialist government and its philosophy. He advocated the equality of Arian and non-Arian pastors. In 1933-35 he was a pastor of the German Church in London and entered lively and decisive contacts with G. K. Bell, bishop of Chichester. In 1935, seminaries for the Confessing Church were organized in Germany. He headed one in Zingst and Finkenwalde. The so-called *Bruderhaus* with meditation, confession and "common life" became a model. Because of his travels in behalf of the ecumenical movement he lost his lectorship at the University of Berlin.

The Death of Bonhoeffer

During the years 1938-40, he was occupied with the *Sammelvikariate*. Through contacts with his brother-in-law, H. von Dohnany, he became involved in the political life and informed about the preparations of insurrectionary actions against Hitler. In 1939, Bonhoeffer was in England and in America. During the years 1940-43 he traveled much and led a dual life devoted to both church and politics. Consequently he was forbidden to write. In 1942, he was betrothed to the 18-year old Marie von Wedemeyer. In 1943, he was apprehended and placed in the prison of Tegel in Berlin. During the years 1944-45, he was kept at the following prisons, Prinz-Albrecht-Strasse, Buchenwald and Flossenbürg, by the Reich Security Central Office. On April 9, 1945, he was executed together with Oster, Canaris, Stünck, and Gehre. The doctor who witnessed the execution stated: "Through the half open door of his room I saw Pastor Bonhoeffer, before he took off his prison clothes, in a sincere prayer to God on his knees. The prayer of complete surrender of this unusually sympathetic man moved me in the depth of my heart. Arrived at the place of the execution, he paused for a short prayer and climbed courageously and without visible emotion to the gallows. Death followed in a few seconds. In my fifty years of service I have never before seen a man die in such a complete surrender to God."

The Christian in the World

The third way in which this biography can be studied can be related only in telegram style. I have reference to the theological development of this unusual man. There is the doctoral dissertation of the 19-year old Bonhoeffer entitled *Sanctorum Communio* (The Fellowship of the Saints) which was an unusual achievement. He had been influenced by A. Schlatter and K. Heim of Tübingen and Reinhold Seeberg and Adolf von Harnack in Berlin. Later he had deep conversations with Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann as well as with the philosopher Theodor Litt.

In 1935, his most influential book *Discipleship* appeared. The author continued his development and growth beyond the views expressed in *Discipleship*. His book on ethics, first written in an outline form in 1939-43, presents new theological views. His continued theological search, while in prison, reveals completely new impulses and formulations. His main topic now was: Christ and the mature world. For him Christ's presence must be experienced in a "non-theological interpretation."

I must close this very sketchy review with the words of Bishop Bell, which he uttered at a commemorative service for Bonhoeffer in London in July, 1945: "His death is a death for Germany—yes, for all of Europe . . . His death and his life constitute a fact of great value in the witness of the Confessing Church. He incorporates two traditions in the noble fellowship of the martyrs. One is the resistance of the believer in the name of God of all attacks of evil, and the other is the moral and political protest of the human conscience against injustice and tyranny. He and his friends stand on the foundation of apostles and prophets. It was his passion for justice, which brought him and many others . . . in such close fellowship with other men of resistance, who,

even though they were outside of the church, shared with him the same convictions of humanity and freedom. . . ."

HEIDELBERG — *Walter Fellmann*

I Knew Dietrich Bonhoeffer. ed. by Wolf-Dieter Zimmermann and Ronald Gregor Smith. Translated by Käthe Gregor Smith. New York: Harper & Row, 1966, 238 pp. $4.95.

This book presents recollections of thirty-six individuals who had contact with Dietrich Bonhoeffer from his childhood to his tragic end at the gallows at Flossenbürg. Some of the reporters such as Eberhard Bethge knew Bonhoeffer very intimately. He is the author of the book reviewed in this issue of *Mennonite Life*. The contributors are relatives, friends, or casual observers like the doctor who saw Bonhoeffer in his last prayer. Among those who were more intimately acquainted are, in addition to the family of Bonhoeffer, Wolf-Dieter Zimmermann, Franz Hildebrandt, Helmut Gollwitzer, Gerhard von Rad, G. K. A. Bell and Paul Lehmann. The latter in his chapter "Paradox in Discipleship" presents an interesting observation from the year while Bonhoeffer was a German Fellow at Union Theological Seminary, New York, 1930-31. He relates how Bonhoeffer could become excitingly and deeply involved in seeming contradictory theological and social interests.

In "Years in Berlin" Wolf-Dieter Zimmermann relates a very fascinating episode of Bonhoeffer's life during the years 1932-33. For me it was particularly so because this was the time that I had the privilege of being one of his students at the University of Berlin. His lectures on the "Nature of the Church" (page 53) were very inspiring and had some influence on my choosing to write my dissertation on "Menno Simons' View of the Church." Vividly I remember his stimulating and fearless lectures when Berlin, including the University, was undergoing radical changes. But hardly did I know how deeply Bonhoeffer was already involved in it and what the outcome would be.

Of interest in the book is also the account on how Bonhoeffer became deeply involved in the establishment and directorship of the Seminaries conducted for theological students by the Confessing Church, which was opposed to the emerging National Socialist philosophy.

The international and ecumenical contacts which repeatedly took Bonhoeffer to foreign countries, including Britain and the U.S.A. had a definite influence on the final chapter of his life which led him not only to a review of his theological and ethical views but also to a political involvement and a premature death. Very interesting and touching is the report by Gollwitzer (138-144) how he received word in the Soviet prisoner-of-war camp about the death of his friend. Gollwitzer's report about the years of 1931-37 is of special interest to those who experienced them during this crucial development of Germany which led to World War II and the collapse of Hitler's empire.

The book *I Knew Dietrich Bonhoeffer* does not give a complete biography but it presents highlights and touching memoirs of those who were close to an outstanding theologian and witness in a crucial period of the German church and the country.

NORTH NEWTON, KANSAS — *Cornelius Krahn*

Thomas Müntzer—The Radical Reformer

H. J. Goertz, *Innere und äussere Ordnung in der Theologie Thomas Müntzers* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967) pp. 157. $9.00.

Manfred Bensing, *Thomas Müntzer und der Thüringer Aufstand* 1525 (Berlin: VEB Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1066) pp. 284. $8.00.

Manfred Bensing, *Thomas Müntzer* (Leipzig: VEB Bibliographisches Institut, 1965) pp. 103. $2.00.

Thomas Müntzer has always been a controversial figure since the days of the Reformation. He has been considered the founder of Anabaptism and the forerunner of many modern movements. He was influenced by Luther but in opposition to him, became a leader of the Peasants' Revolt in 1525 which led to his premature death.

Müntzer is extremely popular today in a time of change, revolutions and reevaluations. Eastern and Western writers compete in the interpretation and restoration of the image of Müntzer who aligned himself with a "lost cause." In the East he is hailed as a forerunner of Marxism and in the West he is being reevaluated and restudied in regard to his roots in medieval mysticism and his relationship to Luther and the Anabaptists.

The book by H. J. Goertz of Hamburg has just come off the press and will be reviewed in the near future. Here we merely call attention to it as well as to the statement of the author about Müntzer on page twenty-two of this issue.

The two books by Manfred Bensing treat Müntzer from a Marxian point of view. The first one is a scholarly contribution while the smaller one is a popular presentation with numerous valuable illustrations pertaining to Müntzer, the Reformation and the Peasants' War. At this occasion we mention them as belonging to the growing list of books produced in East Germany dealing with the Reformation and the social and economic questions of that day. (See also the review of the book by Brendler devoted to the Münster Anabaptists in the July 1967 issue of *Mennonite Life*, pages 140-141.)

BETHEL COLLEGE — *Cornelius Krahn*

Lost and Found Fatherland

John B. Toews, *Lost Fatherland*. The Story of Mennonite Emigration from Soviet Russia, 1921-1927 (Scottdale, Pa., 1967) 262 pp. $6.95.

Lost Fatherland deals with the Mennonites of Russia during and after the Revolution of 1917. The author describes the conditions in Russia among the Mennonites and their attempt to improve the economic and cultural life in the post-Revolution years. Outstanding among the leaders of the following emigration was B. B. Janz, the chairman of a Mennonite committee engaged in reconstruction work in Russia.

It was appropriate to present this account at the time of the Canadian centennial and the fiftieth anniversary of the Russian Revolution. The publication of this book was preceded by numerous memoirs and monographs. Outstanding among them was B. H. Unruh's *Führung und Fügung* (1966) and the scholarly *Mennonite Exodus* by Frank H. Epp (1962). These books constitute a milestone in historiography in regard to the Russian Mennonite migrations and settlements since World War I. Enough time has elapsed

to gather all the basic sources and information in order to present the full account of every aspect of the events which have taken place. In addition to this, a new generation of scholars trained in research have been able to present their findings objectively.

John B. Toews demonstrates that he has a thorough understanding not only of recent Mennonite history but also of the Russian Revolution, the civil war which followed, and the early years of communist rule which enables him to see this aspect of Mennonite history in its context. He has made full use of the sources and files of B. B. Janz, the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, the Bethel College Historical Library, and other pertinent references.

Toews has covered particularly well the knotty question about the Mennonite involvement in a self-defense effort when bandits molested, tortured, and killed the inhabitants of some Mennonite villages of the Ukraine.

The stage in the Mennonite historiography of Russia has now been set for writing the total history of the coming of the Mennonites to Russia, their spread and contribution in that land, and their migrations prior to and after the Revolution of 1917. The availability of primary and secondary sources dealing with both the Mennonite self-understanding and the environment in which they lived makes it possible to write a total, objective history of the Mennonites in Russia.

NORTH NEWTON, KANSAS *Cornelius Krahn*

Reformation and Anabaptist Reprints

By B. de Graaf, Nieuwkoop, Netherlands

Reprinting Program

Only those who receive daily catalogs and publicity pertaining to new publications and the reprint of old books are aware of the increase of the printing of books in the last decade. Particularly the reprinting program is flourishing beyond all expectations that one could have had just a few years ago. Two factors will be mentioned which have contributed to this progress. The photo-mechanic or off-set reproduction of the printed page has made such tremendous progress that more and more publishers are tempted to take advantage of the possibilities in reprinting out-of-print books and periodicals. In Europe the destruction of libraries during World War II created the need for large scale reprinting programs of books and periodicals. In addition to this all over the world schools, colleges and universities mushroom on an unprecedented scale and are in need of textbooks, reference books, source books etc., for the large modern libraries on their campuses.

Many old publishing houses have started a reprint program of books needed in new libraries. Many new publishing enterprises specializing in reprinting books in certain fields are being established. We have selected an example in order to illustrate the point and at the same time to call attention to some significant books most of which had been out of print for many decades if not for a hundred or more years.

The Netherlands has always had publishing enterprises far out of proportion to the size of the country and even its population. This trend continues now that the photo-mechanic printing process has opened new avenues in the reprinting program. We have selected the publisher B. de Graaf who lives in a very picturesque village, Nieuwkoop, on a lake between Amsterdam and Utrecht. During a visit last summer I found B. de Graaf gone but saw his beautiful residence which seemed to be also the place of business and the distribution center of his product—books. His *General Catalog* for 1967/1968 consists of 40 pages of titles of reprinted books of which we select ten as an illustration. We selected books dealing with the Reformation and the Anabaptists.

Hutterites and Münsterites

The first two books listed below deal with the European background of the Hutterites and the third with their early settlements in America. This wing of Anabaptism has been receiving an increasing amount of attention among scholars and in the popular press of the last decades. The fourth in the list is a bibliography pertaining to the Münsterite Anabaptists which was originally published in 1894. This most radical wing of Anabaptism has received steady attention by the press, artists, dramatists, fiction writers and scholars since the eventful year of 1535 when the Münsterite kingdom was destroyed by Catholic and Protestant forces. During the last seventy years more has been written on this subject than in the years before. Nevertheless the Bahlmann bibliography is indispensable for any serious research in the field.

BECK, Josef (Herausgeber), *Die Geschichts-Bücher der Wiedertäufer in Oesterreich-Ungarn, betreffend deren Schicksale in der Schweiz, Salzburg, Ober- und Nieder-Oesterreich, Mähren, Tirol, Böhmen, Süd-Deutschland, Ungarn, Siebenbürgen und Süd-Russland in der Zeit von* 1526 *bis* 1785. Gesammelt, erläutert und ergänzt. Wien, 1883. (*Fontes Rerum Austriacarum* II, 43). - Reprint Nieuwkoop, 1967. Cloth. L, 654 pp. *f.* 100.-

WOLKAN, Rudolf, *Die Hutterer.* Österreichische Wiedertäufer und Kommunisten in Amerika. Wien, 1918. - Reprint Nieuwkoop, 1965. With map and 3 plates. Cloth. VII, 201 pp. *f* 28.-

WOLKAN, Rudolf, *Die Lieder der Wiedertäufer.* Ein Beitrag zur deutschen und niederländischen Litteratur- und Kirchengeschichte. Berlin, 1903. - Reprint Nieuwkoop, 1965. Cloth. IX. 295 pp. *f* 40.-

BAHLMANN, P., *Die Wiedertäufer in Münster.* Eine bibliographische Zusammenstellung. Münster, 1894. (S.A. aus der *Zeitschrift für vaterländische Geschichte und Althertumskunde Westfalens,* Bd. 51, mit Nachträgen und Register). - Reprint Nieuwkoop, 1967. Wrappers. (II), 63 pp. *f* 15.-

Leaders and Music

Ludwig Keller was interested in tracing the influences which led to the Reformation as well as the origin of Anabaptism. In his *Johann von Staupitz* he presents a study of Luther's relationship to and dependence on Staupitz. A similar study was made by Johann W. Baum pertaining to the Strassburg reformers, Capito and Butzer, published more than a hundred years ago. Libraries and scholars are now enabled to acquire these sources. Wackernagel's book dealing with hymns in use in the Dutch Reformed Church during the Reformation adds a valuable source for scholars in musicology which had not been available for many decades.

KELLER, Ludwig, *Johann von Staupitz und die Anfänge der Reformation.* Nach den Quellen dargestellt. Leipzig, 1888. - Reprint Nieuwkoop, 1967. Cloth. XII, 434 pp. *f* 52.-

BAUM, Johann Wilhelm, *Capito und Butzer, Strassburgs Reformatoren.* Nach ihrem handschriftlichen Briefschatze, ihren gedruckten Schriften und anderen gleichzeitigen Quellen dargestellt. Elberfeld, 1860. (*Leben und ausgewählte Schriften der Väter und Begründer der reformierten Kirche* III). - Reprint Nieuwkoop, 1967. Cloth. XIX, 611 pp. ƒ 90.-

WACKERNAGEL, Philipp, *Lieder der niederländischen Reformierten aus der Zeit der Verfolgung im 16. Jahrhundert.* Frankfurt, 1867. (*Beiträge zur niederländischen Hymnologie* Heft 1). - Reprint Nieuwkoop, 1965. Cloth. XVI, 209 pp. in double col. ƒ 35.-

Publishers and Literature

The story of early publications promoting or opposing the Reformation of the sixteenth century is a very interesting chapter in church history. Many printers risked their lives and some lost them because they dared to publish forbidden books. Similar was the fate of those who wrote "questionable" devotional and dramatic literature or attacked practices and doctrines of the church. The following books are a valuable source of information again made available through the modern reprinting facilities.

RUDOLPHI, E. Camillo, *Die Buchdrucker-Familie Froschauer in Zürich,* 1521-1595. Verzeichniss der aus ihrer Offizin hervorgegangenen Druckwerke. Zürich, 1869. - Reprint Nieuwkoop, 1963. Wrappers. VII, 93 pp. ƒ 18.-

CLEMEN, Otto (Herausgeber), *Flugschriften aus den ersten Jahren der Reformation. Halle,* 1906-1911. - Reprint Nieuwkoop, 1967. 4 volumes. With some facsimiles. Cloth. VI, 344 + (IV), 455 + (IV), 396 + (II), IV, 374 pp. ƒ 200.-

HOLSTEIN, Hugo, *Die Reformation im Spiegelbilde der dramatischen Litteratur des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts.* Halle, 1886. (*Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte* 14-15). - Reprint Nieuwkoop, 1967. Cloth. VIII, 287 pp. ƒ 40.-

The ten books listed are only a fraction of the reprints from one printshop produced mostly within one year. The number of publishers reprinting valuable out-of-print books is increasing steadily. The output is mounting. Those who had turned to the use of mircofilming and the Xerox method of reproducing sources no longer available can again turn to the purchase of new books produced from old publications which appeared possibly a hundred or two hundred years ago and could be found only in a few old libraries. All books mentioned can be ordered through *Mennonite Life,* North Newton, Kansas.

North Newton, Kansas *Cornelius Krahn*

Heresy—Past and Present

The literature dealing with the study of "'heretical" views is popular and overwhelming. In a time when everything seems to be in flux, there is an apparent effort to revise concepts, standards, and ideals. The Christian doctrines and traditions are not being bypassed in this effort. Even the most ancient and orthodox tradition-bound institutions such as the Catholic Church are reexamining standards and basic views. An example is found in the *New Catholic Encyclopedia.* Mennonites and other Protestants were asked to write articles which were published without alteration. The outlook and the evaluation of Catholic scholars is broader and deeper today than it has ever been in the past.

Among the books recently published dealing with "heresies in our day" is one entitled *Häresien der Zeit* by Anton Böhm (Verlag Herder, Freiburg). The editor presents thirteen chapters dealing with contemporary "heresies" which include the questions of "What Constitutes Heresy," "Triumph of Despair," "Getting along Without Metaphysics," "The Cult of the Flesh" and "The Idols of Work and Technique." The author concludes the series of chapters with "Life in Heresy."

The heresies herein discussed are not viewed as a categorizing of "true doctrines" and "false doctrines" but as a "sickness of our day." An effort is made to clarify different concepts, views, and beliefs and to assist the reader to become orientated in intellectual, cultural and religious matters.

Another book (Klaus-Martin Beckmann, *Der Begriff der Häresie bei Schleiermacher,* Kaiser Verlag, München, 1959) published by a Protestant publisher deals with the concept of heresy according to Schleiermacher. This contribution is of a more strictly theological nature and deals with the definition of the views which Schleiermacher expressed in his numerous writings on doctrines in general and in matters of Christology, Soteriology, a concept of the church, the Scriptures, etc. The author proceeds to analyze Schleiermacher's views in regard to the early heresies such as Docetism, Ebionitism, Manichaeism and Pelagianism, and has a concluding chapter dealing with an attempt to develop a new view in regard to heresy. (See also the article by Maynard Kaufman "Heresy and the Theological Literary Criticism" in the July, 1966, issue of *Mennonite Life,* p. 118ff.)

Hans J. Hillerbrand in *A Fellowship of Discontent* (Harper & Row, New York, 1967) has presented a number of reformers, schismatics, heretics, and radicals as interesting figures in the history of the church "who held fast to their own tenets of faith despite the opposition of their contemporaries." The individuals chosen are Thomas Müntzer, Sebastian Franck, George Fox, Thomas Chubb, and David F. Strauss.

In a day of revolutionary explosiveness it is understandable that radicals and unorthodox representatives of religious movements get another hearing. This is the case not only among theologians and historians in Marxian countries but also among those of the West. Of particular interest to us are the representatives of the Reformation. By referring to Müntzer as the "impatient revolutionary" and Franck as the "lonely individualist," the author has indicated what the characteristics of the individuals were. Müntzer was "impatient" with Luther and consequently considered a "revolutionary" when he joined the peasants of his day and aimed to apply the discovered gospel to the social and economic problems of the day. Franck was "lonely" because he, like Erasmus, although from a different point of view, found the *corpus Christi* broken up and failed to be sufficiently attracted by any of the "splinters."

North Newton, Kansas *Cornelius Krahn*

Community of Goods

The Study of Contemporary Christian Communities of Property. By Dr. Gan Sakakibara. Tokyo, Heibon Sha. 1967. 1,000 *yen*

This book consists of the preface (53 pages), four chapters

and the supplement. The first chapter treats of The Society of Brothers (58 pages), the second Koinonia Farm in Georgia (30 pages), the third Reba Place Fellowship in Evanston (50 pages), the fourth Hutterite *Bruderhof* (130 pages), and the supplement Palma Evangelical Community in Brazil (30 pages).

The introduction has three parts, in which the author describes church history in the West, denying the Corpus Christianum from the standpoint of New Testament teachings on the church. Sakakibara does not think that the ecclesiastical organization is the essential part of the church, though it may be necessary to maintain it. The essence of church is koinonia, the fellowship of Christians. In connection with the Corpus Christianum, he explains infant baptism. He says that the Reformation did not deny this infant baptism and that the protestant churches were still the state churches. The Anabaptist church is not the state church and it is, thus, the first free church in the world. It claimed the separation of the church from the state and emphasized the free will decision of individuals and the discipleship. Four characteristics are introduced; fellowship of love, believers' church, spiritualization of the sacramental rites, and church discipline.

Chapter one is on the Society of Brothers. This chapter consists of three parts. In part one he sketches the life of this Society. It is based on his experiences of visiting it. He gives the short history of it and introduces its placement and the number of members. The founder was Eberhard Arnold, who was ordained by the Hutterites. Several differences between this Society and the Hutterites are mentioned in terms of dress, smoking, and drinking. Part two is on their faith. Their vision is to realize that primitive-church-in-Jerusalem, the community of love. The discipleship is emphasized. Their concept of non-resistance, denial of private property, the purity of sex and the abolition of racial discrimination are briefly introduced. Their calling is for the community which requires their self-denial. It is possible only when they obey God. Part three is the history of this Society.

Chapter Two is devoted for the introduction of Koinonia Farm in Georgia. The first part is a description of its life. He visited there, saw it and talked with Jordan and others. The fact that they were persecuted because of the Negro problem is described. Part two introduces their concept of the Kingdom of God. The condition of entering it is to obey God. And they are obeying God in their daily life.

Chapter three is about Reba Place Fellowship in Evanston. The first part is a description of their life. One of the differences between this and Mennonites is, according to him, that the latter has organized mutual aid, while the former's mutual aid is personal. Virgil Vogt's paper describing this fellowship which appeared in the July issue, 1964, of *The Christian Century,* is translated. James Miller's paper on "Christian Ethics and the Modern Economic Problems" is minutely introduced.

The latter part of this chapter is a description of "Chapel of Hope" in Chicago. The center of this church is Julias Berther. He thinks that Christians should practice their life of faith today in this society as critics of the modern civilization. This paper further describes the life here, its principle and a story of a girl whose former boy friend was about to come out of prison. According to this "Hope," Christianity is to live a new life in accordance with His will, thanking Him.

Chapter four is the study of Tschetter Colony, a Hutterite *Bruderhof.* The first part is the description of their life. Their history and their practices are treated. The fact that here there are very few neurotics compared to the secular world is mentioned. Different from the Mennonite churches, here private property is denied. Peter Riedmann's theology is introduced in connection with non-resistance, the separation of church and state, their idea of sin and salvation, their Christian life, their concept of the Kingdom of God and the meaning of *Gelassenheit,* etc.

The supplement is on Palma Evangelical Community in Brazil, which is not in the tradition of Anabaptism, but which is very similar to it.

Above is the brief summary of this book. This book is based on the writer's own experiences of visiting these communities and, in this sense, it is very personal. It includes lots of conversations of the writer with leaders of these communities, which gives the reader very vivid images of them. This is the first attempt in which the history and present situation of Anabaptist churches and their related groups are being introduced. I am sure that this is very meaningful and will stimulate sincere readers to look into the Reformation again with new insight and examine the real significance of Anabaptism.

SAPPARO, JAPAN —*Yorifumi Yaguchi*

The Mission of the Church, Study papers from the Eighth Hayama Missionary Seminar, Jan., 1967, Compiling Editor, Carl Beck, Tokyo, Japan, 159 pp.

These nine searching papers deal with such bedrock subjects as the Biblical basis for the mission of the church, the impact of the new theologies, the role of the local congregation, the role of the foreign missionary, the church and social issues. Sixty-nine participants from across the denominational spectrum took part in the seminar. Although specifically about the church in Japan, the papers have an appeal wider than geography. (Available from the editor at 1-17-Honan 2 chome, Suginami-ku, Tokyo, for $1.50, which includes overseas mailing)

TOKIO *Elaine Sommers Rich*

Wegbereiter der Reformation. Herausgegeben von Gustav Adolf Benrath Sammlung Dietrich. Klassiker des Protestantismus. Band I. Carl Schünemann Verlag Bremen. 1967. 540 Seiten.

In der von Christel Matthias Schroeder betreuten schönen Ausgabe der Klassiker des Protestantismus ist nun auch der erste Band herausgekommen, den der Heidelberger Privatdozent für Kirchengeschichte, Dr. Benrath, besorgt hat.

Er schickt eine sehr instruktive Einleitung voraus, die die Behandlung der sog. "Vorreformatoren" durch die Kirchengeschichtsschreibung zum Gegenstand hat und sehr einleuchtend und kritisch die Wandlungen beschreibt, die ihre Beurteilung im Laufe der Jahrhunderte erfahren hat.

Der Stoff ist in folgende Abschnitte gegliedert: I. *Die Waldensische Reformbewegung* (Valdes; Durandus von

Huesca; Die edle Belehrung; Das Bekenntnis des Johannes Leser; Die Lehre der Waldenser zu Mainz; Bericht über die Lehren österreichischer Waldenser; Verhör des Waldensers Matthäus Hagen; Anschluss märkischer Waldenser an die böhmischen Brüder. II. *Scholastiker* (Marsilius von Padua; Wilhelm von Ockham; Nikolaus von Lyra; Thomas von Bradwardine; Gregor von Rimini; Jean Gerson; Gabriel Biel). III. *Mystiker* (Meister Eckhart; Johannes Tauler; Theologia Deutsch: Rudolf von Sachsen; Geert Groote; Gerard Zerbolt; Thomas von Kempen; Johannes Busch; Johannes von Staupitz). IV. *Konziliaristen* (Guilelmus Durandus; Matthäus von Krakau; Konrad von Gelnhausen; Dietrich von Nieheim; Pierre d'Ailli; Das Konzil von Konstanz; Reformatio Sigismundi; Gregor von Heimburg; Gravamina (1451); Andreas von Krain). *Reformprediger* (Militsch von Kremser; Matthias von Janow; Heinrich Kalteisen; Jakob von Jüterbog; Dionysius der Kartäuser; Hans Böhm, der Pfeifer von Niklashausen; Johann Geiler von Kaysersberg; Johannes Trithemius; Giromalo Savonarola). VI. *Die wyclifitische Reformbewegung* (John Wyclif; Die 12 Thesen der Lollarde; Die 37 Thesen [1935]; John Purvey; William Thorpe; Die Leuchte des Lichts [um 1410]; Sir John Oldcastle; Der Bischof und der Koch; Aus dem Traktat wider die Mysterienspiele; William Taylor). VII. *Die hussitische Reformbewegung* (Jan Hus; Peter von Mladonowitz; Hieronymus von Prag; Jakob von Mies; Die vier Prager Artikel (1420); Aus den 76 Artikeln der Taboriten; Inquisitionsurteil gen Peter Turnow; Nikolaus von Pilgram; Jan Rokycana; Peter Cheltschitzky; Die böhmischen Brüder; Lukas von Prag). VIII. Reformtheologen (Nikolaus von Kues; Johann Pupper van Goch; Johann Ruchrath von Wesel; Wessel Gansfort; Traktat von der Autorität, dem Amt und der Gewalt der kirchlichen Lehrer). IX. *Humanisten* (Lorenzo Valla; Marsilio Ficino; Rudolf Agricola; Jakob Wimpfeling; Johannes Reuchlin; Ulrich von Hutten; Erasmus von Rotterdam).

Ich gebe eine vollständige Aufzählung des gebotenen Stoffes, um einen Eindruck zu vermitteln, wieviel wichtige Persönlichkeiten, Schriften und Vorgänge in diesem Buche auftreten—auch für Freunde der Kirchengeschichte sicher mehrere Unbekannte.

Den einzelnen Stücken ist immer ein einleitendes Wort vorausgeschickt, so dass dem Leser die Bedeutung der Persönlichkeiten für ihre Zeit kurz dargelegt wird. Man spürt der Sammlung an, dass sie mit grosser Sorgfalt und Liebe zusammengetragen ist. Am Schluss der einzelnen Abschnitte ist jeweils ein knappes orientierendes Literaturverzeichnis zu finden, das zum weiteren Studium hilfreich ist. Auf den letzten Seiten des Buches findet sich dazu ein sehr intensives allgemeines Literaturverzeichnis.

Um ins Einzelne zu gehen: Bei Erasmus von Rotterdam wird geboten: Aus dem Büchlein des christlichen Streiters (1503); Lob der Torheit (1511); Aus den Vorreden zum Neuen Testament (1516); Der Evangeliumsträger (1518). Und bei der wyclifitischen Reformbewegung ist die köstliche Anekdote vom Bischof und dem Koch festgehalten.

Studenten und Pfarrer, Liebhaber der Kirchengeschichte und Bildungshungrige werden dankbar das Buch erwerben, das auf so engem Raum so viel zu bieten hat. Dr. Benrath ist zu diesem Wurf nur von Herzen zu gratulieren.

HEIDELBERG *Walter Fellmann*

Eberhard Arnold

When The Time Was Fulfilled; On Advent and Christmas. Talks and writings by Eberhard Arnold, Emmy Arnold, Christoph Blumhardt and Alfred Delp. The Plough Publishing House, Rifton, N.Y., 1965, 220 pp.

A welcome book of addresses and meditations for Christmas, warmly recommended for its profound, genuine Bible spirit. By now we should be aware that the growing "Plough Publishing House," part of the activities of the Society of Brothers, the Eberhard Arnold group, is offering a wide variety of Christian literature of a type not easily found elsewhere. Actually it is the continuation of the publication work by this group formerly in Germany and later in England, which gave us many a thoughtful book on Christian renewal and guidance. Its originator, Eberhard Arnold (d. 1935 in Germany), left a remarkable opus of devotional addresses and counsels intended for his own group; they have been preserved and are now gradually being published by this brotherhood in English translation. These books are being hand-set at one of the Bruderhofs and most tastefully produced. There is, for instance, a volume *Love and Marriage in the Spirit* (1965) which contains talks and writings by Eberhard, meant as guidance for young people facing courtship and matrimony, yet uncertain vis-a-vis their Christian commitments. It should prove a helpful guidebook. There is also the intriguing story of the brotherhood up to 1937, charmingly written by the widow of Eberhard, Emmy Arnold (now in her eighties), called *Torches Together* (1963). Another volume of the same Plough production is *Christoph Blumhardt and His Message*, edited by R. Lejeune (1963) [reviewed in *M.L.*, 1964, 143] or Emmy Arnold's *Inner Words for Every Day of The Year* (1963) [reviewed in *M.L.*, 1963, p. 133], and several more such books. They all breathe the fine genius of that brotherhood which has tried to translate the spirit of both primitive Christianity and sixteenth century Anabaptism into the mental framework of twentieth century seekers.

The latest of these publications is our book here announced, a collection of twelve meditations for Advent and sixteen meditations for Christmas, by Eberhard Arnold, his wife Emmy, the above named Christoph Blumhard (d. 1919), leader of the Bad Boll Center in Germany, and two meditations by the converted Jesuit-father Alfred Delp (1909-1945), written in a Nazi jail shortly before his execution because of his underground work against the demonism of the Hitler regime. In such an "ultimate situation" there existed for him but one source of strength: faith in God. "God," he wrote, "enters into the being of man when man is genuinely and completely man," and further on, "man is losing his humanity (today) because he has become incapable of belief."

Out of a deep faith in God's final Kingdom which alone is going to bring "the true peace which no human effort can attain," all these many-sided meditations bring us an uplifting message well fit for the Christmas season and beyond. In an age of so much confusion in matters of the spirit, it is a heartening thing that books of this kind are available providing the seeking soul with proper nourishment of the mind.

KALAMAZOO, MICH. *Robert Friedmann*

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