MENNONITE LIFE

September 1973

This Issue

begins with an article exploring the question of Mennonite identity: its characteristics and whether we ought to maintain it. The writer, Menno Wiebe, points to the uniqueness of the Mennonite experience ("Mennonites have grown out of their own soil") and urges us to "overcome ethnic shame," be ourselves, and make a contribution in harmony with the kind of a people we are.

¶ Judging by current expressions in the fields of history and the arts, there may in some respects be a rising current of pride in Mennonite identity. Never before has there been such an outpouring of creative energy on Mennonite themes. Novels, plays, pageants, films—most of them excellently done—examine the trials and dilemmas as well as the noteworthy achievements in 450 years of Anabaptist-Mennonite history. A host of restoration projects are planned or under way to preserve historic buildings and sites. More markers, monuments and museums are being established. Some of the current focus on heritage is a result of commemorative events—such as the 1974 Mennonite centennial in the prairie states and provinces, and the 50th anniversary of the later exodus from Russia that began in the early 1920s.

¶ Does the current revival of interest in the Anabaptist heritage mean a true recovery of the faith and vision of the best in our church's past? Is it mere nostalgia, or worse, a desire to feed our collective ego? A certain amount of self-love is a healthy thing. Individuals and groups dissatisfied with their identity or unsure of their worth can not make a positive contribution. But we must always keep in mind Menno Simons' favorite verse: "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

¶ Several other articles offer comment on topics of current concern—the state of family life, the role of women, and the energy crisis.

¶ The editor regrets the late publication of this issue, due in part to the transition to electronic typesetting by Herald Publishing Co. This column is set in the new type which will be used throughout the magazine in future issues. The increased production capability of the new equipment will help to better maintain schedules in the future.

¶ Cover: Autumn scene in Marion County, Kansas.

MENNONITE LIFE is an illustrated quarterly magazine published in March, June, September and December by Herald Publishing Co., 129 W. 6th St., Newton, Kansas 67114.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: One year, $3.50; two years, $6.50. Single copies, 90 cents.

Second class postage paid at Newton, Kansas. Send change of address form 3579 to Box 568, Newton, Kansas 67114.

Statement of ownership, management, etc. for Oct. 1, 1973, of Mennonite Life, published quarterly at Newton, Kansas, required by Act of Congress of August 12, 1970. Published by Herald Publishing Co. of Newton, Kansas. Owners holding one per cent or more of total stock, none. No stock issued. Known bondholders, etc., none. Average number of copies each issue printed during preceding 12 months, 3,125; average paid circulation, 1,689; average free distribution, 1,250; average office use, left over, etc., 186. Signed, Robert Schrag, Editor.

MENNONITE
LIFE SEPTEMBER 1973, VOL. 28, NO. 3

A Quarterly Magazine
Focusing on the Anabaptist-Mennonite Heritage
& Its Contemporary Expression

Contents

Mennonites ought to shed their ethnic shame and quit divorcing what they believe from what they are

To Be Or Not to Be Mennonite People?

By MENNO WIEBE

TO BE OR NOT TO BE Mennonite people might well be the question that North American Mennonites will begin to ask with fresh seriousness. Indeed that ultimate question has already been asked. It crops up in Mennonite news media, often masked in the form of queries dealing with the pros and cons of retaining the name "Mennonite." The issue is also repeatedly debated when new churches or missions come into existence and are in search of a name.

Whether the name "Mennonite" is a theological or a cultural concept hardly needs further debate. The records of Mennonite history demonstrate conclusively that Mennonites are a religio-ethnic body of peoples regardless of stated ideological goals. We do well to begin by dismissing a number of popular notions which depict culture as some kind of high class manners, quaint museum pieces or some other exotic curios. Similarly readers who attach stigma to a discussion of Mennonites as an ethnic or cultural group are reminded that contemporary thinkers in anthropology focus on such relevant considerations as: 1) the nature of human alignments, 2) the relationship of man to his environment and, 3) religious ideologies as they relate to the predicament of human survival. This paper will seek to focus on these questions from the point of view of Mennonite identity and adaptation.

Of particular interest to Mennonite people should be the fabric of relationships which makes the difference between being and not being a people.

a thin thread alone
ties us together
at times it seems
that thread will snap

In order to focus on the corporate dimension of human experience, we might speak of "peoplehood," a term which is not as restrictive as brotherhood. The latter too closely connotes organizational systems, e.g., "brotherhood of Labourers in Manitoba," or references dealing with brotherhoods which are congruent with membership lists. The term brotherhood also has that strong male orientation. For instance, we do not talk about sisterhoods. Similarly terms like "community" usually connote geographical restrictions. The term peoplehood is not restricted by generation, geography or altogether by organization, and for that reason fills a niche in the inventory of current expressions.

To speak of peoplehood in the setting of western industrialized society is to counteract the prevailing and more popular ideology of individualism. The educational system, the payroll office and economic achievements are categories where the response is to individuals, not to corporate bodies. I wish to contend that peoplehood in the form of religio-

Menno Wiebe of Winnipeg, Man. has served as executive secretary of Mennonite Pioneer Mission. This article was presented as an address at the Conference on Christian Community held at St. Jacobs, Ont., May 3-5, 1973.

"Earlier generations of Mennonites had a common bond with one another in that they conformed to uniform dress, common occupation, unique settlement pattern . . ."

ethnic relationship is indeed operative within larger bodies of people.

Theologically stated, man is not created in isolation but as a member of a given human group, specifically of the family. Beyond the immediate family there is always some larger body of people with which he is aligned. The Hebrews knew and know themselves as a people, a basic fact of wholesome theological and social self-understanding that obviously contributes substantially to the psychic strength of any body of peoples.

Before Mennonites talk about themselves as a religio-ethnic body of peoples they tend first to look both ways to see who is listening in. In other words, there is a good deal of self-consciousness about the Mennonite identity. In the high schools (even private Mennonite high schools and colleges), on the university campuses and within sophisticated business circles there is not a ready openness for members to identify themselves as Mennonites.

I think it could be fairly said that Mennonites are suffering from a case of ethnic shame. And I would like to contend that there is something unwholesome, even masochistic about that self-concept. Perhaps the mass media has caused public opinion to focus on the curious life-style of Mennonites. And it is probably correct historically that the members of earlier generations of Mennonites had a common bond with one another in that they conformed to uniform dress, common occupation, unique settlement pattern, dual German languages and a somewhat unique ideology.

But Mennonites of today have shed most of the externals which formerly helped to establish the ethnic/social and to some extent geographic boundaries of their members. The dramatic leap from a geographically confined agrarian way of life to an urban industrialized life-style has clearly upset the majority of criteria which symbolized Mennonite identity.

Much of the reaction to a Mennonite identity is a reaction to a former exclusive way of life. While it is correct that religio-ethnic reformulation will have to take place within the adjustment to a new urban environment, it remains unclear why Mennonites themselves frequently scorn their traditional way of life. There simply isn't reason for a negation of Mennonite history and tradition. Rather the opposite is true.

Mennonites as an agrarian people have ingeniously found ways of coming to terms with their environments. If exploiting the maximum resources with a given technology is a criteria for survival, then Mennonites have ranked very high. If, however, the externals of geographic confinement, unique language, common vocation, symbolic dress, the village settlement pattern and to some extent the biological heritage no longer serve to prescribe the boundaries of the Mennonite people, then we do well to examine whether there are alternative ingredients to a Mennonite identity.

The Teaching Profession: The Pivot of Adaptation

There are some risks involved when considering the future identity of Mennonite people. Perhaps it is the over-specialization, that is, the specialization of farming, that reduced possibilities of quick re-adaptation by Mennonite agriculturalists to the new urban-industrialized setting. Over-specialization, which tends to be a deterrent for re-ad-

aptation anywhere, thus becomes a hazard for the survival of a human group.

Interestingly enough it has been the Mennonite teacher who has probably been the most instrumental in bridging the rural-urban gap. The origins of many, if not most Mennonite city churches, for instance, are due to the promotions of Mennonite teachers. Teachers have also provided an important link in Mennonite missions. The relevant factor here is that teachers could be transplanted from one environment to the other without a total vocational change.

If teachers are the pioneers of urban Mennonitism, then it is significant that these were better equipped than some others to understand the basic Mennonite ideology. The Canadian leaders David Toews, A. H. Unruh, B. B. Janz, J. H. Janzen, C. F. Peters, F. C. Thiessen and J. J. Thiessen, it should be remembered, were teachers. So are many of the younger, current, strong proponents of Mennonite ideology. Ethnic shame, I am suggesting, seems to be less of a problem with Mennonite teachers than it is with those of other vocations. It is a particular strong point to the advantage of wholesome ethnic reformulation that Mennonites have an abundance of teachers. The reason for that abundance of course lies in the encouragement of the teaching profession at private schools.

Structures of Mennonite Solidarity

The realism of indispensable social structures seems never to have been completely accepted by Mennonite people. Yet the nature of continuing Mennonite cohesiveness hinges on an honest confrontation of that question. The question could and ought to be answered on the basis of informal group alignments or it might be answered in terms of the more formal official Mennonite church organizations. I will address myself briefly only to the latter. It is really a matter of church conference structures. With the urban to rural—agrarian to industrialized—shift come the significant structural changes in the Mennonite social networks. The shift is most notable in the authority system.

On the rural scene, the Mennonite minister was vocationally and in every other way part of his parish. He was a hometown man who intercepted the informal conversation from the local gossip channels. When he then made his statements from the pulpit on Sundays, he expressed himself in keeping with the current and prevalent trend of thought. If this sounded authoritarian he could get away with it because he was sufficiently tuned in to be able to risk doing so. His statements were largely an amplification of that which was already majority opinion in the informal but important gossip themes. Since the rural minister was typically not professionally trained, he didn't have to fight the "snob" image.

The pastor of the post-rural church is markedly different. Typically:

a) he is not a hometown man;
b) he is elected by recommendation, kinship usually not being a factor;
c) he is professionally trained as a theologian;
d) he is vocationally different from all other people in his congregation;
e) he is salaried;
f) he is often younger than his counterpart, the rural minister; and
g) he is rarely bilingual.

The post-rural congregation, too, is vastly different in terms of its cohesiveness. While kinship is not as influential in the makeup of the modern rural congregation, its impact is still evident. But it is in the diversity of vocation, life-style, status and area of residence where cohesiveness is coming to a severe test. The distinction between rural and urban pastors and churches itself is rapidly fading. Geography is no longer a valid criterion for the designation of those two categories.

To some extent the modern pastor faces the problem typical of many professionals today, namely, that of over-specialization. Mennonite leadership is becoming increasingly differentiated. Typical of bureaucratic behavior elsewhere, Mennonite leaders freely refer inquiries to the "proper department." While specialization and differentiation is inevitable, Mennonites do well not to buy the bureaucratic system which is designed for a larger, totally nonfamilial business corporation. Over-specialization is hazardous because of the possibility of omitting the more fruitful means

"The dramatic leap from a geographically confined agrarian way of life to an urban industrialized life-style has clearly upset the majority of criteria which symbolized Mennonite identity."

of communication via recognized remaining strong networks based on kinship, migration waves or other similar criteria.

A particular strain is placed upon the relationships between the pastor and his congregation in the modernized urban setting. The pastor's formal training is typically that of the education system generally, be it in the high school, college, university or seminary. These institutions are known for following restricted contexts of communication. All the formal communication in the educational institutes takes place within the setting of the captive audience of the classroom. Added to these restrictions is the assumed analytical and/or evaluatory stance of today's scholar. Emphasis seems to be decidedly on analysis rather than creation. For the professionally trained minister, there is a crucial hurdle to overcome, namely to move from a stance of analytical description to a stance of visceral appreciation of the people he is serving.

It was during a moment of intense concentration on the matter of Mennonite leadership that I thought of my good friend, Rev. J. J. Thiessen, for whom I formulated the following lines:

to jj with love

look at those horizontal arms
sufficiently prolonged
to hug the brotherhood

He viewed in time
that specialization
would conveniently become
the mode of socially decreed
passing the buck
to his successors
I hear him saying
be not too specialized
to give a general care
do devote your love and skill
to those vocational slots
but let not your differentiating mind
replace your arms
to love the brotherhood

On the question of social structures, Mennonites probably have moved in two extremes. On the one hand, it was assumed too frequently that Mennonite notions of brotherhood and particularly the concept of the priesthood of believers were theologically valid stances. However, the theological discussion occasionally failed to take into account dimensions of social realism.

One social given which I am proposing is the inevitability of minimal hierarchy as a requisite for the sustenance of any human group. The hierarchy within any organized group assumes differentiation among individuals. Even the idea of the priesthood of all believers requires roles for some priests which are more "priestly" than others. When specialization in the form of professionally trained ministers did hit the Mennonite brotherhood, they bought the package without sufficient discrimination.

Mennonite Ideology Reformulated

Future Mennonite cohesiveness, if it is not dependent on externals, must be sought elsewhere. Perhaps it can be found in an honest assessment of who Mennonites are sociologically and what they are supposed to be theologically. In other words, the ethnic quality of Mennonites should be regarded as a given. This could mean that Mennonites ought to shed their ethnic shame and quit divorcing what they believe from what they are.

What are Mennonites sociologically? Is there indeed any solidarity remaining with the Mennonite people? The answer is yes. The human community does not survive alone by externally created symbols of identity. Man also lives by ideology.

The several centuries when Mennonites lived as an agrarian people seemingly reduced the need for cultivating a strong ideology. The solidarity was retained by externals, notably geographic isolation. To some extent Mennonites coasted on the unique theological themes. In terms of their solidarity they could afford to do so. It is only now that Anabaptists are once again readapting to a new type of agricultural environment that the question of basic ideology emerges. In the absence of a well cultivated and up to date Anabaptist ideology, Mennonites find themselves scrambling for a reason to be. And so the pressures to borrow a basic ideology. In particular, the theology of American evangelicalism is being embraced as a form of loaned ideology.

The influence of evangelicals seems to have filled the void created by the absence of a strong Anabaptist theology created while Mennonites lived as isolated agrarian peoples. Evangelical theology already began to have its influence during the pietistic sweep in Russia during the mid-century of the 1800's. But the influence meant an emphasis on a theology of personal salvation without a theology of "the people of God." Or what there was of God's peoplehood tended to be spiritualized into non-empirical entities, quite unlike an actual body of twelve men—human men called by Jesus—several of whom were even biologically related to one another. Similarly the churches to which Paul addressed himself were bodies of actual people, men and women, who presumably had children to form a second generation set of believers. Whenever this is the case, you of course have stage one of an ethnic group.

The question for Mennonites, I would like to propose, is not to forsake an ethnic identity in favor of a supposed non-ethnic body of "neutral" Christians. Always the question is one of transferring one's encampment to another body of peoples. Evangelicalism itself, it should be observed, is by now almost complete in its process towards becoming an ethnic group. The observation made at a Campus Crusade Institute at Arrowhead Springs last spring was that parents of participants in that Institute were members of one or another of the evangelical churches of North America. Wherever there were a few notable exceptions, there one could quickly observe that their actions did not mesh with the well-established behavior patterns of the Campus Crusade "ritual." That is, all participants had ancestral genetic, as well as theological, influence from their parents.

Mennonites who are satisfied to borrow theologies are therefore asking for a switch of allegiance. If some Mennonite sectors lean towards evangelicals, then they must ask whether the switch is honest, honest not in light of an abstract notion of God's truth, but honest in the light of who Mennonites are. Always the bigger question is one of integrating what Mennonites are with what they believe.

I'm strongly in favor of rediscovering the genius of Mennonitism and discovering what it is that Mennonites

—Continued on page 90.

Embarkation of Paraguay-bound refugees at Bremerhafen, Germany, 1947.
(Courtesy, Mennonite Library and Archives)

"Mennonites have grown out of their own soil. The ferocious suffering endured by Anabaptists, the courageous stand on warfare, the unique sequence of world and national migrations represent typically Mennonite experiences."

WILL YOU KILL A COW FOR ME?

The story of an Old Colony wedding in Mexico

By JAMES R. JAQUITH

AMONG the Old Colony Mennonites, it is customary to slaughter a cow on the occasion of a *felafnes* (wedding), the meat being prepared for the guests. This custom is so firmly associated by *Altkolonier* with the *felafnes* that people recount an anecdote to the effect that a young man was very nervous when he went to his sweetheart's house to ask for her hand in marriage. Finally, he blurted out to her father the simple question—"Will you kill a cow for me?"

This is the story of a Mennonite wedding in Mexico. It was tape-recorded for me by a young Old Colony woman, and thus communicates perspectives and interests not commonly experienced in this country.

Necessarily, this version will represent some combination of the teller's personal experiences and biases. She does not recognize in the story, for example, that the *felafnes* ceremony sometimes takes place in the house of the groom's parents, nor that the *kast* may be held in a private home rather than the church. And late in the story (Sentence 56) she makes a very personal evaluation that the pairing off of boys and girls—peers of the bride and groom—to wander back to their individual homes is "the best part of a *felafnes*." This is interesting in that, strictly, it is not a feature of the *felafnes* at all, but something that happens after it has been brought to a close by the singing of hymns after dinner.

One is tempted to speculate that it is "the best part" because it represents a socially approved opportunity for boys and girls to be alone together in the midst of many of the symbols of the happier aspects of marriage—youth, new clothes, abundant food, singing, positive social and religious sanction. The bridal couple's peers can afford to luxuriate in the symbols of marriage, secure in the knowledge that they are insulated for a time from the trying substance of married living, including for women unceasing toil and the certain prospect of repeated childbirth.

Thus, while the story accurately represents the major features of any (Mexican Old Colony *felafnes,* it is told from the special points of view of an insider, a *meyal* (girl) who has some realistic reservations about making herself a *frü* (married woman). At the same time, one senses the poignancy of the conflict with which she and other Old Colony girls must live—that while being married entails some serious problems, there is really nothing else a girl can do with her life.

The story consists of 68 sentences, each of which is presented first in the story-teller's Low German and then in my English translation.

Low German (Plattdeutsch) is not commonly written. In fact, Old Colonists in Mexico do not use it at all in written form even though it is the language which they most commonly speak. Beginning in 1967, I have analyzed the sound system of that language, using that analysis as the basis for designing a practical alphabet for Altkolonier in Mexico. I have reported on this and related work in *Mennonite Life* (Vol. 24, No. 3, 1969; Vol. 25, No. 4, 1970) and I have transliterated one of Arnold Dyck's *Koop enn Bua* books into the alphabet for distribution in Mexico. It is in this alphabet that the wedding story now appears. When appropriate, I have added explanatory notes.

James R. Jaquith is professor of anthropology, Washington University, St. Louis, Mo. He has done considerable research among the Old Colony Mennonites of Mexico.

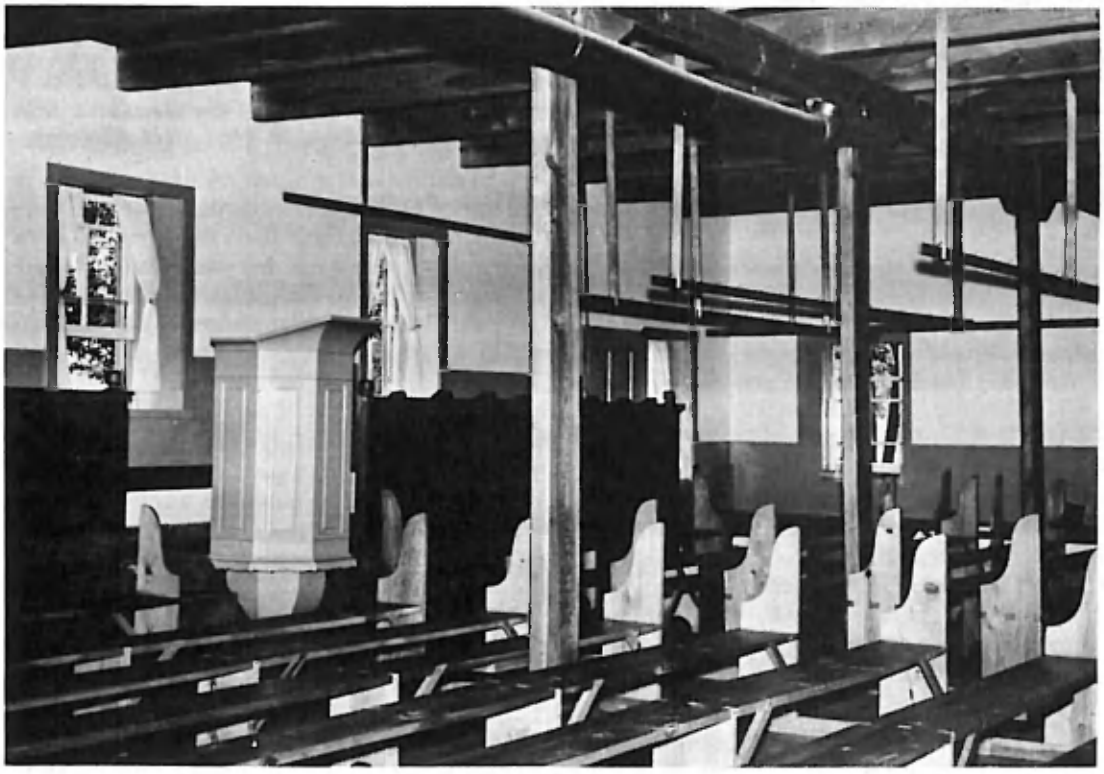
The Story in Low German

(1) Det's ain felafnes fon Viiben Sush en Paitash Dowft. (2) Zai han zek bereit dot zai aem Octawba vaelen felafnes han. (3) Owba iiesht mot noj feil yedownen vowaren. (4) Zai vaelen dot gonse hüs raeenmeiacen. (5) Zai vaelen yiida shtowv noj ütfowaven en niie gurdiinen meiacen. (6) Zai vaelen bûten opem hof oles opriimen uc dai gowades raeenvaiden en oles zol shmoc raeenyemeiact en opyeriimt. (7) Dot aes noj zaia feil owabaeet. (8) En dan vaelen zaw uc noj naeen. (9) Fe dai brüt vaelen zai en powa klaida naeen, uc fe dai muta, uc fe dai kliine yeshvesta. (10) Zai han noj zaia feil owabaeet. (11) Aws dai mawnat nü iiesht fegownen aes dan zaent zai nü dext botem felafnesdaj. (12) Owba dai veiak faerheia Zendaj seowvest faerem felafnes dan kaemt dai briigom Paitash Dowft han. (13) Hai aes en heitye opyereiaxt, viils hait vait hai mot fondeiag om dai hont fon Viiben Sush freiagen. (14) Os dai aelren am dai lowten, owba hai kaemt han en dot yaeet oles beita os hai zek dot feiayeshtalt haft. (15) Dai aelren zaent gons aenfeshtownen. (16) Zenowvent, nü aes owba noj maia owabaeet yebleiven. (17) Dese veiaek mot fe dot eiten yezorxt vowaren en zai moten dein felafnesbraif raidmeiacen, ole liid aenlowden. (18) Zai lowden fon hundat bot hundat faeftex femiilyes aen. (19) En dowa mot us noj feil aenyecoft vowaren. (20) En Donadaj vowat dai caw yeshlajt. (21) Dai nowba kaemt am uc dowamaet halpen. (22) En Friidaj tiidex semoryest cowmen dai meyales ütem darp en halpen diiex kneiden. (23) En dan yaeet Awintye Viib en meiact dot fowatex raid, dot dai meyales kaenen dein diiex aem darp ütfiieren. (24) En yeiayenowvent, nowfaspa dan brengen dai meyales ol ola dai tvaibakes now Viiben. (25) Dan zaent dai ol ola gowa. (26) En dai frües ütem darp, en shteaek drai, cowmen now Viiben en meiacen dein comstborsh en dai plümenmaws raid. (27) Nü aes oles raid taw Zenowvent. (28) Tiidex semoryest Zenowvent shtownen zai op, meiacen dot ondre noj ola raid vot dowa feilt. (29) En dan meiact dai muta dai brüt noj niie sopen. (30) En dan trakt zai zek eia niiet shmocet brünet brütklait on. (31) Nü lüet zai now eiaren briigom. (32) En dan zet zai uc ol dot shmoce fowatex, gons blange maet en shtaeelet shmocet piiet dowafeia cowmen opem hof nop. (33) Nü kaemt eia briigom rof en zai beyeiaynen zek. (34) Nü zeta ziine brüt. (35) Ziin onyezaxt ylaenst. (36) Hai aes zaw shtolt maet ziine brüt. (37) Dot aes tawzainen zai fraeen dot zai nü vaelen felafnes han. (38) Dan gownen zai aene akshtowv naen en zaten zek biim aengyenfaensta ope shtaila dowl, en lüren nü now dai yast. (39) En dan diiet et nex lang dan fangen zai on taw cowmen. (40) En dan cowmen zai ola aene akshtowv, en beyraisen deze brütliid en lowden an aen tawm aene veiaek han taw cowmen taw ne mowltiit. (41) En dan vowat maedaj yeyeiten. (42) Dai brütliid vowat dot iieshte faeraengy yecreiajt. (43) En dan eiten zai ola maedaj, dot diiet zaw onyefeia drai shtund bot zai iiesht yeyeiten han. (44) Van zai iiesht dot maedaj opyevoshen en opyeriimt han, dan vowat yezungen. (45) Dan creiajt dai zengya an aene grawte shtowv naen, en dan zengyen zai tvai laida. (46) Dan gownen dai brütliid treigy. (47) En dan vowat faspa raid yemeiact. (48) Shaine tvaibakes, soca shtaeka en cofe han zai taw faspa. (49) En dan eiten zai ola faspa. (50) Dai Brütliid vada faeraengy. (51) En van zai iiesht dot faspa opyeriimt han, dan zengyen zai noj ainmowl tvai laida, en dan aes dot felafnes üt. (52) En dan, van dowa feil eiten eivayebleiven aes, dan breiagen zai noj vot liid ütem darp taw owventcost, dot dot eiten noj opyeyeiten vowat. (53) En bezomda dai yügent creiagen zai dan noj han. (54) En dan vowat vada owventcost yeyeiten, en dan van zai iiesht opyeriimt han dan kaemt dai yügent en fezomelt zek dowa noj ola aene brütliidshtowv. (55) Dan fraeen dai meyales en dai yunges ütem darp zek, dan kriien zai ola ain powatna dan kaenen zai ola maet ainen powatna now hüs gownen. (56) Dot aes noj dai yratste fraeed fon ain felafnes. (57) En dan Zendaj semoryest dan fowaren dai brütliid now dai kowak. (58) En fon dai kowak fowaren zai now dein briigom ziine aelren taw maedaj. (59) Dot dai brüt noj maia becont vowat maet eiare shviieaelren. (60) En dan Mondaj dan fangen zai on dot frentshoft taw beziieken. (61) Dan fowaren zai now maeest ole shteiden, en bliiven yevainlex fon faeftiien bot tventex menüten op aine shteid, an yevainlex kriien zai dan uc noj ain brütyeshaengk, feile kriien en powa tosen, ainsye kriien en powa shiiven, feshiidenstet kriien zai tawm brütyeshaengk. (62) En van dai veiaek iiesht daerx aes dan om Zendaj dan han zai kast. (63) Yevainlex fowaren zai now dai kowak, om kast taw han, om faermaedaj. (64) En dan nowmaedaj dan han zai noj en beit ne nowkast. (65) Yevainlex bii dein briigom ziine aelren. (66) Dan zengyen zai en powa laida en eiten faspa. (67) En dot aes ol nex en zaia grawtet fast. (68) En det aes zaw os dai Awltcolniia zek befriien.

The English Translation

(1) This is the story of the *felafnes*[1] of Sarah Wiebe and David Peters.[2] (2) They have agreed to have their *felafnes* in October. (3) But first there is a great deal to be done. (4) They[3] want to have the whole house cleaned up. (5) They want to paint each room and make new curtains. (6) They also want to straighten up everything out in the yard and to weed the garden so that it will look nice. (7) There is always a lot of work to do. (8) And then they also want to sew. (9) They want to sew some dresses for the bride, some for her mother and clothing for the bride's younger brothers and sisters. (10) So there is still a lot of work to do. (11) Since the month is almost gone, the *felafnes* day draws near. (12) But on Sunday evening of the week before, the bridegroom, David Peters, will come over to Sarah's house. (13) He is a bit nervous because he knows that today he will ask for Sarah's hand.[4] (14) Sarah's parents give permission for the visit, so David comes over and things go better than he had imagined. (15) The parents had already come to their own agreement about the marriage. (16) Here it is Saturday [a week before the *felafnes*] and there is still a great deal of work to be done. (17) This week Sarah's family must look to the preparation of the food, they must get all the announcements ready and invite the guests. (18) They invite from

a hundred to a hundred and fifty families. (19) And there is still a lot of shopping to be done. (20) And on Thursday the cow must be slaughtered. (21) The neighbors come to help with that. (22) And early Friday morning girls from the village come to Sarah's house to help knead dough. (23) And then Mr. Wiebe gets the buggy ready to take the girls and the dough back to their homes in the village.[5] (24) After *faspa*,[6] before the sun goes down, the girls bring the *tvaibakes*[7] they have baked back to the Wiebe house. (25) Now they [the *tvaibakes*] are all ready. (26) And then several women from the village come to the Wiebe house to get the *comstborsh* and the *plümenmaws*[8] ready. (27) Now everything is ready for the big day. (28) Early Saturday morning everyone gets up to finish the many last-minute tasks. (29) Sarah's mother braids her daughter's hair. (30) And then Sarah puts on her lovely new brown wedding dress.[9] (31) Now she waits for her bridegroom. (32) She sees the elegant buggy, all shiny with a wonderful spirited horse driving up to the yard. (33) Finally Peter comes in to meet his bride. (34) They see each other. (35) His face beams. (36) He is so proud of his bride. (37) It is clear that they are happy the *felafnes* is about to take place. (38) They go into the living room[10] where they sit by a corner[11] window and wait for the guests. (39) They soon begin to arrive. (40) The guests come into the living room to greet the bridal couple and invite them to visit and dine in their homes during the coming week. (41) Now lunch will be eaten. (42) The bridal couple will be the first to sit down at the table. (43) Then everyone eats lunch, and it takes about three hours for everyone to finish. (44) When they have washed the dishes and cleaned up after lunch they will sing.[12] (45) Then the singing leader invites the people to gather in a large room where they will sing two songs. (46) Then Sarah and Peter go back [to sit in the living room]. (47) Then supper will be prepared. (48) Tasty rolls, coffee and sugar cubes are served. (49) And then everyone eats supper. (50) The bridal couple returns to the living room. (51) As soon as they have cleaned up after supper they sing two more songs. With this the *felafnes* proper is finished. (52) When there is a lot of food left over people from the village are invited to dinner. (53) The young people especially are invited.[13] (54) The young people, as soon as things are cleaned up after their dinner, all gather in the room where the bride and groom are sitting. (55) The boys and girls are happy as they choose partners, each couple going off by themselves toward their homes. (56) That is the best part of a *felafnes*.[14] (57) Then on Sunday morning the bridal couple drives a buggy to church. (58) In the afternoon they will go to the groom's parents' house for lunch. (59) This is to let the bride become better acquainted with her parents-in-law. (60) And then on Monday they begin to visit their relatives.[15] (61) They visit a lot of relatives in different villages, usually staying fifteen or twenty minutes and usually receiving a gift at each place, often a pair of cups or a few plates. (62) Next Sunday, after the week of visiting, they have the *kast*.[1, 16] (63) They usually go to the church early in order to have their *kast* in the morning. (64) And then in the afternoon they will have a small reception. (65) Usually, it is at the groom's parents' house. (66) Then they sing a couple of songs and eat supper. (67) It is not a very big celebration. (68) And that is how the Old Colonists get married.[17]



Austere interior of an Old Colony meetinghouse in Mexico.

Typical scene in one of the Old Colony Mennonite villages.

NOTES

1. The *felafnes* is the first of two distinct marriage ceremonies observed in the Old Colony. It is held on a Saturday after announcements and invitations (*felafnes-braiv*) have been sent out. It is more secular than the second ceremony (the *kast,* held a week later) in that it is not celebrated in church, nor is a preacher (*preidya*) involved.

2. These are not the real names of the participants, though they could be.

3. "They" refers to the bride's family, in whose house the *felafnes* will take place.

4. Asking the father for the girl's hand is a customary and desired part of the symbolism of the larger marriage process. It should not be thought, however, that when he is asked the father is surprised to learn of the boy's intentions or that he must make up his mind (and thus both families' minds) in a moment of thoughtful deliberation. Actually, numerous channels operate through which the wishes of the couple are communicated to the father, often considerably in advance of the formal "asking." It is the interim period during which the girl's parents really decide.

5. So much bread will be consumed that not only do village girls come to the bride's house to help in the kneading of the dough, but each takes a portion of the dough back to her own house where she will bake it and return the fresh bread to the scene of the *felafnes.*

6. *Faspa* is a relatively light late-afternoon meal.

7. *Tvaibac* is wheat-flour bread, baked in loaves. *Tvaibakes* are rolls baked from bread dough, sometimes slightly sweetened.

8. *Comstborsh* is a soup made from cabbage. *Maws* refers to a class of milk—or watered-based, sweetened, fruit soups. *Plümenmaws* is one flavored with plums. Both dishes are traditional at weddings.

9. Brown is the customary color for wedding dresses in the Old Colony.

10. This is the *akshtowv* ('corner room'), the front wall of which faces the street while one side wall faces the driveway.

11. This is the *aengyenfaensta,* a window in the corner of the living room view from which commands both the street and the driveway. In this way the bridal couple can see—and be seen by—guests as they approach the house.

12. The entire *felafnes-kast* cycle has strongly religious overtones in several senses. The singing, however, is the principal direct religious expression at a *felafnes.* It must be thought of as religious, since music other than unaccompanied *Gesangbuch* hymns is uniformly proscribed in the Old Colony. Hymns are sung in church and in certain other circumstances strongly sanctioned by the *Gemeinde.*

13. This custom has two functions. One is that it serves as a kind of "going away" party for the bridal couple vis-a-vis their peers. The other is that by immersing young people in the general happiness and gaiety of the wedding scene they will become more consciously aware of and attracted to the idea of marriage themselves.

14. See the discussion in the introduction to this article.

15. During the week between *felafnes* and *kast* the couple traditionally makes horse and buggy visits to their relatives in other villages.

16. The *kast,* while perhaps most important in terms of official church intervention and sanction, involves fewer people and is much less important as a general social event. The marriage ceremony most narrowly defined, that ritual during which the preacher verbally binds the couple together, is called the *trü.*

17. *Zek befrüen* (Sentence 68) has two primary meanings in the Old Colony. One is 'to get married.' The other is 'to free one's self.' The connection between these two meanings seems to be that traditionally young people are so anxious to "free" themselves from parental control that they look to marriage as a way out. However until one is married he has no idea what it is *not* to be free.

THE STATE OF

By HOWARD KAUFFMAN

OF ALL THE MYRIAD TYPES of social organizations and institutions that mankind has devised, none is more universal or more persistent than the family. It seems to survive all onslaughts of war, pestilence, famine, poverty, and national disasters. It even survives the blows of radicals who hammer away at the philosophical and moral underpinnings of family idealism.

The survival of the family as an institution, however, says little about the well-being of specific families. In many ways, the American family system has fallen on hard times. The system may survive the current storms, but particular families and individuals are getting badly battered. The toll of heartbreak, disappointment and bitterness from broken marriages and family relationships seems to be steadily mounting. Currently nearly a third of all American marriages are ending in divorce. Among those who marry before the age of 20 nearly one-half are showing up in the divorce court. The rising rate of crime and delinquency also reflect the weakness of our modern family system.

Mennonite families in the United States and Canada also partake in the rising tide of family problems. We may have built some protective cultural fences around our family and kinship groups, but we have no immunity to the destructive forces that threaten the family system. The fact that our divorce and delinquency rates are relatively low must not soothe us into a somnolent complacency.

What is the state of the Mennonite family? It all depends on what kind of a bench mark we use for making judgments. If we compare ourselves with the "average American family" we may look pretty good. If we have in mind a hoped for "ideal family" type, we've got a lot of trouble. If "husbands love your wives," "children obey your parents," and "provoke not your children to wrath" be our measuring sticks, who among us does not have some things to confess?

Mennonite families have a low divorce rate. According to a recent survey of 3,591 members in five Mennonite and Brethren in Christ denominations (Church Member Profile, 1972), only one per cent of the members have experienced divorce or separation. Half of these have remarried. We can assume that additional divorces have occurred among those who formerly were members of Mennonite churches but who withdrew in the face of strong attitudes disfavoring divorce. It is more difficult to show love than to show criticism and condemnation toward those caught in the web of marital failure? One piece of research indicated that at least 10 per cent of Mennonite couples are relatively unhappy with their marriages. What resources does the church have to help these persons in difficulty?

There are plenty of "generation gap" problems. The American "Youth Culture" of the 1960s has made an impact on Mennonite youth that is difficult to evaluate. The demands for freedom from social restraints, the experimentation with new sets of values, the readiness of youth to take physical, social, and moral risks all serve to create great anxieties on the part of parents for the welfare of their children.

Some parents and youth are poles apart in their music tastes, views on clothing and hair styles, attitudes on use of leisure, use of money, use of language, etc. It's not that the new youth values are always wrong—they are *different.* And the differences sometimes cause tensions that weaken parent-youth relationships. In more serious cases the gap leads parents and their children to "write each other off." There is enough informal evidence to suggest that many Mennonite families suffer these "generation gap" difficulties.

Mennonite families share in the general economic affluence. Evidence from several studies indicates that the Mennonite family income distribution in the U.S. is similar to that of the nation as a whole. On the basis of Church Member Profile data, the average Mennonite family in 1971 had an income of about $10,400, which is very close to the national family average. However, Mennonite families appear to have somewhat smaller proportions in the very poor and the very rich categories. About 80 per cent of all Mennonite families own their own homes, which is well above a national average of around 60 per cent.

Religion in family life. Mennonite families attend church more regularly than families in most Protestant denominations. Seventy per cent of church members report attending worship services at church at least once a week. Another 23 per cent attend "almost every week." Forty-five per cent of families indicated that they "have a family or group worship, other than grace at meals." In additional households, family members have private worship and Bible study. Grace at meals is regularly observed in all but three or four per cent of families. In about three-fourths of the homes, grace is always or usually said audibly; in the remainder it is usually given silently.

Seventy-three per cent of married church members reported the spouse belonged to the same denomination at the time of their wedding. In those cases of marriage across

Howard Kauffman is professor of sociology at Goshen College and was co-leader of the Church Member Profile study undertaken recently of six Mennonite and Brethren in Christ groups.

THE MENNONITE FAMILY

Despite protective cultural fences,
we have no immunity to the destructive forces
that threaten the family system

denomination lines, there is a strong tendency to adjust membership one way or another so that, following marriage, both spouses belong to the same church. Only six per cent of the church members reported that they and their spouses presently belong to different denominations. No doubt many of these are young married persons who will later join their membership in the same church.

Mennonite young people apparently do not begin dating and do not enter marriage as early as is true for the national population. On the basis of limited data, it appears that both dating and marriage among Mennonites begins at least two years later on the average. The typical age for beginning dating is 15 and the average age of marriage for men and women is about 24 and 22 respectively.

Family size is declining. Like the nation as a whole, American Mennonites have a declining birth rate. This is probably associated with increasing urbanization, employment of women outside the home, increased knowledge and use of birth control, and the desire to bestow family resources more abundantly upon fewer children.

Mennonites reflected the long-time decline in birth rates into the 1930s. The post-World War II peak in birth rates was reached by Mennonites about 1953, according to a 1963 census of families in the Mennonite Church. The national peak did not come until 1957. Following the 1950s both national and Mennonite rates have declined, nationally to an all-time low at present. The number of children born to Mennonite families, however, tends to be roughly 50 per cent greater than the national average.

The status of women. There is lots of discussion these days over questions of women's rights and women's roles in society. In respect to employment of women outside the home, Mennonite women keep up with the nation. According to the 1970 U.S. Census, 39.6 per cent of all women were employed (part-time or full-time) outside the home. The figure for Mennonite women is 45.1 per cent. Counting only Mennonite housewives, 38 per cent are employed at least part-time. Only 14 per cent, however, were employed full-time. Even among families living on farms, nearly one-fourth of the wives are supplementing the family income by working away from home at least part of the time.

What about discrimination against women? Church members were asked, "Do you believe that women in Canadian and American societies are being discriminated against and denied certain basic rights?" Eighteen per cent of the males and 14 per cent of the females answered "yes."

An unusually large per cent of Mennonite women never marry. Among church members 35 years of age and over, 21.2 per cent of females and 3.6 per cent of males have never married. Although a few will marry beyond this age, it appears that about one-fifth of Mennonite women will never marry, compared to only about seven per cent of all American women. The discrepancy between male and female marriage rates among Mennonites is apparently due to much larger numbers of males leaving the Mennonite church or bringing wives into the Mennonite church from other backgrounds.

Finally, Mennonites are becoming increasingly urbanized. We are increasingly in communication with, and participating in, the activities and forces shaping the urban, industrial, technological, and commercial society. Time was when most Mennonites lived in the more slowly paced, relaxed farm situation. Today only one-fourth of Mennonite males over 20 years of age have farming as their chief occupation. Thirty-five per cent of families are living in towns and cities.

Farming is a "family affair" and facilitates family interaction and common activities. Urban families need to work hard at the job of achieving meaningful interaction and shared activities between siblings and between parents and children.

And whether urban or rural, the real cement that binds persons together is a Christian faith that gives meaning, purpose, and spiritual strength to meet the stresses and strains of living in today's world. Let's be glad for the strengths reflected in Mennonite family life. Let's have courage and concern to work at the many problem situations that our families encounter.

Women's Lib in the Third World

By MARIE K. WIENS

WOMEN'S LIB in North America has been the subject of Sunday morning sermons, made the headlines in daily newspapers, has become a course of study in universities, reached into the Supreme Court, and has been the object of thousands of jokes, most of them in poor taste.

How has this movement affected the turbaned woman in Africa, the Senora in South America or the wife of a Shastri in India? That is what I asked our missionaries abroad. While their responses leave me with a highly incomplete report, and should be read with this in mind, some light is shed on a current topic.

The wife of a Missionary Aviation Fellowship pilot writes from Bunia in the Zaire Republic, that women are hardly fighting for equality when they haven't even rebelled against cooking over three stones, washing at the nearest river, carrying water, cutting wood or living in a dirt-floor hut. That woman is neither opting for a 40-hour week nor for sharing household chores with her husband.

In South America the variations in the "liberation" of the woman are too great to establish a pattern. Changes have come in dating practices, for instance. The girl from the upper-class family has always been chaperoned, or did her courting at the front gate in plain view. Today she drives unchaperoned in a car with her boyfriend.

I recall back in the 1950s one of our Pax boys dated a girl from one of the upper-class Spanish families in Paraguay. He received the shock of his life when he took out, not only the girl whom he had asked for a date, but also her aunt who chaperoned them!

In the Paraguayan Chaco the Indian woman may be laughing up her sleeve (if she happens to have on a dress) about the to-do on equality because they have lived in a matriarchal society for many years. It's the men who may take up the battle of the sexes!

European Mennonite women in the Paraguayan Chaco are experiencing some changes due in part to a raised standard of living. This factor, of course, has changed women's role everywhere. Homemaking a family used to be the sole occupation for the Mennonite woman in Paraguay. Today, families are smaller, more women are getting an education, transportation has given her greater freedom to move about. Many own bicycles, a few own motorcycles and some drive cars. Women teach school (some married women too), work in stores, offices, restaurants, hotels, and in hospitals. There are several women who write for Mennonite periodicals. Occasionally women speak up in public meetings and in church business meetings.

In the Portuguese Mennonite Brethren church in Brazil, there is a lady serving on a church council. In one of the churches in Curitiba a lady sometimes gives a short devotional on Sunday morning.

A new life has opened up for some women in Brazil through the Bible extension course. In the past only the men could study the night courses, for what woman could leave home and children several nights a week? In fact the church had a case on its hands where Bible study actually caused dissension in a family. Sezinando Camargo studied for two and one half years at the M. B. Bible Institute which took him away four nights a week. His wife, Maria, felt left out and problems became so great that he finally quit his studies, lacking only one semester. Missionaries felt it was a big mistake. But Sezinando said it was no use if there was not unity at home.

This year Sezinando and Maria are studying together in the extension course, attending classes only once a week. She is a different person today.

Another lady in the church has enrolled in the extension course. Her husband graduated last year. This year *he* baby-sits their three children while *she* goes to class. This sharing of responsibilities in the home would not have occurred a few years ago.

Indira Ghandi is one example of the status that women in India have achieved. But the other extreme also exists, that of the woman who is dominated by her husband to the point of tyranny.

Dr. Amy Pushpam, a medical doctor in the M. B. hospital in Jadcherla, India, wrote a paper for this article which may help us understand:

"The Hindu Shastri considers a wife in a home his servant. She washes his feet when he comes home and sprinkles water on her head as a token of humility and devotion to him. In former times she committed 'suttee' by falling into the flames of her husband's funeral pyre, for she thought she had no independent existence without him.

"With the coming of Western civilization things changed. The 'suttee' has stopped. Women have begun to assert themselves. Women are going in for 'love' marriages, paying deaf ear to their parents' choice. This (change in cultural patterns) also results in many homes going to (on) the rocks.

"Among the Muslims, educated women alone exercise their liberty, but the middle class women hold on to their 'purdahs' (veils) and are still subject to their husbands, who are sometimes polygamists. Because of this the women undergo psychological suffering, quite heartbreaking. The poorer class has no problems in this line—they cannot afford to be polygamous.

Marie K. Wiens of Hillsboro, Kan. is director of Information Services of Mennonite Brethren Missions-Services.

Brazilian woman washes clothes in stream, a common practice in some parts of the Third World. (MCC Photo)

"The Christian community in India is unique. The women enjoy more liberty than other Indian women. The Indian Christians believe in the equality between man and woman in all spheres of life. (D. J. Arthur also spoke of this during his visit to North America when he said that Christianity had made a significant contribution in liberating the woman so she could have a more meaningful life.)"

Mrs. Ruth Friesen, Jadcherla, writes that in India there are as many seats alloted to women as to men in the medical colleges. Salaries for lady teachers and doctors are the same as they are for men. But on a wry note she adds, "In our building work here at the hospital, women from the local village have always done the 'headwork,' transporting mortar, bricks, and sand on top of their heads."

Christian women in India have been the first to receive an education. Consequently an unusually large proportion of nurses and teachers in government as well as in private institutions are Christians.

Colombia has experienced many of the same social changes as Brazil. Increased international travel, American movies, TV, have all had their influence.

In the Colombian Choco we have a lady pastor, Mrs. Christina Copete do Mosquera, in Boca de Suruco, who does o fine job of leading the small group of believers.

Today women as well as men are holding jobs in Colombia and several women in the upper and middle classes hold public offices. While some men in South America continue to live a double moral standard, the working woman may change this when she is no longer financially dependent upon her husband for every peso and centavo, and many in time will require the same kind of faithfulness he expects of her.

Women in Japan have ample opportunity to work and express themselves in the church. They are also very active in the pursuit of education for their children, working hard in P.T.A. organizations. Women in Japan were elevated after World War II, according to one of our missionaries. I am sure I was misled when I visited Japan in 1970 when I observed the man invariably preceded the woman through a door, the train seat was given to the old man, rather than to the highly pregnant woman trying to keep her balance. That's the custom in Japan, rather than an act of discourtesy. Culture defines the "right" and the "wrong" for us but we cannot, in fairness, impose our values on other people.

In Niger Republic most of the Moslem women are still kept in purdah, which is part of their religious observance, and are not allowed outside the compound walls except under escort and veiled, after dark, lest another man look upon her face and desire to have her.

However where education of women is encouraged, the women begin to take roles of leadership as teachers, nurses, midwives. In one of the schools in Niger, for instance, courses in reading, writing and arithmetic will be offered this year to the girls for the first time besides the usual courses in homemaking.

Ghana offers the same educational opportunities to girls as to the boys. So great is the striving for a good education that young women will leave husband and children for several years at a time to study in a foreign country. This is hard for our missionary mother to understand because she finds it very difficult to be separated from her children. But the woman in Ghana is an ambitious person who wants to be financially independent. One of our missionaries in Ghana says she has not heard a male voice raised in objection to this kind of ambition.

Paul, who seemed to have a "thing" about women, is I believe often quoted out of context. We hear often that women shall keep silence, they are to submit to their husbands, etc., but along with that we should turn to the 16th chapter of his letter to the Romans. Of the 25 people he salutes, one-third are women. And he has complimentary things to say about them. In fact Phoebe, who at one place is called a deaconess, was Paul's trusted courier when she was given responsibility to carry his letter to the Romans, one of the greatest theological documents of the New Testament.

So the battle goes on. If one eliminates the extreme measures, the weird demands made by some modern-day crusaders, one begins to see the good things that have come out of the fray. Women need not look at the world through a veil. Many have been delivered from tyranny. They now have opportunity in many countries to develop their abilities through education and use this for good. In more and more countries women today can own property, vote, hold office, train for a profession, and take her place alongside the man, making her contribution to a world which stands to gain by using the unique gifts of a woman.

Toward A Centennial In Kansas

Left: Dr. Cornelius Krahn, Mennonite historian and a native of Russia, examines seed wheat he ordered from the Ukraine. Each bag contains a different strain of Red Turkey wheat grown in Russia today. The wheat was planted in Kansas this fall and will be displayed during the 1974 Mennonite Centennial.

Left: At the Hopefield Church near Moundridge, Kan., the men's chorus of the Eden Mennonite Church sings at a service dedicating the site for a centennial memorial for Swiss Volhynian Mennonite immigrants from Russia. Harley J. Stucky (center), president of the Swiss Mennonite Cultural and Historical Assn., was in charge of the service, which was held in June. Since then considerable progress has been made in construction of the marker.

Left, below: Kansas Governor Robert Docking displays a copy of the proclamation issued by him designating 1974 as the Turkey Red Wheat Centennial. Turkey Red, the parent strain of hard winter wheat raised in central states of the Great Plains, was brought to Kansas a century ago by Mennonites from Russia.

Below: The Spring Valley Mennonite Church, the oldest Mennonite congregation organized in Kansas, observed its centennial this past summer. Pictured are three of its ministers: James Hershberger, now serving in joint ministry with Daryl Miller (not shown); Harry Diener, retired bishop, and Charles Diener, minister for 43 years.

Four books provide guidelines for change in a world of diminishing resources

MODELS FOR SURVIVAL

By GARY VEENDORP

By now we are all aware that America, famous for its wealth in natural resources, is facing a crisis of shortages. The list of products in short supply, which began with gasoline, becomes longer every day. "No matter which way you turn these days, it seems there's bound to be a shortage," comments Associated Press Writer Louise Cook.

The news media are constantly warning Americans that their voracious and ever-expanding appetite for natural resources will lead to an end of their prized high standard of living. One cause for the current dearth in resources (energy crisis) is given by Rex Draman of Texas U.S. Chemical Company: "It took Mother Nature millions of years to put it there and we are taking a few years to pull it out."

Life as we know it today cannot continue much beyond the year 2100, according to a study by a team of international researchers, who met at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Sponsor of the study was the Club of Rome, an international organization which attempts to initiate international policies and actions by bringing to the attention of the world policy-makers and the public the interdependence of the components of the global system.

The club's first project was the "Project on the Predicament of Mankind." Results of phase one of that project, initiated at MIT and funded by the Volkswagen Foundation, were published in the book, *The Limits to Growth.* (Edited by Donella H. Meadows, Dennis L. Meadows, William W. Behrens III, all of the U.S., and Jorgen Randers of Norway. New York: Universe Books, 1972. 205 pages. Cloth $6.50. Paperback $2.75.)

The 17 members of the project team included the editors of the book as well as other researchers from the U.S., Turkey, Iran, Germany and India. The team examined "the five basic factors that determine, and, therefore, ultimately limit, growth on this planet—population, agricultural production, natural resources, industrial production, and pollution" (pages 11-12).

The study used a "world model," a formal mathematical model which combined traditional sources of information with the scientific method, a systems analysis and the modern computer. After the team had focused this model upon five major trends of global concern—rapid growth in industrialization, population, malnutrition, depletion of nonrenewable resources and deterioration of the environment—as well as upon the causes, interrelationships and future implications of these trends, the model indicated that if these trends continue, "the limits to growth on this planet will be reached sometime within the next one hundred years" (p. 23).

However, the model also showed potential for altering these growth trends and establishing a "condition of ecological and economic stability that is sustainable far into the future" (p. 24).

One of the most serious problems the model brought to light was the "super-exponential" explosion of the world's population. Whereas the growth rate was 0.3 per cent per year in 1650, with a doubling time of nearly 250 years, the growth percentage had risen to 2.1 per cent a year in 1970, with a doubling time of 33 years. The world model predicts: "Unless there is a sharp rise in mortality . . . we can look forward to a world population of around seven billion persons in 30 years" (pages 37-38). The seriousness of this prediction is compounded by the fact that the world's industrial output is increasing even faster than the world population, according to the world model.

One of the primary resources needed to sustain world economic and population growth until the year 2000, according to the world model, is land for the production of food. But since the cultivation of new land in unsettled areas now costs an average of $1,150 per hectare (one hectare equals .4 acres) the model concludes that "opening more land to cultivation is not economically feasible" (p. 48).

Nonrenewable resources, like mercury which has increased 500 per cent in price the last 20 years, will be "extremely costly 100 years from now" (p. 66). Yet recycling processes and manufacturing of products of better design in order to make the remaining nonrenewable resources last longer are expensive and, therefore, regarded by the researchers as "uneconomic" in most parts of the world (p. 68).

Even if an extraordinarily favorable input is applied to

Gary Veendorp is assistant editor of Mennonite Weekly Review.

Power-consuming cities: Can this life-style continue?

the model—increased land through development of new, high-yielding grain varieties (the "Green Revolution"), perfect birth control, production of nuclear power, recycling of resources, mining the most remote reserves, and withholding as many pollutants as possible—the computerized output of the model still indicates "an end to growth before the year 2100" (p. 141).

Reasons given for stoppage of growth, regardless of assumed optimum favorable conditions, are overuse of land, severe depletion of resources and rise in pollution with a concomitant rise in the death rate.

What will be necessary for survival, according to the team, is that the birth rate be equal to the expected death rate and that the investment rate equal the depreciation rate. A further reduction in pollution and depletion of resources will be accomplished by shifting "the economic preferences of society . . . more toward services such as education and health facilities and less toward factory-produced material goods" (p. 163).

To increase the average life-span of industrial capital and even further reduce resource depletion and pollution, manufactured products must have a "better design for durability and repair" (p. 164) and obsolescence should not be the consumers' dominant reason for discarding the products after a short life-span.

The challenge of a non-growth society, according to the research team, is to seek continual improvement in production methods, which in turn "could result in increased leisure" (p. 176). And this leisure could help man to pursue any activity that is relatively nonconsuming and nonpolluting, for instance in the fields of education, art, music, religion, basic scientific research, athletics and general social interaction. The ultimate goal would be the "harnessing of incident solar energy, the most pollution-free power source" (p. 177).

Such a state of equilibrium "would require trading certain human freedoms, such as producing unlimited numbers of children or consuming uncontrolled amounts of resources, for other freedoms, such as relief from pollution and crowding and the threat of collapse of the world system" (pages 179, 180). The researchers realize, however, that to translate the concept of a steady state of economic and ecological equilibrium into reality would require "a Copernican revolution of the mind" (p. 196).

It should surprise no one, therefore, that 13 staff members of the Policy Research Unit at the University of Sussex in England set out to examine the MIT study. Their critique is entitled, *Models of Doom, A Critique of The Limits to Growth, With a Reply by the Authors of The Limits to Growth.* (Edited by H. S. D. Cole, Christopher Freeman, Marie Jahoda and K. L. R. Pavitt. New York: Universe Books, 1973. 244 pages. Clothbound, $8. Paperback, $2.95.)

The interdisciplinary Sussex team could find only two general areas of complete agreement with the conclusions of their MIT counterparts. They hailed the MIT study as "the most ambitious attempt so far to bring together . . . one general model of the future of the world" (p. 5).

and voiced support for the urgent appeal for solving some vital social problems made by the MIT researchers.

But having made these favorable comments, the Commonwealth scientists—11 British and two Canadians—attack the basic theses of the MIT study. The British-Canadian team claims that the MIT assumptions are too pessimistic. Their methods, data and predictions are faulty and do not accurately reflect reality, and their approach lacks concern for politics, social structure, human needs and aspirations.

They also reject the no-growth thesis of the MIT model, partly for the reason that "brute poverty is still a major problem for most people in the world." To help solve the poverty problem, the Sussex group proposes instead "more equitable distribution, both between countries and within them" (p. 10).

Agreeing with this aspect of the critique is a noted Christian spokesman for the Third World, Paul Verghese, a native of India and principal of the Orthodox Seminary at Kottayam, Kerala, India. Writing in the June 6, 1973 issue of *The Christian Century*, of which he is an editor-at-large, he charges that the "no-growth" idea is inhuman, impractical and inconceivable "for the poor 60 per cent of the world's population." The Goshen (Ind.) College alumnus also charges that the greatest mistake of the MIT model was viewing the world "as a single unit." As an alternative to the MIT solution, he proposes the construction of "a new world society based on . . . new values of human existence," and asserts that "Nothing short of sustained human effort, assisted by the Holy Spirit, can lead us to the vision that saves."

In their response to the Sussex report, the developers of the MIT model claim that the basic British-American difference rests upon divergent religious concepts of man. According to the MIT team, Sussex views the Judeo-Christian tradition as giving man "the right to exploit for his own short-term purposes all other creatures and all resources the world has to offer" and thus he "can develop at no cost a technology or a social change to overcome any obstacle." The concept of man advanced by the MIT team is "more closely related to the Eastern religions" and "assumes that man is one species with all other species embedded in the intricate web of natural processes that sustains and constrains all forms of life." The MIT concept also assumes that man's "very success is leading him to destroy and simplify the natural sustaining web" (p. 239).

There is a third concept of man, however, which holds that man, created in God's image, is to dominate the earth, but within certain boundaries set by the Lord who created man and issued the command. This concept is defined and described in detail in the book, *Pollution and the Death of Man, The Christian View of Ecology*. (Francis A. Schaeffer. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 1970. 125 pages. Clothbound, $2.95. Paperback, $1.95.)

Dr. Schaeffer, well-known contemporary evangelical theologian, author and lecturer, begins his book with a critique of the concepts of man held by St. Francis of Assisi, namely "the idea of the equality of all creatures, including men" (p. 13), and of pantheism: "Unity has meaning, but the particulars have no meaning, including the particular of man" (p. 30). He also rejects the views of nature held by pre-Renaissance Christianity, the nature-freedom concept of Rousseau, as well as the views of Kant and Kierkegaard.

Even much of contemporary evangelical Christianity has a wrong view of nature, for Dr. Schaeffer writes that "we must say with tears that much orthodoxy, much evangelical Christianity, is rooted in a platonic concept, wherein the only interest is in the 'upper story,' in the heavenly things—only in 'saving the soul' and getting it to heaven" (p. 40), and the only value attached to nature is "academic proof" that the Creator exists.

The correct Christian view of nature is the concept of creation, Dr. Schaeffer asserts. The relation of man to nature, viewed from this perspective, asserts: "Man is separated, as personal, from nature because he is made in the image of God. . . . but he is united to all other creatures as being *created* (p. 50). The Fall, however, separated man from God and divided man from nature and nature from nature.

But upon the basis of the finished work of Christ, substantial healing can be brought about. So today, God's call to the Christian and the church is "that we should exhibit a substantial healing here and now, between man and nature and nature and itself, as far as Christians can bring it to pass" (p. 69). And the church should show the world that "in this present life man can exercise dominion over nature without being destructive" (p. 82).

This Christian model for survival could be applied, for example, to strip-mining, Dr. Schaeffer asserts. Though his land conservation proposal is admittedly more costly and time-consuming than the usual land-destructive method employed in surface-mining for coal, it appears to be very practicable: "If the strip-miners would take bulldozers and push back the topsoil, then rip out the coal, put back the soil, and replace the topsoil, in ten years after the coal was removed there would be a green field, and in 50 years a forest" (p. 83).

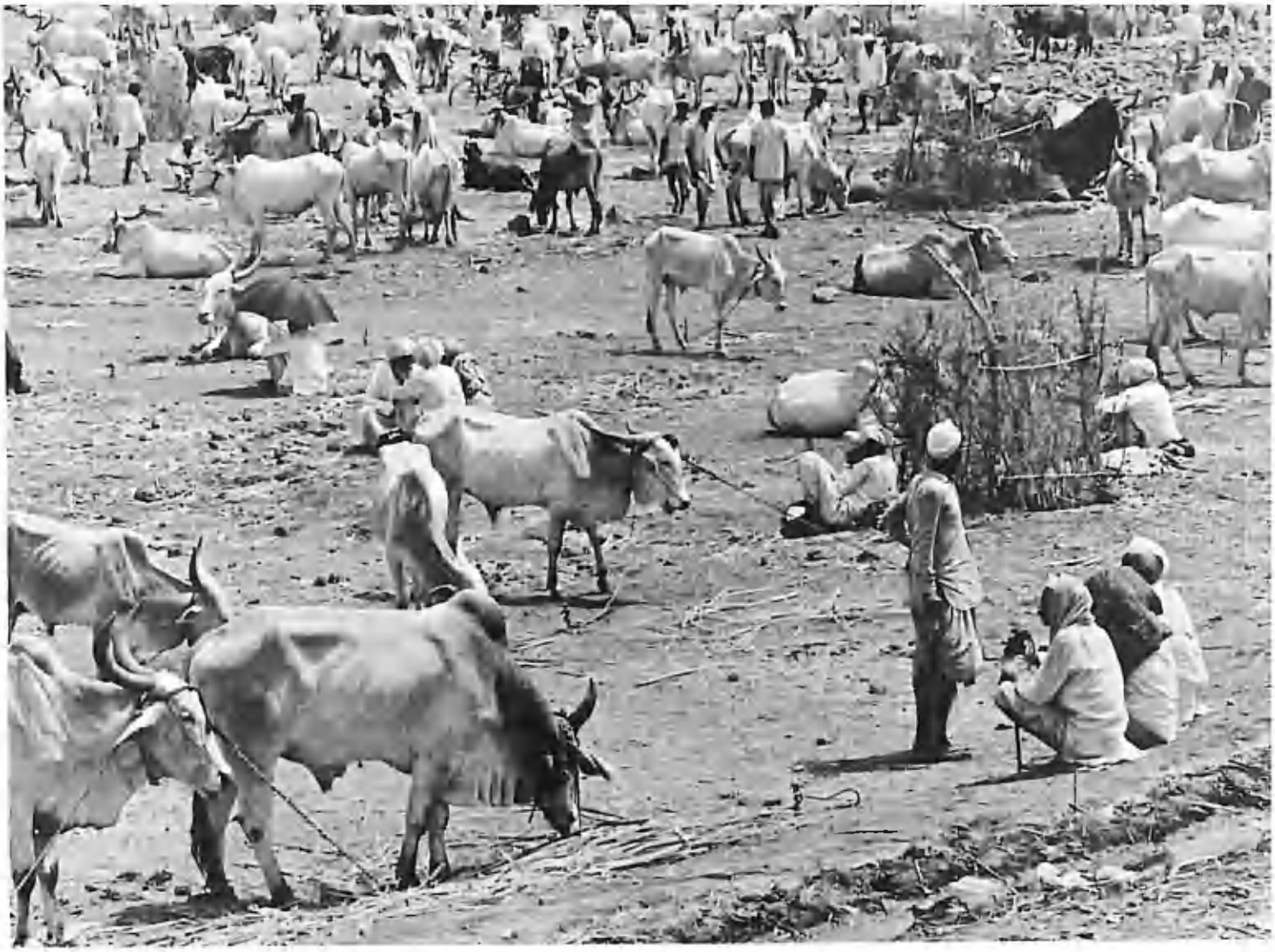
Other Christian models for survival are found in the book, *To Love or to Perish, The Technological Crisis and the Churches*. (Edited by J. Edward Carothers, Margaret Mead, Daniel D. McCracken and Roger L. Shinn. New York: Friendship Press, 1972. 152 pages. Hardbound, $4.95. Paperback, $1.95.)

The book is a report of the U.S.A. Task Force on the Future of Mankind in a World of Science-Based Technology, and represents two years of research and debate. The 38-member task force, comprised articulate minds in the U.S. who joined together for the specific purpose of investigating the question of survival, charges that today's churches are not relevant to today's issues of poverty, war, environmental threats and the mounting cries from the Third World. The group was sponsored jointly by the National Council of Churches and The Union Theological Seminary of New York.

The basic Christian premise of the task force in launching their quest was that mankind and the world are "God's creation, united in destiny" and that the duty of the Christian is "to obey God's invitation to join him in the renewal of the earth" (p. 16).

The first step in applying this model is for the Christian to begin work on a problem in his community. Among the methods recommended to tackle such a problem are organizing a study group in the congregation, writing press releases, giving speeches in service clubs, visiting politicians and forming a coalition with like-minded groups.

To undergird these activities, according to the task force, the churches should tap those resources of their rich heritage



India cattle market: "No-growth" idea rejected by impoverished Third World.

which are relevant to a model for survival. Among these are prayer and the suffering servant stance of "participation in the common life and sufferings of mankind" (p. 105).

One of the objectives toward which the task force wants to direct the use of these unique resources is the formation of new "life styles of town planning, of architecture, of the use of energy" (p. 125).

While pondering the activities and resources the churches have at their disposal, as well as the goals they seek to obtain within a "survival" framework, this reviewer began to ask himself whether the Historic Peace Churches—Mennonites, Quakers and Brethren—have a specific model for survival.

The answer to this question I found in the September 1973 issue of *Messenger,* official publication of the Church of the Brethren. T. Wayne Rieman offers a Peace Church Simple Life Model in his article, "Simple Living: A New Necessity." He contends that the traditional simple life precept has now become "a matter of physical existence—of survival—for us, and for the whole family of man!"

Rieman's survival model is defined as a "voluntary reduction of intake and consumption of the world's resources." He lists 25 possible applications, covering travel, leisure time, residence, possessions, food and the quality of life.

This blueprint for survival reminded this reviewer that the Mennonite churches with their "simple life" heritage, historical involvement with the soil, and readiness to assist any needy member of the human family with physical or spiritual means, are uniquely qualified to draw up and implement a Mennonite model to help man survive his current and long-term crisis.

The primary input for such a Mennonite model is the Bible—particularly Gen. 1-3, John 1:1-3, Rom. 8:19-22, Philip. 2:10-11 and Colos. 1:15-20—and Anabaptist and Mennonite confessions of faith, especially Articles 1-3 of the Dordrecht Confession of 1632. (Printed on pages 375-376 of *Introduction to Theology* by J. C. Wenger.)

Among other extant writings perhaps none surpasses the four books reviewed in providing blueprints for a Mennonite model.

This reviewer completely endorses Schaeffer's model and admires the MIT model. For Dr. Schaeffer presents what I believe to be the biblical ethics for survival, and the MIT study I value for its urgent and reasonable appeal to conserve our limited resources. Furthermore, the Sussex critique enables one to view the MIT proposals objectively and the U.S.A. Task Force broadens the vision of viable Christian models and applications.

I wholeheartedly recommend, therefore, these volumes—*The Limits to Growth, Models of Doom, Pollution and the Death of Man* and *To Love or to Perish*—as guides for discussion groups, as references in pastors' and church libraries and as springboards to action for every Christian concerned about these fundamental issues.

Starvation and extreme hardship reported after an inspection trip in 1924

A Visit to Mennonite Villages In Siberia

Edited and Translated by JOHN B. TOEWS

INTRODUCTION

THE MENNONITE migration to Siberia early in the 20th century occurred in the context of two major internal developments in Russia during the 1890's. The first related to the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway begun in 1891 and completed in the next decade. The second emerged out of the first. The railway encouraged a massive migration from south and southeast Russia into Western Siberia.

By the mid-1890's the Russian peasant, unable to improve his lot, looked to Siberia for the answer to his plight. The czarist government took strong interest in the settlement of Siberia and passed special laws governing the migration in 1889, 1896 and 1904. Already in December, 1896, the Ministry of the Interior created a special agency, the *Pereselencheskoe Upravlenie* (Resettlement Administration) to regulate the complexities of mass settlement. In relation to the rest of the Russian population, the majority of Mennonites were late-comers to Siberia. This was not true, however, of the scattered Mennonite settlements which had been founded in the vicinity of Omsk at the turn of the century. In this region many Mennonites settled along the major railway stations east and west of Omsk, either in small group settlements or upon a private farm (*khutor*). This right of residence on one's own land rather than in the village was one of the more radical provisions of the migration laws of 1889.

In contrast to the open character of the Omsk settlements, the Mennonites who settled on the Kulunda steppe between the Irtysch and Ob rivers were able to retain more closed settlements. Most of this area was settled between 1908-1910. Some 13 villages in the west became known as the Pavlodar settlement, named after the nearest city in the area. Similarly to the east was the Barnaul settlement (with some 59 villages in 1923) which, after the founding of the city of Slavgorod in 1909-1910, was also called by that name. Included in the Slavgorod-Barnaul settlements were remoter colonies often consisting of three or four exclusively Mennonite villages, but attached to non-Mennonite volosts.

Life in the new settlements prior to World War I was not easy. Though most settlement areas were extremely productive in terms of grain, feed, wool and eggs, the lack of markets depressed prices, wheat at times selling for as little as 25-35 kopecks per pud. (100 kopecks in the rubel. A *pud* was a measure of wheat equal to approximately 36 English pounds.) Butter production brought a good cash return but for some reason the Mennonites in Siberia were slow to enter this field. Added to this was the fact that in the early years no railway or water transportation was available, and grains had to be delivered by horse-drawn wagons over great distances. In contrast to low cash incomes, the price of manufactured goods was very high. The frontier presented other hardships. Most villages built schools within two years of settlement, but generally adequate salaries and adequate teachers were not available. The colonists were extremely vulnerable to disease. Typhus, small pox and scarlet fever epidemics were common. There was no doctor in the Barnaul-Slavgorod colonies until 1920, the one hospital in Orlow being occasionally staffed by medical officers of the Russian army. There were other perils and difficulties: drought, steppe fires, wolves, short summers and long, severe winters, lack of wood and coal for fuel, lack of adequate building materials—in spite of these hardships most of the colonies were economically self-sufficient when World War I broke out.

The war contributed to an inevitable attrition of manpower. Many of the schools closed. Farming operations declined in efficiency since the majority of Mennonite men were employed in the forestry service. A new era in the history of the Mennonites in Siberia began with the October Revolution of 1917. Initially the ascendency of the Bolsheviks in Siberia was short-lived. They were deposed by Kolchak's White Army units in the summer of 1918. A widespread White conscription contributed to a peasants revolt in Slavgorod in early September, which was ruthlessly quelled by a Cossack detachment. In the wake of this military operation there was widespread pillaging in the Mennonite, Lutheran, Catholic and Russian villages of the area.

Kolchak's supremacy was shortlived and in the fall of 1919 the Bolsheviks regained firm control in Western Siberia. By the following summer large-scale grain and livestock requisitions were levied upon the individual villages. The threat of force ensured delivery, for a Revolutionary Tribunal dealt with the obstinate. The requisitions had hardly ended when a natural produce tax, payable in kind, was instituted. The sums assessed often bore little relation to the foodstuffs harvested. Meanwhile the Mennonite colonist faced another ominous danger—inflation.

Somewhat surprisingly these difficulties did not totally incapacitate the Mennonite colonist in Siberia. As late as

John B. Toews is a member of the history faculty at the University of Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

1921, when most of Russia was in the grips of famine, the Orloff volost in the Barnaul settlement was still able to supply some 11,000 pud of grain for relief purposes. The next year brought almost a total crop failure. By late fall, 1922 many families were without bread. A representative of American Mennonite Relief who visited the Siberian colonies in July, 1922, reported that 50 per cent of the seeded grain reached maturity, only half of this yielding slightly more than was seeded. The situation did not improve in the following year. By September, 1923, about 3,000 Mennonite settlers were starving. Observers expected this to increase to 10,000 by early spring. Three-quarters of the population lacked adequate clothing. There was not even enough straw for bedding purposes.

In the summer of 1924 P. F. Froese of the *Allrussischer Mennonitischer Landwirteschaftlicher Verein* (All-Russian Mennonite Agricultural Society) made a special inspection trip to the Pavlodar and Slavgorod settlements. His report, "Durch die Mennonitischen Dörfer in Sibirien" has been preserved in the A. A. Friesen Archive (Mennonite Library and Archives, Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas). The contents of the report are self-explanatory.

LAST YEAR towards the end of June (1924) the representatives of the east, southeast, Siberia and the Crimea met for the second time in Davlekanovo to discuss the weal and woe of the settlements. It was the second representative congress of the All-Russian Mennonite Agricultural Union, which as is known, was founded the previous year (1923) and constitutes a brother organization to the Mennonite Union in the Ukraine. The representatives of the various settlements reported about the situation in the villages, and the assembly sought to find ways and means to overcome the prevailing economic depression.

The drought in the eastern areas, which again affected several settlements this year (Trakt-Köppental, Neu-Samara, Alt-Samara, Orenburg and Ufa), generated a serious mood, but there was confidence that ways could be found to promote a further existence. The Siberian settlements had a crop failure the previous year, but during the time of the congress the crop outlook appeared reasonable. If the Siberian representatives spoke of an immeasurable poverty, there was at least one ray of hope which read: Perhaps this year there will be a harvest.

Earlier reports and investigations led the congress to seriously examine the situation in Siberia and consider possible ways in which those so seriously afflicted could be aided.... It was clear that even in the event of a good harvest the settlements needed further help.... This motivated the congress to pass a resolution urging that someone from the central administration of the union visit the Siberian settlements as soon as possible. So I associated myself with Brother Miller (A. J. Miller of the American Mennonite Relief) who was present with us... and we traveled together.

NOTE: News of the tragic experiences encountered by the Russian Mennonites during the Revolution of 1917 and the resulting civil war caused considerable concern in America by 1920. On July 27, 1920, representatives of all existing Mennonite relief organizations meeting in Elkhart, Indiana, voted to form the Mennonite Central Committee, whose first task involved the planning of the Russian relief program. The special agency charged with negotiating the entry of American relief supplies into Russia became known as the American Mennonite Relief (AMR). In the name of the AMR, Alvin J. Miller signed a relief contract with the Soviet government in Moscow on October 1, 1921. A second contract with Ukrainian officials was signed on October 20, 1921. Miller subsequently remained in Russia until the AMR was disbanded in 1926.

Over the Urals

In the early morning of July 2nd we left Davlekanovo. ... Brother Miller and I were traveling this stretch for the first time; we had never been further than Ufa.... Within a short time we entered the mountains.... At first there were only a few hills; then they became more numerous till at last we were in a chain of mountains. It was very beautiful. The Urals are not high but some ranges make a wonderful impression. Between the heights, steep chasms. The tops were covered with lovely pines which penetrated into the deepest valleys.... Finally we found ourselves on Asian soil. Still more mountains, but as the sun lowered we also began to descend. The valleys became wider, the mountains lower, at last only single hills; infinitely far and wide the Siberian steppe lay before us. But on this day we would not get an impression of Siberia. It was evening....

The Siberian Plain

On July 3rd the sun shone brightly.... One impression dominated and refused to allow others to penetrate: flat, flat, endlessly flat! There was no up and down; perhaps occasionally a small depression. On a level stretch a dead-straight railway.... Here and there we see scattered birches and shrubs ... perhaps a marsh or lake ... but not more.

Men? Animals? These are seldom seen.... A Siberian farmer traveling along the railway is a welcome sight. He has only one horse harnessed, but it runs so well. There is plenty of grass and the farmer does not look sad. Here is air and land enough, and one breathes so freely. When I think back I can still feel this boundless freedom which so refreshed my soul that day.... The Siberian plain, how monotonous it is, but what infinite freedom it gives to men!

The Omsk Settlement

In the evening we came to Petropavlovsk. We were unhappy that this part of the journey had to be taken at night since the Omsk Mennonite settlements began here. These are mainly located next to the railway on good soil and have prospered materially....

Early on July 4th we arrived in Omsk. The steamer to Pavlodar was scheduled to leave on July 6th. We utilized the free time to visit the small settlements near Omsk, "Tshumayevka" and "Tshugreyevka." The settlements made an agreeable impression. The houses were built according to south Russian ... models, and farming operations are also similar; naturally they are adapted to the northern climate. There is a very long winter and it is difficult to complete all the work in summer....

Our Omsk section (of the AMLV) is developing along very satisfactory lines. There is strong emphasis on seed grain and cattle breeding.... This is not being done on a large scale because the past war brought an inevitable decline, but the beginnings of a future agricultural operation are there. The houses are set in green, but these are only

forest trees; fruit trees are difficult to grow. There are only bush fruits like raspberries and currants. A south Russian will always find this a great deficiency: a beautiful garden should adjoin the house. The soil is nevertheless good, and we saw magnificent grain fields; after all, there is a great satisfaction for the Mennonite in this. A beautiful wheat field generates the finest feelings in us.

On the Irtysh to Pavlodar

On Sunday, July 5th, we returned to Omsk and took the steamer *October Fifth* to Pavlodar: southward, up the Irtysh River. A Russian song . . . notes that Yermak, the conqueror of Siberia, sat on the "wild" banks of the Irtysh and was overwhelmed with a deep thought. To the latter I can subscribe, but the shore did not exactly seem wild to me. In the first moment I was struck by something extraordinary. If one approaches an ordinary river, one usually moves to a valley either suddenly or gradually, and at the bottom one finds water. This is different. You walk on lonely, flat steppe and suddenly you stand on a bank of the Irtysh. There are no noticeable signs indicating you are nearing a river. The same steppe and then the Irtysh! It is a mighty river that flows through the steppe like a canal. The bank is sometimes more, sometimes less eroded; in any case you can usually see far into the steppe from the ship; only seldom is the shore too high. In the north trees and shrubs grew, in the south almost only grass. The Irtysh makes large bends and progress is slow. There are seldom people. Here and there an occasional winter village of the Kirghiz. If one ever sees a Russian village one is pleasantly surprised. The ship rarely stops; if so the places are "cities," but in reality only villages. Sometimes nothing can be seen at the dock, only wood which the ship takes on.

Slowly we move up the river. The current is rather strong and we only make about ten *verst* (a *verst* equals .66 of a mile) per hour. . . . Now the true steppe is before us, for trees and shrubs gradually diminish and disappear altogether. Desolate and void! . . . Yermak really did not accomplish that much when he criss-crossed the steppe with his warriors; perhaps he thought of peaceable conquerors? . . . We had one fact before us: in this area the Mennonite pioneer had settled, here he built his home, and here he wanted to find happiness.

Pavlodar in Slavgorod

After a two-day journey we arrived in Pavlodar in the late evening of July 7. This is a small, dusty Siberian district center, some 300 *verst* south of Omsk. We did not remain here long. Horses were placed at our disposal and at 4 a.m. on the following day we set out in the direction of the villages of the Pavlodar settlement, first northerly along the Irtysh, then we turned eastward for about 70 *verst*. . . . It was dusty and hot. . . . We moved rapidly; no up or down; always on level way. An endless steppe, dry and arid. The plain yearned for water. After a long stretch a welcome break; we passed two Russian villages and a few Kirghiz huts, otherwise nothing living. Was there a struggle for land here? Some say it occurs. In any case we saw much more dry prairie land than grain fields. While we were still far away the first Mennonite villages appeared in the hot, glimmering summer air on the distant horizon. An inexperienced person would not have known that these were villages, for actual houses could not be seen. A small glen makes itself visible, better several, because simultaneously the whole group of villages can be seen. So on flat, desolate steppes several green dwelling-oases lie before us.

On every steppe one sees four types of "villages." The summer *Aul* (village) with its rounded and near the top pointed tip; the winter *Aul* with its somewhat sunken earthen huts; the Russian village with its bright, white-washed houses and without any tree growth; and finally our village completely enshrouded in green. You always know for certain whether you see a Mennonite village before you or a different one. Siberia loves a very precise classification and borders cannot be indistinct.

We come to *Tas-Kuduk,* the first group of eight villages which we had seen on the horizon. The green grove which we had seen consisted of pure poplars. We came upon the broad street with poplars on both sides. In the more affluent villages there were fences consisting of boards or simply thin tree trunks. In earlier times they may have been present in all villages; lately, however, they have become less popular since the wood must be utilized for more important purposes. It is scarce in that region. Between the poplars nestles the house. It is built out of sun-dried brick or sod. The walls are perhaps two meters high. The flat roof is covered with earth or sometimes plastered with clay. This is the basic model of Siberian homes. It does not exist in many variations. . . . The Siberian house is dry and warm. It is said that it is also durable, with which I do not entirely agree, for renovations are made every summer. Bricks are constantly being made and plastering (with clay) has no end. This is a plague for the Siberians, especially for the women. They ceaselessly plaster and white-wash their houses. Some cannot manage it, especially during this time when the women are generally lacking in bodily strength. Consequently one finds many clay-colored huts and occasionally some badly plastered ones. . . . There are many houses still standing since the founding of the settlement, but they have been carefully maintained. Burnt brick cannot be seen and wood only rarely. A house of burnt brick is unpractical. It must be specially constructed or it allows the frost to penetrate. The yard is in front of the house, the vegetable garden in back. In the house itself some have tried to keep the traditional Mennonite arrangement, though often it is reduced in size and fewer rooms result. In one village there are from 25 to 45 farms and naturally more families than this.

With this I have given a picture of a Siberian Mennonite village. People live in closed villages which generally look the same, only one village looks more impoverished than the next. The villages in the Slavgorod area do not differ substantially from those of Pavlodar. Siberia does not like diversity. . . .

The Economic Life

Our investigation method was not complex. In each village we visited several people, from the poorer to the more well-to-do. We also thoroughly examined the village itself in order to obtain a more balanced view. We visited most of the villages . . . and had to conclude that the reports we received (in Moscow) were not exaggerated. A boundless poverty holds sway which defies every description. The families are usually large, there is, however, frighteningly little or no livestock. With what shall a man seed his acre? If he has managed to do it with the help of others, it is a pitifully poor job. Other possessions are better not mentioned since they are often not there, or they are things

which are no longer useable. Rags and tatters on one's back, straw and remnants of pillows for beds. We saw scenes which made one want to cry out, "People, how do you manage to stay alive?" . . . These are the poorest. Those better off have a few horses and one or two cows; in the home a few old, but surviving belongings. It is an operation which can only sustain itself with great difficulty. Those who still live "humanly" are not many.

So many have no horses and no cows! And this amid Siberian circumstances where agriculture and cattle are the only means of existence. What can be done in those steppes today? No cattle—so he (the Mennonite) is unable to farm and therefore unable to make a living. We repeatedly asked, "Is there not any other kind of work?" The answer was, "There may be some, but no one can pay." Only seldom can a workshop operate profitably and Mennonite farmers lack necessary skills to become tailors. There are the primitive beginnings of industry, but these offer the impoverished farmer no earnings. Livestock is the decisive factor in Siberia if one wishes to judge the economic situation; the farmer cannot have too few cattle for it is difficult to farm in Siberia. Statistics clearly show that at present there are far too few cattle.

It is obvious that farm implements are not in good supply. They are worn out and during the last years it has not been possible to buy anything new. One cannot even speak of "valuables." The economic outlook is grave, very grave. This was substantiated by regional officials. During a conversation with the chairman of the district executive committee in Slavgorod, he expressed the view that the Mennonite and German villages desperately needed help since their situation was the most critical. Tell me, has it ever been said that the Mennonite farmer is worse off than the Russian and even the Kirghiz farmer? Yes, it is a fact. In the Union store . . . the Kirghiz people buy more wares than the destitute Mennonites. . . .

Reasons for the Decline

How is it possible that our farmers have been reduced to such circumstances? In earlier years they were not in this situation! When the settlements were founded between 1897 and 1910, the settlers naturally received some aid. Rich people did not come to Slavgorod and Pavlodar; those who came to settle here between the Irtysh and Lake Chany were those who had nothing at home (mother colonies) with which to farm. At home land was too crowded and scarce, so the endless steppe of Siberia became a site where thousands wanted to find their salvation. It is said that this steppe was very appealing to the first scouts that were sent: what a width and breadth! But what about water? That was the main question. The regional settlement chief dug a well and found good water rather deep down. The basic solution had been found: Hence to Siberia!

The mother colonies had to help along and the settlements developed; some even became "rich"; they had good cattle and harvested many hundreds of *pud* of wheat. I tried to ascertain whether the land was poor and unproductive. No, the settlers did not complain about it and even spoke of good harvests, that is 50 to 60 *pud* (36 pounds) per *desiatine* (2.7 acres). The shipping of grain (very low in price) created some problems, but the newly built Slavgorod railway raised hopes and generally speaking there was contentment. Hence the situation was once different.

The reasons for the decline could be the following. First one should mention the general depression which resulted from the World War and the civil war which followed it. Siberia witnessed great battles. The great fronts (Koltchak) and the peasant insurrections totally ruined economic life. Then, secondly, one should also say that our farmers were unjustly assessed after the end of the civil war. "You must be very rich!" they said, and consequently levied high taxes. During the years 1920-1922 our farmers had to give too much, which the authorities later realized. Thirdly, I have the impression that the settlements were not adequately represented during these years; they did not have leaders who could guide them with a strong hand. . . . Finally, the crop failure last year was the blow which catapulted the settlements into their present situation.

The Cultural Life

With the decline of economic life we simultaneously had to verify the complete deterioration of the intellectual-cultural life. The Pavlodar settlement had a high school, but last year its continued existence could no longer be guaranteed and the number of classes was reduced to three. Another high school was begun in the Slavgorod area but it has been unable to develop. Although it has been possible to maintain the village schools, in the Slavgorod area these were reduced to 21 for the coming school year. We may actually come to the stage where there will be Mennonites who can neither read nor write, for the numerous villages without elementary schools will vegetate. . . .

The question of medical help is very critical. The only doctors are in Slavgorod and Pavlodar, which are far removed from the villages. Here drugs are also available. In the villages everyone must help himself. The Orloff hospital—which should, and perhaps could operate satisfactorily since it has good facilities and instruments—is not functioning. . . . Everyone can draw his own conclusions as to the prevailing health conditions. I should like to keep silent, but it would be wrong for me not to say it. The Mennonite woman finds herself in great misery. Pale and stooped she walks about, seeking to care for her many children, making brick and plastering the house. She is not only poor, but has also become ill. In many houses there is not one white rag, only tatters; old straw and feathers are mixed for beds because this is "softer." "Under these circumstances children are born! How can one keep silent? . . . Except for the things mentioned there is little more one can say about the intellectual-cultural life since nothing more exists; where there is a struggle for bread, everything else becomes secondary.

Despair or Will to Work?

I have tried to picture the economic situation as well as the major characteristics of intellectual-cultural life. My obligation, however, will only be fulfilled once I have touched upon a question of no less importance: Is there still a will to work or has everyone become discouraged. It would certainly become a burdensome secret if I did not clearly report the facts: Yes, some have lost courage. We have seen dwellings which were alarming proof of the fact that the people had no interest in cleaning their houses. I doubt if they wash themselves thoroughly even though

water is available, and they could make brooms. The boundless poverty has engendered the sort of apathy that has no interest in anything. All initiative has disappeared and noble sensitivities have been buried. A hopeless situation!

But I am pleased that I can say on the other hand that this is not the situation in all cases. I can even assert that we were able to detect a will to work in the greater majority; there was an earnest striving to overcome the current situation. It is our good fortune and blessing from above that we Mennonites are not so easily deadened; the inner stance of our soul accounts for this. There is a deep religious-ethical background which sustains us in the most difficult hours of our lives, and we were able to sense that in many ways. . . .

On July 18th and 19th, representatives of the Slavgorod section of our Union (AMLV) met in the village Schönsee (Orloff volost). Representatives from every village in the Slavgorod settlement appeared. The Schönsee church was completely filled and still could not accommodate everyone. The discussions progressed briskly.

The people were most interested in relief, the work of the Union, and emigration. Brother Miller's report received rapt attention. It was not surprising. He mentioned how the relief work had begun, what work had been done in Europe, Asia and especially Russia, and how the endeavor had finally been transferred to Siberia. Everyone understood that this relief work was like a lighthouse in our Mennonite history, demonstrating how the Mennonites can unite in a most difficult hour. Over a million dollars had already been spent in Russia and still the project was not finished. Seed grain and food supplies had also reached Siberia. Consequently no one died of hunger. Everyone knew what the American Mennonite Relief represented. A deep gratitude could be felt everywhere, and the assembly sought to give substance to this sensitivity. A similar gratitude could be felt towards those settlements in Russia who had sent aid to Siberia. . . . While we were there dry goods, purchased with the collected funds, were distributed in the villages. You should have seen the grateful faces!

With great seriousness the work of the Union up to this time was discussed. Its efforts were subjected to thorough criticism, and ways and means to guide the operations in the right direction were sought. Our Agricultural Union has great obligations, especially in Siberia. It must ensure the inhabitants a future livelihood and initiate reconstruction. Where is this work more difficult than in Siberia? . . . .

Should anyone wonder if amid the described Siberian conditions a strong desire for emigration makes itself felt? No, it is understandable. The impoverished Siberian resident looks longingly for a continued livelihood, and it is not surprising that he cannot find it nearby! He sees only poverty and suffering all around him! I could offer those who desired to emigrate no hope, and many a person did not find what he wanted in my representations. But could I have proceeded differently? . . .

The representative assembly (AMLV) as well as the general assemblies (open to all) clearly demonstrated that there is still life in Siberia; there are serious endeavors to find solutions for the emerging problems and a positive will to implement the accepted resolutions. Discouragement was naturally discernable, but the other trend was stronger. The will to work has not disappeared, thank God!

Future Prospects

During our entire stay there it was very hot. . . . The steppe was dry, the way dusty, and our wagon literally churned up dust clouds. The sun always rose in a clear sky, and in the evenings the Siberian sky painted itself a beautiful lilac-red. We saw this frequently but would have preferred getting thoroughly soaked. We would have happily allowed the water to run off us in torrents. . . . In the villages of the Pavlodar settlement it had not rained for some time and the crops were in a bad way; little harvest was expected so morale was very low. In the Slavgorod villages it had rained "stripwise," and we observed better grain. In several villages of the Orloff volost things even looked beautiful. But then we also saw almost totally burnt fields. In spring a great effort was made to plant as much grain as possible; seed lent from the government and the A.M.R. was entirely dispersed, and all hope focused upon that harvest. We do not know how the harvest turned out, but one thing was already clear then—that many a person would only get a few sacks of grain and carry these home with sadness. . . .

On July 22 we returned to Slavgorod. . . . Here is the office of the district representative of the A.M.R., and it will also be the center of our (AMLV) administration. In Slavgorod there are about 200 Mennonite families. These, too, cannot speak of happy days. After taking care of several matters we took our leave and on July 24 we returned via the "North Railway" over the Urals . . . to Moscow. We arrived here after a five-day trip, having gone 1,000 *verst*. During the long journey we often thought of those steppes, far beyond the Urals between the Irtysh and Lake Chany, where 18,000 Mennonites struggle for their existence. We were with them there and told ourselves: they can not be left alone. . . . Discouragement will take over and destroy the will to work, and a people will perish—intellectually, morally and physically—a people that presently cannot be given up.

In Siberia there is a most important obligation for all Mennonite organizations; ways and means must be found to assure a better future for the Siberian Mennonites.

TO BE OR NOT TO BE

—Continued from page 70.

need to inject into the unchristian world about them. The worst that can be done is to live off someone else's theology. To buy the theological systems of contemporary popular evangelicals, Billy Graham or Bill Bright, without being able to internalize these honestly is the easy but sterile way out.

All authentic Christian expression must take into consideration the roots out of which its people grow. The unfortunate allegiance, even subservience, to national ideologies of evangelicals is not at all native to Anabaptist theology. Mennonites have grown out of their own soil. The ferocious suffering endured by Anabaptists, the courageous stand on warfare, and that against mainline Protestantism, the unique sequence of world and national migrations represent typically Mennonite experiences. Those who know their history will gain from it and move on. Those

"I don't think that God who calls a people into being is interested in a careless genocide of that people, be they Mennonites or any other body of Christian believers."

who choose to ignore it will repeat its follies, while ignorantly assuming that they have made great advances.

A particular question that has faced the Mennonite peoplehood for some time is the exploitation they have endured from visiting non-Mennonite proponents of mission and evangelism. The Mennonite audience has been easy to capitalize upon. Mennonite solidarity is the fruitful ground for others to exploit. And that has hurt. It is painful not alone because Mennonites have "lost" their members, but because those same groups are not providing, in turn, the same kind of honest solidarity for their future generations. That is, there the solution is salvation without peoplehood.

But what hurts even more is the failure to recognize the very much needed punch line, that Mennonites are ideologically equipped to give. The world is crying for reconciliation of man to man and nation to nation. Christianity, if it is to regain credibility, must take on nonpartisan dimensions. The world is asking for a theology that is not confined to national and cultural parameters, and certainly not confined to a faith whose scope is limited to codes of personal moral behavior. A broken, sinful world is pleading for wholeness. The churches, particularly the evangelicals, are not responding. And evangelicals are handicapped because theirs is a personal, private faith. To speak about immorality, peace, and justice in evangelical circles is always only to speak of it in its personal dimensions. In that circle of Christians the faith is a personal matter and socio-political behavior is outside of the scope of Christian concern.

Since evangelical Christianity has made and continues to make deep inroads into the Mennonite community and since there are some hidden traps in their otherwise correct and well motivated verbiage, Mennonites do well to examine their own ideology in terms of evangelicalism. It would seem that there simply is no reason to surrender, and every reason to sustain, an Anabaptist theology which is deeply embedded in a people who have been through the roughest of human experience, whose theology embraces the personal as well as the corporate dimensions of human experience, and whose basic stance is one of vigorous evangelism.

I suspect that the American melting pot ideology is also influencing Mennonite faith. Therefore we do well to take another look at ourselves in light of the melting pot notion. Specifically we need to acknowledge that the question is not one of loyalty to an ethnic group versus loyalty to the rest of "neutral" society. Rather it should be acknowledged that all sectors of North American society are ethnic in character. The difference is only a matter of the size of that ethnic group. The ideology propounded by the over-powering ethnic body of an Anglo background has found its way into school curriculum, newspaper editorials and socially acceptable theologies. But as a Jewish friend said to me, "Show me a man of color and I will tell you he has a people behind him." A Mennonite peoplehood is recognized for its strength by those who exploit that beautiful resource. It is high time Mennonites overcome their ethnic shame and recognize the Jesus-like brotherhood of their own people.

If concession to a borrowed theology is granted, then Mennonite people have to face the question of dissolution. For Mennonites, it means a separation of what they are from what they believe. But I don't think that God who calls a people into being is interested in a careless genocide of that people, be they Mennonites or any other body of Christian believers.

Let it be emphasized that the answer is not theological or ethnic purism. Purists tend to repeat what was pure for the preceding generation without taking into account fresh environmental and ideological variables. The bid is for a theology that is true to the people who propound it and to the circumstances within which that people now finds itself. What is needed is not only an accurate verbal theology that describes the past and the present but also the kind of divinely inspired insight that will permit Mennonites to get a jump on the future.

There are a few modern prophets among Mennonites emerging on the horizon. These are predicting that unless Mennonites can rehammer the theological concepts native to original Mennonites—but do so in the context of the presence of other parallel Christian theologies and of their industrialized environment and the non-familial, socially diversified contexts—Mennonitism is en route to the museum. I believe those prophets. But they are not very popular. Much more popular are the ones who ride the crest of socially feasible religious trends.

Those who question religious subservience to national ideologies are sparse. The few who press the point of active peacemaking often find the Mennonite audience rebellious. Those who regard the church as an actual empirical group of human beings, a peoplehood, representing the body of Christ in the here and now, too quickly receive labels that hurt rather than help the building of a modern Anabaptist dream. But it is above else a Mennonite dream that is needed for a fruitful and valid reformulation of a Mennonite peoplehood.

If the choice is between a borrowed theology and discovering an up to date Anabaptist theology, I'll go for the unique peoplehood represented by the on-going Anabaptist body of believers. It is exactly the rediscovery rather than the surrender of themselves that caused the Mennonite people to find the fulfillment of their specific calling to be reconcilers in a modern world of hatred, injustice and degrading materialism.

If Mennonites can successfully transplant themselves into the turbulent industrialized modern society, rediscover their solidarity and reformulate their basic ideology in the context of that present environment, then they will indeed have demonstrated the credibility of a Christian people of God in an increasingly de-humanizing world. Of the Asians it was said, once they were no people, now they are a people. Might it be said about the Mennonites that once they were called to be a people and they, despite socio-environmental changes, are being sustained as a dynamic people of God.

If a Mennonite renaissance is dependent on a reformulation of a relevant Anabaptist ideology, then the onus is largely on the Mennonite training institutions to create or discover that ideology. Particularly the Mennonite colleges find themselves hammering out a theology that will provide for contemporary Mennonites a valid reason to be.

Books In Review

Christ In Bangladesh

James and Marti Hefly. *Christ in Bangladesh.* New York: Harper and Row, 1973. 109 pages plus an 8-page photo section. $4.95.

When the bloody struggle for Bangladesh began on March 25, 1971, foreign government officials and diplomats sent their wives and children to safer climates. A few missionary families left, but most stayed on.

The Pakistan military rulers tried to convince the world that all was well inside its eastern province on the other side of the Indian subcontinent. But the slaughter of innocent people went on and millions fled to India. The tempo of the guerrilla war began to mount through the summer and fall.

Then India entered the war on the side of the Bangladesh freedom fighters and its air force began to bomb the airport at Dacca. Most of the remaining foreigners left in evacuation planes during two hastily called ceasefires. Still a number of missionaries, Protestant and Roman Catholic, stayed on.

During those two weeks in December 1971, the International Committee of the Red Cross took over Dacca's plush Hotel Intercontinental and declared it a neutral zone for reporters covering the war and those few foreigners left who felt they needed a safer haven than their homes near the capital's airfield.

One Bengali friend asked a Baptist missionary why he and his family did not leave their home under the flight path of the bombers and go to the hotel.

"Because," he said, "the hotel is a neutral zone, and I'm not neutral."

James and Marti Hefley have dedicated *Christ in Bangladesh* to "the Christian missionaries of Bangladesh who in the crucible of suffering became Bengalis themselves."

In this slim volume, the Hefleys record the human experiences of these missionaries who lived in the combat zone that was East Pakistan/Bangladesh in 1971. It is a well-deserved tribute to a courageous group of Christian witnesses who have given themselves to serving the people in this tortured little country once a part of India, then for 25 years a part of the ill-fated experiment of building the pure Muslim state called Pakistan, and now an independent country tottering on the edge of bankruptcy.

During those bitter months of the liberation struggle, these workers were the eyes and ears of the world, passing the story of the massacre of the Bengalis out to the world through the few foreign journalists who ventured inside the colony of death.

Earlier, following the crushing disaster that was the cyclone of November 1970, missionaries were on the scene spearheading efforts to bring relief to the people in the coastal region flattened by the tidal bore. And, then, following liberation, they plunged into the vastly larger relief campaign beginning in 1972 to help the refugees returning from India and millions of others to find their way back to their homes and build a new life on the ashes and ruins of the past.

Over 50 foreign relief agencies surged across the countryside. The Christian Organization for Relief and Rehabilitation (CORR) distributed over $30 million worth of aid in behalf of the Roman Catholic churches of the world. The major Protestant contribution in terms of money (about $13 million) was channeled through the Bangladesh Ecumenical Relief and Rehabilitation Service (BERRS). Other groups developed their own programs including the World Relief Commission of the National Association of Evangelicals and the American Southern Baptist Mission.

In the Hefley book, the Mennonite Central Committee is listed third in rank in terms of its contributions during the first three months of 1972 and amounts projected for the rest of the year. This position is based on incomplete reports. Other agencies were slow in reporting their commitments. In any event, MCC probably ranks in the top ten of voluntary relief agencies working in Bangladesh.

Helpful as the Hefley book is in giving a sampling of what has happened in Bangladesh, it is only a limited report of the liberation and rescue of this new nation. The events are much more complex and the suffering endured even more acute than anything recounted here.

The Hefleys have written the book they set out to write—a book about Christian mission and relief agencies in Bangladesh. But the book, in at least one respect, does not live up to its title.

The Christ in Bangladesh portrayed here is, sad to say, largely a white Christ. The stories and anecdotes, some quite trivial, are mostly about white people. This kind of reporting implies that the most important things happening in Bangladesh are those events centered around white people and their work. Unless we have learned nothing from the closing of Christian missions in China, the revolutions in the Third World, and the American debacle in Vietnam, we cannot feel comfortable with that kind of import.

We must train ourselves to see Christ at work in non-white and non-western cultures. In Bangladesh, this means even more than a review of the small Christian community that escaped with a limited amount of hurt during the 1971 holocaust because of its close ties with foreigners. In this case, the dependency of the Christians was their salvation but also their shame. Had the churches been more independent, they would have been closer to the center of Bengali life and more in the line of fire.

We must dare to plunge into the life of Bangladesh and find Christ living among the people and suffering with them. We will find Him in the bazaars, offices, stores, mosques and prisons of Bangladesh. Surely, we will find Him at more places than only where white men are living and working. Christ fortunately is not that limited and we should celebrate His appearing in our thinking, writing and speaking.

MCC Bangladesh *Maynard Shelly*

Basic Christian Convictions

Edmund G. Kaufman. *Basic Christian Convictions.* North Newton, Kan.: Bethel College, 1972, 338 pp. $6.50.

How to find meaning in a world as confused as ours or genuine reality to faith in God in a sophisticated society as ours is a real problem to many people in our time. Apparently even children, at least some of them, are puzzling over this. Just recently a teacher was startled when a boy only seven quite unexpectedly asked her: "How can you be sure there is really a God?" But this question becomes much more acute, persistent and urgent as a young person grows older and in the process begins to think seriously about this confusing world in which we live and tries to make sense of the things he reads, sees, hears and experiences.

A keen awareness of this problem among college youth and of the urgent need to challenge graduating seniors to think through to some basic convictions their questions about God and his whole purpose and work in the world led Dr. E. G. Kaufman, then president of Bethel College, to organize a seminar course for senior students on "Basic Christian Convictions."

The course was not an apology for the Christian faith nor a course of indoctrination. It was planned as a course where students were expected to do a thorough job of digging through on problems of faith, write out their findings and then be prepared to talk with other members of the class about them. It is out of the crucible of the years of this kind of searching, struggle and teaching of many students and with many students that this book on Basic Convictions emerged. This book therefore does not represent merely the written reflections of a veteran teacher. It reflects the background of the give and take of the classroom and of the questions and concerns of our present student generation.

In my judgment this is one of the unique values of this book. It treats with respect the questions thinking people ask and deals with them with an awareness of the mood and the thought of our time and with the desire to point to basic convictions of Christian faith and how one can helpfully live by them and serve by them.

Those who would like to keep in touch with the sort of thinking and searching at work in the minds of Mennonite young people and what efforts are made to help them find their way through to basic Christian convictions of their own will find this book helpful reading. In the process this reading may even help them think through some questions of their own which they may have been afraid to face or simply postponed facing.

NORTH NEWTON, KAN. *Henry A. Fast*

An MCC Experience in Brazil

The Start of a Story Called Joe

By ROGER WIEBE

HIS NAME IS JOE. In Brazil he is known as Jose, but for the sake of all the other Mennonite Central Committee workers in countries all over the world who encounter boys like him, his name is Joe. My story isn't new. It must be painfully old.

Every missionary or voluntary service worker, must sometime in his life write a "tear jerker." It's expected of missionaries. In Sunday school they told us such stories. We gave our dimes.

One of the first things a new volunteer must learn is how to develop a tough hide. Help the people but don't let them get to you. You're no good if you crack up. A soft heart is nice but it may get you into a mental hospital. I've seen it happen to other workers and they were probably better human beings than I'll ever be. It's better to be only partly human.

We are engaged in community development (CD work). What a beautiful ring those words have. The trick, they told us, is to get the people to help themselves. No handouts. Never give money away. Never give anything away. Welfare is for Americans. To develop a community, one must teach the people how to help themselves. One must work through community structures or build them where nonexistent. In this way after we leave the people will have been taught how to face common problems together. Money, material aid and handouts are stopgap measures acceptable only in emergency situations. But yesterday I cheated, and so today I'm suffering for it.

It all started when I went up town to buy some eggs. I had plenty of money but I couldn't find anyone with eggs. We really needed them, too, because it was already after 1 p.m. and it's always my job to make the dressing to go with the fried chicken and mashed potatoes for our MCC unit supper. We were having an extra feast, and I needed those eggs to make the dressing so I could get it in the oven by 3 p.m.

"Hello Joe. How are you? What is that you've got there?" (After four years of CD work, I have learned to act friendly towards almost everyone.) Joe was selling small packages of peanuts from a cardboard box hung around his neck—about a penny for 10 roasted peanuts wrapped in old newspaper.

"Thank you, but I don't want any," I said. It was hot walking and I needed those eggs. I'd already tried seven places. Joe noticed the empty egg carton in my hand and the exasperated look on my face. These poor illiterates are really smart in sizing up situations.

Joe offered to find me some eggs. Joe is only a 10-year-old boy, small for his age. I knew I'd have to give him the money for the eggs in advance. Sixty cents is a lot to just hand over. After all, men working all day in the cane fields only earn 75 cents. Besides I didn't have change and so

Roger Wiebe is a community development worker with MCC in Northeastern Brazil.

would have to give him an even larger bill. Well, I had to have the eggs, so I gave him a bill worth about 80 cents. I instructed him on the price of eggs and told him how much I should get back. He might steal it, but at least I wasn't going to have him say he paid 80 cents for the eggs and then just pocket the money. A veteran CD worker soon learns about handling situations like that. He thought I might have to pay more for the eggs and I wondered silently. He headed in the direction of his slum home to get the eggs. It was only then that I figured the eggs might turn out to be rotten. I walked home.

Twenty minutes later he was at the door with a dozen eggs. The first thing I wondered about was the extra money. He only had a paper bill worth 15 cents in his left hand. He handed it to me with the eggs. I should get 20 cents change.

"I got them," Joe smiled. Inside the folded bill I found the rest of the change. Not bad, I thought, and wondered what I should tip him. A 15-cent bill is a lot for a tip—the five-cent coin would be better.

I gave him the 15-cent bill. My wife, Coletta, and Dale, a Paxman there for supper, smiled at my generosity. I guess they were a little surprised a veteran CD worker would do a thing like that. Dale suggested I buy some peanuts also. I picked up two packs of nuts and gave him the rest of the change. He offered me more nuts but I declined.

Joe left. I doubted if he could make that much money selling peanuts all week. Maybe two weeks. The eggs were good, the dressing better than usual.

Sunday Dale and I were having coffee. Joe came to the house. We invited him into the kitchen. I offered him an orange. He refused it, saying he couldn't eat while he was hot. We talked a little and drank our coffee. I asked Joe where he went to school. He started to smile. "I don't go to school," he said, "but I am going to start tomorrow." He told us that he had bought a pencil and notebook with the money I'd given him yesterday.

We offered him some bread. He didn't want any. With some jelly on it? No thanks.

Where did his dad work? He died two years ago. (This tear jerker is not exceptional—just personal.) Joe simply wouldn't take any of our food and it almost made me mad. Dale even ate some jelly bread, hoping Joe would join him.

Joe had also bought a used shirt for 15 cents. He was happy because he could now go to a nearby Sunday school.

This noon Coletta suggested maybe we should look up Joe's home. I agreed, but would it really make a difference? I am not a willing candidate for a mental hospital. I have to keep a certain distance away. Anyway, regardless of what his home is like, we just can't operate a handout service. It would not be the best for the whole community. If you give to one they all come. No welfare! This morning I gave someone a glass of water. Just now three boys came for water. Didn't I tell you? And water is only the beginning. We have so many problems with germs here. We have to boil and filter our water and that takes time. Now we'll have to sterilize the glass they used.

One way or another, I'm afraid this story hasn't ended.

What Is Your Name?

By ELMER F. SUDERMAN
Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minn.

I am flesh that has been
Mennonite for 300 years
and Lutheran and Catholic
and pagan before that
but is Methodist now
and sometimes Quaker.
Was my father Peter, Martin,
Menno, John or George?
Did he throw inkwells at the devil
(Was he my father?)
or hide from the authorities
and print his pamphlets
proclaiming the vision of a more
pristine Christianity?
or did he see visions and hear
God speaking to him in a
direct, vital joyous experience?
or ride off on horseback,
with no time to stretch
his legs and talk,
because he took the whole
world for his parish;
Each time I look into the mirror
of history I see a different face,
"Stranger," I ask, "Who are you?"
Who was your father?
What is your real name?

"...the most desirable immigrants"

(Excerpt from a Kansas newspaper, 1873)

In 1873, Russian Mennonites, faced with life in a militaristic country contrary to their pacifistic beliefs, began to look for new homes in the United States. Encouraged by other Mennonites already in the U.S. and by the Santa Fe railroad, which had land for settlers, the Russian members of the church sent a delegation to select a place in America. Although somewhat inaccurate, this story from the *Topeka Daily Commonwealth,* August 31, 1873, is a kind of preface to the great migration than began from Russia to Kansas a year later:

"These curious religious exiles . . . called the Mennonites, have created a very considerable stir in this country for a people whose lives are so passionless and whose fundamental doctrine is peace. . . . The Mennonites are, as a body, the most desirable immigrants, especially for a new country, that ever came to the United States, and it is no wonder then that there is very considerable strife to secure them. Each family represents the sum of the lifetime's thrift of all its members. . . . Besides they are thorough agriculturalists, sober, honest, industrious and, as far as the results of the farming goes, aspiring.

"It is with pleasure then that we are able to announce that Kansas has got them, and to this state they have all made up their mind definitely to come. [They did not all come to Kansas. Many of them settled elsewhere on the Great Plains, including Canada, at about the same time.]

(Illustrations, Mennonite Library and Archives)

The advance guard of of an army (though army is hardly the proper word to apply to them) is already here and have secured a large body of land in the Arkansas Valley, on which to found the infant colony to be reinforced by their friends to the number of not less than eight thousand. . . .

"These religionists will at once assimilate with our people in everything essential, as soon as they have acquired our language with measurable fluency. They have that same preference for schools and all humane and beneficent social appliances that is characteristic of the Kansas denizen, and they believe in public improvements. We cannot imagine, then, an equal number of immigrants so free from objectionable elements. The policy of these Mennonites going into the wilderness is not only to redeem but to transfigure it. They are the primeval economists whose chief mission is to make two blades of grass grow where one grew before. We can only faintly conjecture the influence of a nucleus of farmers who cultivate a field with all the care and particularity that they would a kitchen garden. . . .

"The Mennonites are a 'big card' for Kansas; they will largely advance the standard of our present crude and careless farming, and will teach our agriculturalists by example the two radical and most essential lessons they require to learn, thrift and forecast."

—Kansas State Historical Society

An old-fashioned walking plow was used to break ground for the museum complex now under construction at Goessel, Kan. Here Otto D. Unruh, a member of the foundation board, takes his turn in manning the plow. At the right is the building of the former Goessel Preparatory School, which was moved to the museum site.