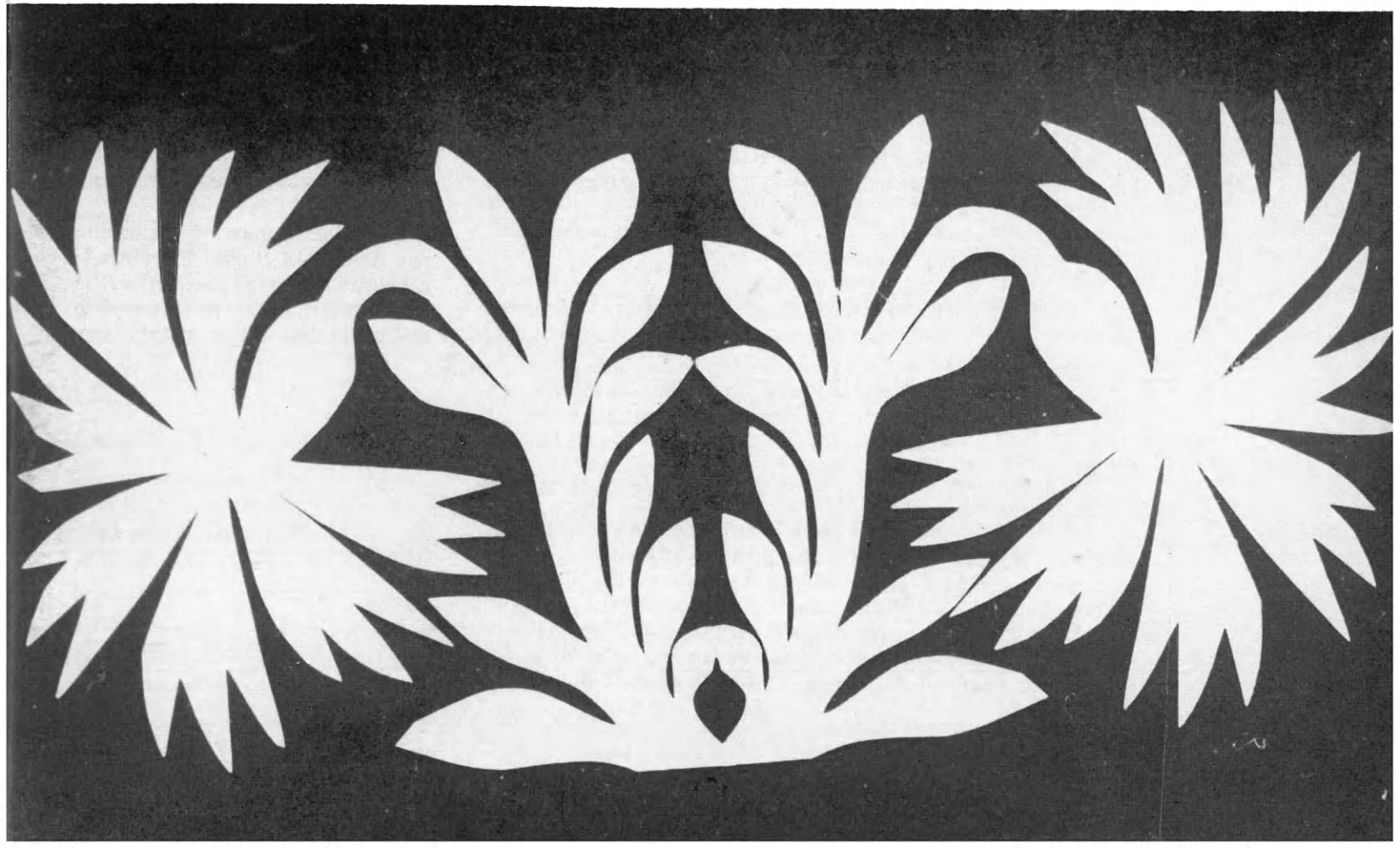


MENNONITE  
LIFE

MARCH 1979



## In this Issue

In this issue of *Mennonite Life* the broad question of Mennonites and the arts is addressed from three quite different perspectives. Marion Deckert poses the question as an educator, "What is Christian Liberal Arts Education?" The answer, he says, is to be found in affirming the best in our dual tradition of Greek rationality and Hebrew faith. A key for bridging the tensions in this double heritage is found in the radical reformation, with its emphasis upon "genuine commitment based on an adult choice, a choice made in full knowledge of the alternatives."

Elmer F. Suderman poses the question as a literary critic. In an analysis of five Mennonite literary works on the theme of war, Suderman finds two distinctive characteristics which are "unique in American art." This insightful essay will remind readers of John Ruth's exploration of "Mennonite Identity and Literary Art," which appeared in the March, 1977 issue of *Mennonite Life*.

Nancy-Lou Patterson introduces us to a Mennonite artist of quite another type—a mother homemaker who expressed her "deeply spiritual vision" through the art of paper cutting. Examples of Elizabeth Johns Stahley's paper silhouette "Paradise trees" grace the front and back covers of this issue.

The bibliography of Mennonite and Anabaptist current literature is a regular feature of *Mennonite Life* and represents the most complete and up to date listing of this type.

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# What is Christian Liberal Arts Education?

by Marion Deckert

*Marion Deckert has been academic dean at Bethel College since 1972. In the fall of 1979 he will begin teaching in the philosophy department of Satya Wacana University, a Christian university in Sala Tiga, Java, Indonesia. The assignment is under the sponsorship of Mennonite Central Committee.*

Most people are never forced to define "Christian liberal arts." But many of us are forced to struggle with questions like "Why should I attend a church college?" or "What is the appropriate relationship between conference and college?" These and other questions like them are important and complex. They cannot be answered solely by clarifying the nature of Christian liberal arts. But it is necessary to have this clarification before adequate answers can be worked out. I wish in the following pages to work towards a clarification of the relation between the liberal arts and Christianity.

Before proceeding, I want to acknowledge that there are many tasks which a Christian college must perform and that little will be said about some of these tasks. Even though little is said about such

tasks as spiritual nurture or vocational preparation or counseling or recreation or service or scholarship, this does not mean that these are not important aspects of a good Christian college. The specific task of this article is to deal explicitly with the problem of a Christian liberal arts education.

It is sometimes helpful to remember that the Western world of which we are a part is the product of two great influences: the Greek and the Jewish. Almost all our institutions, practices, and thought patterns are a complex combination of these two cultural streams.

The Greek influence is humanistic and rational in nature. It is the primary source of Western art and Western science and Western political institutions. It is the dominant force in our system of education. From one point of view, it can be said that the reason the question of the relation of Christ and culture arises is that the dominant forces in our culture are Greek while the dominant forces in our Christianity are Jewish.

The fundamental notion of the liberal arts is one which defines ends, not means. It is not a notion which is designed to divide some kinds of knowledge or activities from other kinds. It is rather a no-



*Marion Deckert*

tion which tries to define what educational activities will best achieve a certain result. The result aimed at is fuller realization of the distinctively human characteristics of men and women—characteristics such as language, art, science, knowledge, creativity, imagination, morality. The aim is to draw out or to make distinct these characteristicly human qualities and in that sense liberate the essentially human values from

dominance by lesser values. These lesser values are seen as the values of sensuality and physical gratification; the values of material accumulation and wealth; and the values of power, fame, and ambition.

A liberal arts education is one which attempts to achieve the liberation of the human being by specifying a course of study which will maximize the higher human potentials of the human spirit. This is a distinctively Greek notion. In its pure form, it does not necessarily see the human being as a child or even a creation of God. It rather has a humanistic focus. It sees the human being as the locus of a variety of potentialities. These potentials are seen as forming a hierarchy of values with the values of the human spirit being the highest. The commitment of the liberal arts view is to maximize these potentials of the human spirit and to liberate them from control by the lesser values of sensuality, wealth, and power.

The underlying values and structure of our civilization are Greek. They are fundamentally humanistic in content. As one of the Greek philosophers once said, "Man is the measure of all things." A pure liberal arts education tries to lift out and hold up the highest values of this humanistic vision. It is a glorious, exciting, and attractive vision. But the Christian affirms an even higher goal. For the Christian, everything human must be judged by a transcendent power. What does this judging process reveal? That all is essentially evil? That some is good and some is evil? That all is essentially redeemable, good as far as it goes but lacking an essential ingredient?

From another perspective, the questions raised are the old questions about the proper relationship between Christ and culture. Or again, it is the question of the relationship between the kingdom of this world and the kingdom of God. This is the question of stance; it is the fundamental question which the Christian liberal arts college addresses. It is the question of "How ought the Christian to live in our world." It is the question of values, priorities, life style. In the end, the

question of stance is the most practical question of all.

The essential idea behind the Christian liberal arts college is that the question of stance can only be answered after an honest and open examination of the possible options together with the evidence which supports them. The belief is that a careful examination of the ideas, symbols, history, and images of the various options can provide the ground for a genuine choice. This means that it is not finally necessary to experience directly all the good and all the evil of value choices or of life styles in order to make a firm commitment to a particular stance. Christian liberal arts education is committed to the belief that indoctrination is neither appropriate nor ultimately adequate for providing an answer to the question of stance. It is committed to the principles of personal commitment and truly free choice; it is committed ultimately to voluntarism. Christian liberal arts believes that the question of stance is the most basic practical question for the Christian. It believes that the correct answer to this question is not given beforehand but must be worked out by every individual Christian. It believes that authentic commitment is the source of power and fulfillment in life and that such commitment comes from genuine choice. It believes that the open examination of ideas provides an appropriate setting for genuine choice. And it believes that the liberal arts present the basic ideas within and against which the choice of Christian stance must be made.

In order to illustrate and further develop this view of Christian liberal arts education, I will outline three different approaches to Christian education. I will do this in the context of certain types of answers to the question of stance.

What is the Christian's relation to the world? This question of stance is perhaps more fundamental than most questions of doctrine. It is the question which is dealt with in the gospels by way of the teachings about the Kingdom of God. How does one live in relationship to both the Kingdom of God and the king-

dom of this world?

The problem of kingdom membership is complex. It reaches out into every aspect of life and belief. A thorough discussion of this problem is not our business here. But it is important to have in mind the various types of answers which have been given to this question. This is important, first, because the type of answer given will determine the appropriate relationship between the Christian and his culture, and second, because the type of answer given will determine the Christian attitude toward human institutions. These two questions, the question of Christ and culture and the question of a theology of institutions, are crucial on determining the nature of a Christian liberal arts college.

There are a number of types of answers to the question of the Christian's relation to the world. And there are uncounted variations and combinations of these types. I wish to deal with three broad types.

#### State church type

The first type we will call the *state church*. The basic idea here is that in the last analysis there should be only one kingdom, that the kingdoms of this world should be turned into the Kingdom of God. The problem of the Christian's relationship to the world is dissolved by the conversion of the world. The state becomes identical with the church. To be born into the state is to automatically become a citizen *and* a Christian. All the institutions of society—schools, courts, churches, prisons, legislatures, businesses, army—when rightly constituted become instruments for the Kingdom of God. There is, of course, sin and human failure but this does not come from the institutions. Rightly performed, the hangman's job or the soldier's job is performed for the Kingdom of God. The Catholic church as well as the main line reformation churches tend to hold this view.

This view provides a powerful and clear legitimation for the Christian's participation in the institutions of society. It provides a strong theology of institutions by showing that it is not only permitted to per-

form the expected roles in society but required as part of the Christian's calling.

The state church approach also provides a clear theology of culture. All true art, music, and literature is ultimately a manifestation of the Kingdom of God. In the end, distinctions between sacred and secular disappear and their place is taken by questions about quality.

In the state church tradition, the vision of Christian liberal arts is quite clear. The ideal is to reform, purify, sanctify the liberal arts so as to make them fit for the Kingdom of God. This view at bottom either must deny the fundamental humanistic framework of the liberal arts or it must finally identify this framework with the ultimate theological foundations of Christianity. The belief that there is no fundamentally unalterable distinction between the Kingdom of God and the kingdoms of this world is a comforting one. It provides a clear program for Christian liberal arts education, namely, domesticate the liberal arts for the Kingdom. The college is freed to give itself unreservedly to the values of the liberal arts. This task is seen as having a theological justification, for it is surely God's wish that the human potential be developed to its highest point.

Unfortunately, the fundamental nature of the liberal arts is not easily covered over by some theological gloss. The inner workings, the drive and force, the priorities and values cannot easily be harmonized with the Suffering Servant. The college which does not understand this confrontation proceeds with the assumption that the question is basically a matter of quality. It tends to become rationalistic, non-dogmatic, critical, pluralistic, tolerant, and ultimately, humanistic and secularistic. Such a college succeeds beautifully as a liberal arts institution but it ceases to be Christian.

#### **Separatism type**

The second stance of the Christian in the world we will call *separatism*. Fundamental to this approach is the idea that the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of

this world are both very real *but* the two are absolutely incompatible. The ideal is to live totally in the Kingdom of God and not at all in the kingdom of this world. Perhaps no one can quite achieve this ideal, but one can approximate it. In various ways, the Hutterites, the Amish, and various communal movements have moved in this direction. The aescetics and the monastic movements are examples of other separatist approaches. In the state church, the ideal is to not make membership in the Kingdom of God a matter of choice, whereas in the separatist view this choice is the essence of the matter. But both of these views ultimately try to make the kingdom a visible society here on earth.

For separatists, there is no theology of institutions; one might say there is only a demonology of institutions. The prime way to keep from spot or stain of the world is to refuse to participate in institutions. A parallel stance is taken toward culture. It is basically seen as frivolous; a waste of time at best, and as evil or the work of the devil at worst.

Since the separatists see society at large as inherently evil, they drive toward the creation of a new separate society. The constant pressure is to create new structures and forms which will be free of the inherent evil of the world. The church college is viewed as the premier example of such a sanctified structure. Its task is clear, namely, to create a new sacred culture. In such a college, many of the traditional liberal arts subjects are only studied in order to point out their danger to the Christian. The only subjects which are fully accepted and valued are those which are thought to be clearly "sacred" in character such as music and theology. Such a college tends to be closed, critical, dogmatic, literalistic, and emotional. It succeeds very well in being a force for its view of Christianity. But it cannot so easily escape the need for the Christian to find his place in the world. It inevitably finds itself becoming an institution in the world along with and interesting with the other institutions

of the world. It cannot escape involvement with the kingdom of the world. In the end, the matter of stance in the world must be dealt with and the student is forced to deal with the question in an extra-curricular context.

In one important way, both the state church and the separatist approaches to Christian higher education are alike. In the end, they uncritically assume that what makes an education "Christian" is that the school is Christian. That is, they assume that somehow the school as an institution is Christian, or to put it succinctly, they think the Christian college must be the church. The one sees the college as the church because it sanctifies all of human culture while the other sees the college as the church because it creates a new sacred culture. In either case, the assumption is that the college is dealing with subjects which are inherently Christian.

There is another view which is more clear eyed about the secular nature of the subject matters of higher education. For those who understand the implications of this fact, it is apparent that any college which allows these subjects to retain their essential integrity is at bottom a secular institution. This means that even a "Christian" college, in so far as it is a liberal arts institution, is not guided by Christian values but by the values of its disciples. If it is Christian, then it must be Christian in some other way than in its content. At first, this seems inappropriate and unacceptable. But looking back at the essence of the liberal arts, it becomes quite clear that any college which aims to embody this essence must be in one sense a secular institution. This is so because as an educational institution its commitments are to humanistic values. Its central authority is reason, not faith. Is there any sense in which such a college can also be called Christian? If there is, it must be in some paradoxical sense of being "in the liberal arts but not of the liberal arts." This brings us to the third approach to the question of stance which I will call the *two-kingdom approach*.

## Two kingdom type

Many of the "children" of the radical reformation tend toward the separatist view. But there are others who insist that it is a mistake to assume that the two kingdoms are separable. They point out that it is not possible to live outside of the kingdom of this world. The Christian is fundamentally a citizen of two kingdoms. The two kingdom view is different from the two previous views in that it sees that the Christian must inevitably live in relationship with the kingdoms of this world. The important question now becomes what is the appropriate relationship to the world.

The classical formula for this relationship is to be in but not of the world. Just exactly what this formula means in practice is interpreted differently by different people.

One interpretation of being in the world but not of the world is essentially that each person must choose the way and the extent to which he participates in the institutions of this world. For example, one may pay taxes for social welfare but not for war. Or again, certain vocations are legitimate, e.g., farmer, teacher, or doctor, while others are not, e.g., soldier or politician. In this way, even though one has to participate in the kingdoms of this world, it is still possible to withhold participation where it conflicts directly with the Kingdom of God.

This view is quite familiar to members of the Mennonite church. Different lines may be drawn by different branches of the church or by different members of the church, but they have in common the notion that a judgment on what is permitted is required. This judgment is the practical expression of the insight that the Christian must be a member of the kingdoms of this world but must also be a member of the Kingdom of God.

The two kingdom view has not provided a very clear theology of institutions or a very clear view of culture. There has been a striking lack of understanding on what role institutions and culture play in the realization of God's Kingdom. Rather, the focus has been placed on questions about what sort of par-

ticipation in the world is acceptable. At its best, the search for an answer to this question has avoided falling into legalism by dependence upon the guidance of the community of believers. The fellowship of believers is not an alternate society but a gathering of the committed to discern what it means to be faithful. This gathering takes place in the world. It is the model for using the liberal arts setting for the locus of Christian activity.

The state church people and the separatist people wish to create a visible Christian society. The two kingdom people believe that any new society here on earth will ultimately have the character of fallen man. They do not aim to create new structures, but rather, they wish to find out how to live in the world without being of the world. For them, the question of stance is the basic practical question. It is the question which is at the heart of Christian liberal arts education.

There is a basic tension or perhaps even a paradox at the heart of the two kingdom view of the Christian liberal arts college. But this is as it should be because it mirrors perfectly the basic tension of the Christian's relationship to the two kingdoms. The college is at once the place where the logic of the liberal arts values is allowed to flower in its full integrity and yet the locus of a committed community of disciples who are dedicated to discovering a solution to the problem of stance for themselves and their students.

The tension which is inherent in the Christian liberal arts institution provides a constant pressure to either cease to be Christian or cease to be liberal arts. This pressure is actually a temptation to avoid the hard questions. On the one hand, a college may succeed in developing the higher humanistic values in its students, while failing to show that all human endeavors come under the judgment of God. This is to cease to be Christian; it is the temptation of the state church college. On the other hand, a college may fail to present the humanistic vision with its inner logic intact and with all its natural persuasive-

ness. This is to cease to be liberal arts and so to fail to provide a setting for a genuine choice. Such is the temptation of the separatist college.

In a certain sense, the genuine Christian liberal arts college only makes sense from the point of view of the radical reformation. It is this view which gives the central place to genuine commitment based on an adult choice, a choice made in full knowledge of the alternatives. This choice, when applied to the question of stance, is new for every individual in every new situation. It is not a matter of a list of dos and don'ts but a matter of discernment.

The liberal arts experience now becomes a quest. It is the place where the student comes into direct and powerful contact with the charms and values of the best that the human spirit has to offer. As such, it is truly liberal arts. But the quest is undertaken in the company of a group of Christians who are already engaged in the quest, and who understand the travail of the quest, and who wish to take the student into their community as a fellow believer. As such, it is truly Christian. The quest is real; no one can avoid adopting a stance. The matter is of ultimate importance. The choice is genuine; it cannot be determined by others.

This means that in the final analysis, the outcome of a Christian liberal arts education cannot be determined. The radical reformers insisted on the importance and integrity of human choice. This is the meaning of the believer's church. Its message is still valid today for the Christian liberal arts college. The most meaningful choice is one taken freely and deliberately in full knowledge of the alternatives. The task and the challenge of the Christian liberal arts college is to provide the setting for such a choice on the most fundamental question, "How shall I as a Christian live?" Dynamic, radiant lives are the results of a genuine, personal commitment based on a free and genuine choice about matters of ultimate importance. Such is the high calling of the true Christian liberal arts college.

# The Mennonite Community and The Pacifist Character in American Literature

by Elmer F. Suderman

*Elmer F. Suderman is Professor of English at Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota, and a frequent contributor to Mennonite Life.*

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Miranda in Katherine Ann Porter's *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* gives us a clue to the way violence, especially war, impinges on the lives of characters and communities. When she awakens at the beginning of the story "a single word struck in her mind, a gong of warning reminding her for the daylong what she forgot happily in sleep and only in sleep."<sup>1</sup> And that word, that single word which dominates her inner and outer life, all day and into the night is "war." "The war," said the gong, "and she shook her head." As the story progresses the crescendo of the gong increases its ceaseless turmoil, crying not one word but the reiterated words, "war, war, war," now augmented with another word, also repeated three times, "danger, danger, danger."

The total impact of war on Miranda and the community in which she lives is true also of the depiction of war in the literature I shall discuss in this paper: Peter Epp's novel, *Erloesung*; Rudy Wiebe's novel, *Peace Shall Destroy Many*; Ken Reed's novel, *Mennonite Soldier*; James Juhnke and Harold Moyer's play, *The Blowing and the Bending*; Warren Kliewer's play, *The Berserkers* and Lee Brackett's novel, *The Long Tomorrow*. All are about Men-

nonite communities and all but Brackett's are written by birthright Mennonites.<sup>2</sup>

In this paper I want to examine how war and the violent mentality of war impinges on the characters and on the communities in which they live. Two distinctive characteristics dominating these novels led me to choose them: The communities which react to and are acted upon by the war are pacifist communities, and the characters who react to a violent world are pacifist because of their religious convictions. Both of these points are unique in American art.

Without exception the events in the works of Epp, Wiebe, Kliewer, Juhnke and Moyer, and Brackett take place in pacifist communities. The setting for Epp's Mennonite community in *Erloesung* is in the Ukraine during the Russian Revolution. Wapiti in *Peace Shall Destroy Many* is in an isolated section of northern Saskatchewan in 1944. In *The Berserkers* the setting is a Mennonite community in southwest Minnesota in 1903. In *Mennonite Soldier*, a Mennonite community in Susquehannock in Pennsylvania is forced to come to terms with World War I. *The Blowing and the Bending* takes place in Pershing, Kansas, also during World War I. And in *The Long Tomorrow*, a science fiction novel, the setting is a world eighty-five years after the Great Destruction when technology, cities, and all machines, except the most elemental were destroyed by an atomic holocaust. In this world the constitution has been amended to

forbid any community of more than one thousand people or two hundred buildings per square mile. The Mennonites, once anachronistic because they used simple handcraft instead of machines, were best suited to survive, and from a small group had quickly multiplied into millions. Virtually controlling the government, they maintain a simple agrarian civilization resisting any return to a technological society.

## I

A look at these communities, unique in American literature, will tell us something about how war affects them and how they respond to war. Peter Epp's novel, published in 1930, describes graphically the effect upon and the response of a Russian Mennonite community to the battle between the White and Red forces as they seesaw back and forth through the community. Community life is disrupted. "Never since its founding over a hundred years before had the community experienced such an upheaval."<sup>3</sup> The economic order is thoroughly disorganized. No mail is delivered. Even the graveyard, once the pride of the community, is neglected; cows graze there. Many people are hungry. Family life is disrupted. Mennonite young men are fighting in the war. The leadership of the community is in disarray. As many as possible are considering immigration. After over a century of peace and prosperity, the community has in a few nightmarish years been, if not completely destroyed, then changed beyond recognition.<sup>4</sup>



The story begins and most of it takes place during a lull in the fighting. Mrs. Harder, the wife of the pastor of the community, exemplifies the helplessness of the community. She cannot understand why her son, Abram, is fighting in the White army. She cannot understand the explanation of her other son, Franz, why Abram doesn't write. Nor can she understand Franz's explanation that the Czar has been deposed, that the world has been turned upside down; hunger, war and the clash of the Red and White armies have destroyed their once orderly and peaceful lives.

Accustomed to neatness and order, she feels obligated in spite of her frail seventy year old body, to wash the walls, scrub the floors and repair the rooms which the White soldiers quartered there have left in thorough disrepair, though she knows that very soon a new group of soldiers will move in and reduce the rooms to a pig sty once again. She asks the question that the community is asking: "Isn't there any law in the land anymore?" (p. 10). Her restless sweeping, scrubbing, brushing is a symbolic ritual motivated by the futile wish to restore the old, secure, clean order. Even when with the help of her son Franz she manages to clean up the rooms, they are not the same. Nor will they ever be. The fleas are not really gone; tobacco smoke still permeates the air. After everything is done that can be done, she knows that the spirit of the past is no longer there: "The mood of old fashioned reverence, of quiet, of peace, of deep inner well being" (pp. 61-62) can never return. She is sad, tells her husband that she wants to sleep a little, falls asleep, and does not awaken again. Nor does the community ever awaken from its nightmare.

The impact of the war on Epp's pacifist community is clear. War is a tragedy. Wise men become confused, peaceful men killers. War destroys the pacifist society which, in this case at least, never is re-established. It cannot survive the gargantuan evil of a war. Pacifist convictions are of little, if any, help in holding the community together.



*The impact of war. Mass grave at Blumenort village, South Russia, 1918.*

They may very well be as futile as war itself. There is, nevertheless, the implication that what is important is not that the community survive but remain true to its convictions.

In *Erloesung* the war is fought in the once peaceful community of Halbstadt. It is responsible indirectly for the death of Mrs. Harder and directly for the death of Pastor Harder and his two sons. In *Peace Shall Destroy Many*,<sup>5</sup> on the other hand, the war is fought across an ocean. Having come from Russia just after World War I in order to escape the kind of disintegration experienced by Epp's community, they have deliberately selected a place where bush and forest separate them from the rest of the world. The German language gives the community a social cohesion. The community is designed to exclude worldly influences and to preserve a rigorous purity of life. Here the effect of war would not be felt. Mennonite young men would no longer have to go to war. Now, however, during World War II they find themselves engulfed in a war from which no barriers can protect them. The war is not fought in their streets, but they do see their young men face the choice of the army or civilian public service.

So not even Wapiti, isolated as it is, can escape the impact of war or isolate itself from difficult and often unanswerable questions. Wiebe is under no illusions that the issues of the war are not momentous. That is one of the strengths of the novel. Wiebe recognizes, as so

many sentimental pacifist writers do not, that the evil represented by Hitler's Germany cannot be ignored. But he recognizes that Hitler is not the personification of evil, that the evil lies as much within the hearts of the Wapiti Mennonites as it does in the world from which it has to isolate itself. Wapiti discovers that fighting evil answers no questions but that pacifism is not an easy answer either.

But the war is only the catalyst, revealing the internal rot which has always been present. Their purity was more ostensible than real. The leader of the community, Deacon Peter Block, has under extreme provocation killed a man in Russia, but he has never confessed the murder, has instead tried to repress it by an almost unnatural sternness in his leadership of the community and the treatment of his family.

The heavy freight of sin which the Wapiti Mennonites discover among themselves is made more weighty when those in the community who are pacifists find themselves fighting with the nonpacifists. Ironically this fight occurs after the Christmas program, Celebrating the birth of the Prince of Peace, the Wapiti Mennonites sing the old song of the angels, "Peace on Earth, Good Will to Men." Wapiti thought they lived by that song. They discover that they don't when Thomas Wiens, a pacifist, and Herb Unger who has joined the air corps engage in a brawl. It is a sobering discovery. Despite their pacifism, which will not let them fight against an enemy overseas,



Carl Unruh asks "Which is the way?" in *The Blowing and the Bending*, performed by students of Mennonite Collegiate Institute, Gretna, Manitoba, at General Conference mid-triennium meeting in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Photo by Vic Reimer

they find themselves at war with each other.

Unlike Epp's community, Wapiti, however fragmented, will survive. If it has not learned how hard it is to practice love, and there is considerable doubt that it has, human nature being what it is, the reader has witnessed a sobering picture of the difficulty of the way of love.

In *Mennonite Soldier*<sup>6</sup> Ken Reed's Susquahannock, like Wapiti does not experience direct fighting. But, like Wapiti, Susquahannock has problems other than war which threaten its pacifism. Susquahannock Mennonites are more concerned about the kinds of decorations that should be allowed on women's bonnets or with drinking and fighting among the young people at parties, or with sexual irregularities, than with war.

These concerns, especially negative attitudes toward church attendance and prayer, are heightened by

the war. To keep their conscientious objections viable young men must belong to the church since the government will not recognize pacifists who are not baptized members. The elders are encouraged by the meeting that Ira Stolfus has attended in which the young Mennonites gathered from many communities have decided that though they may go into the noncombatant units that the government has provided, they will not participate in the war in any direct way by carrying guns or digging trenches. Most of the young men conclude that if it is a matter of disobeying their conscience and the four hundred year old Mennonite tradition of pacifism or going to prison, they will accept prison. But not every one agrees. Ira's brother, Mastie, for example, enlists in the army.

At least one character in the novel, the elder, Isaac Stolfus, Ira

and Mastie's father, must face the problem of whether or not he will buy liberty bonds. But buying liberty bonds does not become an issue for the church; they presumably are more concerned with bonnets.

The Susquahannock Mennonites are dedicated to or at least concerned with pacifism. Susquahannock is not sharply divided as Wapiti was. Indeed Susquahannock does not greatly change. It can joyfully accept and forgive the return of Mastie, the prodigal son who has killed hundreds of Germans, and it can forget the older brother, Ira, who is serving twenty-five years in Leavenworth. It will, presumably, continue to raise corn, wheat, tobacco, oats and cows in abundance.

*Mennonite Soldier*, like *Peace Shall Destroy Many*, is an indictment of a community that fails to give to its youth those satisfactions that make the adventure of war

more appealing. The personal self-satisfaction, community spirit, and human culture that draws some of the energy from the war spirit is not present in Susquahannock, just as it is not present in Wapiti, or, for that matter, in any of the other works to be considered. It is at least conceivable that Mastie Stolfus would not have enlisted in the first place if the community would have been more open, would have given him less reason to become disillusioned with its unsatisfactory life.

Perhaps the most intense searchlight on the community is that which Juhnke and Moyer in *The Blowing and the Bending* focus on the Mennonites of Pershing, Kansas.<sup>7</sup> The name of the community indicates its military nature. The time is World War I. No one in Pershing is ever allowed to forget that a war is going on, not even the church as an institution. Though both the Susquahannock and Wapiti Mennonite churches understood that historically they were Pacifist yet neither Wiebe or Reed portray the direct role of the church in the way Moyer and Juhnke do. The church must decide what stand to take toward buying liberty bonds. It must be concerned with its young men who will have to decide what stand to take toward war in a much more direct way than the churches in Susquahannock or Wapiti.

The decisions are not easy. The church council does not take a position against buying liberty bonds; that is left up to the individual. Solomon Unruh's anguished argument that such equivocation only begs the question, weakens the brotherhood, and is a refusal to admit that war is sin and that people of God do not pay for war, does not prevail. Solomon feels that the spirit of Christ demands that the church stand together if it is to have any force against the propagandistic spirit of America breathing down everyone's neck. Some agree with Solomon, but others do not.

The community survives, but it is changed, more, I think, than Susquahannock. Pershing Mennonites will no longer speak with one voice on the war. The church has bent to the extent that objection to war

at whatever level, while still having the support of the church, will now become more a matter of individual conscience. But in the end, they are united, at least enough to send Carl off to camp as a group. Solomon says, "Somehow people just knew after yesterday that the time was right to weep together and celebrate together. And the blowing and the bending makes the oak tree strong."

The Pershing pacifists are unique in one respect. They have a sense of humor. Realizing the seriousness of the war and its effects, they are, nevertheless, able to enjoy working together in harvest and to revel in the therapeutic qualities of Alpenkrauter. I doubt whether Mennonites are more deficient in humor than most Americans—or that they ever have been—but humor and a sense of play are not among their outstanding attributes. To meet Mennonites who wonder if President Wilson and the Kaiser could not come to some amicable agreement over a tablespoon of Alpenkrauter is a rare pleasure. After all, if it can cure constipation, Spanish flu, nose bleed, back ache, insomnia, it should be able to end the war. In addition to good humor, the Alpenkrauter song helps throw light on the theme of the pacifist community by showing us how ludicrous the other kind of community which threatens to and does use yellow paint on pacifists is compared with the sense of humor of Mennonites.

In Warren Kliever's *The Berserkers*,<sup>8</sup> the Minnesota Mennonite community is not visible, but its influence is felt. Because Mrs. Franz is Mennonite, she thinks of herself as different, different enough not to become too involved in her Finnish neighbor and friend, Oskar Pakkula. He is, after all an outsider. He cannot be expected to offer her the solace he would so gladly give and she would so gladly accept, except for the one barrier: she is Mennonite and he is not. At the end of the play this difference is obliterated and Oskar's statement that at bottom all people are the same is borne out:

Ach! I listened to all you peace-

loving people singing a solemn dignified hymn about the Lord taking care of you. And I didn't believe it—not one word. Because I believe that all people have the same blood, the same guts, the same taste for blood. I believe that when it comes down to a question of dying or the fear of dying, everyone—even you, a nice dignified lady like you—will turn vicious and kill. That's what I believe (II-32).

While *The Berserkers* does not show us a Mennonite community that is destroyed or shaken by war, it does show us that pacifist communities are not basically different from others. The seeds of hatred grow in pacifist hearts, and violence erupts among pacifists just as it does anywhere. All of our authors agree on that point. Under pressure, society breaks. Love and pacifist convictions fail. Who can disagree? From experience we know the scenario depicted in these novels is true. The pacifist community does not yet exist, even though it may proclaim to be peace-loving. Pacifist societies are not inoculated against original sin.

Such a somber view is salutary and necessary. Yet writers ought to have the imagination to enlarge our understanding of the communities, as well as individuals, who can, without cant, love their enemies and bless those that curse them. Reasonably, this may be impossible. But it may very well be the work of the imagination, the supreme work, to show us that such love is as possible and as interesting and dramatic as hate.

Because war has always been a part of our world are we unable, even imaginatively, to conceive of a world without it? Apparently. Pacifist communities accept war just as other communities do and are as unable to conceive of a world without war. They seem not as interested in ridding the world of war as in keeping themselves untainted from the violence and bloodshed and hatred that war brings. Sometimes but not often enough, they are interested in healing wounds (Ira in *Mennonite Soldier* never seems to be), in suffering rather than inflicting suffering (Carl in *The Blowing and the Bending* is). But primarily they are interested, as

Wapiti and Susquahannock are, in keeping themselves pure, or in maintaining the semblance of purity, taking the naive view that the appearance of a virtue is the reality of that virtue.

Where then, if anywhere, are we to find the imagination to transcend the habit of war? Where is the literary imagination able to offer believable visions and alternatives to the present world in which war seems inevitable? Leigh Brackett's novel suggests an alternative but in the end rejects it.

In *The Long Tomorrow*<sup>9</sup> the Mennonites, now in the majority, by eliminating all but the most elemental technology, have made a world war impossible, although there are still small skirmishes. But curiosity about the Pre-Destruction times, particularly curiosity about atomic energy and large cities, threatens the peace. With the help of Ed Hostettler, a former Mennonite, Len and Esau Coulter, Mennonite cousins from Piper's Run, dissatisfied with their simple, drab, anti-intellectual life find Bartorstown, a secret place, where a large computer hidden in the mountains contains the information necessary to rebuild the old technological civilization.

The computer, it is hoped, will make it possible to rebuild a civilization with all the advantages of the earlier one but without unleashing the bomb's destructive power. The attempt fails, Len escapes and tries to get back to the simple, uninquiring world of Piper's Run where there are no disturbing or difficult dilemmas. But Len cannot return. Having developed a sense of curiosity, he cannot live in the innocence of Piper's Run, no matter how enticing the possibility. Having to choose between "here you must stop knowing," and "knowing," Len can only make one choice. He must return to Bartorstown with all of its dilemmas. It is the old story of the Garden of Eden. To eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is to learn about a world not within the grasp of the innocent, but it is also to unleash powers capable of destroying the world. Intelligence, growth, prog-

ress, exact a high price, but Len is convinced that he has to know more, even though knowledge is lethal.

Brackett understands that no community, however innocent (and ignorant), can survive without an increase in technology and that technology which makes life more livable also poses the problem of war. It is, apparently, an inescapable dilemma. If we have automobiles and jets, we will also have tanks and atomic bombs. War is a disease, outside the healthy order of the universe, but incurable.

The Pacifist communities of Russia, Wapiti, Susquahannock, Pershing, Southwest Minnesota, indeed all non-violent communities of the world, have, as these authors know, their work cut out for them. They live in an imperfect world. They must apply pacifist principles in a world which does not see them as possible or realistic, sees them, rather, as visionary, impractical, entirely out of keeping with what can and should be done. Is it asking too much of an artist to show how the entire life of the community might be transformed offering it new myths to live by, a myth which would include an ethic of love and nonresistance applying to all human relationships, in peace as well as war, so that society becomes less degenerate, more wise, virtuous, temperate and just than ours now is? Is it too much to ask the writer to hold up the mirror to society that men may not only see their own depravity but the unjust forms by which we organize society? Is it too much to ask for a literature that shows groups as well as individuals adjusting their priorities, political, military and moral, to reverse the trend of our century which has made things and impersonal forces take precedence over human interests and people?

This literature in its description of pacifist communities has achieved much. It has raised some important problems. But it is woefully weak, as is all literature, in depicting peace. Where are the novels in which peace is the dominant theme? Where is the definition of peace which goes beyond the highly un-

satisfactory one of peace as the absence of war, the end of something, the subtraction of something, a shooting war for example?

We know the effect of war on normally peaceful people. In *Erloesung* they join the White Army or kill fellow Mennonites. In *Mennonite Soldier* they shoot Germans. In *The Blowing and the Bending* they paint yellow those who will not buy liberty bonds, or if they are Mennonite they shovel manure, or make money raising wheat. In *Peace Shall Destroy Many* they join the air corps and bomb Germans and fight pacifists when they are home on leave. But what do pacifists do when they face violence? Stand around confused as the Ukrainian Mennonites do while armies fight in their villages? Argue about women's bonnets as the Susquahannock Mennonites do? Have babies by dirty irresponsible half-breeds hired to help harvest wheat as Deacon Block's daughter does in *Peace Shall Destroy Many*? Avoid contact with attractive Finnish neighbors or pray for help and then ruthlessly kill all her oxen as Mrs. Franz does in *The Berserkers*? Find radios and thus discover where Bartorstown is located as the Coulter cousins in *The Long Tomorrow* do? These are not satisfactory pictures of peace for either individuals or communities, for the communities as well as individuals fall apart. Who can blame Mastie for tiring of rules or Carl for feeling trapped in Pershing and Bessie for wanting to leave the boring farm? Peace seems to pale, particularly in literature, by comparison with war; both communities and individuals are more heroic in war than in peace.

What is needed is a vision of peace in which life is fully lived—of contentment, to be sure, but a contentment that is full of life, a life that includes vigor, compassion and conflict, all fully experienced, a vision never fully achieved, always becoming, requiring our best efforts and intelligence, individually and corporately. In this sense peace is a search, full and exhilarating, not a trip to a dull, dead end. It does not end in the statement, "Home can be a trap, too." It does not end

with Bessie in *Mennonite Soldier* wanting a storm, even a tornado, for excitement.

But where do we find such an experience described in our literature? Where is the vision of peace which is pulsating, vibrant, challenging and demanding? Where is the peace that requires more of us than the mindless mediocrity so often depicted in literature?

The Pacifist literature we have been examining, furthermore, fails to evoke the awareness necessary to allow us to feel the full range of good and evil in a pacifist community. Something is missing. The sense of place, of community, is thin. Epp's Russian community is at times compelling and so is Wapiti. I am not concerned here with whether they are historically factual. The question has some relevance but not as much as whether the communities have verisimilitude, life-likeness. Have the authors breathed into them the breath of life so that when we read we assent to their existence whether such a community ever existed or not. I have mixed feelings about the success of these authors to achieve verisimilitude. In many ways I do assent to Wapiti, Piper's Run and Epp's Russian community. I am a little more hesitant about Pershing and Susquahannock. I never quite live there, never feel that these communities achieve an existence of their own, certainly not in the same way that I assent to Katherine Ann Porter's city, probably Denver, in *Pale Horse, Pale Rider*.

When an author succeeds in creating a community in all its complexity, with all its mixture of good and evil, with all the ambiguities of motives, the reader becomes acutely aware of the nature of his own communal life. The writer does not have to judge such a community—but he does have to create it—but he can trust the reader to make his own judgments. The reader can better understand what life *could* be like because he knows what it *is* like.

## II

But we must go on to the second distinctive aspect of pacifist literature's treatment of war and peace:

the depiction of the religious objector. While there are any number of characters in modern fiction who object to war, they usually do so from a humanitarian point of view and often against a specific war. Religious objectors are not common in literature. However, Thomas Wiens, Ira Stolfus, Carl and Menno Unruh, refuse to participate in war because of religious principles. These objectors come from and are to some extent supported by a church. Another group, Mrs. Isaac, Solomon Unruh and Isaac Stolfus are actively opposed to the war even if they do not have to participate in it directly.

What are these objectors like? With few exceptions the pacifist character is flawed, just as their communities are. Pastor Harder in *Erloesung*, eloquent in the pulpit and gentle and wise in dealing with his congregation in peace, is helpless during the revolution. He does not know why his wife has died, why his two sons have been shot, why the Soviets have taken his home, why the Mennonites are being imprisoned and shot. When the catastrophe comes, he cannot understand what is happening. When people try to explain, he hears words, but he cannot understand their import. He is incapable of thinking about the nature of the church in a revolutionary era, about taxes, land, hunger, schools or immigration. When he tries to help his son with the hay that has just been put into the barn, he can't even push open the hay loft door with his pitchfork. He feels a sense of fear and despair, feels frightened and alone in the loft which is as dark as the world in which he finds himself. In the words of a contemporary song he seems to be told: "Wake up, I got news for you: Nobody need you anymore."

He is incapable of thinking about the nature of the church in a revolutionary era, certainly not of a pacifist church in a time of war. He cannot understand why his son, the inheritor of a four hundred year peace tradition, should fight for the Red Army. He cannot even understand the issues of taxes, land, hunger, schools or immigration. So

many of his people have been killed, so much land has been confiscated, but he can't do anything. He only knows that his life, once dedicated to answering perplexing questions of life and death for others, is now one big question mark: "His life is nothing but a dumb suffering, without words, without tears" (p. 81). His world has been broken into many pieces and he cannot put them together. He does not know who he is or who he was. "I can't understand anything, anymore," he says (p. 89). He cannot explain to anyone the pain in his heart and head.

Others in the community still want to live. He wants to die. Ironically he is relieved when the Red Soldiers discover a revolver among the books of his sons. He knows he will be shot. His head clears, and he gladly accepts the responsibility for hoarding the gun, welcoming the sentence of death that the Soviet pronounces, because he believes in God. Unable to face calamity creatively and courageously, he is able to face death triumphantly, assured that a better world is waiting.

Wapiti has more than its share of flawed pacifists. Thomas Wiens, the central character of the book, is sensible and sensitive and in conflict with the society outside of Wapiti because he finds it inadequate and unjust. He is, moreover, in conflict with what is false and phony within his own church. Perhaps a little naive, certainly innocent, perhaps self-righteous at the beginning of the novel, he is, nevertheless, unafraid to face unpleasant facts. In the final scene of the novel, however, he loses his temper and in anger strikes Herb Unger in the fist fight that takes place, ironically, after the Christmas program. Thomas was appalled at Hank Unger's bragging about the twenty-seven Nazi planes he has shot down and gloating in the death of their crew. "When I shoot down a Nazi pig, it's strictly fun for me. Only one question crosses my mind . . . will he blow or fry?" (p. 223). He is even more appalled when he discovers that his own delight in fighting is no less than Hank's.

Mrs. Elizabeth Harder Franz, the thirty-five year old Mennonite wid-

ow in *The Berserkers*, is no less weak. Having been warned by her neighbor that there are Indians around, Mrs. Franz is horrified when her son John loads a gun in order to protect them against possible harm. Mennonites do not use guns. "No. No, no, no. We do not shoot." She reminds her son that the Mennonites had left Russia because they didn't want their men in the army and that before that they had left Germany for the same reason. "The Lord will help us. The Lord will save us." But prayer does not help. Hearing repeated noises outside, she loses control, grabs the gun, and shoots blindly out of the window. She hits the oxen and for the rest of the night struggles until the wounded beasts, on which she depends for the plowing that will soon have to be done, are both killed by the knife in her hands. When she comes into the house in the morning her hands are bloody. She knows that it is going to take a long time to figure this out. Even more devastating is the realization which her Finnish friend Oskar knows, not only in theory but in practice: that we are all killers, not "just nice clean butchering for the dinner table, but killing for killing's sake." Difficult as it is, Mrs. Franz has to admit that she enjoyed the killing and that she would have killed Oskar—and perhaps her children too had they been present.

Ira in *Mennonite Soldier* is a particularly blemished pacifist. Genuinely concerned with pacifist principles, Ira often pays more attention to the principles than to the human values underlying them. Having committed himself to the pacifist position, he does not wish to compromise at any point.

There is an interesting comparison between Ira and Henry Fleming in Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*. Henry is concerned about standing up to his convictions and fighting. He is afraid that when he meets the test of battle he will run. Ira, on the other hand, wonders if he can keep from fighting, if he can resist the propaganda which insists that war is right, that pacifism is cowardice. His greatest decision, he decides, is whether he can re-

main true, a decision that weighs more heavily on his mind than his love for Suzanne, or his brother, who has enlisted in the army, or his father.

And he does face pressure. Every tactic is used to convince and finally to coerce him to put on the uniform. He refuses. "If he puts on the uniform who would know who he was?" (p. 204). He refuses to salute, march, work in the camp, means that he has to stand at attention all day, even if it means the threat of being shot at sunrise by the firing squad.

Ira's faithfulness is exemplary until one day, having taken more than his share of harrassment from Sergeant Potts, and recognizing for the first time how much he hates him, Ira quickly drives his fists into the sergeant's stomach. Ira's anguish is understandable. After all his successes, he has hit an officer. In a conversation between his idealized Mennonite self and the new self he has discovered, Ira comes to know that the long tradition of being an Anabaptist has given him, up to this point, the guts and courage to resist anger. In the end he has now discovered the other side of himself, the dark side. But he is able to forgive Sergeant Potts, and feels that he has won a tremendous spiritual victory.

But when he is furloughed to go back home for his mother's funeral, he cannot understand why his father invites Pastor Rydell of the Emmanuel Bible Church to eat with them after the services. Suspicious and resentful, he feels that Rydell's apology to his father for leading the mob that tried to force Isaac to buy liberty bonds is a trick. Isaac Stol-fus can forgive, but his son cannot. The old worm of jealousy still eats at him. He becomes more aloof and concerned with principles, forgetting that those principles have to be expressed in love and affection for others. The last we hear of him is when Isaac calls him at Leavenworth where he has been sentenced for twenty-five years. Enthusiastically informing Ira that he has good news, that his prodigal brother has returned, Isaac is disappointed that Ira is suspicious, his

only response an "Oh, yeah? Why did he come home, tell me that? He is back for money, that's what Pop." Ira doesn't think Mastie will stay, and he cannot forgive him. At this point the telephone connection, weak from the beginning, is broken, just as the relationship of father and son and of Ira to his community are broken. Perhaps the most flawed pacifist of all, Ira Stolfus, though impeccable in his beliefs, consistent except for one little mistake, is never able to see that pacifism demands love and forgiveness as well as theoretical set of correct principles.

Solomon Unruh and his sons in *The Blowing and the Bending* are, perhaps, too good, too easily faithful to their beliefs. Menno, the older brother, already drafted and experiencing the kind of testing Ira Stolfus underwent, seems to have little trouble remaining true to his convictions. He never wavers even when he faces the firing squad, though he has put on the uniform, or, perhaps the hardest test of all, when he is told that Mennonites from Goessel are in the regular army and make first-rate soldiers. In fairness, however, it should be pointed out that the art form Moyer and Juhnke use, the musical drama, is not as concerned with three dimensional characterizations as a novel. Solomon, Menno and Ira function well as stereotypes; perhaps that is all we have a right to ask of them.

Carl, however, faces some inner conflicts. "Who has the plan for me?" he asks. He realizes that he has four choices: to stay at home and be guilty of a capital offense; to accept the draft and face the problems his brother is facing: to go to Canada; or to fight like a patriotic American. In the end, he cannot let his father down; he takes his father's place when the mob threatens to harm Solomon who has had a heart attack. Carl decides to go to the army rather than to Canada as we always expected that he would.

Imperfect as these pacifists are, in each case, they find some tentative answer or point to one. Pastor Harder is convinced that the ulti-

mate issues of life are not to be decided here but in another world. Thomas Wiens, after his outburst of violence, reflects on the play presented by the Sunday School, which has ended with the Wise Men, be-draggled and footsore, at an old barn in Bethlehem where one of the shepherds, assures them that this is the end of their journey. Thomas is not sure that he has come to the end of his quest. His discovery of evil in Wapiti, the problems posed by the war in Europe, his bitter confrontation with his own worst nature—could he find answers for these questions at the barn in Beth-lehem? Certainly he could not find them in “the paths of conscienceless violence of the Unger brothers,” nor in Deacon Block’s “misguided interpretation of tradition. They brought chaos” (p. 237). If there is an answer, Thomas thinks it must lead him to the manger, to God’s revelation of himself in the incarnation and in the teachings of Jesus Christ. Pastor Harder and Thomas Wiens find their answers in religion. Mrs. Franz finds hers in her common humanity with all the world. Ira does not find his at all; that is left for the prodigal brother who has gone to the war to fight, but has come home, not as repentant as we might expect, but forgiven and ready to take up his life in the community he once found dull. Mastie finds his answer in his father’s forgiving love as Carl finds his in his father’s steadfastness.

I do not intend to discuss the ver-similitude of the pacifist characters in these works. That is an important question, but what is more important is that we have pacifist characters who, flawed as they are, are heroes. That is perhaps their most striking aspect. When I saw *The Blowing and the Bending*, I with the rest of the audience hoped that Solomon would not be black-mailed into buying liberty bonds, that Carl would choose pacifism, and that Menno would not put on his uniform. The audience sympathized more with Carl’s heroism than with Bessie’s more conventional view of the wounded and decorated hero coming home with a band, a parade, a demonstration and his picture in

the paper. And those of us who have read *Peace Shall Destroy Many* are glad to see Thomas, chagrined as he is with his denial of love, still cling to his beliefs, determined to put them into practice. Ira disap-points us but only because we are sympathetic to the pacifist cause. What has happened, then, is that our loyalties have been switched. Instead of hoping for heroism in battle, we hope for a hero who re-fuses to fight. A pacifist hero in the arts can, as these works reveal, emerge.

This is an exciting theme, I think a new one, certainly one that needs our most perceptive and further ex-ploration, both critically and cre-atively, the theme of the pacifist and the pacifist community refusing to allow war, which often dominates men’s lives, to determine the mean-ing of their existence.

Creatively the theme needs to be carried even further. We do not see enough effort in this literature of the loving community and the non-violent character practicing his love rather than refusing to hate. Solomon Unruh attempts to reason with Abner Schmidt, but Abner is a de-fecting Mennonite, but nowhere does Solomon, or any other character, try to mediate between the Mennonite community and those in favor of the war. They meet the enemy when he comes to them; they do not go in love to the enemy. And nowhere do we have a serious attempt to medi-ate between the warring parties, except the humorous suggestion that if Kaiser Bill and President Wilson would get together over a drink of Alpenkraeuter the war might be ended. Even Isaac Stolfus’ forgive-ness of Pastor Rydell comes only after Rydell apologizes.

We need, moreover, to see the pacifist and his community under-take to build alternative communi-ties where the fabric of society would not encourage but discourage war. In short, we need a more radi-cal pacifism in which the hero or a community refuse to pay taxes on their income, or, more important, who recognize that the heart of the problem lies deeper, who responsibly question the source of the money to which they refuse to pay income. It

is staggering to realize, what we often forget, because we have be-come so accustomed to it, how near-ly every job, profession, status is indirectly and directly involved in making war, not only in wartime but in peacetime. This problem is raised in *Mennonite Soldier* and *The Blowing and the Bending*, but it is too quickly dismissed.

The artist, perhaps more than anyone else, can help us remember how deeply all of us are indebted to a fabric of society which fosters the spirit of greed and competition and war and in making clear that much of the framework of that so-ciety, including its apparent ad-vantages, is part of war and would be undermined by a thorough-going pacifism.

#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Katherine Anne Porter, *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* (New York: New American Library, 1967), p. 115.

<sup>2</sup>Other novels could have been chosen: Merle Good’s *Happy as the Grass Was Green* which deals with the reactions of a Mennonite community to the Vietnam War; Jan deHartog which deals with the Quakers and their response to Indian uprisings, at least in part; Eunice Shellenberger, *Wings of Decision* which tells the story of a young man’s choice to be a conscientious objector would have been natural choices since each present a community as well as individuals involved in a response to war. If accounts of communities and individuals had been included the many stories of Mennonites in the Russian Revolution and John Ruth’s *’Twas Seeding Time* would have had a place in this study.

<sup>3</sup>Peter Epp, *Erloesung* (Bluffton, Ohio: Libertas Verlag, 1930), p. 23. Unfortunately the book has not been translated nor is it in print. The translations are mine. Sub-sequent page references will be included in the text.

<sup>4</sup>One of the best accounts of what oc-curred during the revolution is now readily available in Al Reimer’s excellent transla-tion of Dietrich Neufeld’s *A Russian Dance of Death* (Winnipeg: Hyperion Press, 1977).

<sup>5</sup>Rudy Wiebe, *Peace Shall Destroy Many* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1962). I have previously commented on this novel in “A Study of the Mennonite Character in American Fiction,” *Mennonite Life*, XXII (July, 1967), 123-30; “Universal Values in Rudy Wiebe’s *Peace Shall Destroy Many*,” *Mennonite Life*, XX (October, 1967), 172-176; and “Fiction and Mennonite Life,” *Midcontinent American Studies Journal*, X (Spring, 1969), 16-24.

<sup>6</sup>Kenneth Reed, *Mennonite Soldier* (Scott-dale, PA: Herald Press, 1974).

<sup>7</sup>James Juhnke and Harold Moyer, *The Blowing and the Bending*. The play has never been published. It was first performed at Bethel College on October 10, 1975.

<sup>8</sup>Warren Kliever’s *The Berserkers* has never been published. My quotes are from the script loaned to me by the author.

<sup>9</sup>Leigh Brackett, *The Long Tomorrow* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Com-pany, 1955). The book has twice been pub-lished in paperback, the last time by Ballantine Books in New York in 1974. It is still in print. Previously I have discussed the book in “Mennonite Culture in a Science Fiction Novel,” *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, XLIX (January, 1975), 53-56.

# The Flowers in the Meadow: The Paper Cuttings of Elizabeth Johns Stahley (1845-1930)

by Nancy-Lou Patterson

*Nancy-Lou Patterson is an Associate Professor of Fine Arts at the University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario. She has recently prepared a study of Waterloo Region Swiss-German and Dutch-German Mennonite traditional arts for the National Museum of Man, Ottawa.*

She holds a many-leafed plant in her hands: not a conventional "rose" or "tulip" but a complexly articulated member of the *Compositae* family with every leaf elaborately contoured into dozens of thrusting points. Her hands are articulated too: deeply veined, well muscled, the tendons standing out as her fingers search and control the form. She looks intently at the plant, gazing into the intricacies of its leafy pattern while a gentle smile plays on her lips. These are the hands, and this is the rapt contemplation, of an artist.

Elizabeth Johns Stahley turned her understanding of the structure of plants and flowers into a series of elegant, compelling paper cuttings which have been preserved by members of her family and their descendants, and which have recently inspired her great-niece, Phyllis Kramer, to turn her own hand to the art of paper cuttings. Paper-cut forms tend to be anonymous, floating out from between the pages of Bibles and old books, or namelessly framed and fading on walls or in



attics, where nobody can identify them. The works of Elizabeth Johns Stahley afford a rare insight into the work of a single, identifiable practitioner of the art.

She was born December 3, 1845, near Johnstown, Pennsylvania, and moved with her parents to La

Grange County, Indiana in the spring of 1853. On December 20, 1868, she married John C. Stahley. These are the major dates of her girlhood: a move at the age of seven-going-on-eight to a new community, and a marriage at the age of twenty-three. The rest of her life may be defined by the telling statement: "She was the mother of 9 children (5 sons, 4 daughters) 6 of which grew to adulthood." This poignant career—nine seasons of pregnancy and rising hopes, three little stories of heartbreak—has been documented in the following chart:

Aunt Lizzie's Children	
Daniel J.	b. 1869-d?
Christian J.	1871- ?
*Samuel J.	1874-1876
John J.	1876- ?
Polly	1878-1932
Fannie	1881-1903
*Elizabeth	1884-1890
*Levi J.	1887-1889
Katherine	1889-1974

This chart was furnished by Ira J. Miller (b. 1891), who added the laconic comment: "Those marked \* all died before my time so I never knew them nor do I remember them mentioned only very casually." He wrote the record of Elizabeth Stahley's life at the request of his daughter, Doris Miller Kramer. Sincere thanks are due to him as well as to Doris Kramer and her daughter, Phyllis Kramer, for making these materials available for study.

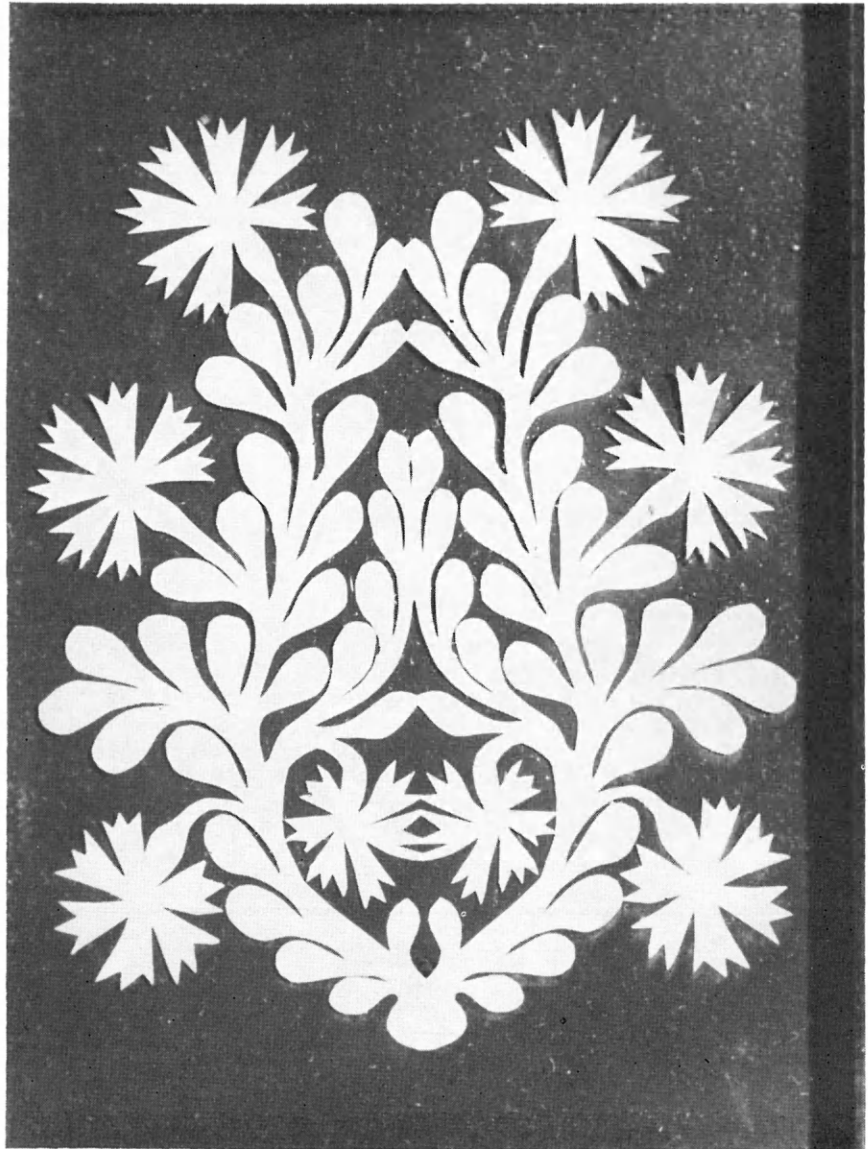


The kind of life Elizabeth Stahley led is summarized by Ira Miller as follows:

She was a farm home maker and lived on the same farm all her life with the exception of her last days. Her schooling probably didn't go much beyond the 6th grade. (This is just a guess.) To my knowledge the cutouts she made for pass time in her later years. She made well over a hundred, no two alike. She had one son who cut out animals free hand.

Ira Miller, who wrote out this account in 1976, adds one last note: "She was a member of the Old Order Amish Church." This was her milieu, one already revealed in her white cap and dark dress. She lived a long life—eighty-five years—and in the period beyond her child-bearing years (she was forty-four when her last child, Katherine, was born) she turned her hand to a remarkable creativity of paper forms.

These forms are not large: the biggest are not more than 10x25cm., and the smallest are considerably smaller than that. Most of them were cut with the paper—always white—folded in half vertically. Her flowers include both round and pointed petals of composite form, and in like manner, her leaves are either slender and pointed or short and rounded. She favoured a sinuous line for her stems, and provided a groundline or vessel for the base in most cases. Tucked among her leafed and floral forms one sometimes spies out miniature birds—paired, of course, as a result of her technique. They are much out of scale for a floral bouquet, and their size and presence show us that these are really Paradise trees, *Lebensbaums*, Trees of Life out of the same primaeval root from which the Bible—and her religion—sprang. One especially elegant example has a hen and rooster paired in attendance, each gender revealed by its familiar silhouette. These charming fowls are often seen on show towels flanking their characteristic flowering trees, and are in fact a motif of considerable antiquity. The Gospels of Godescalc, a manuscript from the time of Charlemagne, illuminated c. 781-183 (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris)

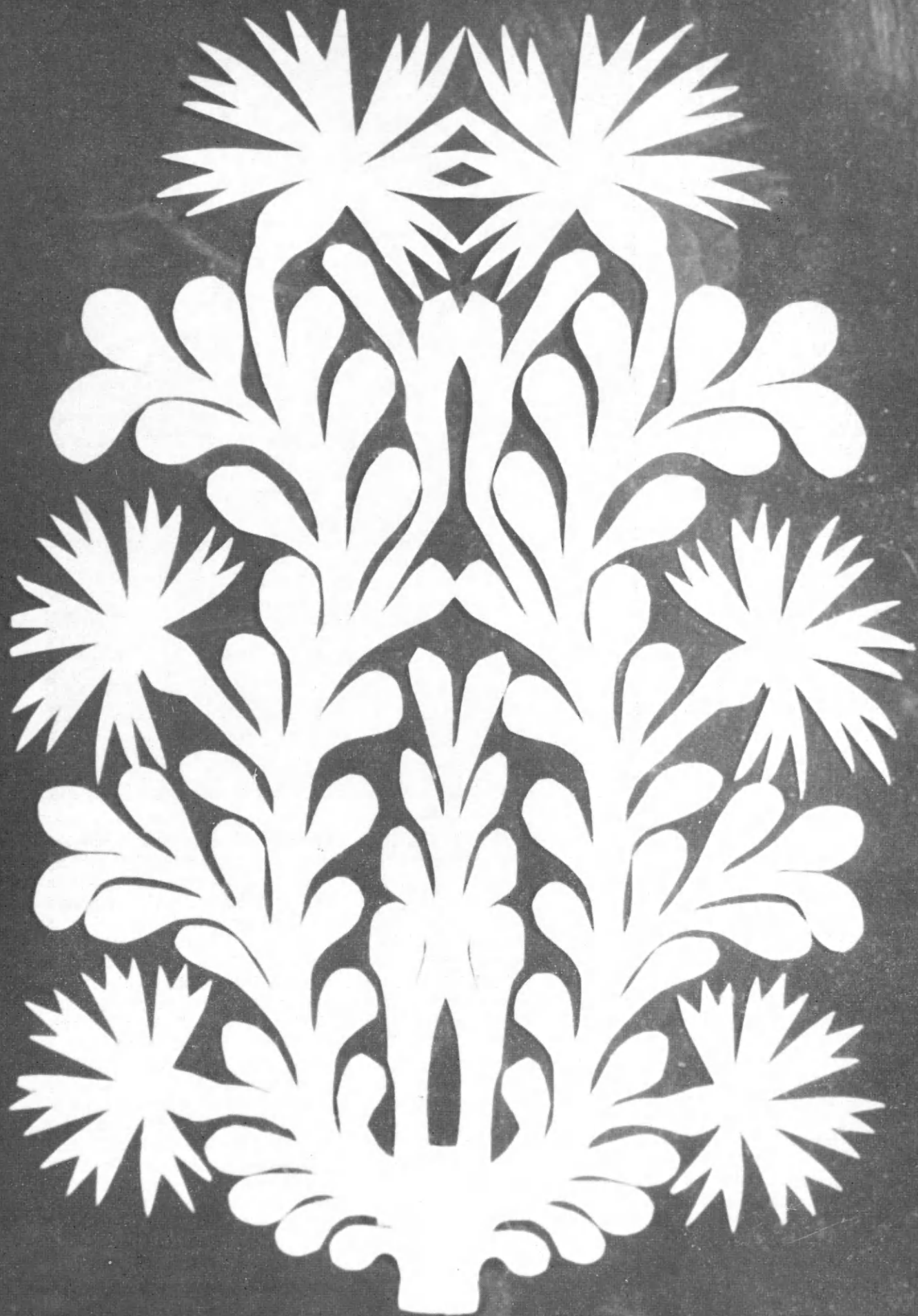


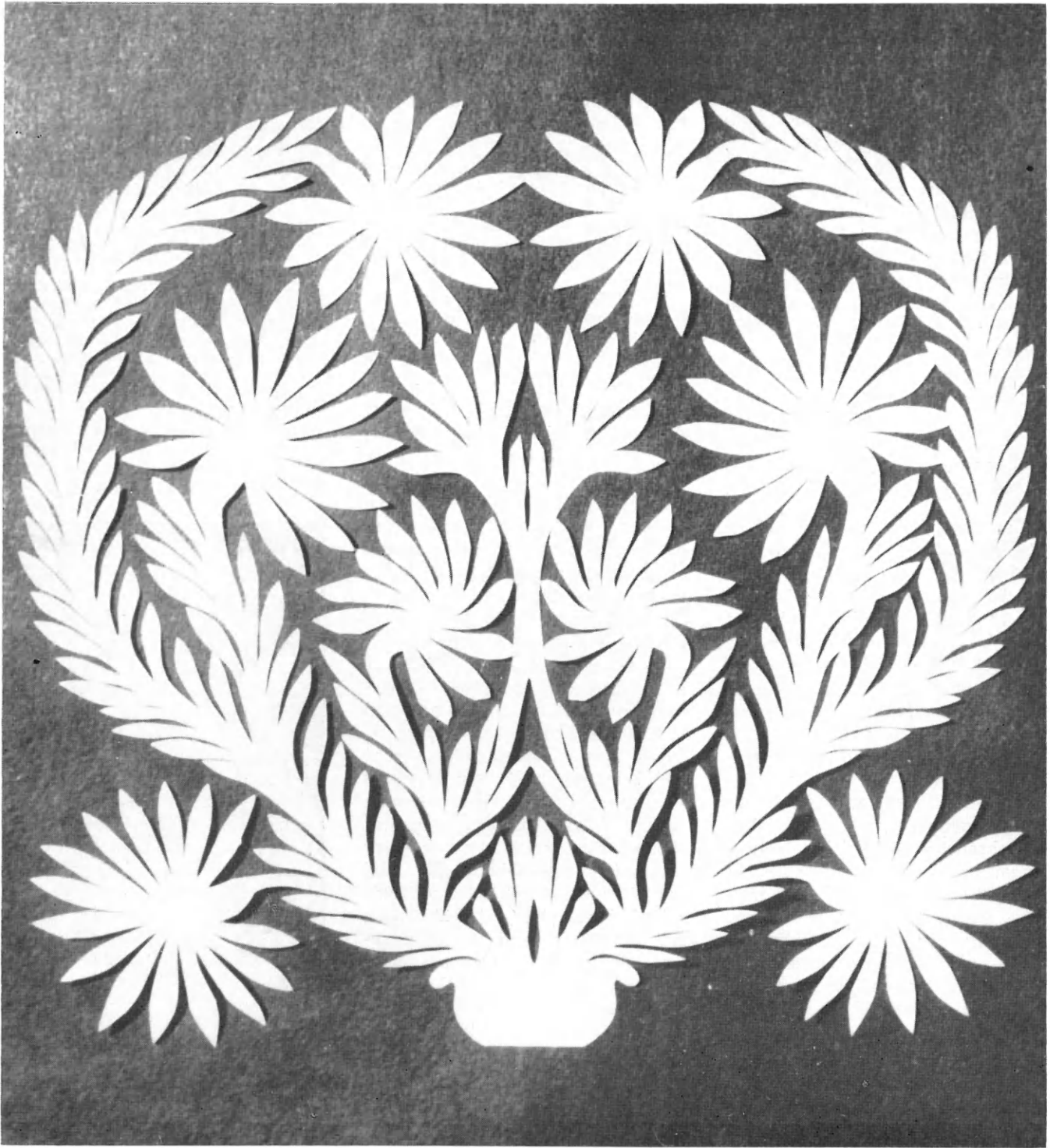
shows the Fountain of Life surrounded by attendant birds and beasts including two roosters, with branching boughs bearing rounded leaves. Of course there is no direct relationship: Elizabeth Stahley worked quite without knowledge of art history. But she must have read her Bible thoroughly, and she may have longed to drink from that well, and rest beneath those boughs. Her farmyard provided fertile ground, it seems, for the Trees of Paradise.

She was very good with her scissors, teasing out the intricate contours of these flowers, birds, and leaves. She created an elegant surface with her undulating branches, her control of the effects of axial symmetry, and her massing of white patterns on the dark ground. View-

ers who want to understand her method can do so best by covering one half of the compositions with a hand: what remains visible is what she actually cut. The principle is known in design as the foliated scroll. Its origins are remotely fixed in antiquity, but she acquired them via the folk art tradition of Baroque Europe, into which they had survived from classical times.

Paper cutting is a minor form which includes folded forms, paper weaving, and paper-cut images conceived as silhouettes. It is the latter form that we see here. Both men and women have practised the art, which has a long history in European folk culture. Claudia Hopf describes the *Klosterarbeit* (cloister art) of paper cutting in Baroque





Germany, which included Holy Day mementoes, and the use of paper cuttings to imitate needlepoint and lace-work in the seventeenth century, as well as the cutting of *Andachtsbild* (prayer pictures) in eighteenth century Germany. Other uses in German culture were New Year's greetings, bride-gifts, and confirmation certificates. Nine-

teenth century Switzerland saw the development of a number of paper-cutters whose names have been preserved. These arts, characteristic of Switzerland and Germany alike, came to North America with the people who became known as the "Pennsylvania Germans" (Hopf 1971:2-7).

Elizabeth Johns Stahley's art

throws an interesting light upon a long-standing controversy: were the natural forms—flowers, birds, and animals—of these folk arts used as a direct response to the environment, or as symbols drawn from archetypal and religious sources? J. J. Stoudt defends the latter point of view (the evidence for which has already been identi-

fied and discussed above): "These designs really were not drawn to show us how nature looked; rather they were imaginative recreations of motifs which, while bearing some relationship to nature, really go beyond it" (Stoudt 1964:306). He explains, "The flowers in the meadow, therefore, were bridges to the spiritual world" (Stoudt 1964:307). In contrast to this is the opinion of Donald L. Shelley who, while admitting the importance of ancient elements, writes, "the artist treated these designs based upon everyday flowers in a completely original manner and went far beyond the patterns used by his European predecessor. Flowers and birds were, after all, constant reminders of the beauty which the Folk Artist found all around him" (Shelley 1961:83).

In her photograph, Elizabeth Stahley contemplates the leaves of a plant of the *Compositae* family. Dr. John C. Semple of the Department of Biology, University of Waterloo, to whom the writer is indebted for assistance, suggests that it may be a member of the genus *Artemesia*. Some of the flower forms she used in her paper cuttings resemble a common Indiana wildflower, the Golden Aster (*Heterotheca camporum*), a flower with numerous rays, on the end of long branches, all arising from a single base. Others resemble the genus *Centaurea* (Bachelor Buttons) which have a composite head including five or more individual florets (petals with a sharply serrated end) expanding from the rounded involucre. The leaves, both rounded and pointed, are known as "simple leaves." All of these elements are found in the physical reality of the artist though she has mixed and re-combined them with a fine disregard of nature. One single floral head shows especially sharp observation: the cutting includes both the ray florets (tiny central points) and surrounding disk florets (larger rounded petals) growing from the involucre. The *Compositae* family includes ragweed, wormwood, sunflower, and dandelion, as well as bachelor button, chicory, and golden aster; almost a survey of the "everyday flowers" in Elizabeth

Stahley's environment. On the other hand these were also for her the very "grass of the field" of which Jesus spoke in the Sermon on the Mount (*Matt.* 8:28-30) and which are quoted by Stoudt in defense of his argument:

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O men of little faith? (RSV)

The differing ways of using forms from the natural world—as subjects for observation, and as images for spiritual contemplation, reflect a double trend in European history which for modern culture has become a deep split into science on the one hand and religion on the other. Agnes Arber in her study of the development of the herbal from 1470 to 1670, shows this trend. An early herbal printed in 1481 shows a woodcut of "Artemesia Wormwood" with a central stem and conventionalized leaves and flowers, based upon simple drawings that had been re-copied over centuries (Arber 1970:16). Early German herbals of the fifteenth century showed, along with more ordinary plants, the "tree-of-knowledge" and the "tree-of-life" as part of their botanical examples (Arber 1970:32). But toward the end of the seventeenth century botany became "more scientific" (Arber 1970:268), which meant the loss not only of spiritual motifs, but also of the medicinal or curative elements which had made the herbals popular in the first place, and the form gradually declined.

In the exquisite paper cuttings of Elizabeth Johns Stahley made early in the twentieth century, both elements are present. Her flowers are based upon accurate observations of the "everyday flowers" of the natural world, just as Shelley says. And she has used the images of "the flowers in the meadow" in the manner described by Stoudt, as "bridges to the spiritual world," changing them by the addition of tiny birds,

from common field flowers into stately *Lebensbaums*. Both realities—the Indiana countryside, and the pastures of Paradise—were immediately present to her, and through her art she has left us a glimpse of her deeply spiritual vision.

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All photographs are by John Cox.



# Radical Reformation and Mennonite Bibliography 1977-1978

by James C. Juhnke, Assisted by Sharon Klingelsmith and Lawrence Klippenstein

The *Mennonite Life* bibliography has been expanded this year to include significant articles, in addition to the regularly listed new books, dissertations and theses, which have been published or written since the most recent bibliography.

This bibliography includes a two-year period, the calendar years of 1977 and 1978. A few previously unlisted items from earlier years have also been included. The most recent *Mennonite Life* bibliography appeared in the March, 1977 issue, pp. 26-30.

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*The Writings of Pilgram Marpeck.*  
Translated and edited by William Klassen and Walter Klaassen.  
Kitchener and Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1978. 566 pp.

With the publication of this book, which appears as number two in the *Classics of the Radical Reformation* series, published by Herald Press under the direction of the Institute of Mennonite Studies, one can almost say that the torch of 16th century Anabaptist scholarship in America has passed from United States into Canadian hands. The translator-editors who have worked at this task for the past ten years are both Canadians. They brought linguistic skill, literary ability, and intense devotion to the completion of a monumental task.

The major writings as well as the letters of Pilgram Marpeck, South German Anabaptist leader and civil engineer, have long been known to the world of scholarship. (The Confession of Faith, 1532; *Vermanung*, 1542; *Testamentserleutterung*) Although these works approach in volume the writings of Menno Simons, they have been available only to those who could read German. Those who were not so fortunate remained dependent upon a few monographs published in the *Mennonite Quarterly Review* in English, or upon William Klassen's doctoral dissertation on Marpeck, published by Eerdmans under the title *Covenant and Community*. Now not only are Marpeck's major writings available in an English translation, but for the first time also nineteen of his extant letters. These were earlier accessible only to those who could read the German script. It is a tribute to the linguistic skill of the translators that they worked from the script of these letters rather than from copies that had been transposed into typewritten form.

The value of these letters, as Klassen and Klaassen indicate, is not only that they give us an insight into Marpeck's love for the church and his passion for unity within the Anabaptist household of faith. The letters reveal also the existence of a group of Anabaptist churches, "scattered from Alsace to Moravia—which are distinct from the Swiss Brethren, the Hutterites, and the Mennonites of the Netherlands and North Germany. This group was characterized by a profounder commitment to the freedom of the gospel than that found among other groups, whose legalistic tendencies and readiness to use the ban caused much division and acrimony." (pp. 303-4)

The book begins with a brief account of Marpeck's early life as a mining magistrate in the Austrian Tirol and his later encounter with the Strasbourg Reformers Wolfgang Capito and Martin Bucer, as well as the Spiritualists, Hans Bunderlin and Caspar Schwenckfeld, after he became an Anabaptist and entered that city's employ as a civil engineer. Much of this material has been covered in previous accounts but Klassen and Klaassen provide significant new sidelights. We learn, for example, that the office of mining magistrate in Europe goes back to the 13th century and that in 1477 there were only five mining directors on the whole continent. Marpeck's position as mining engineer appears as one of the most demanding and responsible ones in all of the Austrian Tirol. The authors state that "he was commissioned to administer the laws regulating mining in a given region. Accordingly he was empowered to lease new mining strips or pits and to settle legal controversies related to mining. In addition he was charged with the responsibility of arbitrating legal controversies concerning the per-

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sonal affairs of the people working in the mining and smelting locations, the only exception being criminal offenses. . . . Not only did Marpeck supervise adherence to the mining code; he was also charged with the responsibility of collecting the revenues pertaining to the mining royalty which went into the royal treasury and of keeping accurate records." (p. 16)

The authors further reveal that Marpeck went through a period of vacillation with regard to the request of Ferdinand I that he should assist the authorities in ferreting out Anabaptists among the miners. At first he declined, then accepted the request, but at last voluntarily relinquished his position because he could no longer comply with this request. (p. 20) The origins of Marpeck's conversion to the Anabaptist movement remain shrouded in mystery but whatever they were, he never wavered after having made his commitment. The authors state that "from the earliest days of his public work he was committed to the separation of church and state. The state could expect him to carry out his work as a mining engineer diligently and efficiently. The state, however, could not dictate in matters of faith and when it attempted to do so Marpeck refused to comply with the wishes of the state." (p. 23) This became a principle throughout all of Marpeck's Anabaptist life, whether in Catholic or Protestant territory. (pp. 23, 33)

Klassen and Klaassen have also shown that Marpeck did not curtail his Anabaptist activities in return for more lenient treatment from the authorities after his arrival in Augsburg, as some scholars had earlier suggested. (p. 40) They correctly assess Marpeck's sojourn in Strasbourg from 1528-1532 as "being exceedingly important for Marpeck. All the major positions with which he would debate throughout his years as a leader in the Anabaptist movement (1528-1556) were represented in Strasbourg, and Marpeck's own position was increasingly more fully developed in those years." (p. 35)

The introduction is enhanced with photos from the Anabaptist Herit-

age Collection by Jan Gleysteen which portray the various localities where Marpeck labored as they appear today. A map, attached to the inside of the back cover shows "the regions where he lived and ministered." Contemporary borders have been added for easier identification. The book is well supplied with indices. These include an index of subjects and titles, one of persons and places and a final index of biblical references.

Most helpful to the reader who may be dipping into Marpeck's writings for the first time are the introductions which precede the translation of every work as well as all of the letters. In these the translator-editors have placed every major writing and each letter within the proper historical context of Marpeck's life as an Anabaptist leader. The introductions are not intended as summaries but they do provide important clues to the main theological thrusts of these works and letters. All footnotes to the various chapters and letters are found at the back of the book. A far more convenient arrangement, in my opinion, would have been the bottom of every page, but Klassen and Klaassen are not to blame for this format. It was the one chosen by the editors and publishers on the assumption that the non-scholarly reader would only be bored with this technical apparatus on every page, while the scholar will not mind turning to the back of the book.

Klassen and Klaassen have translated the entire *Admonition (Vermanung)* of 1542 as Marpeck's work, even though they acknowledge the fact that large sections of it were taken from *Bekennnisse van beyden Sacramenten of 1533*, which was largely the work of Bernhard Rothmann, theologian at Muenster. By a diligent comparison of both works in the best available manuscripts, however, the translators have been able to identify the distinct contribution of Marpeck or his circle to the 1542 edition of the *Vermanung*. For the convenience of the reader these passages have been placed in italics in the translation.

These passages are so numerous and extensive that the translators

are fully justified in their inclusion of the *Vermanung*, the longest Anabaptist document on baptism, in their translation of the writings of Marpeck. What puzzles me, however, is that the *Verantwortung* is not included in the list of the translated works. Was it found so repetitious of the main arguments in the *Vermanung* that a decision was made not to include it, or has further research revealed that the *Verantwortung* was not the work of Marpeck or his circle? Or is the translation of the *Verantwortung* contemplated as the second volume of Marpeck's writings? Whatever the answer to these questions, it would have been appropriate to state somewhere in the introduction why this work was not included in the present volume.

A full digest of Marpeck's theology is beyond the scope of this review. Those who will have the discipline to work through the 566 pages of the book will learn of the scriptural basis on which Marpeck repudiated the practice of infant baptism for the removal of original sin, the basis on which he argued with the Magisterial Reformers that circumcision in the Old Testament did not provide a justification for the practice of infant baptism in the new, and the basis on which he argued against the Spiritualists, that though the sacraments did not work in an *ex opere operato* manner, there was no valid Scriptural basis for their discontinuation, since Christ and the apostles had commanded them and they were not invalidated by the deaths of the apostles. The disciplined reader will also learn of Marpeck's passion for a faith that was embraced without a trace of coercion, of his preoccupation with the humanity of Christ, and the sharp distinction between the Old and New Testaments which grew out of this preoccupation. The Old Testament is and remains a testament of promise only, while the New Testament is one of fulfillment. In addition the reader will learn of Marpeck's passion for the unity of the church and for a discipline that does not violate the freedom of the gospel, nor usurp the work of the Holy Spirit by concentrating on leaves (appearances which may be

deceiving) rather than concentrating on fruit (Christian character) which requires time and patience.

The translators state at the end of their introduction that Marpeck's life spans the first few years of the Anabaptist movement and the second generation of that movement as well. His contacts were with the Reformed parties and all stripes of Anabaptists as well as the Evangelical Spiritualist, Casper Schwenckfeld. "He was engaged in the major theological struggles of the Anabaptists for an identity which could be based upon the Bible and have a concrete meaning for the world in which they lived." (p. 41) To Marpeck and his circle must go much of the credit for giving to Anabaptism an identity that in the end was neither Catholic nor Protestant. "His own life, lived intensely at the points which the secular world and the life of faith intersected, and the writings which emerged from that life, are a legacy to Anabaptism and to the whole free church movement today."

Perhaps the best safeguard for contemporary Mennonites against being blown about by "every wind of doctrine" which blows in our own time, is to become deeply rooted in the Anabaptist tradition out of which the Mennonite church, in all its branches, has emerged. The publication of this book is a worthy contribution toward that goal and the whole Christian church owes a debt of gratitude to the two men who have made its publication possible.

*Alvin Beachy*

C. H. Mike Yarrow. *Quaker Experiences in International Conciliation*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978.

The Quakers are noted for their long interest and activity on behalf of peace and justice. Some of their efforts at conciliation are little known because of the very nature of quiet diplomacy. They tend to work behind the scenes and off-the-record. The work has not often been carefully described and analysed. Mike Yarrow has taken three particular cases and tried to detail the process carefully and assess the out-

come in each case. He seeks to learn what might contribute to the knowledge of the conciliation process in general.

The accounts themselves are not reports of spectacular success. Yarrow may indeed play down the contributions made. He certainly tried to be candid and honest about mistakes made and to determine whether the approaches used would be applicable in every international controversy.

The three case histories dealt with are: "The struggle over East and West Germany during the post World War II period, particularly during the sixties when the Berlin Wall was a major symbol of the hostility around the issue of a divided Germany; The India-Pakistan War of 1965—a much more contained event in terms of the time period involved; and the Nigerian Civil War of 1967-70.

Yarrow begins with an essay on the background of Quaker conciliation. The historical survey is important for persons unfamiliar with some of the distinctive Quaker beliefs, practices, and vocabulary. The long experience of Quakers contribute a certain style, perspective, and attitudinal approach to problems. They make certain Quakers well prepared for conciliation efforts. Mike Yarrow points out as well some organizational philosophy which at times seemed to hinder the conciliation process.

In the closing chapter in which Yarrow reflects on the total task of conciliation, he raises the questions about the distinction between conciliation and confrontation. He tends to conclude that conciliation is only possible where the parties have some balance of power. Where the conflict takes place between a powerful oppressor and a relatively powerless victim, he thinks that the confrontation techniques are more applicable than conciliation.

One of the major participants in two of the cases, Adam Curle, considers confrontation as a subset of the conciliation process when an imbalance of power exists. Yarrow does not seem to be fully aware of Curle's systematic analysis of the various stages of peacemaking

though he uses some of the terminology and makes some distinctions which Curle defines in his book *Making Peace*.

The Quakers might well benefit from awareness of the work which James Laue and others have done at the Community Crisis Intervention Center (formerly at Washington University and now at the University of Missouri, St. Louis campus). Various roles of intervention in conflict are identified and strategies for intervention are proposed along with indication of when and how various roles and strategies can best operate in the peacemaking process.

It is increasingly evident that some major synthesis is need for the various efforts being made to understand the nature of conflicts and the peacemaking processes. Major work done by persons such as Adam Curle, James Laue, Gene Sharp, Johan Galtung, John Adams, and others needs to be integrated into a systematic and coherent whole.

Anatol Rapoport in a foreword to Yarrow's book makes a significant contribution in setting the context for Yarrow's research. He gives an overview of the field of peace science research. He notes the function of value commitments in the research endeavor and calls for greater interaction between researchers and activists. He uses the term "action research" to describe the task which Yarrow has undertaken in using the case history approach.

Yarrow's book is a provocative one on several accounts: in the methodology of case history writing as "action research"; in the attempt to discern when "conciliation" is the proper approach to a conflict and when "confrontation" is the appropriate means; in sensitivity to the place of convictions combined with serious attempts to translate the ideals into practical program; in the probing to find where and why conciliation efforts in major, difficult international conflicts succeed or fail; and probably others will find more in the wealth of material and suggestions given.

Mennonites who are familiar with the work of the Mennonite Central Committee on both sides in the

## Book Reviews

Nigerian Civil War and its cooperation with the American Friends Service Committee in the relief effort will probably find the case study of the Nigerian Civil War of particular interest. The Mennonite Central Committee work is briefly noted but not described in any detail.

William Kenney

Rimland, Ingrid, *The Wanderers*. St. Louis: Concordia, 1977.

*The Wanderers* is the story of three generations of Russian Mennonites who experienced the Civil War of 1917-20, the famine of 1921-22, the liquidation of kulaks and the collectivization between 1928-33, the purges and exiles of 1936-40, the brief hiatus of the German occupation of the Ukraine between 1941-43, the evacuation of the German-speaking Russian population with the retreating German army in 1943, and finally immigration to Paraguay in 1947. It is too much for one novel to cover, but miraculously it succeeds.

The novel is organized into three parts, each one bearing the name of the woman whose story dominates that period of time. Katya's story takes place between 1914 and 1941. As a young girl, Katya experiences the peaceful life in a Russian Mennonite village. But before long her world crumbles as she is raped and her father is murdered by the anarchist Nestor Razin (Machno) whose mobs terrorized the Russian villages during the Civil War. Her husband is exiled during the purges of the 1930's, and she endures a famine and a typhus epidemic. She gives birth to nine children, six of whom die of starvation.

Of the surviving children, Sara, who was the result of the rape, is the subject of Book II. In this section, which takes place between 1941-45, Katya, her daughter Sara, and her granddaughter Karin, escape by minutes deportation eastward beyond the Ural Mountains that was the fate of many Mennonites at the beginning of World War II, but ultimately flee with the retreating German Army in the great trek 1,000 miles across Russia in winter to a defeated Germany.

That they survive at all is due to Sara's beauty and her willingness to trade her honor for the salvation of her family.

The final section deals with life in Paraguay, where the family had immigrated in 1946. It is the story of Karin, granddaughter of Katya and daughter of Sara. Her growing rebellion against the Mennonite way of life in the Paraguayan Chaco ultimately leads her to reject it and immigrate to Canada.

In its scope and its ability to capture in a few lines the essence of the many aspects of the Mennonite experience in Russia during this turbulent period, *The Wanderers* is quite an achievement. It is not, however, without flaws. In trying to "tell the whole thing" with a minimum of characters, Rimland sometimes makes her characters carry too much freight. The most notable example of this is Jasch Kovalsky, the Russian peasant who appears in each section, changing chameleon-like to fit time and place. When he ends up, in the last book, as the rigid, Mennonite elder in the Paraguayan Chaco, it is too much to be believed.

If one is looking for a story of the triumph of the faithful Mennonites or the endurance of their theology and faith through their many trials during this period, the book will be disappointing. The Mennonite theology and the theme of pacifism is given a very ambiguous treatment. Katya's father, Johann Klassen is sure of what he believes and is sorely disappointed when his sons, under threat of losing their way of life threaten to turn their backs on their beliefs. Katya's husband, Gerhard Wall, is equally staunch in his Anabaptist faith and unflinching in his pacifism. But his daughter, Sara, becomes an avowed Marxist, and his youngest son, David, becomes a super-patriotic German soldier. Even Katya idolizes the young German soldiers who rescue them from the Soviet terror. Finally, the Mennonite way of life in the Paraguayan Chaco is presented as rigid and stifling. It is something that needs to be rejected by the creative and intelligent Karin.

Almost as incredible as the novel itself, is the story of how it came to be written. Ingrid Rimland was only nine years old when she experienced the Great Trek across Russia and twelve when the family immigrated to Paraguay. (Katya is a fictional portrait of her grandmother, and Sara of her mother.) Until she immigrated to Canada and to the U.S. at age 30, Ms. Rimland had no English and only a third-grade level of education in German. So impoverished was her German that she says that in learning English she literally acquired language. (It is not difficult to see in the frustration of the intellectually starved Karin, a veiled portrait of the author.)

In addition, Rimland's knowledge of the events that had happened to her and to her mother and grandmother were only fragments either experienced as a child or told to her by others. It was not until she was allowed to do research in the Mennonite Historical Library on the campus of Bethel College, that the pieces came together and she began to realize what she had experienced and that her experiences were part of a larger pattern. She wrote the novel, then, not merely as the story of her family, but as the fictional representation of the stories of many others who have had almost identical experiences.

Above all, *The Wanderers* is the story of a people—a people who survived whether by sheer endurance (Katya), by compromise and accommodation (Sara), or by rejecting the heritage (Karin). It is in this way that the book should be read—as a fictional portrait of a people. Fast moving, colorful, and dramatic, *The Wanderers* is a rich and moving experience.

Elizabeth Yoder

*De Geest in het geding*. Ed. by I. B. Horst, A. F. de Jong, D. Visser. Alphen aan den Rijn: H. D. Tjeenk Willink, 1978.

Dr. J. A. Oosterbaan held positions both as Professor of Philosophy of Religion and Ethics at the University of Amsterdam and as Professor of Christian Doctrine and Ethics at the Mennonite Seminary

in Amsterdam. The book is a collection of twenty articles and essays prepared by his colleagues, students, and friends on his retirement as a tribute to his service.

Oosterbaan's doctoral dissertation was on *Hegels Pheomenologie des Geistes in de theologische Kenleer* (Hegel's Phomenology of the Spirit in Theological Doctrine.) He had a longstanding interest in the doctrine of the Spirit and that led to the central theme of the book, *The Debate about the Spirit*. He has contended for the equality of the Word and the Spirit, not willing to accept any subordination of the Spirit to the Word. From his doctrine of the Spirit flow his ecclesiology, polity, and his views of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

About half of the contributions treat topics in a combination of historical theology and church history. Four are in philosophy, most typically reflecting Oosterbaan's interest in Hegel, Kierkegaard, and Barth as the persons whom he studied and drew from most fully. Three deal with biblical and exegetical studies. One or two are hard to categorize, and probably belong in missiology and ecumenics which were also strong interests of Oosterbaan.

Articles by Cornelius J. Dyck on "Hermeneutics and Discipleship," by Irvin B. Horst on "Immanent Grace in Seminary and Church Life," by Walter Klaassen on "Church Discipline and the Spirit in Pilgram Marpeck," and by John H. Yoder on "'Spirit' and the Varieties of Reformation Radicalism" are all in English.

Many of the articles are provocative and would be valuable to have in English so they could be available to a wider reading audience. As usual, the quality varies and a couple are quite technical so that they would have little interest beyond a few specialists or outside the Netherlands.

Missing from the book are some contributions which might well have been added. One might be an article or essay by Oosterbaan which would typify his own position about the Spirit. It might have been a reprint or an abstract of some of

his earlier writing on the topic. Another might have been a bibliographic listing of his writings, perhaps with some annotation.

It may well be that in his retirement Oosterbaan may want to pick up some of the themes in the book of tributes and either develop them further or respond in his own way to them. It would be surprising, at least, if his retirement from the classroom meant the end of his productive contribution to the church, the university, and larger theological discourse.

William Keeney

Adolf Ingram Frantz. *Water From the Well; The Recollections of a Former Plowboy*. Philadelphia and Ardmore, Penn.: Dorrance & Co. 1978.

Adolf I. Frantz, for thirty years professor of German languages at Bucknell University, was born in 1894 to Mennonite Brethren parents near Hillsboro, Kansas. In this sprightly written memoir of a long life, he describes his family origins, Kansas upbringing, and productive career as student, pastor, and teacher. The problem for both casual and serious readers is that the book is brimful of details, so full, occasionally, that it overflows its wellspring. At least a fourth of the 411-page book is devoted to blow accounts of European and American travels, with background and literary history added. Another problem is a dizzying abundance of poems, aphorisms, and extraneous quotations. Frantz sprinkles his text with one borrowed passage after another, from the ancient Greeks to the modern Romantics.

The most interesting parts of the book concern his transition from Mennonite farm boy to student and professor. One of the few Mennonites of his day to seek higher education, Frantz was imbued with an immigrant son's desire for intellectual and social betterment. In addition to attending Yale Divinity School, where, surprisingly, there were five other Mennonites in attendance between 1916 and 1920, his training included literature studies at Tabor, Berkeley, Stanford, and Munich. He had an insatiab-

lust for the learning and travel that took him out of Hillsboro, and yet he returned often enough to teach briefly at Tabor, to marry Helen Rogalsky of nearby McPherson (where he also taught at that college), and to maintain his Mennonite Brethren roots.

The fact that Frantz was Mennonite, ethnic, and German in background caused him few adjustment problems. World War I delayed his choice of German as a field of study, but otherwise created slight personal anguish. Living in Munich in 1931, he was privileged to see early Naziism firsthand, an experience which soured any possible sympathy for Hitler. In a vintage scene from World War II, Frantz describes going to the garden of his Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, home on the day of Pearl Harbor, lighting the torch to a former student's stray poster of the *Fuehrer*, and thus obliterating the image of a man whose violent rantings he had heard ten years earlier.

The middle decades of Frantz' life were spent outside Mennonite circles. After receiving his doctorate from Yale in 1931, he joined Bucknell, then Arizona State. His ties remained close, however, and much of the book is devoted to Kansas locales and to Mennonite friends and relatives. In portraying his eighty-plus years, Frantz gently evokes the untroubled optimism of the formative period in which he grew up. The Spanish-American War gets a good word; the demonstrators of the 1960s a bad one. A turn-of-the-century July 4th celebration in Hillsboro, with Governor Edward Hoch as speaker, is described as Norman Rockwell would have painted it. All in all, the book's content and subtitle, "The Recollections of a Former Plowboy," put it in the genre of American success stories. The emphasis is on the positive: from the poor son of immigrants to the satisfying life of teacher, scholar, husband, and churchman.

Frantz is currently retired in Shafter, California. He holds joint membership in Mennonite Brethren and Baptist churches.

Allan Teichroew

