MENNONITE LIFE

DECEMBER 1981

In this Issue

This issue honors John F. Schmidt, who recently retired after serving as the archivist of the Mennonite Library and Archives since 1947. He shares a portion of his wealth of information about Mennonite genealogy and ship lists. A poem by Anne-Ruth Ediger Baehr describes her impressions of the Mennonite Library and Archives.

Gustav Enss, teacher at Bethel, Hesston, and Goshen Colleges, often found himself in the midst of controversies. Although Enss was not a major Mennonite leader, his career illustrates the variety of forces which buffeted Mennonite scholars earlier this century. James C. Juhnke traces the intellectual odyssey of Enss in a paper delivered at a lecture sponsored by the Mennonite Library and Archives on November 13, 1981.

Keith L. Sprunger describes the careers and ideas of two Mennonite historians, Cornelius H. Wedel and his son, Oswald. Sprunger presented this paper at the Bethel College Faculty Seminar on November 23, 1981. C. H. Wedel, the first president of Bethel College, introduced a generation of General Conference Mennonites to their heritage, but the works of C. Henry Smith and Harold Bender have obscured Wedel's pioneering efforts. His four volume *Abriss der Geschichte der Mennoniten* has never been translated into English; however, several selections summarizing Wedel's interpretation of Anabaptism accompany Sprunger's article. The Mennonite Library and Archives sponsored this translation by Hilda Voth.

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Gustav Enss Family (1923)

Back Cover
John F. Schmidt

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Archives

By Anne-Ruth Ediger Baehr

How long do you keep letters from the Old country?
Valentines to Agatha?
Journals of Passage?
I scan the fraktur.
Are there traditions here? Secrets?
I wonder how important it is
to read Grandmother as a young girl,
younger even than my granddaughters,
leaning over sums and compositions.
How long do you keep an ivory wedding gown
with an eighteen-inch waist?
Mother kept her grandmother's things,
I pack boxes for my attic.

I have arranged lumpy bags
like black stones around the peach tree,
making my cousin Rachel curious.
I watch her from the kitchen door.
"Are you sure there's nothing valuable?
Nothing for posterity?"
"Open them all, examine the chaff.
Someone has to make decisions. The world
is filling up!"
Have I kept Grandpa's diary? Yes.
Pictures? All of them.
Books? Of course.
What about the peace pipe? Already in the Archives.

A Bible bound in wood
patined by Dutch hands in the New World
is shelved beside great stacks
of journals, family trees, *Martyr's Mirror,*
communion cups in fitted chests
aromatic with age,
a red stone ceremonial pipe,
its whittled mouthpiece shrunken,
apart, in white wrappings.
There is still some room.

Everywhere, hoarding of history!
Libraries, museums, stone vaults,
mountain caverns, abandoned salt mines packed
with artifacts too precious to risk
in outside air dusty with modern atoms.

There was a time when ships could hold
only the necessary, pioneers in wagons
dumped heirlooms by river's edge,
counting on journals and firelight tales
to keep their past.
And Cheyennes moved spare bundles
from stream to stream,
investing a heritage
in four arrows and a buffalo hat.

John F. Schmidt (second from left) displaying some archival resources of the Mennonite Library and Archives.

Passenger Ship Lists as an Archival Resource

By John F. Schmidt

When Mennonites in the great plains states were observing the 75th anniversary of their migration from Russia and Prussia, an elderly couple was asked to name the ship on which their people came to America. The man turned to his wife and after some thought replied, "Na, war es nicht die Maienblume?" (Wasn't it the Mayflower?).

In most instances pioneers did not greatly concern themselves with the name of the ship or the steamship company which brought them to America. In a few instances where large groups came on one ship such as on the Cimbria or the Teutonia some people did remember to pass on this bit of information to the next generation. The Mennonite Library and Archives had made an extensive search in this area and we now believe that practically all immigrants from 1873-1893 and their ships have been accounted for.

The development of this list of ships goes back a number of years. In 1949 T. R. Schellenberg, Assistant Archivist of the United States at the time of his retirement in 1963, mentioned the existence of passenger lists in the National Archives. He wrote, "If the names of the vessels could be identified, it would be a simple matter for me to obtain copies of their passenger lists." The names of several ships were suggested to him in April, 1949. By 1952 Schellenberg had the names of several vessels arriving in America in 1874 and was able to reproduce these on microfilm. As the years went by and people consulted this microfilm, it soon became obvious that this list was very incomplete. Meanwhile, the National Archives microfilmed all the passenger lists at its disposal through the 19th century up to 1910. The catalogue issued by the National Archives indicates microfilm rolls containing ship lists of all ships arriving at New York or Philadelphia.

Jacob A. Duerksen, formerly with the National Geodedic Survey and living in Washington, D.C., raised the issue of ship lists in correspondence with John F. Schmidt in 1965. Mennonite history had been Duerksen's avocation during his research in Washington, D.C., and during the years he had kept notes on further passenger lists. He submitted his findings to John F. Schmidt at the Mennonite Library and Archives who was then able to isolate further passenger lists.

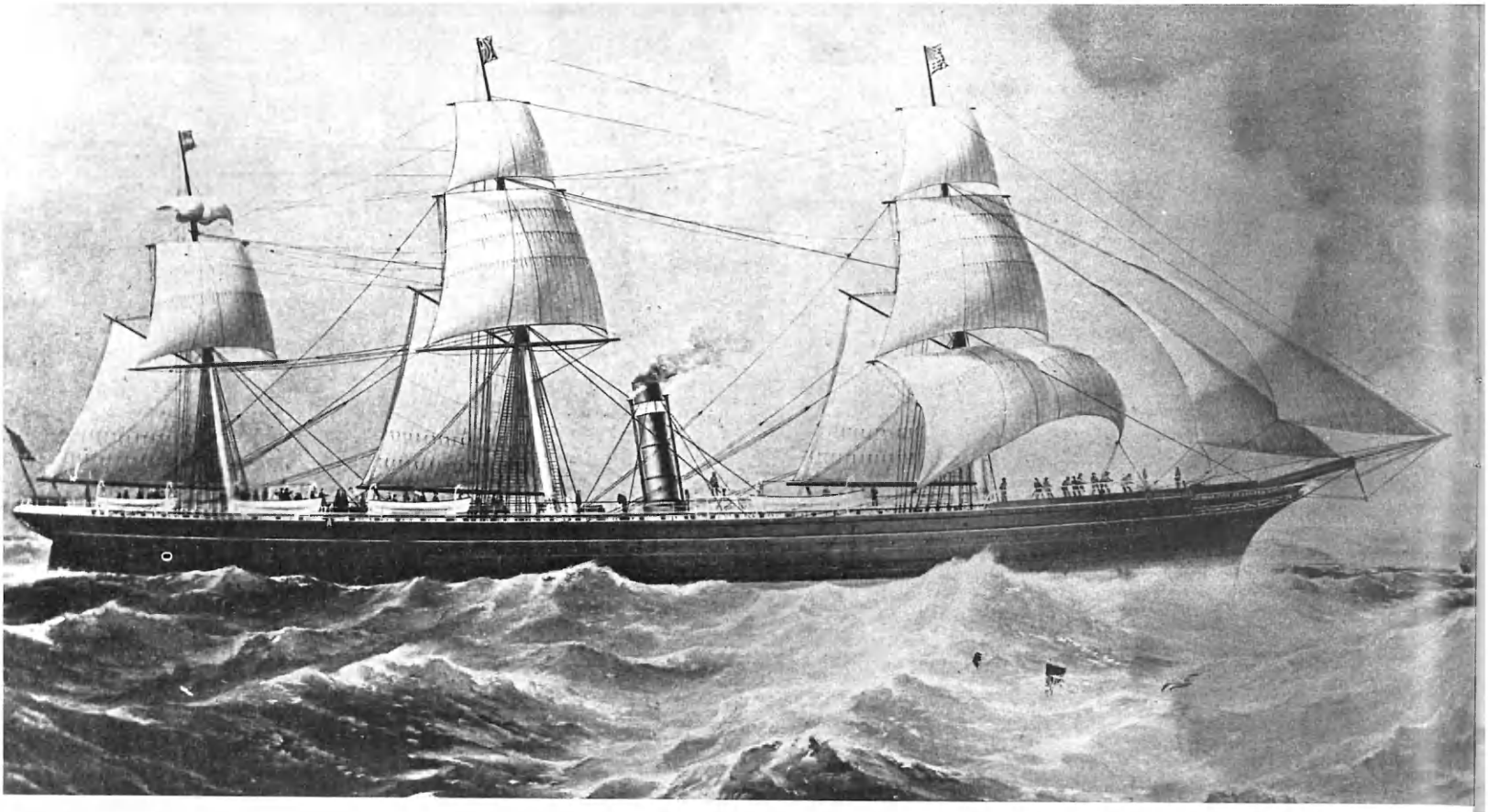
In his research Schmidt used the files of the Mennonite Board of Guardians which had been organized to assist Mennonites from Russia in migrating to North America. He also used various contemporary periodicals such as *Zur Heimath, Christlicher Bundes-Bote,* and *Herald of Truth,* all of which carried extensive information on the progress of the migration to the prairie states and provinces. The findings of this research was sent to Duerksen who made direct checks of clues and information at the National Archives.

To date the Mennonite Library and Archives has listed 182 ship arrivals of Mennonites in America, 1873-1893. The Mennonites on these 182 arrivals total over 13,000. Practically all of these settled in the plains states such as Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, and Minnesota. In looking at the number of arrivals per year, we notice that the bulk of these (over 5000) came in 1874 thus accounting for the importance of this date in anniversary observances of the migration. The following five years the migration held rather steady at 1,000 to 1,800 per year. Mennonites continued to come to America through the 1880's with 1884 being another banner year for migration, accounted for by the fact that in this year Galician Mennonites and Mennonites who had been to Central Asia now came to Amerisa.

Ships bringing Mennonites to America were primarily of the Red Star Line or the Inman Line. The Mennonite Board of Guardians had contracted with the Inman Line to give Mennonites special rates on their trip to America while the Pennsylvania Executive Aid Committee had contracted with the Red Star Line whose ships docked in Philadelphia.

Diaries and memoirs of Mennonites indicate that by and large the ocean crossing was without incident. There was, however, one case which caused considerable concern. This was the Abbotsford which on November 23, 1874, left London and while on the high seas had a collision with the Indus forcing it to return for repairs. While it was docked it was discovered that small pox was on board and further problems ensued. Some patients were taken to English hospitals and in time the Mennonites on board this ship came to America on the Kenilworth and the Illinois.

In the prior negotiations of the steamship companies with the Mennonite committees, some agents tried to discredit competing lines. For example, J. N. Abbott of the Erie Rail Road Company wrote to Bernhard Warkentin on April 17, 1874, "I am sorry to learn that some of the Mennonites in Pennsylvania prefer the Red Star Line. The accounts of disasters that are befalling their steamers will not be encouraging to your people in Europe." In another letter in the Board



City of London, *which landed in New York with a large group of Mennonite immigrants on November 18, 1874.*

of Guardians file W. W. Macalister of the Northern Steamship Company wrote to David Goerz on August 11, 1874, "... our steamers are specially adapted for the carrying of immigrants.... Mr. Schuett does not seem to have such a good opinion of the accommodations of the immigrants in the steamers from Antwerp as he has for the accommodations which can be provided in our steamers."

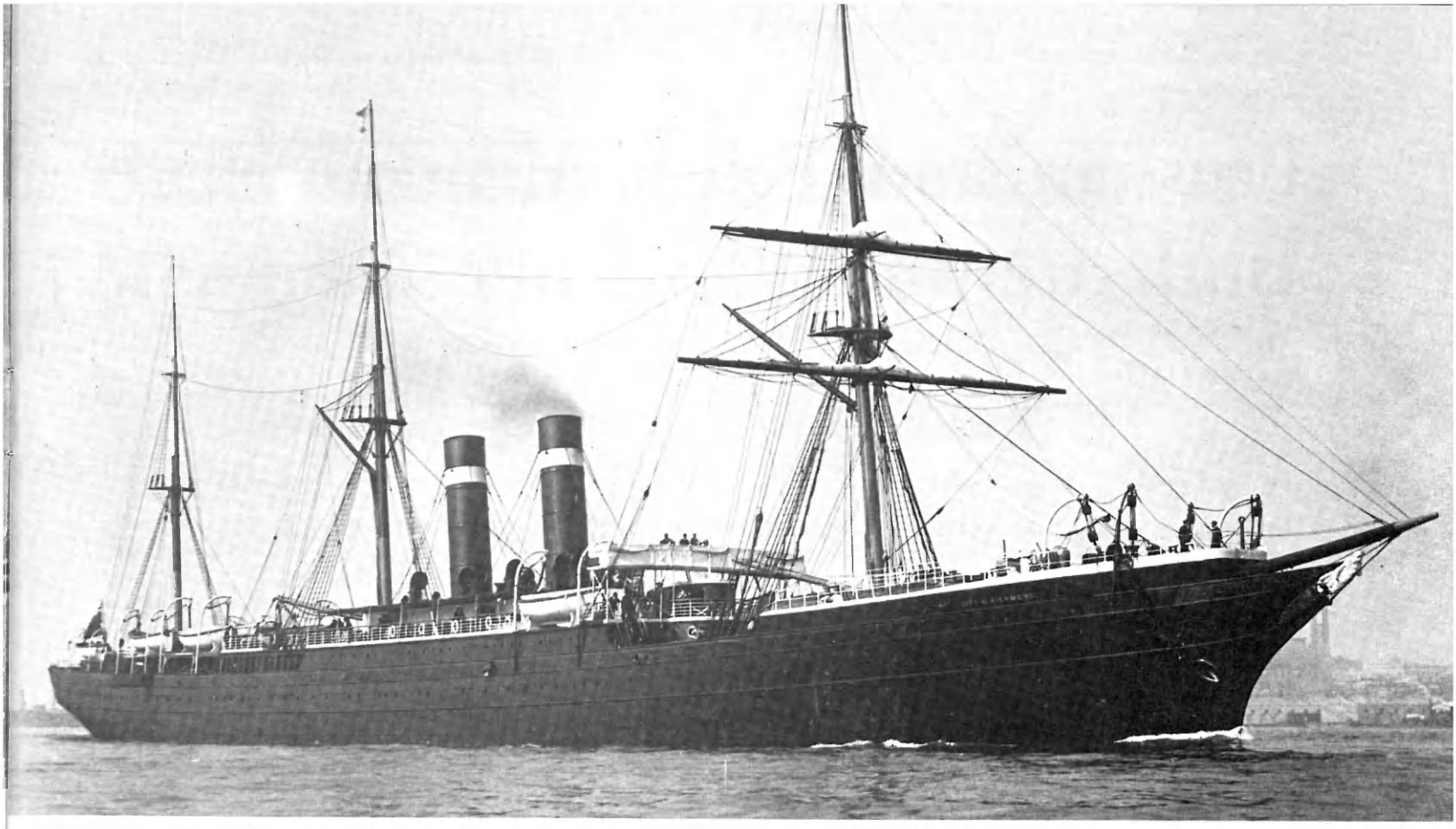
Upon arrival in America it was the practice of that time for leaders of the migrating group to express their thanks to their captain for their safe arrival. The Board of Guardians file contains two such printed notes drawn up on the Vaderland on July 1876 and the Kenilworth also in July 1876. The printed memorial indicates that the original note was filed by the family heads each giving their village of origin in Russia.

Questions might well be raised in respect to the guidelines by which it was determined whether passengers were Mennonites or non-Mennonites. The most obvious answer is the Mennonite surname. However, it must be conceded that Mennonites did not have exclusive rights to names and positive identification of passengers as Mennonites on the basis of names alone becomes very difficult. However, another helpful clue is the fact that almost all Mennonites came in family groupings. This was also true in regard to the Volga and Black Sea Germans, although the names among the latter are invariably so different that confusion is not likely at this point. The lists on the ships indicate families and given names such as could still be found in Mennonite communities a generation ago. In some cases a combination of names would indicate that these were Mennonites. If, for example, you had the following families: Boese, Martens, Pankratz, Sommerfeld you would be rather certain that this was a Mennonite group. The ship lists do give a variation in the spelling of names; however, some of this existed prior to the migration. Sometimes the scribe or clerk on the ship may have spelled the name as it sounded to him. In the case of the Kenilworth which docked in New York on July 17, 1876, passengers were given French names. Henrich became Henri, Franz became Francois, Jacob became Jacque and Peter became Pierre.

It should be mentioned that one group of Mennonites has been the occasion for some confusion with respect to name identifications. This was the group of settlers which later comprised the Ebenfeld Mennonite Brethren Church, south of Hillsboro, Kansas. The existence among this group of such names as Schapanski, Scheikofski, Pelz, Stiebing, Reiswich, Seibel, and others not found in any other Mennonite context can be explained by the fact that many of these people were recent converts from Lutheranism, having followed the leadership of Peter Eckert.

In some instances people who today have information about which ship their ancestors took to America indicate that upon arrival in America they were taken to Ellis Island. This would not be true because Ellis Island did not operate prior to 1893. The Mennonite immigrants did stop at Castle Garden which became their point of enbarkation to the West.

The ship lists are a valuable resource for genealogical information since they give each family group of Mennonites and the age of each individual. Vocations are also indi-



City of Richmond, *which brought several contingents of Swiss Volhynian Mennonites to the United States in 1874.*

cated, although this is a very general category.

In order to isolate ships on which Mennonites came to America it is much easier if we know among which group these Mennonites lived. If they came from the general Russian area of Karolswalde including Michalin, they would have come primarily on ships of the Red Star Line as follows: Colina, Nederland, City of London, City of Montreal, Vaderland, Abbotford, Kenilworth, and the Illinois. Most of the Hutterites came on the following ships: Gellert, Cimbria (1875 and 1876), Suevia, Pommerania and Mosel. The West Prussian Mennonites, coming directly from what was then Germany, came on these ships: Oder, Main, Rhein and Donau. These came in the years 1876-1880. The Galician Mennonites came to America from 1881 to 1883. Ships that brought them were the Suevia, Furnessia, Circassia, Silesia and Westphalia. In the middle 1880's a considerable group was rescued from a disintegrating situation in Central Asia. These people came to America on the Ems, Fulda, and Elbe. The Swiss Volhyians had a distinct preference for the City of Richmond which brought most of them in three different voyages and the City of Chester.

The South Russian Mennonites, or as we usually think of them—Mennonites from the Molotschna colony —were spread over the entire period, but were concentrated on the ships that arrived from 1874 to 1876.

A distinct need today is the publication of all these various ship lists with complete names. This was attempted in the book *Brothers in Deed to Brothers in Need,* compiled by Clarence Hiebert. However, only 112 individual lists were published in this book while we know of 180 at the present time. The first publication of any of these ship lists was in the *Mennonite Quarterly Review,* October of 1941. The list of the Strassburg, docking in New York, July 2, 1878, is given. This was from a document that had come into the hands of John F. Funk of the Mennonite Board of Guardians. This list gives more details than the original ship list does. It indicates the villages from which the immigrants came as well as their destination in America. In 1960, *Mennonite Life* in an article by J. A. Boese published an annotated list of the Colina. During the Mennonite centennial of 1874 further lists were published. The history of the Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church included a list of the Teutonia. Harley J. Stucky published the ship lists of the Swiss Volhynian Mennonites. A recent three volume work by P. William Filby with Mary K. Meyer, entitled *Passenger and Immigration Lists Index,* claims to be a guide to published arrival records of about 500,000 passengers who came to the United States and Canada in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. As indicated, the editors used only published lists and of the Mennonite sources, they used only the one published by Harley J. Stucky, *The Swiss Volhynian Mennonite Ship List, 1874.*

The Mennonite Library and Archives has available an index which correlates most of the Mennonite immigrants from 1873-1893 with the ships on which they arrived in the United States. Most of these ship lists are also available on microfilm. The following roster compiled by Jacob A. Duerksen indicates many of the names which may be found on the ship lists.

Prussian and Polish Mennonite, Hutterite and Borderline Names

Compiled by Jacob A. Duerksen

Abend
Abraham, Abrahams
Adrian
Albrecht
Andres, Androes
Arendt
Bachbann
Baer
Baegg, Bargen
Balzer, Baltzer
Bachmann
Barkmann
Bartsch
Becker
Berg, Bergen
Bergmann
Bergthold
Bestvater
Block
Boese, Beese
Boldt, Bolt
Born
Brandt
Brauel, Breil
Braun
Brockmueller
Brubacher
Bruhn
Buhler
Buller
Buhr
Buschmann, Boschmann
Casper, Kasper
Claassen, Klaassen
Conradt, Konradt
Cornels, Cornelsen
Cornies
Cnels, Knels
Dahl
Dalke, Dahicke
Decker, Deckert
de Fehr, De Veer
Deleske
Dick, Dueck
Dirks, Dirksen
Dester
Dickmann
Doell, Dell
Doelft
Doerksen, Duerksen
Dueck, Dueckmann
Dyck
Eck, Ecke
Ediger
Ehms
Eidsen, Eitzen
Ekkert
Elias, Elia
Engbrecht
Engelbrecht
Enns, Entz, Enz
Epp
Erdmann
Esau
Ewert
Ewy
Fadenrecht
Falk
Fast (Fass)
Fehdrau, Fedrau
Fischer
Flaming, Flamming
Flickinger
Flickner
Focht
Foth
Franz, Franzen
Frey
Friedner
Friesen
Froese
Funk, Funck
Gaeddert
Gaede, Gade
Galle
Gerbrandt
Gering, Goering
Giesbrecht
Glanzer
Glatzer
Goering, Gering
Goertz, Goerz
Goertzen, Gertz
Goossen
Graber
Graser
Graewe
Groening
Gross
Grunau
Guenther
Hamm
Harder
Harms
Heese
Heidebrecht
Hein
Heinrichs
Heppner, Hoeppner
Hess
Heyer
Hiebert, Huebert
Hilbert
Hildebrandt
Hoeppner
Hofer
Hoffmann
Hoog, Hooge
Holsrichter
Hubin
Huebert
Hubner
Huwen
Isaac, Isaak
Jahncke
Jantz, Janzen
Junke
Kaethler
Kasdorf
Kauenhowen
Kaufmann
Kehler
Kersch
Kerber, Kerwer, (Kaerber)
Kintzi
Kirsch
Kilme
Klassen, Classen
Klein
Kleinsasser
Kliewer
Klippenstein
Knack
Knapp
Knels
Knoop
Koehn
Kohfeld
Koop
Kopper
Kornelsen
Kraemer
Krahn
Krause
Krehbiel, Krepel
Kressel
Kroeker
Kron
Krueger
Kruse
Kuehnen
Kuhl
Kunkel
Latschar
Lehn
Lepp, Loepp, Loeppke
Lemke
Letkemann
Lietke, Luedcke
Linscheid
Lohrentz, Lohrenz
Lohner
Loewen, Loewens
Mandel
Mandtler
Martens, Martins
Mathies
Mecklenburger
Merk
Mierau
Miers
Miller, Mueller
Moeller
Nachtigahl
Neubauer
Neufeld, Neufeldt
Neumann
Nickel, Nikkel
Niebuhr
Obermann
Olfert
Ortmann
Ott
Pankratz
Paetker
Pauls
Pellen
Penner
Peters
Petkau
Petker, Poetker
Plenert
Plett
Pries
Preheim
Quapp
Quiring
Ratzlaff
Redekop
Regehr
Regier
Reimer
Rempel
Reiss
Reiswig
Richert
Riedger
Ries
Riesen
Rogalske
Rose
Rosfeld
Roth
Rudiger, Ruediger
Rupp
Sawatski
Schapenski
Schartner
Schellenberg
Schierling
Schmidt
Schoenhoff
Schrag
Schroeder
Schulz, Schultz
Schwartz, Schwarz
Seibel
Senner
Siebert, Siewert
Siemens
Sommerfeld
Spahn
Spenst
Sperling
Stahl
Steig,
Stoesz, Staesz
Stobbe
Strauss
Stucky
Suckau
Sudermann
Sutter
Teichroew
Teske
Tessmann
Thielmann
Thiessen
Thomas
Tiahrt
Tieszen
Tilitzki
Toews
Tschetter
Unger
Unrau, (Urau)
Unruh
de Veer
Vogt
Voth
Voran, Vorran
Walde
Waldner, Waltner
Wall
Wedel
Weldner
Warkentin
Welk, Welke, Woelk
Wepner
Werner
Wichert
Wiebe
Wiehler
Wiens
Wilhelm
Willet
Winz
Wipf
Wipp
Wohlgemut
Woelk
Wolf
Wollmann
Worms
Zacharias
Zerger
Zielke
Ziemens, Siemens
Zimmermann
Zuelcke, Zielke

Gustav H. Enss, Mennonite Alien (1885-1965)

By James C. Juhnke

Gustav Heinrich Enss, born in Samara and buried in Newton, was a Mennonite teacher whose life is notable for the many boundaries he crossed. He was, in his own words, "officially a Russian, by blood a Hollander, at heart an admirer of Germany."[1] He married an English woman and together they crossed the Atlantic and were Americanized.

In addition to his multiple national identities, Gustav Enss crossed the Mennonite institutional boundaries from Bethel College to Hesston College to Goshen College. He also crossed theological boundaries from fundamentalist pre-millennialism to Barthian neo-orthodoxy and —for a time at least—to the doubting of the truth of theistic faith. In church affiliation he crossed from Russian Mennonite origins, to baptism by immersion in a non-Mennonite congregation in Berlin, to General Conference Mennonite churches in Kansas and Indiana, and finally out of the Mennonite fold to the Baptists.

The hazard of crossing too many boundaries is that one can remain perpetually an alien. It was the lot of Gustav Enss to live as something of an outsider wherever he moved. Without a secure home in America, he one day learned of the violent destruction and scattering of his original family and community in Russia in the aftermath of the world war and the ensuing civil war. In an emotional as well as an intellectual sense, Enss could identify with the Hebrews 11:10 description of the migrant and alien patriarch Abraham who "was looking forward to the city with firm foundations, whose architect and builder is God."

There was one pillar of stability and strength in Gustav Enss' volatile life. His wife, Amy, was a woman of quiet dignity, spiritual depth and personal fortitude. When they first met in 1910, Gustav had finished a three-year term in the Alternative Forestry Service and was taking classes at the new Mennonite college at Halbstadt. Amy was a teacher in the Halbstadt school, seven years the senior of this bright student who boarded at her home.

Amy Evelyn Greaves Sudermann was raised in a non-Mennonite middle class family of Sheffield, England. On a visit to her uncle, British consul in Berdiansk, she had met Jasha Sudermann, son of a wealthy Mennonite farming family. They were married before Amy had learned to speak German well. She learned about Mennonite history and beliefs from a book given to her by her Sudermann father-in-law. The book was written by one C. H. Wedel, president of a Mennonite college somewhere in far off America. Amy soon began to bear Mennonite children, but when she was bearing her fourth child, her husband Jasha died suddenly of typhus. An Englishwoman, bereft in a German-speaking Mennonite ethnic enclave in Russia, Amy was recruited for the teaching post at Halbstadt.[2]

When Gustav proposed marriage, Amy at first refused, but she later consented on the condition that he first complete his degree work at the University of Odessa. After a year at the university, however, Gustav failed his exams, apparently because of the anti-German prejudice of his Russian teachers. Amy broke the engagement! Gustav now came to his fiancee and begged for her to reconsider. After an agonized personal struggle, Amy capitulated. She later wrote, "God gave to me one whom I almost rejected."[3] When she first met her new Enss mother-in-law, Amy received the following maternalistic advice: "You will make him happy if you go about it wisely. He is rather difficult, you know, but with the right kind of wife, he will be all right."

This did turn out to be a happy and successful marriage. Gustav and Amy had six children—all girls—making a total of ten children in the family. By all accounts it was a home blessed with generous measures of caring love, intellectual challenge, and true European discipline and thoroughness. There was no doubt that Gustav was the head of the family. "Woman was not created to lead," he wrote, "but to follow."[4] Amy was no ordinary passive follower, however. She was the center of this family, as is suggested by the arrangement of the family members on a 1923 photograph. She was a source of strength and security which sustained and held this family together in some very troubled times.

It was decided that the newly married couple would go to Western Europe where Gustav could engage in advanced university and Bible school studies which could equip him to return to Samara and perhaps be the founder and director of a new educational institution along the lines of the school in Halbstadt. Gustav was inclined to go to the University of Basel, where the director of the Halbstadt school, Benjamin Unruh, had studied. But he eventually chose Berlin on the strength of the recommendation of his older brother, Abraham, who

Amy Sudermann Enss

had earlier studied at the Evangelical Alliance Bible School there. This school, directed by Christoph Köhler, had been founded in 1906 by the British and German branches of the Evangelical Alliance. It's goal was to train students for religious work in Russia.[5]

Although we have no substantial writings from Gustav Enss describing his experience in Berlin, it appears that he was strongly pulled in two directions. On one hand he was greatly stimulated by liberal studies at the university and by the riches of high German language and culture. To move from the limited world of Russian Mennonite colonies into Berlin, he later wrote, was like "stepping out of a dimly lighted room into the bright sunshine at noontide."[6] At the university he took courses in a variety of fields, including literature and drama, for he would need a very broad background for his teaching career in Russia. He probably attended lectures by the famous liberal theologian, Gustav Harnack, although it is not known what he thought of liberal theology at the time. Amy Enss' life story mentions Harnack in a context of approval rather than disapproval. She was proud that her husband was getting such a distinguished education.[7]

On the other hand, Enss was pulled in the direction of the Evangelical Alliance Bible School which suggested more conservative theological influences and less concern for high German culture. Enss was strongly attracted to one professor Meissner who apparently separated from the Bible School and gave private lectures in his home. Meissner was also the pastor of the Bernauer Strasse Gemeinde (Bernauer Street Church) where the Enss family attended services. Meissner's influence is suggested by the decision of both Gustav and Amy Enss to be baptized in the River Spree in 1914. For Gustav this was a second adult baptism. He had been baptized in his 17th year in Lindenau, Samara, in 1902. As far as is known, Gustav never spoke or wrote about this event after moving to America. When he joined the First Mennonite Church in Newton in 1927, he had his first baptism recorded, not his second. But Amy did have her 1914 Berlin baptism recorded in the First Mennonite Church of Newton record book.[8] The meaning of this second adult baptism experience, as well as of the connection with Meissner and the Evangelical Alliance, remains unclear. But it does seem likely that some contradictory forces between university and church were bearing on the life and thought of Gustav Enss.

The stimulating years in Berlin came to an abrupt end with the outbreak of the Great War in 1914. The story of the Enss flight from Berlin to Amy's home in Sheffield, England and thence to Nebraska and Kansas is rich with incidents of providential guidance. Funds for travel arrived from the Enss family in Russia after a period of agonized waiting. They arrived in England the day before England declared war on Germany. They discovered some Wiebe relatives in Nebraska with a letter addressed to "Beatrice, U.S.A." (They remembered the name Beatrice because it was a character in Dante's *Divine Comedy,* and had assumed that the town was somewhere in the vicinity of New York City!) After arriving in Beatrice, they had opportunity to meet J. W. Kliewer, President of Bethel College who was on a tour to recruit students and raise money. The result was an invitation for Gustav to teach German at Bethel College and to move his growing family into the newly constructed Leisy Home on the southern edge of the campus.

The final page of Amy Enss' life story, page 434, tells of the welcoming shower sponsored by the Bethel College women for the newly arrived family:

> Soon after we had come to the campus, I was very surprised one afternoon to notice a large group of ladies on the front porch. I opened the door to these strangers and they all simply walked in! One said, "This is a shower!" I looked at the sky and said, "Oh, I did not know it was raining." That caused a hearty laugh; they thought I was very witty. Then each one put a jar of home-canned fruit, or pickles, or jelly, or sauerkraut or tomatoes on my dining room table. I did not know what to think. "These are for you and your family, because you have not had any opportunity to can this year," someone explained. I was totally unaware of such a custom as "a shower," but thanked each one as nicely as my confusion allowed me. A conversation followed, questions were asked and soon the ladies departed. They must have left with that nice heart-glow that comes when one has done a good deed.

The Bethel community offered a whole complex of customs, folkways and ideas which were quite different from what the Enss family had ever experienced. The sense of cultural shock must have been considerable, even though Bethel was still a German-speaking Mennonite community. Gustav, in fact, had difficulty adapting to the Bethel community and became involved in a personal quarrel and theological dispute which led to his departure from the college in 1918. To understand this unhappy episode in Bethel's history, it is necessary to appreciate not only the position of the new Russian-German language teacher, but also the cultural revolution through which Kansas Mennonites were passing in this era. Mennonites were undergoing rapid Americanization in the early decades of this century, and the colleges were at the forefront of changing ideas and social patterns. Bethel College faculty included a number of bright young professors—Jacob Balzer, Samuel Burkhard, David Richert, Cornelius C. Regier and others—who had been to some of the most advanced universities of America where they had felt the intellectual currents of their "Progressive Era." They were dis-

ciples of John Dewey, Shailer Mathews and Woodrow Wilson.

There appear to have been at least three conflict areas for Gustav Enss at Bethel. One was his authoritarian teaching style. President Kliewer in his memoirs said tersely, "We had a German professor here who was rather European."[9] The contrast in classroom method between Enss and other young Bethel professors must have been great, for Enss preferred authoritative lecturing rather than student-oriented discussion. Questions of teaching style aside, there is abundant evidence that Enss had high standards of excellence and that students learned a great deal in his classes at Bethel as well as at Hesston and Goshen colleges.

A second point of conflict had to do with attitudes toward the World War. The young Mennonite progressives on the Bethel faculty were partisans of Woodrow Wilson and the idea of a world safe for democracy. Jacob Balzer, the academic dean, boasted in a letter to the Newton *Kansan* written shortly before the end of the war, "... I was one of the first ones in Harvey county to see the inevitable need of America's entrance into the war. I still think it would have been a bad mistake to stay out of the war."[10] Although we have no extant statements from Enss regarding his attitude toward the war, it must be assumed that he identified at least to some extent with the cause of the people of his own language and culture. Neither Balzer nor Enss seem to have reflected on what the Mennonite understanding of Biblical nonresistance implied for the choosing of sides between warmaking nations.

It was on a third issue, the question of higher criticism of the Bible, that this conflict came to the climax which E. G. Kaufman labeled the "Daniel Explosion."[11] In October of 1916 Balzer gave a chapel address which included evidence that the book of Daniel was not written during the Babylonian Captivity when it was purported to be written, but several centuries later. On the very next day, Gustav Enss took the unprecedented step of publicly attacking his faculty colleague in the chapel service, charging the Bethel Bible Department of having been infected with the dangerous methods of higher criticism. There was, of course, some truth in the charge. Balzer was using historical critical tools in the study of the Old Testament.

Whether or not these tools were dangerous or illegitimate, it soon became clear that the Balzer-Enss controversy was itself damaging to Bethel. Other faculty, students, the administration and constituency all became embroiled in an unlovely quarrel which resulted in the departure of not only the two leading antagonists, but in the eventual purging of the faculty of its most progressive-liberal members.

When the Bethel College Board of Directors was forced to make a choice between Balzer and Enss, both of whom tendered their resignations, they made a clear decision. They reprimanded Enss for his method of attacking a colleague, and they asked Balzer to reconsider his resignation. (Balzer in fact did go on leave, never to return to Bethel.) The minutes of the Bethel Board of Directors for February 5, 1918, a meeting which included a thorough conversation with Enss, reveal that Enss had given the impression that he was impugning the theological orthodoxy not only of Jacob Balzer, but also of President Kliewer and some of the board members.[12] The board expressed its belief that all parties were opposed to "negative Bible criticism," but the emotional context did not allow for a clarification of the specific issues involved. P. H. Richert, who disliked Enss' method but agreed with him on interpreting Daniel, said the unfortunate affair was based on a misunderstanding. He was hopeful that Enss would reconsider his resignation.[13]

But Enss had other options. He had had preaching opportunities in Mennonite churches and was quite well known. He accepted an offer to become pastor of the Hoffnungsfeld Mennonite Congregation near Moundridge on January 2, before his official meeting with the Bethel Board of Directors. J. W. Kliewer's memory, recorded in his published *Memoirs* (p. 107), that the board "asked the German professor to leave" may not be entirely accurate.

Gustav Enss

But it is true that Enss was something of a thorn in Bethel's side for some time to come. At a special Western District Conference meeting in March 1921 to consider Bethel problems, Enss—then a member of the conference committee for school and education—charged President J. E. Hartzler with having used a modernist textbook by Dr. William Newton Clarke.[14]

Gustav Enss served as pastor of the Hoffnungsfeld Mennonite Church from 1918 to 1927. It was a time of stressful change for this congregation, and Enss' coming symbolized an almost revolutionary transition. He was the first pastor of this formerly Amish congregation to come from outside the group. He was the first congregation leader whose credentials came not from the providential working of the lot, but rather from professional training. He was the first to receive a salary. Added to this were the strains of first steps of shifting from the German language to English, and an old congregational division which flared up again in the early 1920s.[15] It is no surprise, then, that Enss submitted his resignation as Hoffnungsfeld pastor and elder on four different occasions in this stormy decade.[16]

The theological orientation which informed Enss' preaching at Hoffnungsfeld was that of fundamentalism, a religious movement or coalition which emphasized a literal interpretation of the Bible and a vigorous opposition to Darwinism or the theory of evolution. We lack

adequate writings from Enss clearly to identify the outlines and the sources of his thinking. Amy Enss once wrote that her husband probably got his ideas of Biblical literalism and infallibility from his Mennonite origins in Russia, and his pre-millennialism from his Bible teacher in Berlin.[17] But Enss soon became acquainted with fundamentalist leaders in America. In 1919 he invited Dr. Reuben Torrey, one of the most influential of American fundamentalist thinkers, to speak at the Hoffnungsfeld Church.[18] He quoted fundamentalist leader Philip Mauro, and used the dispensationalist charts drawn by Clarence Larkin. Enss also corresponded with John Horsch of Scottdale, Pennsylvania, the most outspoken and articulate fundamentalist leader in the MC Mennonite Church. Enss sent Horsch a religious statement by David H. Richert of the Bethel College mathematics department which allegedly exhibited modernist influences. Horsch responded with an indictment of Richert's views and asking Enss to send evidence of liberalist tendencies in Bethel teachers Samuel Burkhard and J. E. Hartzler who had come from the MC Mennonites. "This would," wrote Horsch, "be a help in the fight against liberalism here in the East."[19]

Enss expanded one of his 1919 Hoffnungsfeld sermons, entitled "Der Mensch and die Menschwerdung Jesu Christi," (Man and the Incarnation of Jesus Christ) into a 46-page pamphlet published by the Mennonite Brethren Publishing House in Hillsboro. The pamphlet attacked the theory of evolution and included an incarnation view rooted in the notion that woman has "no seed in herself; she is only the fertile soil (Nährboden) for the seed which she receives from man." (p. 41) Enss' central thrust was the proclamation of the evangelical gospel of salvation from sin. On the final page we read:

> The incarnation of Jesus Christ, the only begotten son of God, was, is, and remains the only hope of mankind. For in Adam we were eternally lost.... Yes, happy is the person who is in Christ, for he has become a new creature. But woe unto those who remain in Adam, for they are without hope and without God in the world. Oh, become reconciled with God through our Lord Jesus Christ! Amen." (p. 46)

Enss' attitude toward the language question was very dogmatic, whether arguing in behalf of retaining German or shifting to English. His effort to preserve the German, as well as to continue a teaching career, took shape in his founding a German language parochial school in Moundridge in the fall of 1919. Among his students was the young Menno Schrag from the Hoffnungsfeld congregation whom Enss insisted attend the new school. But the anti-German spirit from World War I remained virulent in Moundridge and the American Legion patriots raised a protest which shut down the school after only a month or two of operation. The Enss home was smeared with yellow paint. As often seems the case in such Americanizing Mennonite communities, a main leader of the anti-German school effort was an ex-Mennonite who had traded his Anabaptist nonresistant heritage for the American militaristic civil religion. The American Legion also had a hand in frustrating Enss' endeavor to become a naturalized American citizen. He had declared his intention to become a citizen on November 7, 1916. But his petition was denied on May 9, 1922 by Judge W. G. Fairchild in Newton, on the grounds that Enss was "un-American in his ideas and ideals, and that his loyalty is questioned by the Commander of the American Legion Post of Newton."[20]

Despite his public humiliation at the hands of local super-patriots, within seven years Enss had switched positions by 180 degrees to become a partisan of Americanization and use of the English language. He outlined his position in an article in *The Mennonite,* December 16, 1926:

> We are in the United States of America, where history has decided in favor of the English tongue, in spite of the great body of immigrants of other nationalities. This is an established fact and there is no doubt but that God intended it to be so.... In fact, whether we shun it or not, the stream of American national life runs straight through our [Mennonite] colonies and churches. It comes in through doors and windows and now through radio even through the walls.... Why not shake hands and say "Thank you!" (p. 3)

As surely as Enss' German school had offended the Americans, now his Americanization position offended some members of the Hoffnungsfeld congregation. The minutes of a congregational meeting of January 2, 1927, record that Enss' article was read before the congregation, that Enss resigned because accusations against him were so severe, and that it was agreed not to accept the resignation. When Enss resigned for the fourth and final time nine months later, he gave as one reason the fact that John F. Goering had protested against the use of English language in the Sunday School and had left the congregation.[21]

Enss had a special interest in Mennonite history. In April 1919, he gave a presentation in the Bethel College chapel on the topic, "Hans Denk, the Most Important Leader of the Anabaptists in Reformation Time." In January of that year he began a special column on Mennonite history in the pages of the Mennonite German language weekly edited by H. P. Krehbiel, *Der Herold.* The column assumed readers would be supplementing their knowledge by using volume two of C. H. Wedel's *Geschichte der Mennoniten.* In the final column of his history series, Enss announced that he was undertaking to write a German language work on Menno Simons and that he had the cooperation and warrant in the project from John Horsch, who had written an English language book on Menno in 1916. Enss never completed his work on Menno, perhaps because of a new preoccupation with mission work in his old homeland, Russia.

The tragic destruction of Mennonite lives, communities and culture in Russia during the war and following had a searing effect upon Enss. Why had he and his immediate family been spared this suffering which his extended family and community in Russia had to undergo? What could he do to help his

Enss Family on front porch of Leisy Home, North Newton.

family and friends back home?

In Berlin in 1912 Enss had learned to know a "single, rich and very generous" Russian evangelical named G. Petrelevitch Raud.[22] Raud at that time had attempted to recruit Enss to go to Petersburg to work in an evangelical Bible school founded by J. S. Prochanow. Raud managed to survive the war and to emigrate to America where he founded the Russian Bible and Evangelization society in New York. Enss visited the Society headquarters in July, 1921, and a plan was developed for Enss to establish a branch office and found a German language missions journal to share information, raise money, and promote the cause of the evangelical gospel in Russia. "God had saved us from Russia," Enss wrote, "in order to use us for Russia."[23] In 1922 the Moundridge branch became semi-independent and was organized as the "Mennonite Russian Bible Society." The officers of this new society were M. H. Schlichting, Tabor College Professor, president; P. H. Unruh, Elder of the Alexanderwohl Congregation, vice-president; Gustav Enss, secretary and editor of the journal, *Auf Zum Werk;* and P. D. Dirks of Moundridge, treasurer.[24]

The Mennonite Russian Bible Society announced its intention to support a new Mennonite mission station in Samara, led by Abraham Enss of Alexanderwohl, Gustav's older brother. But these plans were foiled by the death of Abraham Enss of typhus in the spring of 1922, as well as by the ongoing political and social upheaval in Russia. The Mennonite Russian Bible Society established relationships with Jacob Kroeker, leader of "Licht dem Osten," a mission organization in Wernigerode, Germany. But Enss' organization did not last, in part because of health problems and the press of teaching and pastoral work. It is also possible that the endeavors of the newly created Mennonite Central Committee co-opted available resources. The November 1922 issue of *Auf Zum Werk* noted that Elder P. H. Unruh had gone to Russia as a relief worker for MCC. The last issue of this journal to appear was in January 1923.

The *Auf Zum Werk* enterprise involved the cooperation of the Enss family children as well. Step-son Jacob Suderman recalled, "I was often employed as envelope stuffer for the mailings of *Auf Zum Werk* and went on most trips to Hillsboro, Kansas, to pick up the pamphlets at the printers." Suderman had particular images of various men who came to the Enss home in connection with this work. There was Jacob Kroeker, a kindly old man; G. R. Raud, an enigma in horn rimmed glasses; J. S. Prochanoff, an unforgettable personality and seer; and Benjamin Unruh, story teller of the sack of Halbstadt.[25]

Gustav Enss taught at Hesston College from 1922 to 1928, dividing his time with the Hoffnungsfeld pastorate until the final year when he was at Hesston full time. D. H. Bender, Hesston College president, wrote to the congregation asking them to release Enss because "we expect a large class of young Russian Mennonites to take training in our College and this extra work and care will fall largely to the lot of Br Enss."[26] One of Enss' students at Hesston was Paul Mininger of Kansas City, later to become president of Goshen College. Mininger remembers Enss as a dogmatic "fighting premillenialist" who would criticize the theological waywardness of other Mennonite schools, especially warning about the academic dean at Goshen College, Noah Oyer. Mininger had high regard for Enss' mind and for his gifts as a teacher, but found some of his theological

interpretations "tedious and irrelevant."[27]

Despite his reputed antipathy toward Goshen, Enss moved to that school as Professor of Bible and Philosophy in 1928.[28] Amy Enss taught French part time, as she had done at Bethel and Hesston. While at Goshen—1928 to 1934—Enss underwent a remarkable shift in his theological position from fundamentalism to neo-orthodoxy. In 1931 he took a course in "Recent German Theology" under Wilhelm Pauck at Chicago Theological Seminary. He subsequently wrote a 46-page manuscript in German. "Der Offenbarunsbegriff in Karl Barths Theologie" (The Concept of Revelation in Karl Barth's Theology). He also prepared a series of four articles explaining this theological position for the pages of *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, edited by Harold S. Bender. These articles became so controversial that only the first two were published. Two points were particularly offensive to MC Mennonites. One was the Barthian tendency to denigrate religion. Enss was now convinced that religious forms were incidental rather than essential to real Christianity. MC Mennonites were committed to certain religious-cultural forms such as footwashing and the prayer covering, and some found here an attack on things held dear.

A second potential point of issue, in an article that was announced but not published, was the Barthian view of Scripture. Enss now abandoned his insistence on the literal truth or inerrancy of the Bible. He now, with Barth, saw the Bible as "witness" rather than as "revelation." "When the revelation of God is the subject of discussion," he wrote, "then the witnesses must take second place."[29] Thus Enss became the first Mennonite teacher in America to articulate the neo-orthodox theological position. That he had influence on at least some people is suggested today by Elizabeth Horsch Bender, daughter of John Horsch and wife of Harold Bender, who today credits Enss with having helped her to understand the important distinction between Christianity and religion.[30]

Enss had hoped to be the main Bible teacher in a new seminary adjacent to the Goshen campus, but his writings had elicited such a negative response in the MC Mennonite Church that he could not be offered this position. Indeed, he became such a lightening rod for conservatives who wanted to attack Goshen that it became necessary for him to leave the Goshen faculty. He was, after all, an outsider whose church membership was not in Goshen but at the General Conference congregation in Berne, Indiana. Toward the end of his tenure at Goshen he began wearing the prescribed plain coat, apparently in an effort to keep his job, but it was too late.

The Enss family moved to Fort Worth, Texas where Gustav completed his work for a Th. D. degree with a dissertation entitled "Barthian Theology in its Relation to Schleiermacher's Theological System." He decided to join the Baptist Church. The problems with Mennonite institutions no doubt contributed to this decision, but perhaps more important was his reappraisal of the doctrine of nonresistance in the face of the violence wreaked upon his Mennonite family and community in Russia. Enss later wrote that he rethought the Mennonite viewpoint and "inwardly I had radically changed in my convictions" already before leaving Goshen.[31]

After completing his degree, Enss accepted a call to a pastorate in Detroit, Michigan. Here he experienced a physical and mental breakdown, and, in his words, "Almost ten very difficult years followed during which my wife's precious optimism was tested very severely. I had lost all desire to live . . ."[32] It was a shock to his former student, Paul Mininger, to meet Enss in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and find him arguing against Christian theism.[33] Enss slowly recovered his health, earned an M.A. in philosophy at the University of Michigan, and eventually moved to a teaching position at Bridgewater College in Virginia until his retirement at age 72. He was especially pleased when he had opportunities to teach students in his classes who came from Virginia Mennonite churches.

A balanced view of Gustav Enss must take into account not only his dogmatism, volatility and contentiousness, but also his successful family life and his considerable gifts as a teacher and preacher. We will never know what he might have achieved had it been possible for him to fulfill his chosen career as a Mennonite educator in Russia. Instead of being able to work within a network of support by family, friends and church, Enss became a refugee, an outsider, an alien. In an American Mennonite world of developing denominational institutionalism, this was a major liability. At Bethel College, for example, one hidden element in the Enss-Balzer struggle was the fact that Balzer came from Mountain Lake, Minnesota, and represented a family and church constituency which the college could ill afford to alienate. Enss' constituency, in contrast, was in far off Samara. At Hesston and Goshen Colleges Enss' status as outsider was almost perpetually visible in the very clothes he wore.

Not only were Mennonite institutions difficult to break into, but Enss had the misfortune to arrive among American Mennonites just in time to experience the most profound cultural and theological upheaval in American Mennonite history. Added to the strains of German-speaking pacifist identity in World War I were the bitterness and polarization of the Mennonite version of a wider Protestant culture battle between modernists and fundamentalists. Enss escaped the battlefields of Europe and Russia, but got caught in American theological crossfire which left their own peculiar scars.

Finally, an understanding of Gustav must take into account a set of opposing self-images which were a part of his behavioral as well as theological makeup. On one hand, he was marked by a cultural "establishment" mentality. One word invariably emerges as old acquaintances of Gustav and Amy Enss describe this family. They were *cultured* people. They stood straight, proud, dignified. Gustav had studied at the University of Berlin and was proud of this association. He loved German language and literature. His

reputation for flawless high German can be appreciated by anyone who reads his clear, direct and vivid German prose.

On the other hand, Enss had a real sense of standing outside the main stream of establishment culture. There is frustration in his assertion that "almost the whole educated world" had fallen victim to the theory of evolution.[34] Was it possible to be a respected, educated, cultured man and reject the modern patterns of thinking? Earlier in this century it was widely believed that fundamentalist viewpoints would eventually be vindicated by science. But it was the fate of this movement to be pushed to the periphery of American culture and to adopt an isolationist stance over against mainstream denominationalism, especially after the Scopes trial in 1924.[35] Gustav Enss, in his own way, exhibited this establishment-isolationist ambivalence.

After Gustav Enss died, Amy Suderman Enss wrote the following on the margin of a poem written by her son in tribute to Gustav:

> I had never been indoctrinated and I think perhaps my freedom to love and serve God in a more natural way rather amazed him. My love for him was also an understanding love mixed with pity as I watched him struggle for freedom.[36]

We would do well to match the depth of sympathetic but objective insight of this grieving widow in our quest to understand Gustav Enss, a man who sought a home but remained an alien.

FOOTNOTES

1 From an untitled short autobiography by Gustav Enss, p. 5, located with other materials in the Jacob Suderman collection at the Archives of the Mennonite Church (AMC), Goshen, Indiana. This article has benefitted from information generously shared by Mrs. Joanna Suderman Andres, step daughter of Gustav Enss.

2 Information about Amy Evelyn Greaves Sudermann Enss is found in her autobiographical life story from her origins down to her arrival on the Bethel College campus in 1915. Her son, Jacob Sudermann, was editing the manuscript with a view to publication, but he died before the project was completed.

3 Amy Sudermann Enss life story, 272.

4 Gustav Enss, *Der Mensch und die Menschwerdung Jesu Christi* (Hillsboro: Mennonite Brethren Publishing House, 1919), 40.

5 Erich Beyreuther, *Der Weg der Evangelischen Allianz in Deutschland* (Wuppertal: R. Brockhaus, 1969), 82.

6 Enss, "Our Fears Motivated and Examined," *The Mennonite,* 16 Dec. 1926, 3.

7 Amy Sudermann Enss life story, 350.

8 The quotation is from Amy Sudermann Enss, "My Thoughts and Beliefs and Experiences Regarding Religion after 87 Years of Living," unpublished ms. 7. John D. Thiesen pointed out to me the First Mennonite Church record, copy in the John E. Entz Collection, Mennonite Library and Archives (MLA), folder 235.

9 Kliewer, *Memoirs of J. W. Kliewer* (Bethel College, 1943), 106.

10 Letter from Balzer to the *Kansan,* Nov. 2, 1918. Jacob Balzer Collection in MLA. Quoted in Delores Reimer, "Jacob Frank Balzer and the Experience at Bethel College 1913-1918," Student term paper, 1974. 17-18.

11 "Crisis in Bethel's History," *Mennonite Life,* April 1963, 54.

12 Protokoll der Direktorsitzung am 5 Feb. 1918. 33.

13 Letter from Richert to Enss, Jan. 23, 1918. P. H. Richert Collection. MLA. folder 22.

14 English translation typescript copy of Western District Conference Minutes, special meeting of March 22, 1921, 3.

15 Enss wrote his version of the Hoffnungsfeld difficulty in an 83-page 1924 pamphlet. "Geschichtliche Darlegung der Ereignisse in der Hoffnungsfeld Gemeinde."

16 The dates of these resignations as recorded in the Hoffnungsfeld Church Record Book were December 30, 1920; June 21, 1923; January 2, 1927; and September 4, 1927.

17 "My Thoughts and Beliefs." 11.

18 Hoffnungsfeld Church Record Book, entry for October 19, 1919.

19 Enss to Horsch, Sept. 11, 1919; Horsch to Enss, Sept. 16, 1919. Jacob Suderman Collection. AMC.

20 Menno Schrag, oral history interview with Robert Kreider, June 19, 1981. Naturalization Service Petition and Record, Vol. 3, in office of Clerk of Disrict Court, Newton, Kansas. U.S. Petition for Naturalization No. 157.

21 Hoffnungsfeld Church Record Book, entries for Jan. 2, 1927 and Sept. 4, 1927.

22 Enss, "Allgemeine einleitende Mitteilungen ueber das Missionswerk und meine Verbindung mit demselben." *Auf Zum Werk,* Aug. 1921, 2.

23 *Ibid.*

24 *Auf Zum Werk,* Jan-Feb. 1922. 2.

25 Suderman's comments are in the folder with the *Auf Zum Werk* copies in the Jacob Suderman collection. AMC.

26 Hoffnungsfeld Church Record Book. Bender letter of Aug. 2, 1927 recorded with meeting of Aug. 7, 1927.

27 Paul Mininger, interview with the author. Goshen, March 1981.

28 See letter from Enss to Noah Oyer, Feb. 28, 1928. Suderman Coll. AMC.

29 Enss manuscript. 55.

30 Interview with the author. Goshen. June 1981.

31 Gustav Enss autobiography, 9.

32 *Ibid.*, 10.

33 Paul Mininger interview.

34 Enss, "Der Mensch," 7.

35 For the development of this interpretation of fundamentalism, see George M. Marsden. *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (New York, 1980).

36 Suderman Collection. AMC.

Cornelius H. Wedel and Oswald H. Wedel: Two Generations of Mennonite Historians

By Keith L. Sprunger

Cornelius H. Wedel, the first president of Bethel College, was Bethel's first historian. Wedel (1860-1910) led the way in establishing Bethel College as the earliest Mennonite college of higher education in America; and although trained in theology, he also became one of the foremost pioneer Mennonite historians. His four volume history of Mennonites, according to the *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, "constitutes the first general and comprehensive history of the Mennonites written and published in America."[1] One of President Wedel's sons, Oswald Henry (1894-1957), followed his father's footsteps into history, making the Wedel family unusually prominent in American Mennonite historical studies. The younger generation, however, saw history quite differently than the father. The development of Anabaptist-Mennonite historiography along professional lines is one of the major events of church history in the twentieth century. The two historians, father and son, had an important part in the Mennonite historical renaissance. This article on the Wedels is the first in a series of studies on twentieth-century American Mennonite historians.

The story of the first historian Wedel began in the Mennonite Ukrainian village of Margenau, Molotschna, where Cornelius H. Wedel was born May 12, 1860. As a school teacher, Wedel's father moved the family from time to time, first to the village of Alexanderwohl, next in 1874 to America, when the Alexanderwohl people moved to Goessel, Kansas. Having become an American, the fourteen-year old Cornelius learned English, so that by 1880, if not before, he was writing letters in the new language.[2]

Wedel's early career consisted of teaching elementary school at Alexanderwohl and then missionary work at Darlington, Oklahoma. In the 1880s he pursued American higher education at McKendree College in Illinois and Bloomfield German Presbyterian Theological Seminary in New Jersey. Ursinus College of Pennsylvania awarded him an honorary A.M. in 1892. His education went far beyond the Kansas and Mennonite average, and his home congregation of Alexanderwohl called him as minister. He taught also at Halstead Seminary. In 1893 he accepted a call to become the first president of the newly established Bethel College at Newton. Bethel College in its single fortress-like building perched on the Kansas prairie was a part of the great American frontier—some called it the great American desert. To go to Kansas was almost like forsaking the academic calling. Wedel reminisced: "How much I wanted to go, after finishing at the Bloomfield seminary, to one of the German universities, but that was not to be." Instead, "I dedicated myself to school teaching and went West to help build up the education work of our church."[3]

As he had discerned, Wedel's career at Bethel was not to be primarily academic in the university sense. At Bethel he taught; he administered; he edited and wrote over 180 articles for the school paper; he ministered in the newly organized College Mennonite church; he preached at conferences and churches; and much of his energy went into the General Conference Mission Board, of which he became president. Students valued Wedel's classes. "People in general thought that there was no one who could teach like C. H. Wedel. He made his classes so very interesting," recalled Mrs. Helen Isaac Moyer (Bethel Academy Student, 1907-09).[4]

With his scholarly demeanor and thorough educational methods, Wedel emerged as the pre-eminent scholar of Kansas Mennonites, "one of the best informed and educated men of the denomination . . . one of its leading men."[5] Amidst all the pressing daily school and church chores, and during the summers, Wedel somehow reserved blocks of time for writing books on religion and theology. A new book appeared almost every year. Wedel's publications filled a great need for Kansas Mennonites.

The historical work of C. H. Wedel was totally directed toward Mennonite history. For Mennonites of the late nineteenth century, this was nearly unexplored wilderness. American Mennonites had few scholarly pretentions and the scattered Mennonite scholars thus far had given little attention to Mennonite history. Books about Mennonite history were mostly hostile accounts written by unfriendly outside historians or slender accounts not up to the scholarly standards of the time. The most common historical book in Mennonite homes was the *Martyr's Mirror,* a classic to be sure; but little had been done in America to bring the Mennonite story up to the present time. A perusal of Harold Bender's bibliography of Mennonite writings, *Two Centuries of American Mennonite Literature 1727-1928,* reveals how great the publication void was. During the entire nineteenth century, American Mennonites (except for John Horsch and C. H. Wedel in the 1890s) published only four books on general Mennonite history, written by Benjamin Eby, Daniel K. Cassel, Johannes Bartsch, and C. H. A. van der Smissen.[6]

As a result of such skimpy resources, American Mennonites lacked appreciation of their historical heritage, and many considered themselves inferior to other more respectable Protestants. Educated young Mennonites, under the Americanizing influences, were moving out into the world and away from their Mennonite heritage. As America's first Mennonite college president, Wedel was a major force in developing Mennonite scholarly respectability.

Susanna Richert and Cornelius H. Wedel

C. H. Wedel was only one of several late nineteenth-century Mennonites dedicated to the new Mennonite historical enterprise. Progressive Mennonites yearned to overcome the caricature of Mennonitism: That Anabaptists were Münsterites, radical troublemakers, and theological illiterates, unlike the respectable Lutherans and Calvinists. Having evolved from the Münsterite Anabaptists, Mennonites were chained to a blighted history and had no positive contributions to make to the modern world, except perhaps as quietistic, isolated farmers.

The chief American organ for the rejuvenation of Mennonite history was the *Herald of Truth* (with a parallel German edition, *Herald der Wahrheit*), a general Mennonite periodical of "very great influence," published since 1864 by J. F. Funk of Elkhart, Indiana. Among many concerns (missions, Sunday Schools, evangelism), Funk and associates promoted a positive image of Mennonite history in numerous articles. John Horsch (1867-1941) frequently wrote historical articles in the *Herald of Truth,* or *Herald der Wahrheit,* beginning in 1877, as did A. B. Kolb and occasionally E. W. Weaver. The "Herald of Truth historians" aimed to rehabilitate Mennonite history by shaking off the odium of radical Münster and by stressing instead a pre-Reformation Waldensian heritage. The anti-Münsterite stance is easily understandable: Who wishes to own up to vile ancestors? "The Mennonites were not Münsterites," declared A. B. Kolb. The peace-loving Anabaptists of Menno Simons were not to be confused with the "ungodly rioters who set themselves up against

all law and order under John van Leyden at Münster."[7]

If not Münster, where were the Anabaptist roots? The Waldensian link, long before incorporated into the venerable *Martyrs' Mirror* (1660), was the means to provide Anabaptism with a respectable, evangelical ancestry which pre-dated even Luther. The Waldensians of the Middle Ages were said to have been the forerunners of a great movement of pre-Reformation Old Evangelical Brotherhoods, also known as Swiss Brethren, Bohemian Brethren, Old Evangelical Baptists, and "true Christians"; and during the Reformation the Old Evangelical brotherhoods re-emerged in a fresh way as "Anabaptists." Menno Simons did not create a Mennonite church, said the *Herald of Truth* historians, but he united with a wonderful movement long in existence. This put Mennonite history into a positive perspective equally praiseworthy with the mainstream Lutheran and Reformed Protestants. The Waldensian proto-Anabaptists, in fact, were "forerunners of all the present Protestant sects."[8]

The spark for this innovative re-interpretation of history was a German Protestant scholar, Dr. Ludwig Keller (1849-1915), state archivist of Münster and later archivist at the state archives of Berlin. Keller, not personally a Mennonite, was the first scholarly nineteenth-century historian to evaluate Mennonites in a positive way in such books as *Ein Apostel der Wiedertäufer* (1882) and *Die Reformation und die älteren Reformparteien* (1885). His books were eagerly read by Mennonites in Europe and America, and many seized upon his Waldensian theory of Mennonitism as an inspired doctrine.[9]

Cornelius H. Wedel

The *Herald of Truth* historians made constant use of Keller's writings and frequently reprinted segments of his books. "With Keller a new era of historiography of the Old Evangelical churches has begun," proclaimed John Horsch. "Especially has Dr. Ludwig Keller brought to light many important facts concerning the connections of the Waldenses with the Mennonites."[10] Articles in the *Herald* praised Keller's books as "very valuable additions to Mennonite history." Keller seeks "to set the history of our people in its true light." With Keller's help, Mennonite history was rescued from the anti-Mennonite bigots and rises "to a much higher esteem and begins to recover to some extent its due measure of respect." Warmed by his zealous American disciples, Keller declared himself to be "a constant reader" of the *Herald of Truth*.[11]

Many American Mennonites corresponded with Keller for new light on Mennonite history, and some made trips to Europe to visit him. Among his American friends were John Horsch, who had corresponded with him in Europe before immigrating to America. J. F. Funk, John Holdeman, and in Kansas, David Goerz, Herman Suderman, Jacob R. Toews, and C. H. Wedel of Bethel.[12] Wedel and Horsch were the foremost American "Kellerite" historians, and C. H. A. van der Smissen's book, *Kurzgefasste Geschichte und Glaubenslehre der Altevangelischen Taufgesinnten oder Mennoniten* (1815), was also of the same spirit. Their historical work took place within the general American Mennonite renaissance of the Kellerite period.

Along with the career as educator, C. H. Wedel earned considerable eminence among Mennonites as a learned historian. Bethel College made a distinction between "general history" as taught by teachers like G. A. Haury and Wedel's "church history." His experience as a college teacher of Mennonite history persuaded him that the Mennonite people required more up-to-date books on Mennonite history for school and home, incorporating the latest findings from scholars like Keller. Hardly a year passed without Wedel's producing some work in either history or theology for the Mennonite brotherhood. His chief historical works were: *Bilder aus der Kirchengeschichte für Mennonitische Gemeindeschulen* (1899, translated in 1920 as *Sketches from Church History for Mennonite Schools*); *Kurzgefasste Kirchengeschichte* (1905), and his magnum opus—which Wedel modestly referred to as his *kleine opus*—the four volume, *Abriss der Geschichte der Mennoniten* (Newton, 1900-04).

These volumes extended the outreach of Mennonite history and established Bethel College as a center of historical studies. Wedel's historical research was primarily compilative from the work of European scholars. There is little evidence that he did much manuscript and documentary digging, as was being promoted by the scientific Rankeans of the universities. The followers of Leopold von Ranke used primary documents to reproduce history objectively as it really happened—*geschichte wie es eigentlich gewesen ist.* Nevertheless, Wedel's scholarship was sound and thorough. He extracted the highlights from authors like Keller, Anna Brons, and H. G. and W. Mannhardt, and reworked the material to give it some of his own interpretations.

Wedel was privileged to make two short trips to Europe, one in the summer of 1896, the second in 1898, but neither was used for archival research. Travel for him was the opportunity to refresh and broaden himself in theology, history, and literature, so that his teaching would be more beneficial to students. He took pains to visit the historical sites important to Mennonites in Holland, Germany, Switzerland, and Russia. In 1898 he stopped at Witmarsum to view the new Menno Simons monument. "I believe we were the first American Mennonites to see Menno's memorial." Although lacking the Dutch language, Wedel discovered that his

Low German was usually sufficient to get him around in Holland.[13] In 1903 the college news magazine reported that he went to Elkhart, Indiana (where he may have met C. Henry Smith) "for the purpose of making further research regarding Mennonite history," and there were likely occasional other trips which deepened his historical research.[14] Primarily Wedel's books were drawn from sources available to him in his own study or from Mennonite history books in the college library. Considering the shallow Mennonite historical resources available to him, his scholarship was an achievement.

Wedel's *Abriss der Geschichte der Mennoniten* gives an extensive account of Mennonite history. Like other Protestant historians, he periodized church history into a golden Apostolic Age, followed by the dismal Catholic Middle Ages (Christianity covered over in all but name), followed again by the glorious Reformation period. Mennonitism, however, had a special history which could be traced back beyond the "Taufer" and "Anabaptists" of the sixteenth century through the Waldensians in unbroken line to the Apostolic Church itself. Even Luther, Wedel believed, had been influenced in his reforms by certain Waldensian "Bohemian Brethren".[15]

Volume one of the *Abriss* covered the pre-Reformation history of Mennonites, via the Waldensians. Volume two dealt with the sixteenth-century Reformation. Volumes three and four were about Mennonite history since the Reformation, including the Netherlands, Prussia, Switzerland, Germany, and America. Throughout his history writing, Wedel emphasized the spirit of Mennonite religion rather than the form. The spiritual essence goes beyond dogma and formalism. The church of believers transcends the state and must be separated from it.

Near the end of volume two, Wedel sketched a comparison of Anabaptists and "other Protestants," stressing the non-dogmatic nature of Anabaptism. Luther and Zwingli erected a Protestant state church, but Anabaptists rejected both this Protestant state church (*Staatskirche*) and the Roman priest church (*Priesterkirche*), Anabaptists created the *Gemeinde* or *Gemeindekirche* (brotherhood-of-believers church). Luther authoritatively demanded pure doctrine (as defined by himself) rather than pure life; such authoritarian formalism the Anabaptists could never accept. "Practical Christianity" was Wedel's mark of Anabaptism. At this point, Wedel was influenced by German Pietism of the Spener-Francke variety. Wedel praised pietism as producing "little churches" within the formal churches. These pietistic fellowships nourished a kind of *Gemeinde* Christianity, the very goal of Anabaptists themselves. In a summing up of Mennonite history at the conclusion of volume four, Wedel again stated that the Mennonites, like Old Evangelical brethren, valued primarily personal Christianity and freedom of conviction.[16]

Wedel's Waldensian-centered version of Mennonite history was heavily indebted to Ludwig Keller. Keller's books were prominent among Wedel sources. In 1898 Wedel arranged his itinerary to allow time to visit Keller at Berlin; but having arrived at the Keller home, Keller was absent. "How gladly I would have introduced myself and told him how highly I esteemed his writings and admired his courage." Thoroughly disappointed, Wedel sent word to Keller about his intended visit through Jacob R. Toews of Newton, who corresponded with Keller. Toews was a minister of the First Mennonite church.[17] In a letter and packet of 1902, Wedel sent the first three volumes of the *Abriss* to Keller and again praised him as the chief inspiration of his history of the Mennonites. "At Bethel in our library we have most of your books, and we are busy using them."[18]

The circle of Kansas Mennonites, including C. H. Wedel, Herman Suderman, and Jacob R. Toews, was strongly influenced by Keller's vision of a great Mennonite-Old Evangelical revival. In fact, Toews, a member of Bethel's board of directors, credited Keller's vision with inspiring the founders of Bethel College to move beyond "Methodistic" imitative Protestantism. "Your work has borne fruit in America," Toews informed Keller. "Our Mennonite people here have built their own school to be free from the century-long influence of other denominations (which often were basically negative to us)." Bethel has a professor of Bible who teaches on the basis of Keller's "Old Evangelical idea . . ." "This professor is C. H. Wedel."[19]

Although admiring the Waldensians of old, Wedel and his fellow Kellerite Mennonites had little first-hand information about Waldensians of the contemporary age. In 1893 the *Herald of Truth* reported a possible Waldensian migration from Italy to North Carolina. They were welcomed and esteemed as the "forerunner of all the present Protestant sects." In 1895 a terse note reported that the North Carolina Waldensians had affiliated with the Presbyterian Church of the South. It was now discovered that the latter-day Waldensians had lost their non-resistance and the believers' baptism.[20] Wedel wrote several articles on the Waldensians for the Bethel College newspaper, and in 1910 the college was able to arrange a visit from a traveling Waldensian churchman, Albert Clot. Unfortunately, Clot's visit to Bethel came a short while after Wedel's death; "For Professor C. H. Wedel, with his deep interest in Mennonite history, it would have been a delight to have met Professor Albert Clot."[21]

The *Abriss* was an important step in the coming of age of American Mennonite scholarship. It's purpose was to revive an appreciation of the Mennonite forefathers and to demonstrate that Mennonites have a worthwhile, admirable history and a promising future. Wedel's particular American audience was the German-speaking Mennonite settlements west of the Mississippi. Moreover, Wedel's Molotschna background made him a scholarly link between the Russian Mennonite colonies and the settlements in America. Under Wedel's leadership, Bethel began to gather students and financial support from Russian Mennonites. Elder Heinrich Dirks and Gnadenfeld sent a gift of 100 rubles in 1896 and declared: "Wir Menno-

niten . . . sind doch einmal van einem Stamme." Wedel revisited Russia in 1896 and 1898 and cultivated the old ties. Beloved Alexanderwohl: "a thousand memories." Gnadenfeld: "The old fatherland."[22] The books of Wedel circulated rather widely among the Russian Mennonite villages. Historian Cornelius Krahn discovered Wedel's *Abriss* in his youthful days in Russia. "C. H. Wedel in Russia on the Volga River was my founding father in my interest in history, and that was Mennonite history."[23]

Wedel's Waldensian-Kellerite theories, although useful at a certain stage of Mennonite historical development, have not stood the test of time. More important in the longer run was Wedel's goal of an open, dynamic Mennonite outreach in the world. His Mennonite message was "practical Christianity" and this emphasis has left a permanent mark upon Bethel College and the larger course of American Mennonitism. He himself travelled widely and developed broad interests: Europe, the St. Louis Exposition, the chautauqua, and Winona Lake Bible Conferences. At the time of his death he was planning to attend the 1910 World Conference of Missions at Edinburgh. As historian, C. H. Wedel stressed the Mennonite heritage. As educator and church leader, he envisioned a progressive, ecumenical spirit of Mennonite involvement in the world.

While a student at Presbyterian seminary, Wedel developed a deep appreciation for evangelical Protestantism. As a Mennonite leader, he warned young people against narrowness and isolation: "We ought therefore, to be all the more eager, to observe sympathetically those church groups which agree with us most closely in our confessions of Christ—the Baptists, the Methodists, the Reformed, the Herrnhuters, and the Lutheran churches, and others. Surely we can only profit from an intercourse with them. . . ." Still, he was deeply convinced, the Mennonite spirit must be preserved. He saw a future danger from Americanizing influences which might water down the Mennonite distinctives (including pacifism). "You have come into possession of a rich inheritance."[24]

The issue of cooperation or separation from society, that eternal Mennonite question, troubled Wedel occasionally. His *Gemeindekirche* was a brotherhood community in its own right, but it existed within the larger American context. C. H. Wedel loved America. Again and again, he referred to the blessings of America: It was the "Land of Freedom," the "Land of religious freedom," the "free coast," and the land of opportunity where no one inherited privilege and feudal estates. Wedel quickly associated the hard-working Mennonites of America with the older "solid elements of American society, the Pilgrim Fathers" — thereupon Mennonites became honorary children of the *Mayflower*. "God led the Mennonites to America."[25]

At the same time, Wedel sensed the dangerous pull of modern American society. Getting into step with the Americans would be a threat to the survival of the separated Mennonite church communities. "How swiftly the youth will be pulled into the stream of secular American society!"[26] Did he see this Americanization process, to the detriment of Mennonite Christianity, already at work among his students at Bethel College? Among his own children?

Before World War I Wedel's history books had a large influence They were serviceable for home, church, and school, but their future use was limited. Writing in the German language, as he did, was the way to communicate with the immigrant and the first generation of children. Thereafter, the fast acceptance of English among American Mennonites, a process speeded along by World War I, relegated Wedel to the sidelines. His historical contribution was notable but of a limited time duration.

Wedel's historical and educational career was cut short by an untimely death. He died of pneumonia March 28, 1910. Wedel had not reached fifty years of age; "in the prime of life," lamented his friends. C. H. Wedel is buried in the Greenwood Cemetery of Newton.

The Wedel family grew up on the Bethel College campus. The first residence of President and Mrs. Wedel (Susanna Richert, daughter of Heinrich Richert) and children was in the Administration Building of Bethel. At that early stage of Bethel College, the building *was* the college. The Wedels and Professor B. F. Welty lived on the east first floor of the building. Down below, the students were housed in the basement along with the furnace and coal bins. Soon the Wedels built a house of their own to the front of the campus, north of the David Richert home. The college newspaper made occasional mention of the activities of the Wedel children, and Theodore Otto recalled: "Here we children must have been a nuisance to the students who passed through the college halls."[27] Theodore grew up to become a noted scholar of English literature and a minister of the Protestant Episcopal church. Among Bethel people, he was "Canon Wedel" of the Washington Cathedral. Hilda, a public school teacher married O. R. Osburn and lived at St. Clair, Missouri. Oswald Henry followed his father's historical career, but not Mennonite history.

Oswald Wedel entered Bethel College in 1912, transferred to Oberlin College (as Theodore had done earlier) and then took his degree at the University of Arizona in 1923. The move westward to Arizona was partly health related, because Oswald suffered badly from asthma. During these early years he also did some public school teaching. He pursued graduate work in modern European history at Stanford, earning the M.A. and the Ph. D. (1927). His first regular teaching position was as history professor at the University of Arizona, Tucson, where he continued until his death in 1957. From 1948 to 1957 he served as head of the history department. In 1915 he married Marie K. Dickman of Mt. Lake, Minnesota. They had one son, Donald O. Wedel.[28]

As a second generation Mennonite historian, trained in scientific methodology, Oswald Wedel's historical interests were much broader and cosmopolitan than C. H. Wedel's strict Mennonitism. Oswald Wedel chose as his field the modern history of World War I and the years immediately preceding it, which for

him was almost current events. At Stanford he did his doctoral dissertation on pre-World War I Austrian-German diplomatic relations (under Frank A. Golder) and in revised form this became his major publication, *Austro-German Diplomatic Relations 1908-1914* (Stanford University Press, 1932). He published various articles on modern history, the most significant being "Austro-Hungarian Diplomatic Documents, 1908-1941" in the *Journal of Modern History* (1931). These publications drew favorable response, and Wedel's book in 1932 was awarded the George Louis Beer Prize of the American Historical Association, which was one of the highest honors of the historical profession.

Oswald Wedel diverged considerably from the religious teachings of his family. When he left Newton, he cut his formal ties with the Mennonite church, and he did not reestablish a church membership. His story is similar to many intellectual Mennonites of the early twentieth century (the second generation Mennonites) who outgrew the immigrant faith of the forefathers and went forth into the larger world. Theodore, the older son, found his way to Episcopalianism (while at the same time retaining a "great love for and pride in his Mennonite heritage").[29] Oswald Wedel was attracted to intellectual theories concerning the powers of the mind, and at one stage, while still a college student, he espoused Theosophical religion. Theosophy is a religious teaching which claims to be a true amalgam of religion, philosophy, and science. Theosophy contains obvious mystical, Hindu doctrines. When missionary P. A. Penner returned from India on furlough in 1922, his family visited with the Oswald Wedel family, who were related through the Richert connection. Based upon his India experience, Penner urged Wedel to give up the Theosophical way: "You are absolutely on the wrong track."[30] How long Wedel continued amongst those teachings is not known. He always maintained an independent stance in religious matters.

At first view, it would seem that Oswald Wedel had totally departed from the Mennonite historical and religious principles of his father. His books and articles contain nothing about Waldensians, Anabaptist reformers, or Molotschna Mennonites. On further reading, however, the Mennonite heritage became discernible in Wedel's lifelong historical interests in conciliation, war, and peace. The concentration on World War I was not so much academic as directed toward finding out what had gone wrong in 1914 and how such tragic events could be prevented in the future. In a memo (about 1934) Wedel proposed that "a proper understanding of the Austro-German relationship lies at the bottom of the problem of Central Europe, while the problem of Central Europe is certainly the principal ingredient in Europe's present accumulation of political difficulties."[31]

Professor Wedel belonged to the Revisionist movement of post World War I historians. Under the leadership of historians Sidney B. Fay and Harry Elmer Barnes, the Revisionists overturned the German-Austrian war guilt of Article 231 in the Treaty of Versailles. They called for a re-evaluation of the causation of the war and rejected the propagandistic jingoism produced by all sides. The blame was not only Germany's, they insisted. No side in the war was "right" and "justified." Wedel's book was an important Revisionist book of the 1930's, and it still makes worthwhile reading. Wedel was a thoughtful, judicious historian in the Rankean tradition and well versed in the printed and manuscript sources of the day.

Leading Revisionist Sidney B. Fay appreciated the book, and, in fact, was chairman of the committee which awarded it the Beer Prize. Professor A. F. Pribram, the Austrian diplomatic historian with whom Wedel had worked in Vienna

Oswald, Hilda, and Theodore Wedel (ca. 1902)

in 1930-31, pronounced the book "sehr gut." Harry Elmer Barnes, however, the most militant Revisionist, thought Wedel had not gone far enough in his revisionism.[32] Wedel's correspondence has exchanges with several persons who found the book an important corrective to the one-sided propagandistic histories produced during the war. Arthur Hugh Frazier, an American diplomat stationed at Vienna in 1914, declared that the book had helped to clarify the Austrian record on the war. Frazier, at first, remained unconvinced that Berchtold, the Austrian foreign minister, should be as favorably treated as Wedel had done; Frazier labelled Berchtold as "very frivolous being fond of cabarets and the lighter forms of opera and the ladies. . . . Thoroughly unscrupulous." Finally, however, Frazier acknowledged that the book convinced him about some Berchtold items which he, as an eye-witness observer, had missed. "A number of facts which you reveal were unknown to me and many of my cherished beliefs have had to be scrapped."[33] These were good words to an historian.

Running throughout Oswald Wedel's printed articles and public speeches was a skeptical, slightly debunking tone against all one-sided, patriotic history. As a Revisionist, he not only pricked the moralistic pomposity of the warriors of 1914, but also the "isms" of the 1930s and the crusade of World War II. He warned: Beware grand slogans like "For Christ and the cross" or "The last war" or "The war to end war." The absolute claims of the state must always be examined critically. Was World War I really a crusade to make the world safe for democracy? Hardly. The patriots demanded a crusade but "the Great War now represents almost the usual aspect of a war over spoils so characteristic of previous wars. Contemporary research has disproven most of the charges and claims believed during the war" (1931).[34]

What about Fascism versus Communism in the 1930s: "Whether it's Heil Hitler or long live the proletariat—its all the same." Democracy also had its sordid side; was England acting "to protect the ten commandments — or her investments?" The U.S.—"Certainly not our Sunday School principles." After World War II he refused to swallow the Cold War rhetoric about Free World versus demonic communism. "Our policies are actually based on other considerations than moral ones." The U.S. plays Metternich's game. "The only end I can see is a repetition of the past. Our crusade will soon cease to be popular."[35]

His themes were often in tune with aspects of Mennonite thinking on war and peace, such as the revulsion against World War I, and concern for conciliation and social values. Oswald Wedel's philosophy of history was not strictly pacifistic; he certainly did not use the pious language of his father's Mennonitism. Nevertheless, the Mennonite heritage seems to be a factor in understanding the historical perspective of Oswald H. Wedel. Both C. H. Wedel and son Oswald H. Wedel illustrate stages of Mennonite historical scholarship.

The Wedel family has been rooted to the Mennonite heritage, but each generation in a different way. For C. H. Wedel, his work was the Mennonite church and Bethel College. For his children, Mennonitism was one cause among others, but still a religious and cultural heritage that was savored and appreciated. Oswald Wedel reported his activities for inclusion in the Bethel College *Monthly*, and occasionally he submitted articles on history for publication. Oswald's and Theodore's biographies were included in all editions of *Who's Who Among the Mennonites*, but for Oswald it likely was a perfunctory matter. He could be sour about his Mennonite background. As the years passed, the Oswald Wedel family revived interest in the Mennonite heritage; and following Dr. Wedel's death, Mrs. Marie Dickman Wedel in 1976 established a memorial at Bethel College by an endowment for the Oswald H. Wedel Chair of History. The Wedel scholarly contribution begun at Bethel College by C. H. Wedel will be remembered and appreciated.

FOOTNOTES

1 *Mennonite Encyclopedia,* IV, 908. On American Mennonite historians, see Rodney Sawatsky. "History and Ideology: American Mennonite Identity Definition through History" (Ph. D. dissertation, Princeton Univ. 1977).

2 For bibliographical data on C. H. Wedel, see *The Mennonite,* 25 (May 5, 1910), 1-2; *Bethel College Monthly,* 15 (May, June, 1910). Also *Mennonite Encyclopedia,* IV, 907-08; and David C. Wedel. "The Contribution of C. H. Wedel to the Mennonite Church through Education" (Th. D. dissertation, Iliff School of Theology, 1952).

3 *School and College Journal* (Bethel College), 2 (Jan. 1897), 4. The Ursinus College Catalogue for 1892 records: "Honorary A.M., Prof. C. H. Wedel, Bethel College."

4 Mrs. Helen Moyer, after attending Bethel Academy, took the A.B. program at Bethel, graduating in 1915. She was the first woman graduate of the A.B. program. Interview in Bethel College Oral History Collection. Aug. 17, 1978.

5 Obituary, *Berne Witness* (1910).

6 Bender, *Two Centuries of American Mennonite Literature* (Goshen 1929), pp. 45, 99, 102, 104. In addition, Americans also published two printings of the English versions of *Martyrs' Mirror.*

7 *Herald of Truth,* 1895, pp. 44, 51-52; *Mennonite Encyclopedia,* II, 707.

8 *Herald of Truth,* 1889, pp. 353; 1893, p. 101.

9 On Keller, see Cornelius Krahn, "Ludwig Keller: A Prophet and a Scholar," *Mennonite Life* (1966), 81-84; and *Mennonite Encyclopedia,* III, 162-64.

10 *Herald of Truth,* 1889, p. 353; Krahn, "Keller," p. 84.

11 *Herald of Truth,* 1888, p. 130; 1886, p. 170.

12 Keller's letter collection is in The Mennonite Library and Archives, Bethel College. On John Horsch and Keller, see Robert Friedman, "John Horsch and Ludwig Keller," *Mennonite Quarterly Review,* 21 (July 1947), 160-74; and Sawatsky, "History and Odeology," pp. 93-95.

13 *School and College Journal,* 1899, pp. 29-30.

14 *Bethel College Monthly,* 1903, p. 36.

15 Wedel, *Abriss,* I, 5, 150; II, 150; Wedel's religious and historical thought is treated by D. C. Wedel, "C. H. Wedel."

16 *Abriss,* II, 147-59; IV, 206-08. On Wedel's Pietism, see Sawatsky, "History and Ideology," p. 100, and Wedel, *Bilder aus Kirchengeschichte,* section 29.

17 J. R. Toews to Keller, Aug. 4, 1899 (M.L.A.); *School and College Journal,* 1899, p. 77.

18 Wedel to Keller, Nov. 22, 1902 (M. L.A.).

19 Toews to Keller, Aug. 4, 1899.

20 *Herald of Truth,* 1893, p. 101; 1895, p. 257.

21 *Bethel College Monthly,* Nov. 1910, p. 2.

22 *School and College Journal,* 1896, p. 6; 1897, p. 62.

23 Cornelius Krahn interview, Sept. 19, 1978 (Bethel Oral History Collection).

24 C. H. Wedel, *Words to Young Christians,* trans. Theodore O. Wedel (Berne, 1926), pp. 27-32; *Abriss,* IV, 205.

25 *Abriss,* IV, 137, 156, 193, 203-04.

26 Ibid., p. 193.

27 *Mennonite Life,* 3 (1948), 36, 39-40.

28 Bethel College has the Oswald H. Wedel archive with biographical information. A brief biography is included in *Who's Who among the Mennonites* (1937 and 1943 eds). I also wish to acknowledge helpful information from Mrs. Theodore O. (Cynthia) Wedel and Mrs. Mariam Schmidt.

29 Mrs. Theodore O. Wedel correspondence, Feb. 19, 1981.

30 Mariam Penner Schmidt interview, Mar. 9, 1981.

31 Wedel MSS Collection, folder 1.

32 Ibid., folder, 7; *Bethel College Monthly* (1933), p. 3; Barnes, *A History of Historical Writing,* 2nd ed. (New York, 1963), p. 284.

33 Frazier letters, April 27, May 5, 1932; Jan. 31, 1933 (folder 7).

34 "The Great War in the Light of Present Day Evidence" (Liberal Arts Lecture, Univ. of Arizona, 1931), folder 4.

35 Quotations in this paragraph came from several of Dr. Wedel's unpublished addresses from 1930s-1940s (folder 4).

C. H. Wedel's Synopsis of the History of the Mennonites

Edited by Keith Sprunger

C. H. Wedel's *Abriss der Geschichte der Mennoniten* (4 volumes, Newton, Kansas: Schulverlag von Bethel College, 1900-1904) has never been translated into English, although some of his shorter books have been. Wedel's Mennonite history enunciated an early version of the Anabaptist vision for American, German-speaking Mennonites at the turn of the century. His history established two foundations for Mennonite belief: The Apostolic Church and the Old Evangelical Brotherhoods of the late Medieval, early Reformation period. His Anabaptist vision encompassed "practical Christianity" and *Nachfolge Christi*. Wedel's history might well be considered a classic of American Mennonitism.

The translation of these selections is by Hilda Voth. The translation draws upon aspects of Wedel's thoughts from all four volumes.

ORIGIN OF THE MENNONITES
Volume I, Part IX

In current history the Christians who followed Menno Simons and identified with him in the recognition of points leading to Protestantism are called Mennonites. Menno Simons, who died in 1559, was a Dutch reformer. He wrote numerous publications that received wide circulation, so that groups with similar beliefs acknowledged him as their leader and established their identity by bearing his name. The main thrust of Mennonite belief was an endeavor to represent the Christianity of apostolic origin and to live according to the precepts of Jesus Christ. This they carried through to the disciplines of their congregations as well. For this reason the Mennonites emphasize community (*Gemeinde - Christentum*) and have always advocated a complete break between church and state. They separated themselves from the other Protestant denominations and communities because of the one special tenet of their faith, adult baptism based on a personal confession of faith. Other differences are their refusal to swear an oath, their refusal to do military duty, and their very limited acceptance of other confessions of faith.

2.

The relationship of the Mennonites with the *Allgemeine Kirche* is in direct relationship with that of their forefathers with the early church. The traditions and historic conditions of Mennonites reveal an unbroken relationship across the Middle Ages back to the Apostolic Churches. This claim of an unbroken line with the Apostolic Church has been considered as a probable thing, according to reliable research of history. Some historians consider it a proven fact.

The Mennonites were actually not of the same church background as Menno Simons. In the sixteenth century they grew out of a branch of "Baptizers", as they were called; and they have developed into a group of their own, amid violent bloodshed administered by government authorities. The Baptizers simply called themselves Christians. In Switzerland they belonged to what were called "Old Evangelical Churches." The Baptizers share their real background with the Waldensians of the Middle Ages. As such, Baptizers were very closely related to the early church. Even though they have departed from each other in many interpretations, basically there is a similarity in the main facets of their faith as well as in their church organization. Thus their connection appears very natural.

The Mennonites and their ancestors consider themselves entitled to be known as an autonomous movement in the church, because they continue to uphold important aspects of the Apostolic Church. (Some neglected by Rome and the other Protestant groups.) They have never fostered the idea that it is impossible to find salvation in other branches of the church. They have never condemned those who held to opinions other than their own. They were under the impression, however, that the way of redemption and the way of sanctification were more accessible in their own community than under the guiding leadership of the church of Rome and other Protestant state churches. They were so convinced of the truth of their biblical interpretation, that they were willing to make enormous sacrifices for their belief. Thousands from their ranks have faced death joyfully for this cause.

3.

The ecclesiastical organization of the Mennonites and their ancestors give evidence of a certain basic pattern. They cannot be considered a sect. They have too many characteristics of apostolic Christianity for that. Probably there have been times of utter lack of growth, but there have also been periods of rejuvenation and renewal of the original vision. They can rightfully be called a "community church" (*Gemeindekirche*) as opposed to the Roman priest church (*Prieststerkirche*) or the Protestant state church (*Staatskirche*). In the latter two there

was visible state support given to the church, sustaining it just as much as the actual servants of the church did. Actually the lines of demarcation between church and society merged into the same, so that the religious rites became regular functions of the state. The community church (*Gemeindekirche*) strived for and then maintained its independence from the state, even though it provoked persecution to the point of bloodshed. The ministers in the church did not hold government offices. Their teachings stated from the beginning that the civil government was not appointed to prescribe the articles of Christian faith, least of all to force them upon Christians to make them agree with dogma that was contrary to their convictions.

Mennonites were not very concerned with dogmatic systems. They were far more interested in a zealous study of holy scripture and the striving to be better followers of Christ and as such be in the service of benevolence. For this reason, their churches tried to accept as Christians only those who had an inner conviction rather than all those who were merely joining with the church for the sake of appearance. Out of the emphasis on personal Christian convictions will come many of their personal characteristics.

4.

In the historical presentation of the development of the *Gemeindekirche* up to the Mennonites of our day, we consider the "Gemeinde Christianity" of the first centuries, then the development of the general church into the "episcopal church" in the fourth century. From this basis came the "Roman Church" with the papacy. From there, as the stream of ecclesiastical protests increased, some large and small separatist congregations were formed as a result of separation from the Roman Church. Each separatist church would strive in its own way to return to the original or at least rejuvenated apostolic structure of church organization. In the Waldensian movement this idea was carried out to the fullest, and as a result this group separated from the greater church with the intention of achieving anew the true ideals of Christianity. At this point in history they were joined by the Baptizers and by the Mennonites. During this time many diverse religious factions were created.

5.

Thus the history of the Mennonites and their predecessors falls into four periods or categories: (1) The section of history that tells of the Bishop Churches and State Churches up to the appearance of the Waldensians in the twelfth century. (2) This history of the Waldensians from the twelfth to the sixteenth century. (3) The Baptizers or *Taufertum* of the sixteenth century. (4) The Mennonites of the sixteenth century to the present time.

WALDENSIAN CHRISTIANITY
Volume I, Part 95

REVIEW. And so we see how small groups and also larger congregations have been formed from the original church since apostolic times. These have been serious in their efforts to maintain the original simplicity of the original church. As supporters of "gemeinde" Christianity, they have established a certain basic stature of the Christian church. In spite of numerous differences, a definite system of uniform points of understanding have been established. These tie the groups together as though they were small streams flowing into a larger stream. Their emphasis is upon the lasting value of the apostolic institution of their church life and its reverence for the words of Christ.

Since they are careful not to stray from these precepts they cannot allow themselves to take the sword nor swear an oath. They grasp the essential points of love in Christianity. They permit no acts of violence as a matter of doctrine; therefore the promotion of freedom of conscience. They overthrow the blending of church and state. They require baptism to be based upon a personal confession of faith. They seek to provide evidence that Christianity is not an agreement of scholarly dogmas but rather the following of Christ (*Nachfolge Christi*). Practical deeds of charity are more important to them than outward churchly perfection.

They make a particular claim to being apostolic Christians and to keep a direct tie with the original church. This is a situation that was either affirmed or denied by its enemies as it satisfied their whims. From the rulers of the church they have received treatment comparable to that of heathen Romans and the early Christians. They were considered as sects that needed to be resisted, so they were attacked with ugly names and false accusations. How closely they hung together will probably never be known since their history was written by their enemies. Their lack of freedom explains why they became victims of certain peculiar and overreactionary circumstances. There is no doubt that as a whole they have contributed a purer portion of the church at large than their persecutors did. Those branches of the church at large or portions of it that have become re-established with the apostolic Christians have done so only up to the degree that they were able or willing to abandon erroneous ideas. They had to regain the vitality that came from overcoming persecution and then going in the right direction.

They emphasize that the *religion of love* is not to be exhausted in idle theories and empty phrases, and especially not in the condemnation of those who differ with them in doctrine. The religion of love furthers inner and outer happiness. Wherever they are portrayed as mystics, it could be a right interpretation because mysticism represents the ethical side of that group. The intellectual part alone was not their main intent; the reason for their bitter persecution was basically the same as the conflict of the world and the kingdom of God. Just as the Lord went the way of suffering, it should not astonish us that his followers must tread the same path.

ANABAPTISTS OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO PRE-REFORMATION CHRISTIANS.

Volume II, Part 6

It is completely false to accept as the truth that with Luther in 1517 a new era appeared in the realm of Christian understanding. As greatly as this is proclaimed in the Lutheran version of the Reformation, it is still not correct. The fact that Luther's 95 theses were new did not cause them to have such a deep impact; rather it was because they brought out the deep inner conviction that lay in the hearts of so many people. And it was this group of pre-Reformation brother congregations (*Brüder gemeinden*) that formed the bulk of simple community life that produced a storehouse of faith and understanding for later development. Without the existence of this influence and support, it would have been impossible for Protestantism to develop in the sixteenth century.

The fact that most historians don't want to recognize this is understandable. The Roman Church had a vital concern to squelch any emergence of sects that could put a blot upon its history and prevent the justification of its evil behavior. And for the Protestant established churches it is also an advantage if the deviating groups are shown to be weak, without influence, fruitless and even harmful. The historians themselves were guilty of a passion that did not come from a love for their work but rather from the influence of the confessionals. Gottfried Arnold is quite correct in his *Kirchen und Ketzerhistorie* (Church and Heresy History) when he makes this statement: "It is impossible to estimate how diligent and cunning the false church has always been in covering up and replacing the footprints and evidences of the godly in order to heap mistrust and hatred against them." In spite of this, however, there is a large number of these historians who would agree and vouchsafe that the relationship between the Waldensians of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and the Anabaptist churches of the sixteenth century was not close.

7.

The extensive spreading of Anabaptism is considerably less than that of the Waldensian churches. The latter were spread over all of western Europe. But after the diminishing of their confessional awareness, the bulk of their membership joined the established Protestant churches — the Bohemian brethren and the Roman Waldensians of Italy and France did this. This was not the case with those in Switzerland, south and north Germany, and in the Netherlands. There it happened in the 1520's, that great time of sudden awakening of all religious impulses, that the branches that had left the Waldensian church as well as other groups experienced a revival of old ideas and principles that are characteristic of "gemeinde" Christianity.

We call this rejuvenation of an old course, "The Anabaptism of the sixteenth century." By this is not meant that the expression puts a follower into a new "sect," but rather that in 1525 there was a development of a new era of "gemeinde" Christianity. During this period the long discontinued practice of adult baptism was reinstated and an independent church life was set up again. The theologians made every effort to point to them as a new sect in order to represent them as being a threat. At the same time the magistrates judged them to be supporters of old condemned heresies. The common people had earlier sided with these heretics, but now they spoke ill of these same people. Those whom they had called Waldensians, Winkelers, and Spiritualists, they now called "Baptizers" and "Rebaptizers." Among themselves they went by the name of "Brothers". The history of Anabaptism includes a Swiss, Upper German and Netherland era.

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Finally it can be said that only the ignorance of the facts or a spirit of malice has caused the historians and controversialists of the sixteenth century to portray the Baptizers as a new and peculiar revolutionary force at this time. They present them as sects that just sprang up; they made up the terms "Rebaptizers" or "Anabaptists" as names of disrespect for them. And the later historians did the same thing to them. Far more accurate is the assumption that the Waldensian Baptizers, as well as the Mennonites, represent new phases of one and the same basic directions the Christian church has taken. It is evident in the Catholic church—the priestly church—and in the Protestant denominations. These both take into careful consideration the teachings of the Old Testament. Thus we are confronted with the so-called free course of the "Gemeindekirche" which doesn't really wish to establish a rigid doctrine but rather to further the pursuit of unity that the Lord and his apostles had established. This becomes a personal incentive to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. They called themselves "Brothers" or "Evangelical Christians" and often "Altevangelische" (old Evangelicals). The historic scholarly title which should have been given to them—and still should—is "Altevangelische Gemeinden" (Old Evangelical Congregations).

MENNONITES OF RUSSIA

Volume III, Part 86.

As we review the history of the Russian Mennonites, we note the following specific traits in them:

1. First of all, Mennonitism of Russia was a continuation of the same pattern in Prussia. In fact, some of the same sort of Dutch characteristics are still visible. In relation to the church they depended upon support from Prussia for a long time. They received their directions and advice from there; similarly, their teachers and preachers came from there. This evangelical church received as good as nothing from the Russians. Therefore they stood quite alone and cut off by distance and this soon became monotonous.

2. From the beginning, the Mennonite public affairs system in Russia took on more of the characteristics of a colonial economy than a churchly one. The household management became something to be noted—its culture more than its refinement. The obligation not to work with the outside world gave it an excuse for forming the conventicle and thus push the interest for religion into the background.

3. The peculiar situation into which the Mennonites in Russia were placed created a sort of *Volkskirche* (state church) from the very beginning. The heirs then fell naturally into this situation. As a result of this, the church rites would develop as being more of a responsibility for the citizens and government people. This arrangement was in opposition to the fundamental ground rules of our denomination; therefore the articles of faith were seldom mentioned in everyday life. Theoretically they were still considered to be correct, so during the separatist movement there was a vigorous reaction although it never developed into open conflict.

4. As a *Volkskirche* the Russian Mennonites in their quiet way did demonstrate their Mennonite witness, and the traditional vigor in their work left a weighty impression. How rarely—indeed where—did a Mennonite ever stand in a criminal court! What a morally healthy impression a Christian family makes in village life as a whole! This is proved by the high moral character that pervaded the Mennonite colonies. Unfortunately even there not all remains well; there is fornication, dishonesty and much effort for acquiring earthly goods. However, for this kind of village history as portrayed by Horn and Glaubrecht, there is scant material here.

5. The Mennonite colonies have become a blessing for the entire of South Russia. Even from outside their ranks thousands of Russians have had opportunities to earn their livelihood here, have learned to work, and to manage their businesses here. Thousands of beggars have found food and clothing here—and are still doing it. In this quiet way many have had the motivation to serve the Lord outside their own ranks and will be seen and rewarded by God himself. They have followed this urge in an unassuming way and have done noble mission work.

6. The Russian Mennonites have made tremendous sacrifices in the article of faith concerning non-resistance. In order to avoid confrontation they avoided accepting government jobs. This is an area in which other Germans gained prominence. This deep adherence to personal convictions also had its effect on the mass migration to America. This came to the attention of the entire literate world through its newspapers, and as a result the individuality of the Mennonites became known. Those people who remained there (in Russia) are still doing silent witnessing by their alternate forestry service. This shows how tenaciously they hold to this basic principle. The American Mennonites have not been molested over this issue of peace. The Dutch and the South Germans have dropped it entirely. The Prussians make no issue of it. So in respect to nonresistance the Russian Mennonites stand out as being very honorable and certainly deserve the sympathy of all those who share the faith.

7. The ways and methods the Russian Mennonites used to provide for their families after many periods of discord in connection with refusing military service shows an inherent trait of our *Gemeinschaft* (community). And then to pass it on to the younger generation is certainly a credit to the group. What is usually considered as a newly acquired challenge of church life and is lauded as a special consequence of the Christian religion, is practiced silently by our Russian brethren and even taken for granted. They can rightfully be considered an example in this respect.

8. Lacking complete freedom in Russia, the Mennonites there are completely dependent upon foreign countries to supply their educational and literary needs as well as their church leadership. The actual strength in their church usually had to be formed in foreign lands; many of their church interests were discussed in foreign newspapers. This had its advantages but it must have threatened their own identity. A danger of church carelessness and haziness must have been a concern. It must have been a difficult matter for those congregations to preserve the inherited characteristics of the confessionals.

9. The threat was always present that in time the Russian Mennonites would be forced to use the Russian language as their trade language, and ultimately as their church language as well. This caused questions and problems that still cannot be ignored. As a warning to Protestantism as a whole in Russia, and Mennonites, the following statement pertains: "Hold fast to what you have so no one can snatch your crown."

MENNONITES OF AMERICA
Volume IV, Part 46.

In reviewing the history of the American Mennonites we notice in particular:

1. As actually most of the Mennonites have left their ancestral homes for religious causes, the countries along the Rhine, so as a whole they have entered the land of freedom for the same cause. They have joined with the most solid element of the population in our country, the Pilgrim fathers and their partisans. Upon the invitation of the English statesman William Penn, the first Mennonites landed on the free coast of this country. They rested upon the assurance that they would have all the desired freedoms of the British king and later the same from our Republic. Truly God led the Mennonites to America.

2. It cannot be denied that the Mennonites have proven themselves trustworthy as good stewards of the outstanding ability to discern what is right. Not in vain did they press on to places where the rights of all people were respected. Not in vain did they witness to the belief that man's relationship with God had to be put ahead of any social or civic responsibilities. Of equal importance is that their way of life has had a profound influence upon others, having brought their share of solid Christianity with its radiant effects to bear upon his earthly life.

3. Unfortunately the rather underdeveloped conditions of the church in the pioneer period remained as a model for later times. Too much potential intellectual strength remained undeveloped in Mennonite circles; too little use was made of the opportunities resulting from American freedoms. These could have provided them with an enormous build-up of inner and outer independence and growth

within the churches. On the contrary, in many respects they failed to grow. Here they lived in a small cluster with a "Büchel" (beechtree) in the corner as a model. And they did the isolating themselves. Here they could bring about all these divisions—and they brought about many of them.

4. As a result of this continual influx of immigrants, it is impossible to make a satisfying survey of all the groups at this time. One certain isolated characteristic can be defined by the descendants of the oldest congregations, the "Alte" or "Amische" Mennonites who already have a two hundred year established history. They often adhered far too much to the old, although they did succeed in preserving much of the simplicity and quiet godliness of their parents—far too little, however, did they strive for church growth. Their publications and their mission projects are evidence that their energies were used up in a short time.

The congregations settling here after 1850 have certainly showed more favorable growth. They came with open eyes toward all improvement of church environment. They sought to establish more stable conditions and from the very first they were able to arrange for a more satisfying state of the church. They sought out the weaker members, the discouraged ones. Here their community life was still in the stream of establishing a well rounded stability. The fact that those who migrated from South Germany as well as from Prussia and Russia also made great efforts to maintain the basic points of their creed and their solid virtues is illustrated by the example of Jacob Haury in Iowa who was persuaded to pay $600 to obtain his freedom from service in the Civil War. And he was a poor man at that. An example of the second point mentioned above is the Bergthaler Church in Manitoba. In 1893 it repaid a debt to the treasury amounting to $130,000 including interest. The Minister of the Interior mentioned this fact in Parliament saying it was a very rare incident indeed and a credit and honor for the congregation and its guarantors.

5. The American Mennonites are no less vulnerable than those anywhere else to lose their individuality and the visible points of their beliefs, especially since their ethnic groups are spread out in all directions. This puts great distances between individual congregations and it is no easy matter to provide suitable assistance to all of them. This makes it easy for the denominationally indifferent and the dissatisfied members to join with another denomination whose church is closer. A classroom type of nurture of an individual's well being in this respect is obviously needed in our denomination.

SUMMARY OF MENNONITES AND OLD EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS

Volume IV, Part 47

A review of the development of the history of the Old Evangelical congregations arouses a multitude of thoughts than can be described as uplifting, sad, faith-inspiring, and deeply hopeful. One course that attempted mainly to foster the personal Christian life, confined to the community of like-minded believers, was to put them in close contact with the word of the Lord and his Apostles. They have always found this to be a noble task to fulfill. Their struggle, this heroic verification of their faith, is vindicated by their present expansion, their many-sided, well-deserved esteem by tolerant, intellectual historians, educators and statesmen, as well as Christians of other denominations. All this verifies the wealth of true biblical perception from which they could draw. They can be called a church of witnesses and martyrs, mostly also a church in the wilderness—as a whole, the quiet in the land—who are able to discern the true Christianity when other denominations denied the very core of it. These congregations have not escaped times of losses or dimness of their ecclesiastical awareness and other numerous aberrations. Neither did they ever lack a vigorous reformation when needed. As a large people with their roots in Switzerland, South Germany, Holland, West Prussia, South Russia, besides Pennsylvania, Canada and the Mississippi Valley, they have now branched out in all directions. Their divisions now seem to be more far-reaching than the supposition had been, especially their own. They assert the basic principles that they are a peculiar people; the emphasis is actually upon the premise that every person is in direct relationship with God and is obligated to make a decision—a point that is not always correctly assessed in the life of the church. As a whole what they have in common far outweighs what pulls them apart. Undoubtedly they would all readily and heartily agree with Menno Simons' motto found in I Corinthians 3:15, and with Hans Denk's theological point of beginning: "No one is able to comprehend Christ unless he follows Him with living a holy life." Throughout the Old Evangelical group there is still a forceful pull toward unity. Even in those regions where the acceptance of refusal to bear arms has been neglected, the others still maintain a brotherly attitude toward them. They try to learn from them one way or another and especially try to stay together and even work together with them. Even the theological "free thinking" group is met with hopeful consideration even if their positive viewpoint is brought out sharply. Where practical Christianity is concerned, the dogmatic differences are still pushed into the background. The Russian congregations support their new settlers without being inquisitive about their special ecclesiastical viewpoint. The "Alliance of Mennonites in the German Kingdom" helps those congregations that are not yet its members. Similarly, the American Mennonites stand ready to support one another in this respect. Likewise to other denominations; as a whole there is a feeling of generosity, and many contributions have gone from Mennonite groups to other treasuries. In all parts of our *Gemeinschaft* (greater community) there is now more than ever a growing conviction that at the same time we foster an interest in the entire Christian church, we also participate in a loving manner in the building up of our own Zion of congregational life. This should remain an important phase of our church.

Book Reviews

Ethel Ewert Abrahams, *Frankturmalen und Schönschreiben, The Fraktur art and penmanship of the Dutch-German Mennonites while in Europe, 1700-1900* Fraktur translations from the German to English by Elizabeth W. Nickel. Mennonite Press, Inc., North Newton, Kansas, 1980. 154 pages, 21 color plates, 314 illustrations, 2 maps, bibliography, index. Foreword by Cornelius Krahn.

This book is a most valuable and handsomely printed documentation of Mennonite cultural history. It brings together for the first time pages of Fraktur writing and illumination from private collections, libraries and archives in the United States and Canada, penned and painted with care and imagination by Mennonite girls and boys, women and men. This is a catalogue of popular imagery, an anthology of religious-moralizing and secular-didactic writing. The full English translations of the German Fraktur face texts provide access to the ideational context which furnished the motivation for the practice of this art by Mennonites. Unfortunately the reduced size of the illustrations hardly permits the reading of the original texts which would be a must for those wishing to analyze and to interpret them, since the translations do not always capture the writings' true spirit or exact meaning.

Why was calligraphy (Schönschreiben) and illumination of the written page practiced by Mennonites, and is there a Mennonite-specific aspect to their practice of a millennium-old and widely executed art form? These are questions indirectly suggested by the book's title, the answers to which the reader must largely infer through his own interpretation of the illustrations. The very first one is perhaps the most touching testimony to why calligraphy has been practiced and continues to be practiced by Mennonites. This is a letter by Johann Rempel to Cornelius Krahn, of the 20th of June 1948, expressing his gratitude for received material aid but in which he speaks of himself dispairingly: ". . . I cannot say much, my nerves are totally worn out because of grieving and longing for the old (lost) homeland and because of worry about our deported daughter, and I shall need to exercise utmost patience in order to regain my balance. . ." This suffering Mennonite refugee designed a carefully proportioned page of letters, flowers and scrolls as the appropriate way with which to clothe his sincere words of thanks. In doing so he overcomes his own situation of loss, his feeling of un-balance. By framing his words with ornament and by their controlled shaping they achieve special importance, transcending the personal and the momentary. Here then lies the reason for the meaning of *Schönschreiben* as defined already by Demosthenes: it is both the writing of beautiful letters and also of beautiful words, "by people who cherish truth and desire emphasis".

The very last illustration is of a wooden writing box with open-work carved letters in Russian which read: "What is written with a pen cannot be destroyed with an axe", a saying which may well stand as a motto for this book as it documents the survival power of words deemed worthy of emphasis through specially applied design because they were carriers of valued truths.

The catalogue of illuminated pages, for the most part written in Fraktur, is arranged in chronological order and within this sequence according to artist and region, suggesting a historical development of style, and within this a diversity of individual and regional styles. The introductory chapters however hardly relate to or interpret this organization of the material. Rather, the reader is given an overview of thematic categories which reflect the occasions for calligraphic efforts in order of frequency among the surviving examples: samples of handwriting (Vorschriften), the elaborate Christmas and New Year's wishes, bookplates or title pages, illuminated texts (mostly arithmetic books and hymnals), rewards of merit or certificate of excellence issued by teachers, home blessings (Haus Segen) and mottos, mazes which were a form of moralizing game, cut work and formalized love letters. Now one could wish for a more detailed discussion of the use of illustrative motifs and visual symbols as they relate to these categories. Without careful analysis of the symbol in correlation with the text which it is meant to enhance, the symbol cannot be fully understood. For example, the dominant image of a double headed eagle-like bird holding in its claws the egg shaped wreath surrounding the New Year 1844 is to be associated in the context of a New Year's wish with the symbolic meaning of the mythical Phoenix, a Christian symbol of resurrection and renewed life since the first century, and certainly not solely with the double headed eagle emblem of Czarist Russia — even though the Christian Orthodox Czars may in turn have chosen their emblem on the basis of its Christian interpretation. Most of the symbolic motifs—flowers, plants, animals, the heart, the Eye of God —are integral to Christian iconography since the 3rd century. In addition there is imagery depicting aspects of daily life, especially of

town, village and farmstead architecture, the latter still to be seen in Mennonite settlements. Purely geometric designs are very rare, as is the human figure. In all, no clear-cut division between sacred and profane texts, religious or secular illustration exists. The two realms fuse, as is dramatically pictured by an arithmetic problem on land measurements: Within a perfect circle representing God's universe we see one half occupied by the tree of knowledge, the snake and an utterly sexless Adam and Eve, while the other half filled with stylized trees and animals represents the Garden of Eden. (P. 46, ill. 61)

The Mennonite parochial school infused all learning with religious instruction which in turn emphasized virtues of patience and diligence in work. The whole tradition of Mennonite calligraphy and illumination was anchored in the Mennonite private school during the 18th and 19th centuries. Because Anabaptist faith centers on the interpretation of the Word of God by every believer, the written word is central and literacy is crucial for its continuity. Therefore calligraphy is an ideally suited expressive mode for Mennonites: it celebrates the Word as a vehicle of valued ideas. In calligraphy and illumination there exists an intimate relationship between the idea and the image: through elaboration, ordering, balancing of the design, the letter, the word as carrier of an idea, also becomes an image or a sign which expresses the idea in a heightened, emphatic way.

The introductory text for the catalogue is at its best in the discussion of techniques used and in its brief summary on Mennonite schools. The book's Achilles heel lies in the undeveloped, sometimes ambiguous and therefore confusing use of terminology. For example, nowhere does one learn that Fraktur is the technical term for Gothic letter types with their characteristic "fractured" or "broken" lines, which were developed during the Middle Ages, particularly during the Gothic style period. The term has also come to mean "German" type, used only for writing in German, favored especially during the Third Reich and falling therefore into disfavor after 1945. In this context it is noteworthy that the 1948 letter penned in the British Occupied Zone of Germany is not executed in Fraktur, nor are the earliest examples which were penned in the Netherlands and which feature the flowing rounded lines of Latin lettering, preferred by the Renaissance and by humanist scholars. Maps of Europe without political boundaries and without historical references look pretty but are utopian and serve little purpose. The long complex tradition of book illumination and calligraphy received a most unfortunate summary quote which presumes that art develops from the "primitive" to the "beautiful", a tenet which the author found not to be applicable to her survey of 200 years of Mennonite practice of the art in that she observes a decline of quality and esthetic merit. But she fails to realize this contradiction.

For everyone with a historical bend this book captures the *Geist* of Mennonite life, its pietism, work ethic, achievement orientation. In addition, Ethel Abrahams has provided a rich resource for further study by artists, historians, theologians, philologists, and pedagogues. And finally, for future practitioners of the art of calligraphy—using Fraktur as one of its modes—the book is a wonderfully diverse and stimulating *Vorschrift.* This is another word whose English translation conveys only half of its total meaning. Literally it translates as "pre-scription", here used in the sense of sample or sampler. But figuratively and most significantly in the context of this book "Vorschrift" also means to prescribe to someone a rule, a mode of conduct, a guiding principle.

Reinhild Kauenhoven-Janzen
Lawrence, Kansas

Solomon Stucky, *The Heritage of the Swiss Volhynian Mennonites.* Waterloo, Ontario: Conrad Press, 1981, Pp. 222.

It is almost too good to be true to find a book that is well constructed, convincing, highly readable and at least somewhat autobiographical. Such is Solomon Stucky's book on the migrations of his forefathers.

The author begins his book by showing how Anabaptism came out of the radical reformation in Switzerland. With its center in Zurich, it soon spread to nearby cantons including Bern. From there persecution drove believers to Alsace and the Palatinate and eventually as far as Russia and America. In this dispersion Stucky picks out one strand —the Swiss-Volhynian Mennonites and traces their journeys from the Bernese Oberland to the United States.

The distinctive feature of Stucky's book is contained in five chapters in which five characters give personal reminiscences regarding places where his family and other families sojourned on the way to America. There is Peter who gives a fictional soliloquy of his life and later imprisonment in Trachselwald Castle. In the same way Christian tells about Mömpelgard (now Montbeliard in France). Katherina speaks of marriage in Michelsdorf, Poland, Anna describes her life in Russia, and Jonathan tells of the journey to Kansas.

While the author must have used his imagination to write these vignettes, he did a great deal of research. A recent traveler to the Polish area found the description in the book to be quite helpful relating to the Mennonite sojourn there. This is a contribution which helps the reader to understand the thinking of the people in their down to earth dealings with each other.

The author, himself of Swiss-Volhynian descent, writes his own detailed and vivid remembrances of his life in a family of ten on the Kansas prairies near Moundridge. He is careful to include the influence of the church and its leaders in every one of the separate movements. He felt very keenly the power of the *Gemeinde* as the various decisions were made.

While the author could reflect on the many changes that have occur-

red he also found time to do interviews in the Hopefield congregation which was the church established when the Swiss-Volhynian group first came to Kansas. Had more time been available he could have obtained still more information on the influences of the church and political forces operating in the new homeland.

Solomon Stucky, himself a "wanderer" left his Anabaptist heritage while a high school student to join a fundamentalist group. After some years of searching he became a Baptist minister, and during his graduate studies he met Dr. Robert Friedmann who urged him to delve deeper into his heritage. These words were not without effect and, rejoining the Mennonite church, he was able to understand his son's desire not to register for the draft. Both father and son left for Ontario where Solomon engaged in draft counseling and used other means to help young people to find meaning for their lives.

The book is illustrated with pictures and maps and has a descriptive pull-out chart which details the twenty different migrations of the Swiss-Volhynians from their origins in Switzerland to their destinations in Moundridge, Kansas, and Freeman, South Dakota.

The book belongs in church libraries, on the shelves of pastors and church leaders, as well as in personal libraries. It has a forword by James Juhnke, and can be obtained from the author, Box 1084, Brighton, Ontario, KOK 1HO.

Eldon Graber
Wadsworth, Ohio

Walter Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals Since World War II.* Herald Press, Kitchener, Ontario, 1981, Pp. 473.

Soviet Evangelicals Since World War II, by Walter Sawatsky is one of the most significant recent publications on the church in the Soviet Union. While dealing mainly with Evangelical Churches, useful observations on the Orthodox Church help the reader to see the Evangelicals in the proper Russian setting. Sawatsky develops the story of the Evangelicals with an impressive empathy. Missing are the common blind spots of some Western scholars who know Russia only from a tourist perspective. Here is a thoroughly scholarly work, written in a popular style to make it accessible to a broad reading public. Sawatsky gives the the reader a chance to grasp the complexity of church life in a society where the church is seen as a cancer that cannot be fought with known antibiotics and therefore it has to be "tolerated". The author sheds light on the obvious and less obvious obstacles erected by the state. The timid believer cannot make it in this kind of society and thus it becomes clear why the membership of the growing Evangelical churches comes across as a much more committed community than the church in western democracies. At the same time we are also puzzled by the incredible compromises made with the state. Knowing full well that the government's professed aim is the destruction of the church, the leaders of this church frequently opt for cooperation with its atheistic oppressors.

Sawatsky deals very convincingly with three generations of the Evangelical church leadership. There are those who have opted for cooperation, to save the church organization, but they are challenged by leaders who have suffered in prison camps because they refused to give in, and finally a younger generation is beginning to challenge the old guard. The author avoids the temptation of moral judgment but at the same time he offers an objective analysis of situations and considerable insights into the struggles of individual leaders. The author does not create heroes but he succeeds in mellowing our judgment of personalities on whom history might come down harshly. Sawatsky makes us sensitive to the plight of the church leadership in the Soviet Union and raises our awareness of the truly tragic fate of church leaders in a society which openly professes to tolerate the Christian Church only temporarily, until such "superstition" can be erased successfully. But meanwhile men like Karev, Orlov, and Pimen accept "peace medals" from that state, knowing quite well that the state's understanding of peace is diametrically opposed to the peace of Christ. During the severest oppression these leaders travel abroad and deny any oppression. However, there are also those leaders who refuse to be compromised by promises or privileges.

This leads us to another important chapter of Sawatsky's book, with important insights into the tensions in the Evangelical camp. Some of the outstanding Evangelical leaders, like Kriuchkiv, Baturin, and Georgii Vins, refused to accept any state interference in the church and demanded that the ALL UNION COUNCIL OF EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS-BAPTISTS (AUCECB) stop being subservient to the state. The story of the eventual split in the Evangelical camp is treated with compassion and objectivity. Sawatsky's analysis of the developments, leading to the successful formation of the Initsiativniki (dissenters) union, the COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS—BAPTISTS (CCECB), may well be the best analysis of this development by a western scholar.

As would be expected, Sawatsky is well informed on Mennonite involvement with the Evangelicals and he interprets the Mennonite story in the context of the Evangelical groups. It is encouraging to read his interpretation of Mennonite actions in the Soviet Union which point to a growing Mennonite consciousness among the various groups, which for some time was almost lost. While this book is especially important for Mennonite scholars and interested readers, non-Mennonite historians and sociologists will also appreciate this significant source.

Bibliographies have become commonplace for any publication, but in Sawatsky's book the bibliographies must get special mention. It is safe to say that we will gather

more revealing information on church developments in the Soviet Union, but at this time Walter Sawatsky's book is the most up-to-date in information, insights, and impressive bibliographies on the Evangelical movement in the Soviet Union.

Sawatsky has become an authority on the Evangelicals in Russia and even those who have kept up with developments behind the iron curtain will appreciate this excellent contribution to Mennonite scholarship.

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Wederdopers, Menisten, Doopsgezinden in Nederland 1530-1980, Ed. by S. Groenveld, J. P. Jacobszoon, and S. L. Verheus. Zutphen: De Walburg Pers, 1980, Pp. 288. Cornelius Krahn, *Dutch Anabaptism: Origin, Spread, Life, and Thought.* Second Edition. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1981 (1968), Pp. 303.

Four hundred and fifty years of the history of the Anabaptist-Mennonite-Doopsgezinden in the Netherlands are traced by various authors. About a third of the chapters deal with the origin and formation of the Anabaptist movement and the emerging of the Mennonites as the major surviving group.

The next two-thirds of the book treats the various aspects of the Brotherhood as it chooses to call itself, using the Dutch Doopsgezinden (Baptist-minded, literally) rather than Mennonites. Several authors draw attention to the decline of the churches from a membership of 160,000 at the beginning of the eighteenth century until early in the nineteenth century. The membership again rose as persons left the Dutch Reformed Church because of doctrinal disputes and then joined the more liberal Doopsgezinden. That has special interest since the Doopsgezinden have again sunk to a membership almost as low as that of the early eighteenth century.

Various chapters deal with topics such as the Seminary; church life; ministry to the poor, orphans and elderly; Mission work, the peace witness; cultural development; and participation in the life of the country.

A final chapter surveys what has happened in the decades of the twentieth century. An extensive bibliography is provided. It has a general listing and then a chapter by chapter by listing, covering five pages with double columns and including both books and articles.

The book is a delight to read. It is well illustrated throughout and has an attractive format. Most of it is well written and very readable. It had subsidy from the Algemene Doopsgezinde Societeit, the Dr. Hendrik Muller's Fatherland Fund, and the Foundation Honig-Laan Fund, which made possible the publication of such a substantial and handsome book at a reasonable price.

While the book lacks the consistency and coherence of a book by a single author, it does have the advantage of a greater scope of awareness by choosing scholars who write in their areas of expertise. It probably presents the best popular account of the Dutch Brotherhood, supplementing the more scholarly work of N. van der Zijp's *Geschiedenis der Doopsgezinden in Nederland* which was just reprinted in 1980.

The second edition of Cornelius Krahn's *Dutch Anabaptism* covers less than a third of the period covered by *Wederdopers, Menisten, Doopsgezinden in Nederland 1530-1980.* It can thus go into greater depth on the earliest years of Anabaptism in the Netherlands. He covers only part of the first century of the movement, mainly during the lifetime of Menno Simons which is Krahn's specialty in Dutch Anabaptism.

One of the best chapters traces the events at Münster, which is always a difficult and somewhat confused episode in Anabaptist history. Krahn seems to be thorough and fair in his treatment.

The book suffers some from repetitions. They include coverage of Jan Joste (pp. 125 and 133); suspension of baptism by Melchior Hoffman (pp. 120-1 and 133); "David Joris emerged as the dominating mediator..." (p. 166) and "David Joris proved to be a successful mediator..." (p. 167); Bernard Rothman not identified among the living or dead after the fall of Münster (pp. 160 and 168); and the effect of the execution of Sicke Freerks on Menno (pp. 99, 132, and 171.)

It is unclear where Krahn considers the center of the Anabaptist movement. He states that at a meeting of divergent Anabaptist groups at Bocholt in 1536, "the representatives were primarily from the center of the Anabaptist groups." (p. 166). He then notes the absence of Obbe and Dirk Philips. (He does not mention Menno, presumably because Menno had not yet risen to prominent leadership in the movement.)

Despite his note that in the second edition mistakes were corrected, some still are present. On p. 195 "conscientiousness" appears when he apparently means "consciousness". On pages 195 and 260 spiritual is hyphenated wrongly. On page 260 church-dominated and state-dominated are separated with what appear to be dashes instead of hyphens.

The treatment of the Dutch Anabaptists and Menno's view of incarnation is not interpreted very adequately. As I have demonstrated elsewhere, Menno and his colleagues did not simply accept the somewhat crass views of Melchior Hoffman, but restated them in more careful terms and for sound doctrinal and theological reasons.

Much of the treatment of Mennonite history by American writers has come from Swiss-South German sources and background. It is helpful to have two substantial works from the Dutch. Unfortunately the broadest in scope is in Dutch and thus not available to the vast majority of American Mennonites, including most scholars. It would be worthwhile if the first of these two books could be translated and reproduced with all the illustrations for an English readership.

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