MENNONITE LIFE

SEPTEMBER 1981

In this Issue

This issue of *Mennonite Life* includes a pictorial companion piece to the book *Prairie People: A History of the Western District Conference* by associate editor David A. Haury. A few of the group photographs from the files of the Mennonite Library and Archives have been enlarged. An examination of these photographs reveals subtle changes in activities and dress during the last century

Bertha Fast Harder began to collect Low-German rhymes over thirty years ago while she was a student at Bethel College. The sponsorship of a Low-German play by *Mennonite Life* stimulated her interest in the language and customs of the Mennonites. Sketches by John P. Klassen illustrate the rhymes.

Calvin Redekop's essay on the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren contains a wealth of insights into the relationship between faith and tradition. Numerous Mennonite groups are faced with "fundamentalist-evangelical" divisions. Redekop analyzes the group embarrassment which causes "anti-conference" sentiments.

Katie Funk Wiebe writes on the early history of women in the Mennonite Brethren Church. Perhaps the major trend in historiography during the past decade has been to look at the lives of the powerless and disenfranchised through the study of social history and women's history. Wiebe provides encouragement and a solid foundation for future research in these often ignored areas of Mennonite history.

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Editor
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Front Cover
Western District Pastors (1900)

Back Cover
Preparation Committee for Western District Conference, Emmaus Mennonite Church, 1912

Photo Credits
P. 18 *God, Working Through Us . . .* (1972); p. 26 Katie Funk Wiebe and *The Witness of the Martyr's Mirror for our Day;* p. 27 *My Parents* by David V. Wiebe; and p. 32 Henry T. Claassen. All others: Mennonite Library and Archives.

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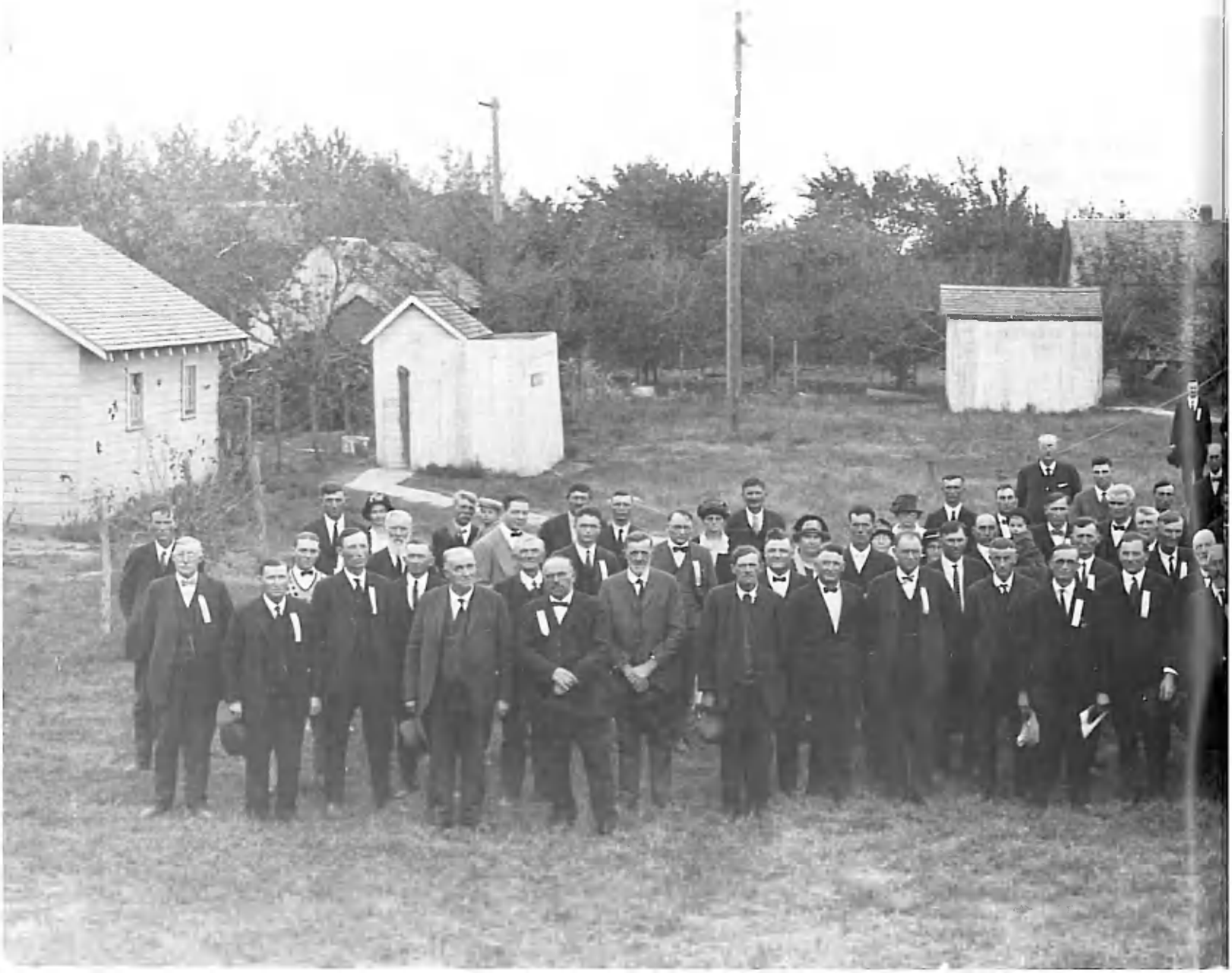
The Western District Conference

A Photographic Essay

by David A. Haury

Right, Western District Conference Memorial Hall, Bethel College, 1952.

Below and continued pp. 5-7, Western District Conference, Buhler, 1925.




34th Western District.
Mennonite Conferenc
Buhler Kans. — Oct. 20-23,


34th Western District
Mennonite Conference
Buhler Kans. — Oct. 20-23, 1925

Far left, Western District officers and committee chairmen, 1953. Left to right: Erwin Goering; Albert Gaeddert; Harvey Jantz; Arnold Epp; Harold Buller; and P. T. Neufeld.

Left, Western District Conference, Memorial Hall, Bethel College, 1953.

Below, Western District Conference, Buhler, 1925.

Upper left, Western District business meeting, First Christian Church, Clinton, Oklahoma, 1957.

Middle left, Western District Sunday session attended by over 800 at Clinton High School, 1957.

Lower left, Western District officers: Henry W. Goossen; Roland R. Goering; and Waldo Kaufman (left to right), 1957.

Above, Western District Ministers' Conference, Hillsboro, 1951.

Left, Western District Conference, Memorial Hall, Bethel College, 1972.

Above, German school at Bethel College, taught by Irvin Haury, 1916.

Upper right, Western District Ministers' Retreat at Camp Mennoscah, 1980.

Below, Hunter School near Whitewater, taught by Ted Roth (far left, back row).

Below right, German school at Deer Creek, Oklahoma, 1906.

Low German for Children—Rhymes, and Poems

Collected by Bertha Fast Harder

Preface

When I was a little girl I experienced the joy of a child in learning rhymes and songs that my mother taught me. Among the earliest I remember are some Low German rhymes and songs which we might classify as Mennonite folklore.

Even though time and years have often taken me away from vicinities where Low German is used, I have always retained an appreciation for the contributions of this language.

My interest in Low German increased after I entered Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas, where *The Mennonite Life* was sponsoring a play written in the Low German and containing a portrayal of a life with its peculiar flavor of language and customs reminiscent of days gone by. This interest grew with the study of our forefathers in "Mennonite History, Life and Principles," taught by Cornelius Krahn.

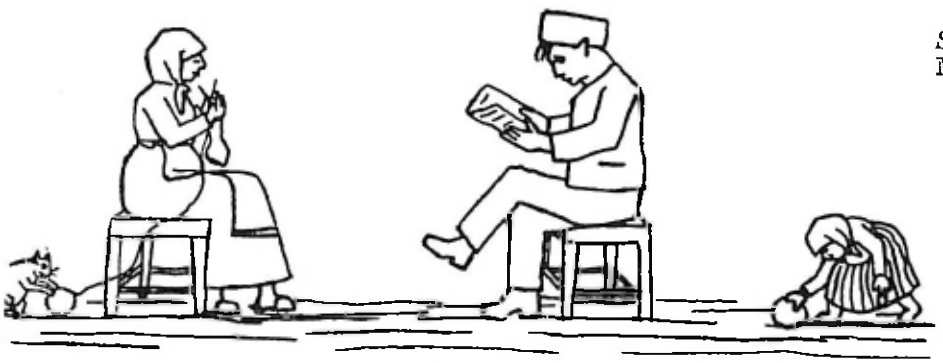
With this impetus I began a collection of that part of Low German expression dear to many of us because of childhood memories—literature for children.

Some of the rhymes and songs I wrote from memory were given to me by my mother, relatives, and friends from several states and Canada, who also knew them only as they had learned them by word of mouth. I copied several of the verses from the "Mennonitische Volkswarte", "Ruszlanddeutsche Friesen", and "Die Mundart von Chortitza". I want to express my gratitude for all these contributions.

Since the Low German is basically not a written language, there is no accepted spelling for its usage. In this collection I tried to conform to that used by Arnold Dyck in his Low German publications.

The following Low German words and their English meaning are given to aid in recognizing the phonetic sounds:

een—one
enn—and
etj—I
tjemmt—comes
doa—there
nao (or) no—to
ea—before
froag—ask
wi—we
woone (or) woni—which
jeali (or) jäle—Yellow
nijh—not
mehl—mill
uck—also
finji—find
leewi—dear
tun—fence
waetje—wake
vurratji—father
opa—on
floch—flew
noch—now



Sketches by John P. Klassen from Mennonite Life *(December 1973).*

I. POEMS OR RHYMES

Haunstji enn Greetji

Haunstji set em Schorsteen
Fletjt siti sieni Scho,
Tjemmt doa Noabasch Greetji aun
Sach am flietijh to.

"Haunstji, wellst du frije,
Dann frij du doch noa mi!
Etj hab scheenit Spältijh,
Daut jaew etj dann die!

"Spältijh es to weinijh,
Enn Kruschtji sen to fäl."
"Enn Haunstji, wellst du frije,
Dann frij du doch noa mi!"

Haunstji enn Greetji jingi top oppim Stijh
Haunstji fol 'nen, enn Greetji rannt wajh
Haunstji ropt, "Greetji, komm halp me 'rut,
Saulst uck woari mieni leewsti Brut!"
(MVW: Feb. 1935; p. 66)

Mutta enn Tjind

Mini Mutta es mi got
Jeft mi waut to eati,
Schintjifleesch enn Butabrot
Daut waor etj nijh fejeati.

Mini seeti Tsokapop,
Du lijhst mi Dach enn Nacht em Kop,
Du hast mi sofeal Jeld jekost
Doarom jef mi nu'n seeten Pos.
(MVW: Nov. 1935; p. 409)

Tjipheenatjis

Tjipheenatjis, Tjipheenatjis,
Dee weari oppim Hof
Dee ploki auli Blomtjis auf,
Daut wea doch schia to grof.

Dee Mami woat ju schelli,
Dee Papi woat ju schloani!
Tjipheenatjis, Tjipheenatjis,
Wo woat ju daut dann goani! (MVW: Jan. 1935; p. 19)

Back Koatji

Back Koatji, back back!
Eitji es em Sack Sack
Kuchuck es jischtorwi.
Wo woa wi ahm bigrowi?
Hinjrim Schult sinen Aowi.
Wo woa wi ahm seetji?
Hinjrim Schult sine Eatji.
Wo woa wi am finji?
Hinjrim Schult sine Linji. (MVW: Jan. 1935; p. 17)

Op Wätji

So wätji mine Mutta mi:
"Tjitjieritji! Tjitjieritji Tji!
Nu es't Tit fe di!
Sontji es op enn Fäjiltjis sinji,
Schpitstji enn Mitstji em Goadi aul schprinji.
Rausch op, wausch enn dann jeati enn dann herut.
Sest lachi di aula den Langschloopa ut!
Tjitjieritji! Tjitjieritji!
Nu es't Tit fe di!" (MVW : July 1936; p. 208)

Fo Peeta

Hoadsch Mauntji jäle,
Paupe foat nao dee Mehli
Fon dee Mehli nao dee Schtaut
Brinjt uck onsim Peeta waut.
Waut woat Paupe am brinji?
Eenin Aupil enn eenin Tjrinjil
Een Aupil enn 'ni Päpackoak.
Daut schmatjt onsim Peeta got.

Goondach, Om Peeta

Goondach, Om Peeta
Scheendach, Om Peeta,
Hab ji nijh mienen Peeta jiseene?
Jo, Om Peeta, min Peeta enn din Peeta
Jingi top nao Peeta Peetasch Peeta.
(MVW: July 1935; p. 266)

Lirem, Lorem

Lirem, Lorem, Lepel Schtel,
Tjleeni Tjinga froage fäl.
Froage dit enn froage daut—
Woarom es daut Woata naut?
Woarom es dee Schnee so wit?
Woarom es daut Fia so heet?
Woarom, woarom, woarom so?
Woarom, woarom esdaut so?

Schuschtji, Patruschtji

Schuschtji, Patruschtji, waut ruschelt em Schtroh?
Dee Janstjis goani boaft, enn habe tjeene Scho.
Dee Schusta haft Lada, oba tjeeni Lestji doa to.
Dee omme, omme Janstjis, bliewe ohne Scho.

Rejen, Rejen

(to call out when it is raining)
Rejen, Rejen groate Dreppe
Daut dem Bua de Scheestji weppe. (RF, p. 103)

Schpaun Aun

(to say when putting on your shoes)
Jehaun, Schpaun aun
Twee Kaute feraun
Twee Mies feropp
Dann jeit't em Galopp. (RF, p. 102)

Jripa, Pipa

Jripa, Pipa etj set ope Huck
Wann'a tjemmt dann rann etj fluck! (MC, p. 120)

Aotboa, Aotboa, Lankbeen

Aotboa, Aotboa Lankbeen,
Jeit op'i jreene Wäs,
Haft uck rode Schteewle aun,
Et sit am aus'n Adilman.
Aotboa, Aotboa Lankbeen,
Wanea tjemmst du wade?
Optjoa, optjoa!
Wan dee Roge ripe,
Wan dee Poge pipe,
Wan dee Däre Knoare,
Wan dee Tjalwa bloare. (MVW : July 1935; p. 263)

Sinj Am So

Sinj am, sinj am, sinj am so,
Sched em Sack enn binj am to,
Haud etj nijh so sea jisunge
Wea dee Sak nijh tojibunge. (MVW : July, 1935; p. 266)

Mitz Mitztji

"Mitz Mitztji,
Woa weascht du?"
"Bo Grotmuratji
Em Koamatji."
"Waut deetst du doa?"
"Letjt Schmauntji."
"Met waut?"
Met't Potji."
"Ei schtikats 'rut!
Ei schtikats 'rut!" (MVW : Oct. 1935; p. 377)

Nijoasch Koake

Etj sach jun Schornschteen roake
Etj wist wol waut ji moake.
Ji backte Nijoasch Koake.

Jef mi eene, bliw etj schtone.
Jef mi twe, fang etj aun to gaone.
Jef mi dree enn fea tojlitj
Wensch etj junt daut eewje Himmelrijh.

Etj Wensch

Etj wensch, etj wensch,
Etj wea enn tjleena Mensch.
Wann etj eascht woa gräta senne
Woa etj beta Wensche tjenne.

Etj Wensch

(A New Year's Wish)

Etj wensch, etj wensch,
Ttj wet nijh waut
For enn'a Fup.
Enn jef mi waut.

Lott es Dot

Lott es dot, Lott es dot,
Listji lijht aopp Stoawi.
Daut es goat, Daut es goat.
Woa wi uck waut oawi?
Oaw etj nijh den roden Rock,
Oaw etj doch den Bassemschtock.

Daut Farjoa Tjemmt!

Wann woam dee Wind fom Side tjemmt,
Enn den Schnee fom Laund wajh nemmt,
Dann woat dee Foama froo jischtemmt
Enn sajht, "Daut Farjoa Tjemmt!"

Wann kloa dee Son fom Himmil schint,
Enn't nijh mea so ilijh nemmt,
Dann sajht dee Leera enn'i Schol,
"Tjinna, Daut Farjoa tjemmt!"

Enn wann em Flus daut Is opbrätjt,
Enn dee Krauj ea Leet aunschtemmt,
Dann weet een jidra gauns bischtemmt
Daut nu daut Farjoa Tjemmt. (MVW : Feb. 1936; p. 40)

I. Peetasch

II. ABOUT PLAY

Finjasch

Tjleena Finja,
Goldna Rinja,
Langhauls,
Botta Letja,
Lustji Tjnetja. (MVW : Jan. 1935; p. 17)
(to say when counting fingers on a child's hand)

De Wind Bloast

Machst Apel? Machst Beere?
Kaunst Wind enn Waota weere?
(gently blow into child's face after saying the last line)

Tjenentji, Mulentji

Tjenentji, Mulentji,
Näspiptji, Backblostji,
Ogbrontji, Schteenhontji,
Schip, schip min Hontji!
(on the word "Tjenentji" touch child's chin; "Mulentji" mouth; "Naspiptji" nose; "Backblostji" cheek; "Ogbrontji" eyebrow; "Schteenhontji" forehead; "Schip, schip" hair)

Holt Soagi

Holt soagi,
Waota droagi,
Tjiltji koaki,
Schpatj broadi,
Holt schnidi,
Koamt eti.
Woa ji nijh bolt eti kaomi
Woa etj junt dee Butskop schlaoni!
Buts, buts, buts, buts!
(Hold hands of child as he sits on the lap and see-saw him back and forth. On the last line bump foreheads together.)

Back Koaktji

Back Koaktji, Back Koaktji,
Back, back, back, back, back!
(to say when clapping child's hands together)

Rea Jretji
Rea Jretji, Rea Jretji,
Jef dem waut,
Jef dem waut,
Jef dem waut,
Jef dem waut.
Dem rit dee Kop aur enn schmiet 'erut!
(On the first line stir with finger in the palm of the child's hand. On the next four point to each, or touch, each of the fingers. On the last line pull the thumb.)

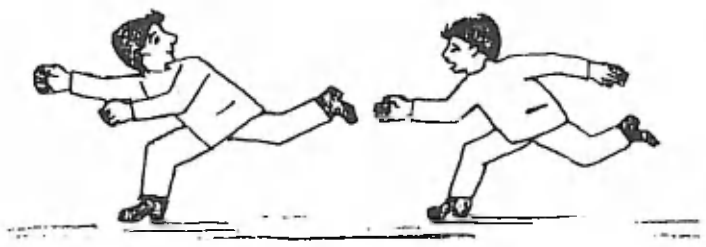
Ronda, Ronda Rosikrauns

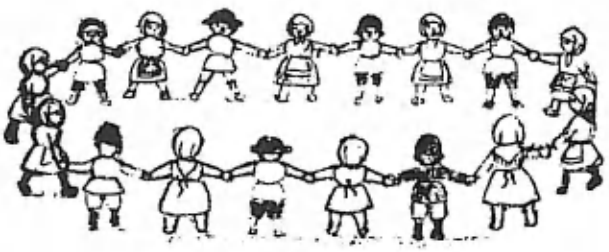
(A Game)

Ronda, ronda Rosikrauns,
Wepe, wepe, Wepeschtauns,
Tjlinjs, Tjlanjs, dool!
Nu noch eenmaol!
(Children join hands in a circle and walk around on the first line, stand still on the second, fall down on the third, and up on first position on the last.)

Hops, Hops, Hops

Hops, hops, sops, hops, seedatji.
Babi fol fom Feedatji!
(To say when bouncing a child on the knees. On the last line the child is tipped back.)





Aul Miene Janstjis Koamt No Hus!

(A Game)

Mother: "Aul miene leewi Janstjis koamt no Hus!"
Geese: 'Waut säl wi doa?"
Mother: "Bota Brot eta."
Geese: "Wolf es doa!"
Mother: "Woa doa?"
Geese: "Hinjrim Schulte Tun."
Mother: "Waut deit hee doa?"
Geese: "Läjht Eia."
Mother: "Wo Fäl?"
Geese: "Feftin enn een Tjleenatji."
Mother: "Wont's mient?"
Geese: "'T Goldne."
Mother: "Wont's dint?"
Geese: "'T Selwane."
Mother: "Wont's deem Wolf sint?"
Geese: "'T Jäli!"
Mother: "Aul miene Leewi Janstjks koamt no Hus!"
(Children choose one to be the mother goose and one the wolf. The remaining children are the geese. The mother and the geese are at opposite ends of the playground. The wolf hides in the middle. On the last line the geese try to run home to the mother and the wolf tries to catch them. The game goes on until all geese are in the wolf's house.)

(The following three rhymes are used to count off for games.)

Mosmaral

Mosmaral, Tsockaschal,
Tjemelstjind, Rode rinj.
Bif, baf, baus. Aus!

Eentji, Beentji

Eentji, Beentji,
Klaupaschteentji,
Hoala, Doala, Dusint.
Jihoali, Jischtoali,
Jikupiedt, jikoft,
Ut Preisi met Jibroacht.

Eeni Meeni

Eeni meeni Murtjitsoagil,
Wem wi tjrije, wel wi joagi.
Fon 'e Lin bot opi Lada,
Dee saul heeti, Pomptjimada. (MVW : Apr. 1935; p. 152)

III. SAYINGS OR PROVERBS

Aules haft een Enj,
Blos dee Worscht haft twee Enja.

Aula eeni Reaj,
Aus Klosses Keaj.

Tjinja Froag
Met Tsocka beschtreit.

(for children who ask too many questions)

Ach jeeni jao,
Wo jeit mi daut so nao!

Mi hungat, mi schlungat,
Mi schlackat dee Buck.

(to say when you are hungry)

Tjemmt Tiet, tjemmt Raot,
Tjemmt Saodeltit, Tjemmt soat.

So jeit 'it ope Welt—
Eena haft den Bidel,
Dee aundra haft daut Jelt.

Mitsch, pitsch peepa Mehl
Dine tjinja freete fehl!

Sources

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Quiring, Jacob, *Die Mundart von Chortitza* (MC). Munchen, 1928.
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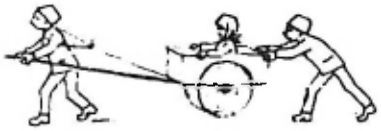

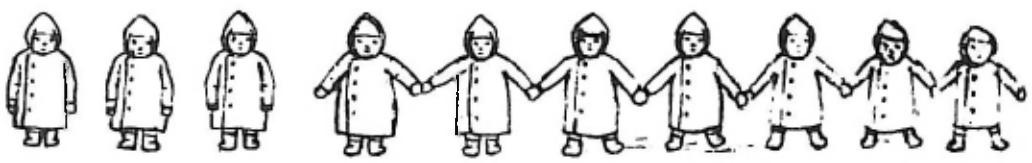

The Embarrassment of a Religious Tradition

By Calvin Redekop

One of the reasons for the continuing popularity of the prophetic literature of the Old Testament, I am convinced, is that it gives us canonical justification to criticize if not condemn our own religious tradition. The prophetic denunciation of apostasy, and the call to repentance and faithfulness have always been comforting assurances to many who have been "embarrassed" with their own traditions.

Typical of the jeremiads which have struck resonant chords in "faithful" Christians is that of Jeremiah himself when he speaks to words of Yahweh:

> I remember the affection of your youth the love of your bridal days; you followed me through the wilderness, through a land unsown . . . I brought you to a fertile country to enjoy its produce and good things; but no sooner had you entered than you defiled my land, and made my heritage detestable (Jeremiah, ch. 12-1-passim).

Without disparaging the validity of much of the criticism regarding the apostasy of a particular church conference or denomination, it is my thesis that much of the "practical hermeneutics" expressed by those who are embarrassed by their own tradition is misplaced and possibly even false. I submit that the central issue which concerned the Jewish prophets was precisely the opposite—the children of Israel, (the people of God) were constantly in a mode of apostasy from a religious tradition which God was in the process of creating *through the history of the people themselves.*

Applied to our time, the theme of the prophetic voice is, "What is God saying to his people (us) in the historical context of today?" not "How does the biblical teaching substantiate a contemporary evangelical fundamentalist or liberal theology?" Apostasy in this sense would be illustrated by the Christians who adopt the national or civil gods and philosophies, rather than remaining with the heritage which God has been nurturing. The misinterpretation of the "prophetic" is therefore: hating or rejecting the tradition or heritage from which one comes (i.e., group embarrassment) by assuming that the true essence of faith or relationship with God does not come out of a historical context, but rather comes abstractly "out of nowhere." Thus the modern fundamentalist-evangelical "tradition"(!) would have us believe, that faith comes as a result of faith itself.

The group embarrassment, and the subsequent "whoring after other gods", which will be the focus of my argument here, I submit is the result of the continual rejection of several sociological axioms: 1) cultural and social systems are the result of the emergence of a continuing tradition; 2) religious faith and experience is also mediated to us through a complex but continuous tradition; 3) these traditions are developed and mediated through real people in real life situations; 4) there has always been a continuous process of increase and decrease in the participation of persons in the process of tradition building and destroying.

The Mennonite "tradition" or community, is a fruitful object of study for group embarrassment, since it has had both characteristics which produce it: 1) a strong sense of community coherence; 2) a great deal of inner conflict and external loss through individual attrition, as well as group schism.

There is little objective data to document the amount of membership loss through personal defection. It is practically nil among the Hutterites, but much higher among Amish, Old Order, Old Colony and other plain groups, and probably highest among the groups which are urbanizing and modernizing. Some trends are well known, such as the loss among Mennonite Brethren to the Baptist, loss of General Conference individuals for Presbyterianism and the like. But the best proof for most of us is the continuing personal encounter with "ex-Mennos" who keep showing up in various denominations, or as "non-affiliates" of any group. Individual attrition is a form of self-hatred or group hatred, but is not the topic of this paper.

The phenomenon of collective group embarrassment has also been extensive in Mennonite history. Defections of congregations and conferences from the Mennonite family have a long history; one of the first is the David Jorists, which emerged during Menno's time. Another is the Apostolic Christian Church, begun in 1803 as the "Gemeinschaft Evangelischer Taufgesinnter," (*ME*, Vol. 1, p. 138). No comprehensive account of collective defections from the Mennonite community is available, nor does the *Mennonite Encyclopedia* carry the topic of "schism" or "apostasy."

The focus of this paper is on the more contemporary American phenomenon of group embarrassment, which includes groups who have left the Mennonite fold in the last hundred years or so. It includes the

United Missionary Church (originally known as the Mennonite Brethren in Christ), the Evangelical United Mennonites, The Missionary Church Association, the Brethren in Christ, to name just a few. It also includes individual congregations and splinter congregations in almost every community where Mennonites have settled which have left the Mennonite church to become independent groups (e.g., Elmdale Fellowship Church), or who joined other groups such as the Missionary Alliance and local Baptist conferences.

It will be most helpful in our analysis if we focus on a particular group, which is in process of severing its relationship with the Mennonite family, namely the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren Church.

The Evangelical Mennonite Brethren emerged in the last decades (1889) of the nineteenth century as a renewal movement among the recently immigrated "Kirchliche" Mennonites in Minnesota and Nebraska and other states and Canadian provinces. The records of the Bruderthaler Gemeinde clearly state that Elder Aron Wall and a group of faithful followers felt obliged to leave the Mennonite churches of Mt. Lake, Minnesota because of carnal living, including smoking, drinking, questionable associations and other moral laxity. "Unfortunately, however, all sorts of fleshly works crept into the church which consisted of born again and mere professing Christians . . . (Elder Wall's) conscience and the Holy Scriptures told him that no difference was being made between clean and unclean, between holy and unholy things."[1]

The church at Henderson, Nebraska separated from the Henderson Mennonite Church for the reasons included in the following ringing statement:

> Shortly after the organization (of the church) the church board compiled a set of twenty church rules, the purpose of which was to set forth clearly the teaching of the Scriptures concerning worldliness and fleshly lusts. This list . . . required that members should abstain from the use of tobacco in any form, musical instruments, worldliness in dress, the oath, and to refrain from going into court because of disputes, and warned against the possession of firearms as a possible temptation to transgress the command of nonresistance.[2]

Two "faithful" congregations were formed, and the evidence indicates that a revitalized Christian life stressing high ethical living, including the belief in non-resistance was stressed. The congregations grew, and new congregations were added. In 1915 a conference "The Defenseless Mennonite Brethren in Christ of North America" was formed.[3] By 1937, because of increasing education, and adoption of the English language and other changes, the name "Evangelical Mennonite Brethren Conference" was adopted. By the end of the nineteen thirties, the historic high value placed on education developed a trend toward attending Moody Bible Institute, Northwestern Bible Institute, Grace Bible School (of which the EMB Conference has always been a staunch supporter), Bible Institute of Los Angeles, and other "fundamental" schools.

Evangelical Mennonite Brethren Conference Founders.

Elder Isaac Peters

Elder Aron Wall

Elder Peter Schultz

Rev. H. E. Fast

Brudertal Evangelical Mennonite Brethren Church, Mountain Lake, Minnesota.

Evangelical Mennonite Brethren Church, Janzen, Nebraska.

Not only foreign educational influence, but the inroads of non-denominational Bible study conferences, area evangelists and Bible expositors and religious radio broadcasts began to permeate the EMB heritage, so by World War II, the tension between the supporters of a non-resistance stance and those favoring the support of the United States in war against Germany created severe conflict. Approximately half (41%) of the young men chose to enter military service,[3a] and I remember vividly the bitter debates young draft age men engaged in over the peace issue.

The rejection of the heritage continued apace within the EMB, with increasing participation in, and support of, non-Mennonite religious activities and institutions. Thus EMB missionaries went out under non-denominational missionary organizations, as well as those of other denominations such as Baptist and Missionary Alliance.[4] Few EMB youth attend Mennonite colleges, going mostly to Grace Bible College, Moody Bible Institute, BIOLA, Taylor University, Wheaton, Three Hills Bible Institute, Northwestern, and Bethel College of St. Paul, Minn. Support of Mennonite Central Committee activities and inter-Mennonite work decreased. The best evidence of the nature of the rejection of the tradition and group embarrassment might be the fact that at the last several biennial meetings, two major issues have dominated the proceedings: 1) Shall the EMB Conference sever relationship with MCC? 2) Shall the EMB Conference drop the name Mennonite?[5]

The arguments for severing relationships with the MCC are based on the proposition that MCC is a social service organization, and social service is not biblical. The proposal to drop the name Mennonite is based on the premise that the name identifies the EMB conference as also being cultural and ethnic, and thus stands in the way of evangelism and "reaching others for Christ." The historical developments have thus brought the EMB conference to the present position of denying almost totally any Mennonite heritage except as individuals and families still feel a reluctance to separate from the heritage or from the host of relatives and friends still in the tradition.

From a sociological perspective, it seems rather obvious that what has happened in the EMB conference is the rejection of a tradition and heritage, with the consequent dissolution of a "community of faith" or ideological community through group embarrassment. Put another way, there has been a dissolution of a community of "common faith and experience" and the people who were members of that earlier community are in the process of developing another "community of common experience," in the fundamentalist evangelical community. What the EMBers are not conscious of is that they are exchanging their earlier heritage or "community of common experience" for a newly developing one and the question which brings us back to the prophetic question raised at the beginning of the essay is: What is the call to faithfulness? Is it the rejection of the "culture" of the Mennonites and the consequent adoption of the culture of the evangelical tradition? Or *could* it be a return to the *heritage*—that very thing which is considered *the evil* itself? If we accept the premise that it is through a tradition that God speaks, then we may need to take the latter as the true definition of the prophetic call to the EMB conference—and other groups which are being tempted by group embarrassment.

In order to make my proposition, which surely must seem blatantly culture religion and apostate, a bit more understandable, let us look more closely at the nature and function of the religious heritage and religious community. The description will proceed from a sociological perspective, and will not presume to present a comprehensive description of what takes place in religious experience.

1) Human groupings, of whatever nature, emerge when a certain number of persons develop a coherent collective representation of reality. Specific beliefs, sentiments, norms and behavior emerge from the shared response to similar experience. This has been termed the process of the "Social Construction of Reality." This applies to the religious aspects as well as the secular, and it is not sacrilegious to assume that regardless of the "transcendental" elements inherent in the Christian faith, Christianity has also emerged at least in part through a "collective" dimension.[6]

2) Religious removal or revival movements share a great deal of

similar elements to social movements in general, and even though social movements are very complex, and almost impossible of explanation, it is clear that most, if not all, movements (including religious) share an ideological (belief) dimension, and emerge when critical mass has been reached where there is sufficient "shared common experience" to provide for the emergence of a new group with a recognizable coherence. Thus the Anabaptist movement illustrates this factor, as does the emergence later of the EMB conference out of the larger Mennonite family.[7]

Therefore movements, social or religious, are a miniature of the "social construction of reality" of the larger society; only different in scale, the "social reality" that is intensely shared to form the new group derives out of or is a response to, the larger social reality out of which it came. Thus just as the EMB movement sprang from the confines of the larger Mennonite ideological community, so the Anabaptist movement emerged from the larger religious-social context of the early sixteenth century. Christianity in turn itself sprang from the larger "social reality" of the Judeo-Roman civilizations.

3) The "fracturing" of "ideological communities" is also a continuous process, as "normal" as the "coagulation" of common shared experience which creates new social movements indicated in point 2. There are always persons at the peripheral of every ideological community who tend to share more common experiences with outsiders than with members of the tradition out of which they have come. The worship of Baal in the Old Testament context is only one of a continuing stream. The terms "pagan" and "heresy" are well entrenched in human history, attesting to the constant tendency to go astray *theologically*, while marginality, acculturation and integration are terms which refer to the social parameters.

In the sociological sense, there is nothing immoral about leaving one ideological community for another, illustrated by an Italian leaving his ethnic group to become a "Toronto" Canadian. From a religious sense, however, when a person leaves an ideological community (his tradition), it is normally considered infidelity and even apostasy—unless when group embarrassment is involved, in which case the dissenting group considers it a moral good to leave the old tradition for the "true" faith, whether it be another denomination, or an individualistic piety.

4) Religious group embarrassment, and in this essay we mean by that embarrassment with the "Mennonite" label, is almost always couched in religious concepts and terms, but is in reality the justification or rationalization for the adoption of an alternative "ideological community" and culture. Thus a most fascinating paradoxical situation develops by which the defecting group accuses the parental group of being only a cultural community and not an ideological (religious) one, where in actual fact the defecting group is accepting a new ideological community which has its own cultural systems. But the new cultural (ethnic if you will) system, which the apostate group accepts, is not considered a real fact. The new group is rather defended as being "Biblical." For example, a defecting group will argue that it is biblical to defend one's country against communism. Pacifism is defined as legalistic tradition.

To interpret the preceding points in the context of history of the EMB conference, we can move backwards from point 4 to point 1. When members of the EMB conference accuse the Mennonite tradition of being mere cultural and ethnic tradition and not a religious one, they are saying that Mennonites have only "dead form"—the Mennonite tradition has no ideological base. The EMB Conference has however adopted the ideology of the fundamentalist - evangelical movement which includes the traditional "dead form" elements of that movement—stress on inner experience, less stress on ethical dimensions, downplaying of the social aspects of the Christian Gospel, the culture of middle America which includes militarism and identification of American economics with God's purposes and will.

Moving back to point 3, the process of the "fracturing" of the Mennonite ideological community among the incipient EMB is noticeable already in Russia but especially noticeable in Nebraska, Minnesota, South Dakota, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and other places where the church emerged. Of the Mountain Lake situation, an EMB historian writes: "The congregational life and religious services were also unorganized. The few ministers who had come along (from Russia) belonged to different churches (congregations) and as a result there were different ideas and opinions." At a later place he states, "The small group became a disgrace and their leader was generally termed a hireling."[8]

The formation of small groups of worshippers stressing inner assurance and a recovery of the biblical faith thus illustrates that new groups of "shared experience" were taking place, and thus illustrate point two—the emergence of a new movement when a "critical mass" of shared experience greater than the shared experience of the larger group existed. And this leads us to the first point, which stated that social groupings emerge when there is a corpus of shared experiences which produce a view of reality which becomes a viable unity.

A purely sociological analysis of the EMB separation from the main line Mennonite community would suggest that through social, economic and cultural experiences, a marginal society developed which rationalized its separation by accusing the larger body of "ideological apostasy" but which in fact was an expression of embarrassment for being excluded from the mainstream of American mainline evangelicalism.

If the EMB accusation of apostasy of the parent group was, however, in fact even partially true, then the resulting movement could be termed a "protest movement," with renewal or revitalization as its purpose. The evidence is clear that there was "laxity" and apostasy within the larger Mennonite tradition, and hence the "protest" factor

in the separation was understandable, even if not justified. The "renewal" element is present in many if not most separations but can not be expanded on in this essay.

What makes the analysis of the EMB separation especially interesting is that the "renewal" basis of the separation became quickly and increasingly informed by Fundamentalist ideology *after* the initial separation had taken place. Evidence indicates that the EMB conference had largely severed collegial relationships with the Mennonite brotherhood by the early thirties, and was, by then, largely associating with non-denominational or fundamentalist denominations.[9]

The central question which the Prophets raised, and which the EMB separation poses for us: Is it possible to distinguish an ideology from the community that produces it? And if it is, then how can Christians determine which traditions are unchristian, and which are biblically religious? The EMB group hatred is a painful example of a short-circuited conclusion to the issue. It has merely avoided the question by assuming that fundamentalism-evangelism has no tradition (ideological community) out of which the faith (ideology) emerges.

The prophets called for a return to the faith of the Fathers, one in which God was trying to create a people—that is, a community which was sharing a system of experience and hence faith. If points one and two are accepted, then religion (faith or ideology) cannot develop without a community out of which the shared views develop. For Mennonites (along with all other Christians) the question therefore becomes: Is there a *real tradition* out of which a faith (ideology) can develop? And if there is such a tradition, is *faith really* developing?

Faith (ideology) and tradition (community) are intrinsic parts of each other. We cannot have one without the other. The question is: Is the faith in any tradition the right one? The individualism of fundamentalist-evangelicalism is a very weak vehicle to answer this question. It would appear from a sociological perspective that a collectively derived ideology (faith) where the Holy Spirit works among the believers (Koinonia) is inherently more credible than one derived from an individualistic tradition where "each person does what is right in his own eyes." It appears clear that the EMB phenomenon is an expression of the losing of the "ideological community" (heritage and tradition) for an ideology of individualism in religious guise—Fundamentalistic evangelicalism.

I restate my basic premise once more—hopefully it sounds less heretical at this point—there is no faith apart from a tradition which forms it. Without a tradition, there is no faith. Jesus was the epitome of an heritage. He drank wine, and washed feet. I wash feet and drink coffee. Am I the product of that same heritage? The ultimate question, which should exercise most Christians, including Mennonites, and EMBs, is "Is my heritage faithful to Jesus?" Or am I embarrassed by my tradition because it hinders my being accepted as a member of the civic community?

FOOTNOTES

[1] G. S. Rempel. *A Historical Sketch of the Churches of the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren* (Rosthern: D. H. Epp, n.d.), p. 77.

[2] Ibid., p. 78.

[3] Originally the two congregations and those joining in subsequent years called themselves the "Nebraska-Minnesota Conference." Approximately 1915, the name was changed to "Defenseless Mennonite Brethren in Christ of North America." See Daniel Kauffman, Ed., *Mennonite Cyclopedic Dictionary* (Scottdale: Mennonite Publishing House, 1937) and also H. F. Epp, "Evangelical Mennonite Brethren" in *Mennonite Encyclopedia.*

[3a] Guy F. Hershberger, *The Mennonite Church in the Second World War* (Scottdale: Mennonite Publishing House, 1951), p. 39.

[4] It is impossible to expand on the emphases of the EMB separation in detail, but the documents all emphasize the following elements: the regenerated life, assurance of salvation, holy living and congregational discipline. In time a great emphasis was placed on missionary activity, which is probably the single most important motif that appears in the official church paper (*Gospel Tidings*), themes at conferences, budgets and personnel. At the June 14, 1953 inaugural service of the affiliation of the Evangelical Mennonite Church and the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren Church (which lasted approximately ten years) the credo is presented as follows: "*The Evangelical Mennonite* (paper) is the official organ for the promotion of the Conference of Evangelical Mennonites. It stands for the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, the deity and virgin birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, the depravity of man, redemption through the atoning sacrifice of Christ on Calvary, regeneration, sanctification, separation, the pre-millennial return, the resurrection of the just at the time of the Rapture, and the final judgment of the wicked after the millennial reign of Christ on earth—a heaven to be gained and a hell to be shunned." (*The Evangelical Mennonite*, July, 1953).

[5] See Allan J. Siebert, "Evangelical Mennonite Brethren Prepare for a Change in Name," *Mennonite Reporter*, August 4, 1980. See also *Gospel Tidings* (September, 1980) "The second recommendation brought to the Executive Committee was to study whether our present name of our fellowship of churches best identifies the purpose, the doctrinal stance and ministry. This is not the first time this question has been raised. History seems to indicate that EMBs are not immune to changes, but rather seek to be 'tools' God can use effectively in bringing lost people to Himself. The identity issue will be studied on the local level and then presentations made at the 1981 convention." (1980 Convention Report: A Fellowship That Cares.) Although the MCC relationship was not discussed officially, it has been informally argued for many years.

[6] One of the very significant contributions sociology has made to understanding human history is the "sociology of knowledge," which focuses on the way human experience creates human consciousness, human values and knowledge itself. There have been many elaborations of this theme from Feuerbach, Marx, Mannheim and Scheler to the present. For a recent cogent presentation of the issues, see Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1967).

[7] See Orrin E. Klapp, *Collective Search for Identity* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969); see also "Social Movements" in *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences.*

[8] Rempel, op. cit., p. 78.

[9] A perusal of the *Gospel Tidings* of recent years provides overwhelming evidence of an almost total orientation toward the non-denominational missionary, evangelistic and fundamentalistic religious world. Book reviews are mainly of books published by Zondervan, Baker, Moody and other presses. Articles and speakers come from the circuit of "Community Bible Churches" and groups like "World Vision" and "Sunday School Times." The above are random topics selected from recent issues of the *Gospel Tidings.*

The causes for the EMB/General Conference division, and its subsequent development awaits further and more extensive analysis. It is my conclusion, subject to revision with more documentation, that the cause for the schism and the consequent developments were both ideological and structural, and that these forces interacted with each other. The following propositions summarize what I believe happened:

1. Moral and spiritual laxity did exist in the Mennonite community.
2. The attempts at reform were contested and ignored by the majority.
3. The moral marginal members, forming an incipient "representation of reality," felt ostracized.
4. A new structural reality resulted, which cut down on communication and socialization.
5. Being cut off from the "parent structure of reality," the group became very susceptible to extraneous influences representing the "mainline" American religious themes.
6. The influences of American secular society was imported along with the religious, especially through the development of Fundamentalism and revivalism, and the introduction of mass media, beginning with the radio.

Mennonite Brethren Women: Images and Realities of the Early Years

by Katie Funk Wiebe

In Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night,* the duke asks Viola about Olivia, whom he wants to marry, "And what's her history?" Viola replies, "A blank, my lord."

To ask for the history of Mennonite Brethren women is to receive the same answer. The record is a blank. They have been given little room in the history of the Mennonite Brethren church. Histories offer little help in revealing their role and contribution. Their indexes have few entries under women's names.

It is true that women in the Mennonite Brethren church have not been church leaders or contributors to business, agriculture, and educational institutions in a way that was openly visible to others and which made history. Because their contribution is unrecorded, the assumption is sometimes made that women of the Mennonite church in Russia, including the Mennonite Brethren, were passive, uncreative, unassertive, accepting their lot with equanimity.

I approached the topic of women's role in the church with this attitude about twenty years ago when my interest in women's activities first developed. After more thorough research into the lives of Mennonite Brethren women, I had to reconsider my earlier misassumptions. I soon found that women had never been absent—only officially unrecorded—and that made them invisible to later generations. They were present during the founding and development of the Mennonite Brethren church, and their early contribution can best be described as the quiet shining of a lamp, rather than the powerful roar of a waterfall.

Mennonite Brethren leader B. B. Janz of Coaldale, Alberta, was asked during the years of the migrations of Mennonites to Canada in the 1920s, what he saw as his mission. He replied, *"Ich suche meine Brueder"* (I am looking for my brethren). He had picked up this expression from historian P. M. Friesen, who, during the years he was writing his massive history of the Mennonite Brethren church, responded to his questioners with *"Ich suche meine Brueder in einem besonderen Sinne"* (I seek my brethren in a very special sense). Friesen continues, "Nor did I wish to leave even the most meager, the most distant, the most insignificant or the most estranged member of our Menno family unmentioned or unknown."[1] I joined historian Friesen in recent months in his search, but I was looking for my sisters and for their particular contribution to the founding of the church.

I found in the record, often hidden between lines and in footnotes, the story of women who were as human as their husbands, brothers and fathers. They, too, despaired, failed, sinned; but I found also women who were open to God's redemptive grace and overcoming love. They showed compassion for others, tenacity of spirit, and selfless endurance in the face of tremendous hardships. They were committed to Christ, his church and its mission, inasmuch as cultural and religious limitations allowed them.

Before I specify their particular contribution, it is important to understand the factors which contributed to their exclusion from history. Several reasons relate to the absence generally of women's contribution from most church histories. Archival material in historical libraries is not usually neatly catalogued under women's history, nor do researchers expect to find significant historical material under women's names when they do locate them. Secondly, little in a historian's professional training equips him (and most historians have been men to date) to make sense of the lives of ordinary and powerless persons, particularly women, who were not part of the public record or who didn't openly influence church policies. Historians look for exceptional and powerful people and for the record of their influence in public debates, speeches, letters, journals and official minutes of meetings. The life stories of ordinary people who go about their daily tasks quietly and do not see themselves as makers of history do not usually provide the material for history books.

In the case of the Mennonite Brethren church, we need to consider such additional reasons as theology, language and culture. One of the strongest doctrines in the history of the Mennonite church in Russia was nonresistance, an issue which concerned primarily the sons in the family, not the daughters. Adherence to it determined whether the young men were drafted or not, and if they were, what type of service they would do in the military. Mennonite history often records the fathers' concerns for sons having to go into the army (p. 586ff). Several Mennonite migrations occurred because of this concern for sons. Women—their needs and their role in relationship to the

peace position—are not part of this major concern. Because the destiny of the Mennonites revolved around the way sons were involved in this issue and not the way women experienced the truth of Scripture, women's contribution was not as significant.

The ambivalent theology of the Mennonite Brethren with regard to women's roles in the church, particularly as it related to missions and ordination, has also made their contribution to the church an ambiguous or non-existent one. Missionary service has always been an acceptable form of service for men or women from the beginning of the Mennonite Brethren church, even though in an overseas country, the woman, particularly if she was single, might engage in activities such as preaching and teaching, leading an institution—activities not acceptable for a woman to do in the home church. In the early years of the Mennonite Brethren church, married couples and single women were encouraged to become missionaries and were ordained to such service, but the women were not allowed to preach.

Paulina Foote, missionary to China for nineteen years, expresses some of her ambivalent feelings about the lack of clear leadership regarding what a woman could or could not do overseas in the following excerpt from her memoirs written about her ordination in 1922:

> The thought of an ordination gave me struggles. Women in our conference do not preach. Why should I be ordained if I could not proclaim the Gospel to those who had not heard it? Women were permitted to tell the Gospel to women and children. What if men would come to my women's and children's meetings? Should I stop proclaiming the Gospel message? Did not the men have a right to hear the Word of God? The church had asked Pastor Jacob Reimer of Bessie, Oklahoma, and Elder Johann Foth of the Ebenfeld Church of near Hillsboro, Kansas, to officiate at my ordination. Both were considered to be of the most conservative in the whole conference. What a surprise to me when Elder Foth in his sermon at the ordination proved with Scripture passages that women should preach. He spoke about Mary Magdalene, who had followed Christ to the cross. . . . She was the first of Christ's followers who was at the grave on the resurrection morning. She was the first to tell the greatest story of all stories that Christ had arisen from the dead. Christ Himself commanded her to carry the news to the disciples, the men, and to Peter who had failed Him. My problem about the ordination was solved. My later experience proved that this was of the Lord.[2]

Though Miss Foote's mind was clear on the matter of her ordination, the church at home remained confused, and from this ambivalence was sown the seed in many women to enjoy a greater part in the work of the church, not only overseas, but also in the sending churches. Not until 1957 did the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches change its written policy on ordination of women, stating, "That in view of the fact that we as an M.B. Church, on the basis of clearly conceived Scriptural convictions, do not admit sisters to the public Gospel preaching ministry on par with brethren, we as Conference designate the fact of setting aside sisters to missionary work a 'commissioning' rather than an 'ordination.' "[3] But the sluice gates could not be shut off so easily. Too many young women had been encouraged to become missionaries and had felt the call to service and all that it might bring, and later echoed Miss Foote's frustrations.

Another reason for the invisibili-

Mennonite Brethren Missionaries in India.

Upper row: Heinrich and Anna Peters Unruh, Anna Neufeld, Abraham and Maria Martens Friesen.

Second row: Unidentified, Abraham Hieberts, and unidentified.

Bottom row: Nikolai and Susie Wiebe Huebert and unidentified.

ty of the women is the present lack of understanding of the Russian Mennonite culture, the culture which cradled the Mennonite Brethren church. We read Mennonite Brethren church history with American eyes. The emphasis in American churches is on the individual's personal response to the call to be converted, baptized and to seek membership in the church, and rightfully so. We count membership by persons: two hundred names means two hundred members.

The situation was a little different in the Ukraine. In that culture, which was introduced from Prussia, a child belonged to the father's family until until marriage, when a new family unit was set up in the village books. Land was apportioned to family units, not to individuals. As soon as son or daughter married, their names were taken off the family register and together with the spouse considered as a new family. People migrated as family units and were processed as family units, often with widowed members and even servants as part of the group. Sociologist Alan Peters of Fresno, Calif., has done much research showing how the signers of the Document of Secession of the Mennonite Brethren Church in 1860 were mostly young men, many of them related through their wives, and how the family contributed significantly to the development of the early Mennonite Brethren church.[4] Yet, today, when some modern readers see eighteen signatures attached to the Document of Secession, some immediately deduct that these eighteen names represent eighteen individuals, rather than eighteen family heads representing eighteen family units, which is a much different total number. Eighteen men signed the document, but the charter membership consisted of about fifty-four people, according to P. M. Friesen. Historians who state that the church was begun by "eighteen men"[5] read into P. M. Friesen what he never intended to convey.

Friesen writes that in the fall of 1859, two weeks after St. Martin's, a few *Geschwister* (usually translated brothers and sisters) were gathered in the home of one of the members for the Lord's Supper (p. 229). As a result, these members were placed under the ban, and later excommunicated and civilly ostracized. On January 6, 1860, the Founding Document was signed by eighteen heads of families and by nine others a little later. Peter Regier, in his short history, states that women were present at this meeting but did not sign.[6] Jakob Reimer and other Gnadenfeld members who signed with him agreed that on January 6, 1860 the Mennonite Brethren church began (p. 230). Yet in a footnote, P. M. Friesen explains that the 18 plus 9, or 27, refers to 27 heads of families and denotes men of full age and a corresponding number of sisters (p. 999). Johann Claassen, early leader, in a writing to the Emperor, dated May 21, 1862, states the number of Mennonites involved in the January 6, 1860 event to be "ca. 50" (p. 345). In another footnote dealing with Claassen's reference to the January 6, 1860 meeting, Friesen explains again, "The members of the family and sympathizers are included with the 18 family heads who united on January 6, 1860 to sign the important document" (p. 1009). He refers to his mother and his eldest sisters as members of Bible study groups and charter sisters of the Mennonite Brethren church, together with the men (p.1025). Clearly, a better understanding of the cultural context would have kept writers from making the mistake of attributing the founding of the church to only eighteen men.

Another factor making the women invisible and therefore also their contribution is the German language, which makes it possible to use a term like *Geschwister*, which can mean brothers and sisters, or only brothers, or only sisters, and the use of male-oriented language like *"Brueder"* (brethren). This exclusive language, which was used out of a desire for greater intimacy and warmth among the early leaders, gradually shut out one large segment in the church—its women.

Yet despite these factors, women made a significant contribution to the founding and growth of the Mennonite Brethren church.

1. Women strongly supported their husbands in their open decisions and quietly influenced the direction their lives were taking. Friesen mentions repeatedly Johann Claassen's high regard for his wife, Katharina, to whom he entrusted important information about legal matters of the early church. Claassen entrusted his wife also to undertake certain actions on his behalf in his absence, not customary for women in those times. Elizabeth Suderman Klassen in *Trailblazer for the Brethren* (Herald Press, 1978) has enlarged on her contribution in this biography.

Jakob Reimer, another of the leaders, had a high regard for women and mentions them frequently in his writings. He does not hesitate to mention how he was influenced theologically by them. As a young man Reimer read the writings of Anne Judson, wife of Adoniram Judson, on baptism, and accepted her ideas. Because of this material on the form of baptism written by a woman outside the Mennonite fold, the first baptism was performed by the secessionists using the form of immersion. Mennonite Brethren stress on immersion can therefore be attributed in part to a woman's teaching (p.286).

Friesen himself had a high regard for women and doesn't hesitate to mention them freely. He writes that the determining influence on his life were his mother and his eldest sister, already mentioned as being charter members of the Mennonite Brethren church (p.1022). He refers to them as "blessed mother and sister" (p.999). He credits his wife with being his "best secretary" (Preface, p.xxix). He was working with five thousand pages of manuscript, so without his wife's help, we might not have this valuable volume. He explains why and how he wrote his book: "Time and again I listened to dozens of honorable men and women from the various factions, and read and reread their documents" (Preface, xxii). He usually refers to the women by their given name and surname; for example, Gertrude Reimer, not just their husband's name. According to A. A. Vogt's index of persons named in Friesen's history, he mentions about 97 women by name, most of them either teachers,

missionaries, or wives of ministers or missionaries.[7] Not all, of course, are Mennonite Brethren. By contrast J. H. Lohrenz's *The Mennonite Brethren Church* includes no women in the biographical section and J. A. Toews' history has nine women in the index.

Friesen's positive attitude toward women and their influence on the men is seen also in an unusual metaphor he uses to describe Johann J. Fast, a widely known itinerant minister and a representative of elders and co-elders of the time. He speaks of him as a "mother to the church in soul care" (p.425). He seems to be saying that though a church may have fathers, it also needs mothers.

A second major contribution on the part of women was their gift of hospitality. "Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality" writes the author of Romans, after discussing the gifts of the Spirit (Romans 12). Because the Mennonite Brethren had no meeting houses of their own at first, their services were held in homes. Members' homes were open to gatherings of all kinds, large and small, but also to traveling ministers and their families, some of whom were fleeing or moving to other areas to escape harassment. Because at first the Mennonite Brethren church was a house (home) or small group movement, and few houses were large, women will have been much aware of what was happening and more involved than at first seems apparent, and points to another contribution: participation in church life. Historian Cornelius Krahn writes about women's status in the Mennonite churches in Prussia:

> The emphasis on spontaneous conversion and antipathy toward tradition broke barriers and promoted equality in general, and also between the sexes. Paul's admonition "Let the women be silent in the churches" (I Cor. 14:34), was interpreted to mean only that women should not preach. With the introduction of Bible study, prayer meeting, Sunday school, and mission societies, a wide field was opened for Mennonite women. Now they could express their views in Bible studies, they participated audibly in prayer meetings, they taught Sunday-school classes, discussed missionary affairs in sewing circles and many other organizations, and as mission workers engaged in direct evangelism and teaching.[8]

A close reading of Friesen supports Krahn's views of the status of women in the Mennonite Brethren church. They contributed by taking part in the singing, prayers, testimonies and discussion of Bible passages. Women were converted, baptized, and received into membership, but also excommunicated during the time of emotional excesses. Women are mentioned freely in connection with the problems that arose regarding footwashing and the "sister kiss."

The question of how much they actually participated in the more formal meetings is not clear, although it is possible to make some assumptions similar to Krahn's views. Elders of the *Kirchengemeinde* accused the Brethren of allowing women to speak up at meetings and to pray openly (p.377). A criticism, even if unjust, usually has some small basis in fact. Friesen responds to one of these accusations with the words, "But only in intimate home gatherings" (p.256). The Russian woman, much involved in the early Mennonite Brethren church story, prayed either in Russian or German, according to the group she was with, writes Jacob Bekker.[9] Mrs. Gertrude Huebert, whose husband Heinrich was in prison because he had been accused of baptizing the Russian woman, was so overcome with thankfulness for God's wonderful leading when her husband was returned to the ministry after being excommunicated, she asked for and received permission to pray openly (p.438). Friesen reports that the Kuban church, formed later on, was especially blessed with vital and pious praying sisters. He adds, somewhat humorously, "Day and night one could undoubtedly say, there was always a priest in the holy place, watching before the Lord, even though it was a *priestess*, according to the New Testament pattern: 'There is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus' (Gal. 3:28)" (p.507). The italics are mine. Obviously, he was delighting in the role reversals.

It is not clear from the Friesen account whether women participated in annual brotherhood consultations or conventions as the church grew. He writes: "It has been the custom in the Mennonite churches from time immemorial to allow any approved elder, minister, brother or sister of congregations to have the privilege of becoming a delegate to such meetings, be their stay at such meetings of long or short duration" (p.527). By 1879, sixteen years after the church was founded, the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches in America decided this issue by agreeing "that sisters may take part in church activities as the Holy Spirit leads. However, they should not preach or take part in discussion meetings of the church."[10] Theologian A. H. Unruh adds, "*Es war dieser Beschluss doch schon eine Erweiterung der Schranken, die den Schwestern sonst in den mennonitischen Kreisen gezogen wurden.*"[11] At the same convention the continuing participation of women in mission work was affirmed. This pattern of allowing women in a new church movement much freedom after the model of Jesus' liberating words and actions with the follow-up of restraints and limitations as the church became institutionalized began in New Testament times.[12]

In addition to considerable participation in church life during the early years, women had two other ties with the church, although neither were policy-making roles. As already mentioned, women were encouraged to become missionaries. They also became members of sewing societies in their home congregations and met to sew and pray for missions. Gnadenfeld, the site of the original revival movement had many Bible study groups and mission festivals. Alongside these activities, women's groups developed, (p. 256), which were later transplanted to America and there underwent various transformations, sometimes functioning as an auxiliary to the church and sometimes as a church in itself, operating almost parallel to the congregation with its own budget, program, membership list and annual retreats.

Top, Mennonite Deaconesses of Morija Deaconess Home, Neu-Haldbstadt, South Russia.

Above, execution of Maria and Ursula van Beckum, 1544, depicted on the Martyr's Mirror.

These women's groups became a significant part of a caring ministry in the church. They showed loving concern for missionaries and their families, for overseas nationals, focusing on the needs of women and children. During the war years in Russia, including the Crimean War, Friesen mentions that the Mennonites were recognized for their sacrificial donations of money, services, and products, including clothing, bedding and bandages as the need arose, all of which women will have had a significant role in providing. Women are mentioned in the literature of the famine years as setting out food for beggars, of carrying food to a starving neighbor.. They cared for the sick—their own and that of the enemy ananarchists during the Russia Revolution. They helped women in childbirth. This role of caring concern for the needy in good times and bad was expected of them, and they accepted it willingly, but because it was not institutionalized, the record of their contribution in this way is often missing.

There is another, perhaps even greater, contribution seldom recognized during the founding and growing years of the Mennonite Brethren. That is the role of pain and suffering borne by hundreds and thousands of women in the Mennonite family in silent trust in God. When men were imprisoned, conscripted, exiled, women remained at home and endured. But they kept the faith, cherished it, and nurtured it, so that when times improved, the church could again pick up its mission. These women were the true keepers of the faith. Among them were Mennonite Brethren women.

Suffering it itself is neutral, though many people believe it always leads to goodness and strength of character. Depending on the attitude of the person undergoing the suffering, it can also lead to bitterness and rejection of God and humanity. With exceptions, these women in the Mennonite heritage did not become bitter. However, the manner and cause of their suffering in Russia has not been recognized to the same extent as it was during the Anabaptist period. During Anabaptist times, women stood up for their faith like the men and were persecuted like the men. *Martyr's Mirror* includes stories of many women who were tortured for their faith.. Likewise, the small book *Geschichte der Maertyrer* or *Short Historical Account of the Persecution of the Mennonites,* which covers the stories of early Mennonite martyrs to about 1782, lists at least one-third women.[13] However, another book compiled later, also entitled *Mennonitische Maertyrer,* compiled by A. A. Toews to acknowledge the contribution of Mennonites through suffering through World War 2, mentions one woman by name in the index together with her husband, and an entry "women martyrs" about three pages long.[14]

A careful study of this book reveals that women were as much a part of the suffering of the Mennonites, but because they were living on the underside of history, to use Elise Boulding's term, as wives, sisters and mothers, and men were in the public sphere as church leaders, their stories were omitted or given glancing notice. Paradoxically, women wrote many of the accounts of the suffering of their husbands.

Overseas workers in missions or Mennonite Central Committee service frequently mention that the bottom line of suffering in Third World countries is always the suffering of the women. When there isn't enough food, women are the last to eat. When there isn't enough work, women are the first to be out of work. When there isn't enough room to attend school or money to pay for fees, girls are the first to stay home. It is true, however, that when the church is persecuted, men, particularly religious leaders, are often the first to be affected, nor would I or anyone else deny their suffering as being real, intense and tragic. But the suffering of the women left behind to care for the family's total needs, to deal with the mental and emotional anguish because of the absence of loved ones, sometimes physically abused, raped and also exiled, imprisoned, or murdered, is equally real, intense and tragic. It deserves at least a nodding recognition in view of the fact that without these women's will to trust a sovereign God who allowed such suffering, the church would have ceased to exist.

A few examples highlight the role of Mennonite Brethren in suffering. During the period of secession, the women, in same manner as the men, openly confessed their faith. The secession brought with it unexpected affliction for both men and women in the form of ridicule and hatred from former friends and neighbors, social ostracism, and financial loss. Both Becker and Friesen state that in this revival the condition of women whose husbands were not Christians was most difficult, for the men followed the Russian example of beating their wives (p.244).

Both men and women were threatened with exile from the Mennonite settlements and suffered the emotional hurt caused by the ban of avoidance. Women who had married Mennonite Brethren men were considered unmarried by village officials and their children declared born out of wedlock (p.258). Children were scoffed at and sometimes deprived of an education. Wives suffered the pain of separation from husbands physically abused and/or imprisoned by village authorities. Some fled with husbands and children in the dead of winter to a new locality. Abraham Cornelssen, a respected teacher and father of a large family was forced to leave his position and residence in the winter, and together with his family, spend a long time on the steppes in a small hut (p.247). Without this willingness of the women to endure suffering, the new church would not have grown during the difficult first years.

Like other Mennonite women, Mennonite Brethren women suffered also during the Russian Revolution and the period of communist control under Stalin, and on through World War 2. If ever a tribute is written about the church during these periods, a special section should be devoted to ministers' wives and their widows, who were sometimes exiled with husbands or killed because of their husband's calling. A. A. Toews' book only hints at some of their experiences: One minister's widow fled by foot with several small children to a village 65 *Werst* distant, only to be refused accommodation. In Siberia, the shoulders of a 15-year-old girl were rubbed raw from carrying logs while in exile. Another older sickly woman carried a 60-pound bag of potatoes a long distance, and rested by leaning against a tree with her burden on her back for she knew if set it down, she would never be able to lift it again. The number of women raped and sexually abused is given only casual comment because of the nature of the crime.

During the long and difficult trek of German-speaking settlers in the Ukraine to Poland after World War 2, one account in the Toews' book

Right, immigrant women resting in train depot.

tells of a time when enemy planes bombed the train in which the trekkers, mostly women, children and old people, were riding. The people rushed out of the cars. When the pilots saw their target was made up of mostly women and children, they stopped strafing the cars. "Bodies were dismembered; hands, feet and other body parts were lying around; some people were moaning in pain. The bodies were gathered and shallow graves dug." The account states that a woman, and it doesn't matter what denomination she was, spoke a hymn and prayed. Then the grave was closed. That woman's faith and that of many others like her, gleamed that day like the quiet shining of the lamp, lighting the way for the next generation of women. Women kept the faith and modeled the Christian life in faithfulness to God during some of the most difficult periods of Mennonite history.

Women Among the Brethren (Katie Funk Wiebe, ed., Board of Christian Literature, Hillsboro, KS, 1979), includes short biographies of the women of this period of suffering and also of earlier and later periods in the history of the Mennonite Brethren and Krimmer Mennonite Brethren churches. It also shows how some women always found a work to do for the Lord. Family responsibilities, even large families, at a time when labor saving devices were few, never held them back. The women added to their home responsibilities the care of other children, particularly orphans; the care of young women in new situations, like city life or college dormitories. The women moved into home missions and overseas missions. Very few took up creative arts.

Some day when a more complete history of the Mennonite Brethren church is written, I hope it will include, along with the public church movements and decisions, the private personal history of its women, the domestic history of the family, the ways in which male-dominated institutions have affected women's and men's lives, and how the feminist consciousness in the Mennonite Brethren church started—possibly from the missionary movement and from women like Paulina Foote, who were intent only in doing God's will. Such a history will take reading between the lines, reading journals and memoirs, and perhaps reading with a woman's eyes and emotions to recreate the kinds of persons these early women were and how they contributed to its growth. The setting for women's contribution has rarely been in the open in view of the crowds or church councils, but by the hearth and by the lamp; and when the hearth was cold, and the light nearly gone, it was in the darkness, waiting for a new day to dawn for themselves, their families, and the church.

ENDNOTES

[1] P. M. Friesen, The Mennonite Brotherhood in Russia (1789-1910), tr. by J. B. Toews et al (Fresno, Calif.: Board of Christian Literature, General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, 1978), preface, p. xxxii. All further references to Friesen will be placed in parentheses within the text.

[2] Paulina Foote, *God's Hand Over my Nineteen Years in China* (Hillsboro, Kans.: M.B. Publishing House, 1962).

[3] A. E. Janzen and Herbert Giesbrecht, *We Recommend . . . Recommendations and Resolutions of the General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Churches* Fresno, Calif.: Board of Christian Literature of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, 1978, p. 179.

[4] See "Brotherhood and Family: Implications of Kinship in Mennonite Brethren History" in *P. M. Friesen and His History: Perspectives on Mennonite Life and Thought, No. 2* (Fresno, Calif.: Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, 1979).

[5] John H. Lohrenz writes in *The Mennonite Brethren Church* (Hillsboro Kans: The Board of Foreign Missions of the Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America, 1950), p. 28 that "The document was signed by the following eighteen men, who thus became the first members of the Mennonite Brethren Church." *The Mennonite Encyclopedia* entry under "Mennonite Brethren Church", Vol. III. p. 597, likewise states: "This document was signed by 18 men. This event is regarded as the beginning of the Mennonite Brethren Church, and the 18 men as constituting the first congregation." C. Henry Smith in *The Story of the Mennonites* (Berne, Ind.: Mennonite Book Concern, 1941) states the original number was eighteen (p.434).

[6] Peter Regier, *Kurzgefasste Geschichte der Mennoniten Brueder-Gemeinde* (Berne, Ind.: Light and Hope Publishing Co., 1901), p. 14.

[7] A. A. Vogt, *Register der Personennamen die in dem Geschichtswerk der Altevangelischen Mennoniten Bruederschaft in Russland von P. M. Friesen vorkommen Mit Angaben des Berufes von Jeder Person So Wie die Seiten, Auf denen Der Name Im Buche zu Finden Ist* (Steinbach, Man.: published by author, n.d.).

[8] "Mennonite Brethren Church," *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Vol. III. (Scottdale, Penn.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1959), p. 597.

[9] Jacob P. Bekker, *Origin of the Mennonite Brethren Church*, trans. by D. E. Pauls and A. E. Janzen (Hillsboro, Kans.: The Mennonite Brethren Historical Society of the Midwest, 1973), p. 99.

[10] Janzen and Giesbrecht, *We Recommend*, p. 219.

[11] A. H. Unruh, *Die Geschichte der Mennoniten - Brudergemeinde* (Hillsboro, Kans.: The General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America, 1955), p. 568.

[12] Evelyn and Frank Stagg in *Woman in the World of Jesus* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1978) trace the status of women in New Testament times, showing how the freedom which Jesus introduced in his own ministry and which the early church picked up was later limited by the restrictions the apostle Paul placed on the women although he himself had earlier spoken up for a broader ministry for them.

[13] *Geschichte der Maertyrer oder kurze historische Nachricht von den Verfolgungen der Mennoniten* (Winnipeg, Man.: Mennonitischen Gemeinden Manitobas, 1938).

[14] A. A. Toews, ed., *Mennonitische Maertyrer der Juengsten Vergangenheit unter der Gegenwart* (n.p.: published by author, 1949).

Book Reviews

C. Henry Smith. *Smith's Story of the Mennonites.* Fifth Ed., Revised and Enlarged by Cornelius Krahn. Newton: Faith and Life Press, 1981. 589 pp. $17.95 (paperback).

This is not the first review of C. Henry Smith's *Story of the Mennonites* to appear in *Mennonite Life.* Dr. E. G. Kaufman favorably reviewed an earlier edition in *Mennonite Life* in 1951; consequently I will comment primarily on the changes which have taken place in the new edition rather than repeating a general review. Previous editions (in some cases printings) appeared in 1941, 1945, 1950, 1957, and 1964. The editor is Dr. Cornelius Krahn, emeritus professor of Bethel College. Dr. Robert Kreider has provided a biographical foreword.

Changes are very evident in this 5th edition. First of all, the format and type have been completely redone. This is the first edition since 1941 to be completely re-set in type and format. It is now in a large, attractive book with bigger pages and margins. We can be thankful for these stylistic changes.

Changes in the content, however, are also evident. It is very interesting to lay the various editions on the desk and compare the changes which have been evolving through the years. Only the 1941 and 1945 editions were completely Smith's. The 1950 and 1957 editions and preeminently this 1981 edition, bear the stamp of Cornelius Krahn's handiwork. By far the most substantial changes appear in this present edition, previous changes having been very small in comparison.

What kind of changes have come about? To begin with, the basic interpretation of Anabaptism-Mennonitism has gradually shifted. For C. Henry Smith (1875-1948), professionally trained at the University of Chicago, the essence of Anabaptism-Mennonitism was individual liberation. He had been strongly influenced by the democratic, optimistic thinking of the early twentieth century. Smith declared that "Anabaptism was the essence of individualism" (1941 edition, p. 29). The new edition drops this statement altogether and instead substitutes: "Bible study *in groups* was the source of their spiritual life and living." (1981 ed., p. 15, italics added by reviewer). Krahn has not thrown overboard all of Smith's concern for individual liberty, but much Anabaptist interpretation has shifted in past years from individualism to groups. If you have an old edition of Smith, I would not discard it. The old and the new are not quite the same book.

The present edition also has removed most of Smith's "defensive" and apologetical language regarding Mennonite radicals. Where Smith went to undue lengths to disassociate Mennonites from radicalism, such as Müntzer, the Münsterites, communism, and Claasz Epp, Krahn takes these people and movements in stride. He does not feel obliged to give long apologies and disclaimers. Krahn's revisions represent the maturing of Mennonite scholarship over the past forty years. Mennonite historians today are much more assured of themselves. The shadow of Münster no longer terrorizes.

Krahn has updated the book with events of Mennonite history since 1957, and generally the book is much stronger on events since World War II. No other American Mennonite historian would have been as well qualified to comment, from the lofty status of Mennonite elder stateman and personal experiences, on these past years. Here too a difference of philosophy between Smith and Krahn shows itself. Smith believed in progress; he saw the rise of Mennonite education, prosperity, and activity as good. His chapter on "Culture and Progress" (now renamed "Theological and Cultural Developments") points with appreciation to Mennonites who have entered the business world "and have contributed their share to the captains of industry and successful men." He reported proudly about a notable woman of Mennonite descent who had just been named the outstanding American mother of 1939. Krahn has seen too many tragic events in the twentieth century to celebrate steady progress. He sees rather a historical rhythm—periods of Mennonite strength and retreat evaluated in terms of nonresistance and other basic Anabaptist practices—not a steady progress. In an eloquent statement of conviction he urges, "Concerning basic Christian convictions, it can be said, one can have them, one can lose them; one can, by the grace of God, even regain them." (223)

Smith's Story of the Mennonites is a valuable compendium of Mennonite history which will be useful to Mennonites and the general reader for many years to come. C. Henry Smith was one of the great Mennonite historians of the twentieth century. I concur with Dr. E. G. Kaufman's 1951 review on the earlier edition: "it is the best and most comprehensive book on the subject in existence and should find its way not only into every Mennonite home but also into the hands of scholars." I only regret that the book was issued as a paperback. After only a few weeks, my book spine is already beginning to break.

Keith L. Sprunger
Bethel College

Book Reviews

David A. Haury, *The Quiet Demonstration: The Mennonite Mission in Gulfport, Mississippi.* Newton: Faith and Life Press, 1979. 128 pp.

This book has been slow in coming to the hand of a reviewer, possibly because of the seemingly limited significance of its subject. It is the story of Mennonite service to the community of Gulfport, Mississippi. What became the first Voluntary Service unit began in 1945 as a Civilian Public Service camp, with the prosaic task of building sanitary outhouses to control the spread of hookworm. Over its thirty-one years of existence, first under MCC administration and later under the General Conference, the Gulfport work has involved many people.

James Juhnke, in his foreword to the book, says that its purpose is "to celebrate one manifestation of the church in action." *The Quiet Demonstration,* however, is much more an evaluation and interpretation than it is a celebration. Because of its evaluative nature, this book is of great importance to any planning for the future of Mennonite missions and service.

The CPS camp began late in World War II. Only a very select and dedicated group of men were invited to come to the Gulfport unit. Haury states that there is some indication that a few in MCC already had the vision that would lead to later national voluntary service programs. Gulfport was the first test of these ideas.

The workers at Gulfport did not fail to see needs beyond the health area. Educational work began in the black community with the showing of health films to combat ignorance and indifference. After CPS was replaced by VS religious films were added. Work with Bible schools and classes began at this time. Annual summer youth retreats were organized. A community center was started to provide wholesome recreation for black youth. These continued to be major activities for the unit throughout its existence.

The issue of race relations and segregation forms a dark and tense background to the whole story of Gulfport voluntary service. The unit never pushed the integration issue hard, and neither did the blacks of Gulfport, but both sides were always aware of it. The VSers made a contribution in unspectacular ways, showing the black community that there really were whites who cared about their needs and would treat them as equals, thus the title *The Quiet Demonstration.*

Haury's first published work is a significant contribution. It is to be hoped that this is only the beginning of a new genre for Mennonite history. As Mennonite mission and service mature, we need more critical studies of the past to prepare for the work of the future.

John D. Thiesen
Bethel College

David A. Haury, *Prairie People: A History of the Western District Conference.* Newton: Faith and Life Press, 1981. 533 pp. $8.95.

What is the best shape for carving out a block of American Mennonite history? The shape David Haury chose is that of a district Mennonite conference. Or perhaps the Historical Committee of that conference made the choice: Haury worked with that committee's full authorization, encouragement, and help. In either case, he worked very well—so well in fact that his reader need not worry much about his book's quality and reliability. One can soon go on to more reflective responses.

A more amateurish author might have bogged the reader in catalogs of fact. Or kept readers asking whether the book really represents careful research and weighing of evidence. Or produced a book without important issues. Haury's book is above all that. Oh, to be sure, someone who is interested mainly in the broader strokes may at times think Haury included too many details. Someone else may question a statement here or there. For instance, in telling of emigration from Switzerland to Kansas in the 1870s (pp.53-4), Haury said that a change in Swiss military service law was the motive; but should he not have either given more evidence or else not been so quick to use the "for conscience sake" explanation? Or on another subject (p. 175), did the story of conflict between the Hopefield and Eden congregations really show the limits of conference power? Or, on still another, if it is true as he (p. 123) and others say, that the 1860 move to form a General Conference came from a missionary impulse, why did the conference wait for decades before it began real mission work beyond preaching to scattered Mennonites? But such questions are too small or too few to undermine interest in the book or confidence it its information.

So the reflective reader can go on to larger questions. One larger question is: "Instead of writing a conference history, might it have been better to pick a region, say the state of Kansas, and weave together a story of *all* Mennonite groups in the area, so as to compare a richer variety of Mennonite life and response?"

Using conference lines is the easy way. No, of course, *Prairie People* was not easy to write. It is a big book that weaves large themes with detail, factual information with topical organization, yet does so quite coherently. Anybody who has ever been close to the long hours and agony and sweat of producing a substantial and well-written book will know that *Prairie People* was not easy. Nevertheless, by using the conference to set the book's limits, Haury and the committee probably chose the easiest organizational principle at hand. Conference jurisdiction nicely marked out the limits of the subject. Conference structure provided machinery for getting it

from idea to completion. The question is, does the handy device of fitting history to the dimensions of a district conference give a block of Mennonite history its most fascinating shape?

Haury began with quite a complex mosaic of immigrant groups, congregations, and institutions; but by and large his story developed into one of Western District people feeling pulled mainly one of two ways—toward conservative evangelicalism at one end of a line, or toward a fairly progressive, relatively liberal version of Mennonitism (more or less derived from Anabaptism) at the other. His book does not communicate very much of a tug in a third direction which many Mennonites in North America feel. That third tug is toward a different kind of conservatism, an in-group traditionalism, concerned largely with maintaining traditions perceived as coming from the group's own history and preserving them from religious and cultural erosion. Old Order groups have of course moved farthest in that direction, but the third tug pulls with greater or lesser force upon almost all Mennonites. By including all or at least more of the various Mennonite groups, an inter-Mennonite approach to regional history might allow for a much richer study of those historic forces that have pushed and tugged on Mennonites in North America.

Bringing a variety of Mennonite groups into the same work might also make for a richer study of Mennonites' relation to nation. At both ends of the two-pole line one tends to get from *Prairie People*, there seems to have been much openness to American culture (although people at the two ends differed in the mixes of Americanisms they tended to accept). Of course that cultural openness has often been positive, not merely a matter of cultural indifference. Since the latter nineteenth century quite a few Mennonites have cogently argued in favor of such openness as a strategy ultimately to maintain the essentials of Mennonite faith and Mennonite testimony. The question here is not whether such openness has been positive or negative; it is whether the patterns perceived in Mennonites' response to national culture do not become far more interesting and full of meaning when one sees more fully the effects of all three pulls—toward progressivism and inclusion, toward American evangelicalism, but also toward in-group traditionalism. The points toward which those three pulls move mark out a triangle within which lie an infinitely rich variety of Mennonite responses. To be sure, even Haury's rather two-dimensional presentation shows quite a variety. But the greater variety that comes by adding that third tug, that third dimension, might show much more depth, and a richer variety still. And that richer variety would tell even more about American pluralism, and about all the ways that small groups struggle in response to the magnetism of American life.

To all this, Haury might well object with a truism: the reviewer is asking him to have written a different book. Well, truisms are true; the objection is fair. And, yes, if an inter-Mennonite regional history is not yet practicable—if, say, the various Kansas Mennonites were not yet ready to cooperate in support of one—then thank God (or at least thank Haury and the committee) for this book! It comes near being a model conference history. The facts about individual congregations are there, with a balance between detail for a local reader and summary for the general reader. Haury connected his material well to larger national themes, for instance the frontier process, as well as to religious ones such as American evangelicalism. His style is very readable. And if the book evokes some large questions about how best to capture the meaning of the Mennonite experience, its success in doing that is also to its credit.

Theron F. Schlabach
Goshen College

Western District Conference, Emmaus Mennonite Church, 1912 (right, temporary structure for conference meals).

Preparation Committee

First row: Marie Bergmann, Mrs. Bernhard Brucks, Mrs. Elisse (Gerhard) Claassen, Mrs. Helena (Bernhard) Harder, and Mrs. Helena (John) Dyck.

Second row: Gerhard Dyck, John Harder, Herman B. Entz, John J. Kopper, and Jacob J. Regier.