

MENNONITE LIFE

JUNE 1982

Note: We have removed several images of Hopi ceremonial activities from this issue, because of Hopi objections to the viewing of such images.

In this Issue

The Mennonite Library and Archives often provides photographs to illustrate articles in *Mennonite Life*, and this issue features two of the most important photograph collections of Mennonite origin. Pioneer General Conference missionaries, Rodolphe Petter and H. R. Voth, worked among the Cheyenne and Hopi Indians, and each took over one thousand photographs which are now preserved in the library. Voth's images, in particular, have received national recognition and occasionally appear in both scholarly and popular publications. In this issue the textual material was chosen to elucidate the genesis of the photographs.

Rodolphe Petter's interest as a missionary was not photography but linguistics, and Margaret Dietzel Hillegass explains his career and calling. She has kindly given permission to edit and publish her social science seminar paper, written a decade ago at Bethel College. While Petter snapped his photographs as an amateur, Voth's photographs were integrally related to his studies of Hopi culture and beliefs. Fred Eggan describes the tension between Voth's interests in missions and ethnography. Eggan and the Heard Museum have graciously allowed *Mennonite Life* to reprint his essay on Voth.

A grant from the National Historical Preservation and Records Commission has allowed the Mennonite Library and Archives to preserve and catalog the photographs of Petter and Voth.

MENNONITE LIFE

June 1982 Vol. 37 No. 2

Editor <i>Robert Kreider</i>	Rodolphe Petter: A "Called" Linguist <i>Margaret Dietzel Hillegass</i>	4
Associate Editor <i>David A. Haury</i>	Cheyenne Images: A Photo Essay <i>Rodolphe Petter</i>	8
Front Cover Two Horn Priests, H. R. Voth Collection		
Back Cover Cheyenne Women exhibiting Quilt and Chief Mower with his family.	H. R. Voth: Ethnologist <i>Fred Eggan</i>	14
Photo Credits H. R. Voth Collection and Rodolphe Petter Collection: Mennonite Library and Archives	Hopi Images: A Photo Essay <i>H. R. Voth</i>	20
	Research Note: G. A. Haury Photographs	26
	Book Reviews	27

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Rodolphe Petter: A "Called" Linguist

By Margaret Dietzel Hillegass

Rodolphe Charles Petter was born on February 19, 1865 in Vevey, Canton Vaud, Switzerland. His father, a coppersmith who made large vats for the local wine industry, died in his mid-thirties and left his destitute widow to take care of their five children. Consequently, Rodolphe spent a rather unhappy childhood in the homes of various relatives and friends.

In recalling those early years, Petter later wrote that his maternal grandmother was largely responsible for his religious training. While living in her home he was required to read the Bible and to attend both Sunday School and church. Here, too, he experienced the first "calls" from God to become a missionary. In his own words Petter related,

... even then, all unbeknown to myself, God was singling me out for my special life-work. Brother Auguste and I were sleeping together. One night he woke me up and said in exciting words, 'Rodolphe, I had a vivid dream. I saw you in a large camp of Indians in America and you were preaching to them.'

Another night Petter remembered how he was startled from sleep by the ringing of the nearby village church bell. He shook Auguste awake and exclaimed, "Oh brother, I know L^eEternal is calling me. I henceforth dedicate my life to his service."¹

The next step in Petter's journey to becoming a missionary occurred when he was receiving catechism instructions prior to his confirmation in the Reformed Church. His pastor influenced him for the first time to consider aspiring to the "high calling of the ministry."² Several years later the young man gained some

valuable experience along this line when he started working for a blind evangelist named Eugene Peter. For two years Petter accompanied Peter on his evangelistic tours about Switzerland and France. Besides making travel arrangements and serving as a guide for the blind man, Petter also helped to prepare his sermons even though he still was only a teenager. Through this work Petter made many contacts with teachers and students at the theological seminary of Lausanne. These friends encouraged him to go to the Basel Mission Institute for preparation for mission work. At the same time a wealthy Lausanne doctor and his wife, Dr. and Madame Recardon, offered to adopt Petter. As their son he would become their sole heir and receive the finest education available at European universities.

Nonetheless, Petter turned down the generous proposition because he felt God had called him to a different future. Accordingly he entered the Institute as an eighteen-year-old to study theology and to prepare for the duties of a missionary. His courses included Latin, Greek, Hebrew, German, philosophy, mathematics, and medicine. In addition to this he served as head nurse of a large hospital in order to fit himself more thoroughly for the mission field.

During this time in Basel, Petter was also involved in Switzerland's compulsory military service where he trained as an aid in the army medical service. Here he became acquainted with Samuel Gerber, a Mennonite. Together the two friends used to visit Gerber's home in the Jura Mountains where Petter fell

in love with Samuel's sister, Marie Gerber.

Through these associations with the Jura Mennonites, Petter became sympathetic with the Mennonite's scriptural grounds for adult baptism. Then on one visit to Gerbers, he met J. A. Sprunger of Berne, Indiana. Sprunger, who was preaching in the various Swiss Mennonite churches about the mission interests of American Mennonites, learned about Petter's changed beliefs on baptism and invited him to come work among the American Indians. Subsequently Petter was rebaptized in a Swiss Mennonite church, which then agreed to send him as a missionary to the General Conference (G. C.) Mennonite Church of North America.

On May 14, 1890, Petter married Marie Gerber, and that same summer they sailed for New York. The fall meeting of the General Conference at Marion, South Dakota, officially appointed the young couple as missionaries among the Oklahoma Cheyennes. Before setting out for the field, however, the Petters were assigned to study the English language at Oberlin College in Ohio, throughout the winter of 1890-1891. Finally, after their ordination at the Halstead Mennonite Church in Kansas, they left for Oklahoma and arrived at the Cantonment mission station on October 1, 1891.

Four years earlier the G. C. Foreign Mission Board had passed a resolution that work among the Cheyennes in Oklahoma should no longer be limited to training Indian children in the mission school. "Our workers should realize [sic] it as their first duty," read the resolu-

tion, "to labor for the saving of the souls of the grown people. . . . It is an illusion to expect that without labor among parents these are to be won to Christ through the children."³ In accordance with this decision, then, the Petters were assigned to work exclusively among the adult Cheyennes at the large camp near Cantonment. The young couple proceeded to devote their whole time, thought, and energy to the special task of learning the Cheyenne language. Although they had their living quarters in the Cantonment Mission School building, these new missionaries daily visited the Indians in their lodges, talking with them, studying their language, and trying to understand their ways of thinking by becoming familiar with their customs and traditions.

This linguistic study was a very ambitious undertaking since very few white men had ever before been successful in such an attempt. Not only was Cheyenne an unwritten language, but also it had an exceedingly complex grammatical structure, and white men had great difficulty learning to pronounce the unusual vowel combinations. One missionary noted that

. . . traders who for years have lived in this reservation and heathen daily [sic], find it futile to attempt (to acquire) even a partial knowledge of cheyenne [sic] for trade purposes, while traders with other tribes are able in a short time to talk on ordinary topics. Again we have noticed that white men who have married Cheyenne Indian women acquire only a limited and imperfect use of the language.⁴

Petter, who had already mastered French, German, English, Greek, and Hebrew, was nevertheless highly impressed by the Cheyenne language's complexity:

. . . the Cheyenne language is highly developed, admirably descriptive, has an inexhaustive vocabulary with thousands of verbal forms, many of which are not found in modern languages, neither in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. Verbs will undergo as many changes as actions are done or compounded. Thus what is done or expressed or felt by mind, senses, words, motions, attitudes and postures demand different verbal forms. Further, what is done by means of head, eyes,



Rodolphe Petter

mouth, teeth, arms, hands, legs, bones, water, fire, heat, striking, cutting or other instruments requires as many verbal changes. All these forms adopt thousands of other changes, according as they become compounded or affected by animate and inanimate subjects or objects. The Cheyenne has five, where we have only three personal pronouns, four imperatives, and can conjugate the numbers 'ad indefinitum.'⁵

At first the Indians remained aloof from these white missionaries who were so foolishly trying to learn Cheyenne. According to tribal tradition their language was a special gift to them from the Great Spirit, so none but the Cheyenne could know it.⁶ Consequently, even the few Indians who had learned some

English did not bother to help Petter with his translation work, particularly when they would have been most helpful in explaining abstract terms.

Despite this discouragement the white missionary persisted in his efforts and gradually became proficient in the language. An important part of his work included the development of a written Cheyenne language. As soon as he was able Petter would translate simple Bible sentences into Cheyenne. The Indians were astonished to hear these funny marks on the paper talk to them through the lips of this white man. After many puzzled discussions the leading men of the tribe agreed that this Cheyenne-speaking

white man must have been a descendant of their relatives who had failed to cross the ocean with the rest of the tribe in the long ago.⁷ Thus they claimed Petter as a Cheyenne, giving him the name of *Zessensze*, or "Cheyenne-talker."

Some of the older Indian leaders listened to the missionary's Gospel story with great respect, a natural response dictated by their customary reverence for holy things; they were fascinated by the mysteries of writing and the white Cheyenne-talker. Other Indians, however, were not so cordial. As soon as they understood that the missionary's purpose in learning their language was to bring them the white man's religion, skepticism overcame their initial awe for *Zessensze*.

During these early years (1892-1893), Petter tried to establish contacts with Indian bands all over the reservation. He would travel a 200 mile circuit along the Washita, South and North Canadian, and Deer Creek rivers to visit the various encampments. Despite their usual hostility toward whites these Indians respected *Zessensze* for his knowledge of their language. After the mission house at Cantonment burned down early in 1893, Mr. and Mrs. Petter put up a tent house right in the large camp of Indians near Cantonment. There they lived during the summer and fall of 1893, until the new mission house was ready for occupation. Under these conditions the missionaries were fortunately provided with an opportunity to become more familiar to the Indians, gradually winning their confidence. They also gained rapidly in speaking the language and were thus able to begin evangelical work among the Indians.

Petter continued to translate English devotional literature into Cheyenne as fast as he could learn the language. He and his wife taught the other Mennonite missionaries in Oklahoma how to speak and read Cheyenne so they, too, could preach the Gospel in the Indians' mother tongue. In the following years *Zessensze's* translations were published for general use on the Cheyenne mission field: a reading book and several religious song books appeared in 1895, the first edition of

Luke and John in 1902, *Pilgrim's Progress* in 1904, and a sketch of a Cheyenne grammar in 1907.

After several years of declining health, Petter's wife died of tuberculosis in the summer of 1910. By November of the following year, Petter had married again, gaining himself a new companion as well as a mother for his two children. His second wife, Bertha Elise Kinsinger of Trenton, Ohio, was a mission teacher at Cantonment. Already before Marie Petter's death, she had provided valuable assistance by working directly with Petter as he labored to compile a Cheyenne-English dictionary.

Throughout 1912 and 1913, Petter translated more portions of the Old Testament, and his son Valdo printed them—as well as a revised edition of Luke and John—on the multigraph. Urged on by the Cheyenne missionaries' need for a printed Cheyenne-English dictionary, Petter decided to take a leave of absence (1913-1915). Mrs. Petter continued working at the Cantonment station while Petter and his children went to Kettle Falls, Washington, to do all the printing.⁸ By working long hours in the next sixteen to eighteen months, Petter produced the manuscript for a 1,126 word dictionary, and Valdo once again did the printing on the multigraph.

Besides going to Washington, Petter also made three trips in 1898, 1901, and 1903, to Montana in order to explore the possibilities for starting mission work among the Northern Cheyenne.⁹ These Montana Indians were overwhelmed by the visiting *Zessensze* and "fairly stormed [him] from dawn to late in the night, so eager were they for news from their Southern relatives."¹⁰ When Petter reported favorably on the prospects for extending the Mennonite mission effort to the Tongue River Reservation in Montana, the G. C. Foreign Mission Board assigned Mr. and Mrs. G. A. Linscheid to open a mission station there in 1904. Then in the fall of 1916, Mr. and Mrs. Petter moved to Lame Deer, Montana, which was the agency headquarters for the Tongue River Reservation. Petter said that "the main cause of this transfer was the hayfever which

plagued me in Oklahoma. It disappeared entirely here in Montana."¹¹

For the next nineteen years Petter superintended the Montana mission work among the Northern Cheyenne with the very able assistance of his wife, Bertha. He preached in Cheyenne, he gave reading lessons and religious instruction to Cheyenne laymen, and he coached the other Mennonite missionaries in their language studies, particularly by correcting their Cheyenne sermons. And, of course, he never lost interest in his own philological research.

By 1934 this brilliant linguist had made an outstanding quantity of Christian literature available in the Cheyenne language. He had completed translations of the entire New Testament, large portions of the Old Testament, and sixty Cheyenne hymns. The Bible translations involved years of painstaking labor with careful reference to the original Greek text, to French, Hebrew, English, and German versions of the Bible, as well as to commentaries and other scholarly works.

The most indispensable part of Petter's mission work was to give the Cheyenne the Word of God in their own language. He was absolutely convinced that his Cheyenne linguistic helps for the Bible were his "trust," his "talent to use in behalf of the salvation of the Cheyennes."¹² The first step in his mission program was to have the missionaries master the language so they were able to intelligibly read translations to the Indians. Nothing—especially in his later years—irritated Petter more than new young missionaries who relied on the Indians' knowledge of English and excused themselves from learning the complex Cheyenne language. Here Petter argued that

The Indian is a thinker and thinks best in his mother's tongue. What he has learned [in English] in school or on the streets is surface matter. Underneath he has another personality.¹³

A missionary's failure to master the Cheyenne language was unforgivable, said Petter, since he had already laid the foundation for their study with his grammar and dictionary.

The senior missionary became so certain of the inherent power of God's Word in Cheyenne that he jealously guarded his grammar and dictionary from falling into the hands of his competitors, the Catholic Mission located at Ashland, on the Tongue River Reservation. In a 1943 letter to the Mission Board he reported:

Even the Catholics have coveted our knowledge of the language. In underhanded ways they have again and again tried to get hold of the grammar and the dictionary. Once an order came from the Catholic headquarters to send a Cheyenne dictionary C. O. D. tho they knew its price was \$50. Of course we did not send it. . . . Surely they must "laugh in their sleeves" when they see that our Board and our churches have such difficulty in finding workers capable of mastery the Cheyenne language even tho it has been made so easily available to them. "Those stupid Mennonites" who have such a treasure and relegate it to Museum shelves instead of making the utmost practical use of it in their work.¹⁴

A second phase of Petter's mission program was to teach the Indians themselves to read Cheyenne. Promising Christian Indians were taught to read in Cheyenne, they received weekly instructions for Bible study and were well grounded on the fundamental doctrines of the Bible, they were trained to conduct meetings and to deliver Gospel talks or sermons. To Petter, the value of these native helpers, as he referred to Cheyenne laymen in the church, lay in their knowledge of the language. "Unless we develop the native element for work, there is no perspective for the future," he wrote to his wife in 1914. "Of course they cannot stand on their own legs now, but now is the time for them to learn. Rather this than have new missionaries who have first to learn the language."¹⁵ After all, he continued, Indians from out of the midst of the tribe were best adapted to preach the Gospel as they could best understand it.

Although Petter retired from active service in 1935, he resisted all efforts of the G. C. Foreign Mission Board to remove him from the mission field. Mr. and Mrs. Petter continued living at Lame Deer, where Bertha Petter was still very active. The highlights of these later years

for Petter were two trips to Europe during the summers of 1935 and 1939. These travels gave him the pleasure of visiting his family and renewing contacts with old friends from his days at the Basel Mission Institute.

Then in the spring of 1938, many of Petter's activities had to be curtailed when he developed heart trouble. Nevertheless, according to his wife, Petter remained mentally keen and fit as ever; in the spring and early summer of 1944 her husband worked out forty-one closely typed pages of an *Addenda* to his Cheyenne grammar for the special benefit of the new missionaries to make their study easier. Three years later, early in the morning of January 6th, Petter suffered a severe heart attack and died in his home at Lame Deer.

The Cheyenne

The Cheyennes, to whom Petter had devoted over fifty-five years of his life, were members of the Algonquian family which originated in the woodland country of the western Great Lakes. Late in the seventeenth century they migrated west to the Red River (along the border of Minnesota and the Dakotas), becoming closely connected with the sedentary village tribes of the upper Missouri River. Here the Cheyennes lived in earthen lodge villages where they cultivated corn, squash, and beans. Horses were introduced in 1760, and by 1830 the Cheyenne had completely abandoned their villages for the nomadic life of buffalo hunters.

Around this time the tribe separated when some moved down to the Arkansas River in southeast Colorado while the rest roamed the area along the Rosebud, Yellowstone, and Powder rivers. Guns and horses, mobility and war transformed their culture. The Cheyenne enjoyed their zenith between 1840 and 1860 since the buffalo were still plentiful and white settlers were few. The next twenty years, however, were a period of continuous fighting with the whites.

Upon surrendering to the U. S. army in 1877, the Northern Cheyenne were herded south to join the Southern Cheyenne on their reservation in southwestern Oklahoma.

The summer of 1878 was so marked by suffering—disease, malnutrition, and homesickness—that 300 Northern Cheyenne fled the Oklahoma reservation in a desperate march for their home in the north. The attempt was unsuccessful since they were finally overtaken once again by the U. S. army in January, 1879. After this tragic experience, however, the U. S. government did allow a separate reservation to be established for the Northern Cheyenne on the Tongue River in Montana. Here, where the Cheyenne subsisted mainly as cattle raisers, the original allotment (1884) of land was 271,000 acres, which was increased to 440,000 acres in 1900.¹⁶

¹ Rodolphe C. Petter, "How I Became a Missionary," *Mennonite Life*, X (January, 1955), 6.

² *Ibid.*, 8.

³ 1877 resolution of the G. C. Foreign Mission Board; quoted by Bertha K. Petter in "Cheyennes" (February 2, 1953), 3 page typescript found in Rodolphe Charles Petter Collection, Mennonite Library and Archives, North Newton, Kansas.

⁴ Bertha Kinsinger (Petter), Speech to the Missionary Society of the Fourth Lutheran Church, Springfield, Ohio (December 15, 1904), R. Petter Collection, folder 20.

⁵ Rodolphe Petter, *Reminiscences of Past Years in Mission Service Among the Cheyenne*, 1936, reprint found in Mennonite Library and Archives, North Newton, Kansas, 47.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁷ Bertha Petter, "Sketches from the Life of Rodolphe Petter," R. Petter Collection, file 4. This makes reference to the Cheyenne's legend concerning the tribe's migration to North America across the "Great Water" (probably the Bering Sea). According to the tale, two Cheyenne brothers remained behind.

⁸ The Petter family had bought a small orchard in Kettle Falls, Washington, while Marle Petter was still living. Petter came to this small fruit ranch—a favorite spot because the beautiful mountain scenery reminded him of Switzerland—almost every fall after 1916, to supervise the fruit harvest, to rest, and to do concentrated translation work.

⁹ E. G. Kaufman, *The Development of the Missionary and Philanthropic Interest Among the Mennonites of North America* (Berne, Ind.: Mennonite Book Concern, 1931), 139.

¹⁰ Rodolphe Petter, "Our Montana Cheyenne Mission," *The Mennonite*, XXXVII (March 2, 1922), 5.

¹¹ Rodolphe Petter, *Reminiscences*, 50.

¹² Rodolphe Petter, "Cheyenne Mission Publications," *The Mennonite*, XXXVII (March 2, 1922), 15.

¹³ Rodolphe Petter, report to G. C. Foreign Mission Board, January 26, 1943, R. Petter Collection, file 55.

¹⁴ Rodolphe Petter, letter to G. C. Foreign Mission Board, July, 1943, R. Petter Collection, file 55.

¹⁵ Rodolphe Petter, letter to Bertha Petter from Kettle Falls, Washington, dated January 8, 1914, R. Petter Collection.

¹⁶ For more details on Cheyenne history, see *Indians of Montana, Wyoming* (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Dept. of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1966,) 20 pp.; also, Bertha Petter, "Establishment of Northern Cheyenne Reservation," *The Mennonite*, XXXVII (March 2, 1922), 5-6; or Marl Sandoz, *Cheyenne Autumn* (New York: Avon Books, 1953).



3



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4

1. Oklahoma Mennonite missionaries: H. J. Klievers, R. Petters, and J. B. Edigers.
2. Petter with Anna Wolfname and Ernest King
3. Petter home in Montana
4. Petter family: Marie Gerber, Olga Marie, and Valdo.
5. Rodolphe Petter
6. Rodolphe Petter
7. Bertha Kinsinger Petter



5



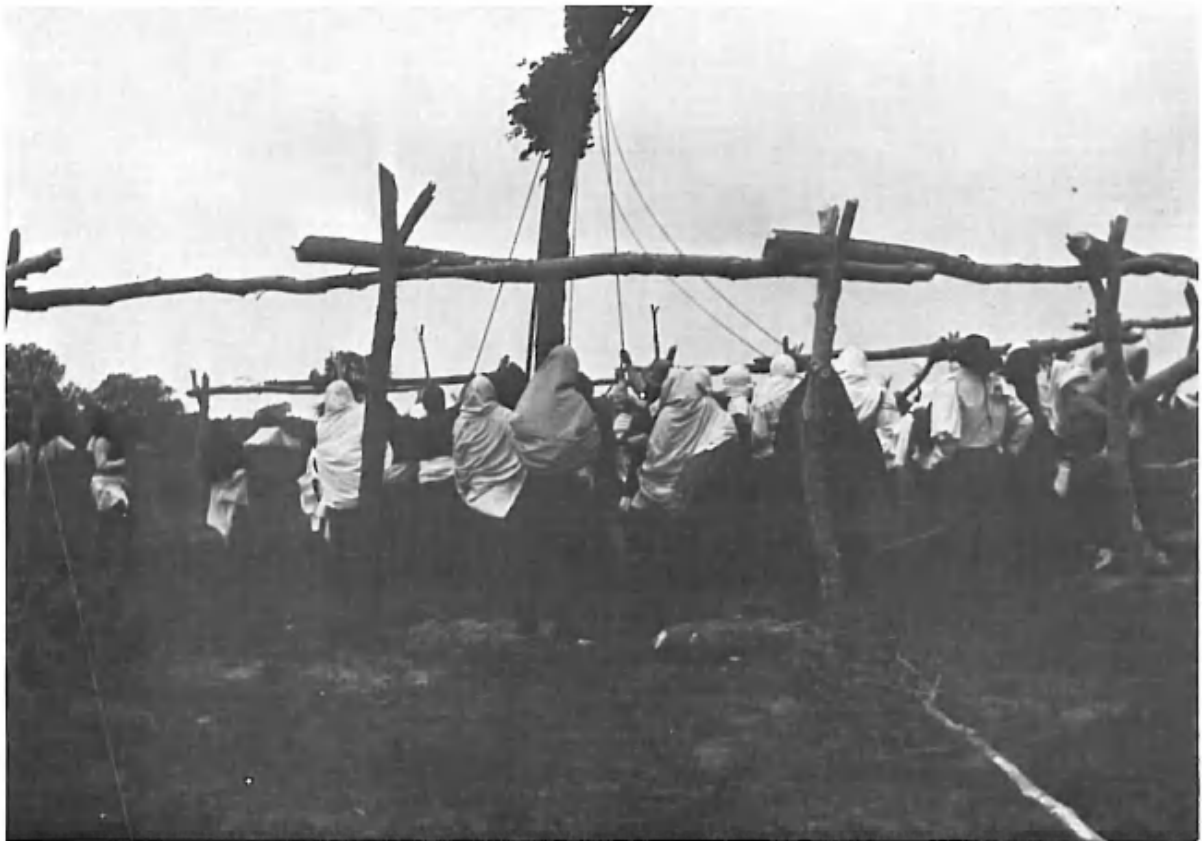
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- 8. *Cheyenne sun dance*
- 9. *Cheyenne encampment*
- 10. *Typical Cheyenne home*
- 11. *Wickiup*
- 12. *Beef drying in the sun*
- 13. *Girls in ceremonial dress*



11



12



13



15



14

- 14. Cheyenne couple
- 15. Family with papoose in beaded cradle
- 16. Cheyenne couple at church
- 17. Cheyenne with peace pipe
- 18. Redbird and wife, Cantonment, Oklahoma
- 19. Chief Mower, Fonda, Oklahoma



16



17



19



18

H. R. Voth: Ethnologist

By Fred Eggan

H. R. Voth as Mennonite missionary is a controversial character and in recent years has been blamed for many of the difficulties experienced by the Hopi Indians of Third Mesa—unfairly in my estimation, as I hope to show. But H. R. Voth as ethnologist was an important figure in the development of anthropology around the turn of the century, and his collections of Hopi material culture, his reports of Third Mesa ceremonies and other aspects of Hopi life provide an unrivalled corpus for the serious student. Of his contemporaries only A. M. Stephen, who resided at First Mesa beginning in the 1880s, and J. W. Fewkes, who represented the Bureau of American Ethnology, made comparable observations on Hopi ceremonial life and culture. How the Reverend H. R. Voth became an ethnologist, after having established the first mission among the Hopi Indians since the Pueblo Rebellion in 1680 drove out the Franciscans, will be the major theme of this paper.

Heinrich R. Voth was born in the village of Alexanderwohl in southern Russia in 1855. His parents were part of a German Mennonite colony which had been offered sanctuary by Catherine the Great, and the young Voth grew up in the village, learning both Russian and English in addition to his native German, and preparing for a life in the church. The Mennonites were an outgrowth of the sixteenth century Anabaptist movement which repudiated war and emphasized the rebaptism of adults as a result of personal conviction. Adherence to pacifism and nonresistance led to frequent persecutions, and in the

1870s the Russian colonies were severely tested. As a result, the congregation to which the Voths belonged removed to Kansas in 1874 and started a new colony near Newton.

Voth was the only member of the colony who spoke English. He taught school for two years before attending Wadsworth Academy in Ohio, and later the Saint Louis Medical School, where he spent a year learning the elements of medicine in preparation for missionary work. His first assignment was to the Cheyenne and Arapaho in what was then Indian Territory, and later Oklahoma. These Plains tribes, fresh from military defeat and subjection, had only recently been established on reservations, and they were not easy to work with. Voth spent most of the decade of the 1880s with the Arapaho, learning to speak the language, collecting Arapaho tales (some of which he published much later), recording Ghost Dance songs as well as carrying out his mission duties, and maintaining a voluminous correspondence in German with the Mennonite Conference. The Dawes Act of 1887 which allotted the reservation lands to individual Indians, interrupted the mission work.

In 1891 Voth took a six month's leave of absence to visit his old home in Russia, and during his absence the Mission Board decided to establish a mission among the Hopi Indians, and asked him to take up the new assignment on his return. En route back to Kansas Voth married Martha Moser, a former mission worker, in Dalton, Ohio, his first wife having died earlier. With the president of the Mission Board,

Voth made his first visit to the Hopi country in the autumn of 1892, and the following spring the board decided that a mission station should be established.

Voth and his family proceeded via Holbrook to Keams Canyon by means of a Mormon freighting outfit and stayed with Superintendent Collins and his wife, old friends from Indian Territory. After visiting all the mesas, Voth decided on Oraibi, the largest Hopi community, as the best location for his mission. Oraibi, with over 800 Hopis, was already too large for the land base immediately available, and the villagers were sharply divided on the question of sending their children to the new boarding school established a few years earlier at Keams Canyon, some twenty miles to the east. Initially all Hopis opposed the school, since it disrupted the initiation rituals and training essential to the continuation of the elaborate Hopi ceremonial system. In 1890 the government had brought a group of Hopi leaders to Washington, and the trip "convinced" most of them that they had no choice. Lololoma, the Oraibi village chief and leader of the Bear clan, was opposed by the "traditionalists" led by Yokioma, the Kokop clan chief and Lomahongyoma, the Spider clan leader. The resulting factional quarrel led to the division of the ceremonial system, and the ultimate splitting of the village into two almost equal parts when Yokioma led his followers off to found Hotevilla in September, 1906.

Voth, initially unaware of the turmoil ahead, rented a Hopi house while he started construction of his mission station on land provided along the wash, a mile away from

the village, and began to learn the Hopi language. It took almost two years to master the language, and after the mission was built he and his wife began to hold meetings in the streets and plazas. As they became more proficient in Hopi they entered into every phase of Hopi life, becoming acquainted with the various families, aiding the sick, and attending the ceremonies. In a retrospective account of their decade as missionaries from 1893 to 1902, Voth reported that under the Hopis' "outward filth and degradation there were splendid lovable natures, immortal souls to be saved." But it was mainly he and his wife who prepared the way: "If we could have made the gate a little wider, the road a little less narrow, we could have had many converts, but as it was, none came to a full decision for Christ."

In the spring of 1901 his wife died in childbirth and Voth decided to leave the mission field, at least temporarily. He had become increasingly interested in Hopi ceremonial life as the rituals followed one another in order throughout the solstitial year, and through the interest of George A. Dorsey he began to prepare collections for the new Field Columbian Museum in Chicago. He remained a year longer, initiating his successor, the Reverend J. B. Epp, into the language and work, and began the church on Oraibi mesa that became his monument. J. B. Frey soon came to help with the mission, and a few of the Hopis accepted Christianity and were baptized. By 1905 the factional disputes in Oraibi were reaching a climax. Epp had returned bringing a wife, but opposition to the mission work was so great that he had to leave for a while.

In the 1920s Voth characterized the Hopi reservation as one of the most difficult of mission fields. In thirty years the converts numbered only about forty in all—an average of a little more than one a year. He added: "Of course we hope for more in the future but even as it is—it pays!" Today the mission still sits along the wash with a school for children, and the congregation of the Mennonite church in New Oraibi is not much larger than in the 1920s. Voth's church on the mesa



H. R. Voth

was rehabilitated during the war but was later struck by lightning, a sign to the Hopis that their deities were still opposed to the Mennonite intrusion. It still stands as a gaunt reminder of an important period in Hopi history.

In recent years the Mennonites have come under severe criticism from Laura Thompson in her *Culture in Crisis, A Study of the Hopi Indians* (1950), in which she explains the "breakdown in the ceremonial organization in the Mennonite-dominated villages through the undermining of the authority of the priesthood, the conversion of the chief priests, and the subsequent lapse of the ceremonies they led"—and in general the upsetting of the organic balance of the social system. This overstates the influence of the Mennonites and neglects environmental factors such as pressure on land, limited water supply, and the new alternatives provided by the government. Alfred Siemens, a young Mennonite scholar from British Columbia, has provided a more balanced view. In "Christ and Culture in the Mission Field," published in *Mennonite Life* (April, 1962),

he reports on his personal assessment of the Mennonite missionary activities:

The first Mennonite missionary to the Hopi, H. R. Voth, was an aggressive evangelist and anthropologist. He gathered many Hopi artifacts, made intensive studies of their customs, vocabulary and religion, and wrote carefully and voluminously about them. But he, as had the Catholic fathers before him, also antagonized them. The present missionaries feel they are still the objects of a resentment that was aroused by pioneer missionaries. [p. 84]

The Voth archives and journals will ultimately provide a more definitive answer. In the following pages we shall see kindness and understanding as well as behavior which would not escape censure today.

We might now look more specifically at H. R. Voth's development as an ethnologist which led, among other things, to the collection of Hopi materials which are described in the present catalogue. In Elizabeth Q. White's account of her childhood in *No Turning Back* (1964) we have a number of glimpses of Voth. He had lured her father to help him and the daughter often

tagged along. In 1894 a new school had been built at the foot of the mesa, and the government was using Navajo policemen to round up the children. Lololoma, the village chief, had given his promise that the children would attend the new school, but the conservatives refused and hid their children as long as possible. The friction between Lololoma and Yokioma intensified as children were caught and taken to the school where they were bathed and given new clothes and new names. Elizabeth's parents, Qoyawayma and Sevenka, were conservatives and Yokioma and his followers often visited Voth to discuss their problems and get his advice. Later, when the conservatives were imprisoned in Alcatraz after the founding of Hotevilla, Voth remained their means of communication with their families until they were released.

During the 1890s Voth began a systematic study of Hopi social organization and ceremonies in order to understand better their religious beliefs. He attended funerals and inquired about their conceptions of the afterworld, and of good and evil. The Kachina cult particularly interested him because of the initiations of the children and the masked dances which occupied the winter and spring periods. He began a collection of the dolls which the Kachinas presented to the girls on particular occasions. He also began to sort out the bewildering variety of Hopi deities who were associated with various aspects of nature and culture, and represented on the altars set up in the Kivas for the calendric ceremonial performances. "The religion of the Hopi," he wrote, "is preeminently a product of his environment. Being surrounded by a harsh and forbidding desert, awe inspiring in its solitude, stern and inhospitable, he is strongly modified by its subtle influences, and his altered nature shows itself in his daily life and in his attitude towards those unseen but real forces of nature which determine and go to make up what we call religion."

As Voth became more knowledgeable about Hopi life he was called on for advice with regard to reservation problems — trading posts, schools, Navajo incursions, missions — and the scope of his correspon-

dence widened. J. W. Fewkes wanted comparative data from Oraibi for his First Mesa accounts, but Voth was reluctant to let Fewkes publish his material for fear of weakening interest in his own proposed accounts. In a letter to Superintendent Collins as to the effects of the ceremonies on the teachings of the government schools, Voth stated that "As a whole the ceremonies are devotional and serious," but the obscene sideshows of the clowns were degrading and filthy, and the whipping of the children at initiations was a serious problem. He asked whether the government might not prohibit certain features of the ceremonies. Voth was a member of the Indian Rights Association and was concerned with both policy and appointments. In 1897 he wrote that the Hopi had reached a crisis and that much of the good work was at a standstill. "We are getting discouraged."

Later in 1897 these interests began to take a new direction. Dr. George A. Dorsey was Acting Curator of Anthropology in the Field Columbian Museum, established after the World's Fair of 1893. He visited the Hopi reservation en route from a summer's field trip to the coast of British Columbia and discovered Voth. Dorsey was the first Ph.D. from Harvard's pioneer anthropology department, and had been put in charge of developing exhibits and making new collections for the growing museum. He was a sophisticated administrator; during the next decade he brought together a remarkable staff at the museum and raised large sums of money from Chicago financiers and industrialists to support museum activities.

Dorsey immediately borrowed some 400 specimens from Voth, including a collection of kachina dolls and a large number of stone implements and weapons, as well as some twenty-four masks that he had accumulated. Voth specified that these were a "loan," since missionaries were prohibited from trading and he had recently been denounced as a "Russian Jew trading with Indians all the time." He wrote Dorsey that "Neither the collection as a whole nor any part of it is for sale as long as I stay here, I am

making it to aid in my studies. If I leave this work the collection will probably be for sale and those stone articles will then be subject to your order."

The documentation that Voth provided for his collections was both complete and perceptive, and he had a passion for accuracy that greatly impressed Dorsey. Dorsey returned in December of 1897 to see the Oraibi *Soyal* ceremony, the keystone to the Hopi ceremonial calendar, which Voth had observed annually since 1893. Dorsey had earlier provided Voth with a camera and a typewriter, and he soon proposed to Voth that he come to Chicago and prepare a series of exhibits on Hopi culture and a set of monographs on the major ceremonies. Voth was tempted but he was unwilling to leave the mission even temporarily until a successor was available. In the meantime he began a correspondence with Dorsey which continued over the next decade and a half, covering a wide variety of topics of mutual interest. Dorsey had interested Stanley McCormick, a member of the prominent McCormick family in Chicago, in supporting the Hopi exhibits, and Voth was given funds for both collecting and planning exhibits. All of his publications from 1901 until 1912 were brought out under the auspices of The Stanley McCormick Hopi Expedition.

The death of his wife and the needs of his children were important factors in Voth's decision to leave the mission field temporarily in 1901. He had reconstructed several Hopi altars from his photographs and measurements for the Field Museum and with Dorsey's guidance, had prepared a manuscript on *The Oraibi Soyal Ceremony* which was published in March, 1901. Voth had the confidence of the Hopi chief priests and was allowed to witness the kiva rituals, despite the growing schism in the village and the opposition of some members. In December Voth's account of *The Oraibi Powamu Ceremony* was published. These two volumes alone would make his reputation as an ethnologist; they were soon followed by a series of further accounts of ceremonies and of other aspects of Hopi life, which provide

an unrivalled corpus on the Hopi.

His correspondence with Dorsey reveals Voth's growing ambivalence. He notes that "no other white man will ever get in Oraibi what I now have," and goes on to say that he ought to be working full time but cannot: "I am a missionary here and have to be loyal to my calling and to my Board." With the completion of the *Soyal* manuscript, Dorsey again asked him about working full time. "My idea would be to add you permanently to the staff of the Museum, giving you ultimately the position of Assistant Curator of Ethnography."

Voth still temporized but the new publications resulted in criticism at home. Late in 1901 he wrote Dorsey that "People have heard that I was again working for the Museum, and now a storm of prejudice against me has been fanned and is blowing through our churches. I have explained about these publications and have an understanding with the Mission Board... but it will take my personal presence in Kansas to fully explain what I am doing." He went on to say that on January 1, 1902 he would have been in mission work for twenty-five years and "I shall on that date consider my official connection with the Mission severed. I can then do work easier—though I have a right now to do it."

Dorsey urged him again to take a position on the staff of the Museum but Voth, while expressing his appreciation of Dorsey's confidence in him, replied that he was not yet ready to sacrifice the position he held among the Mennonites and would prefer to continue his researches at Newton—"this our people would excuse and understand." A few months earlier he had begun the Oraibi chapel on the mesa, and he was well along on his description of the Snake and Antelope ceremonies and the women's *Oaqöle* ceremony, both published in 1903. He was soon to start *Traditions of the Hopi*, published in 1905, stories he collected in the vernacular and without an interpreter.

While working at Newton, Kansas, in August, 1904, Voth received a letter from John F. Huckel asking if he would help the Fred Harvey Company design and build a Hopi House at Grand Canyon, where the

new El Tovar Hotel was soon to open. Huskel was the son-in-law of Fred Harvey and had entered the company in 1898, founding the Indian Department in 1902. Voth wrote Dorsey asking if he should help out the Fred Harvey people and evidently received an affirmative reply, since he reported two months later that "our Hopi House — a large structure — progresses nicely." Whether Voth contributed to the "large amount of museum quality crafts" shipped to Grand Canyon in 1904-5 is not clear from the records, but in his spare time he was more than busy reading proofs on several manuscripts in press at the Museum.

In the spring of 1905 Dorsey wrote Voth that Stanley McCormick would probably not support further work with the Hopi and suggested other expeditions that he might want to consider: Brazil, the Rio Grande Pueblos, the Amur River, the Interior of Labrador, German East Africa, or German New Guinea. "I have faith in your ability to go into a tribe... make ethnologically complete and valuable ethnological collections, and prepare a report on the same," Dorsey wrote, and he asked Voth to think about it. The salary was tempting, one hundred and sixty dollars per month and expenses, and the time varied from two to five years each. Through Dorsey, Voth had become a founder of the new American Anthropological Association and was beginning to attend meetings. He was tempted but decided that his family and business interests had to come first.

Five years later he received word from C. L. Owen, Assistant Curator of Anthropology at the Museum, that they wanted him to construct four altars, two to three shrines, and a representation of a Hopi spring to add to the nine altars and representations originally constructed. Voth replied that he would like to do it, but since he now had another occupation he asked to do the work at home. He estimated that it would take eight months and Owen authorized him to go ahead.

After Voth completed the task and had installed the altars in Chicago he made a survey of what still needed to be done. In a letter to

Dorsey, he said:

Before I left last spring [1912] I suggested certain work with the Hopi Collections to Sims and Owen.

1. Continuation of the series of Hopi altars.
2. Reproduction of shrines and springs.
3. Overhauling of (Drab) Flute Altar now that I have the measurements.
4. "Aging" altars for appearance.
5. Preparing publications on Niman and Oraibi Flute ceremonies, I have many splendid photographs.
6. Working up and publishing songs—the records of which I procured for you some years ago.
7. Publication on Kachinas—masks, dolls, etc.
8. Further study in the field, especially of songs and the Kachina cult, of which we know extremely little.

Dorsey's reply was brief and regretted "that it will not be possible to go on with the work in the Southwest."

Voth had ended his letter to Dorsey: "I was in Oraibi lately, doing a little work for Mr. Huckel, which he had asked me for." This is undoubtedly a reference to what became later the Henry R. Voth Hopi Indian Collection at Grand Canyon, Arizona, the catalogue for which was prepared by Voth in 1912. Byron Harvey III, in his Introduction to the publication of Voth's original catalogue in 1967, says that "In 1912 he sold a collection to the Fred Harvey Company which had conceived the idea of adding it to the display at the Hopi House, built in 1905 for both the display and sale of Indian craft. Voth was retained to describe the specimens."

The 1912 collection is labelled "Hopi Collection No. 2" and is — or was in 1967 — preserved virtually intact at the Hopi House at Grand Canyon. "Hopi Collection No. 1" was sold to George C. Heye in 1918 and is presumably at the Heye Foundation in New York. This collection was derived from several sources but included some twenty-five carefully listed specimens from the Fred Harvey Voth Collection secured around 1909. The lists of material culture provide a better idea of Hopi daily life than do Voth's major publications.

Voth's last monographs were also published in 1912 by the Museum.



H. R. Voth



Chief Loloma

In the Preface to the *Oraibi Marau Ceremony*, Dorsey states that

Through the renewed generosity of Mr. Stanley McCormick, the Field Museum of Natural History resumes investigations among the Hopi Indians of Arizona. The services of Mr. H. R. Voth, who has made that tribe the object of special studies, have again been secured to construct additional Hopi

altars and prepare further papers on Hopi ceremonies and customs, and to add new ethnic features to the Hopi collections.

But the Marau monograph had been left over from the 1905 group of publications and *Brief Miscellaneous Hopi Papers*, which followed, was composed of odds and ends.

Later in 1912 Voth again wrote

to Dorsey saying he had not had an opportunity to round out his Hopi work and suggesting that he would be glad to do further work at home if the Museum were interested. Dorsey apparently never replied and was soon to leave the Museum. In 1915, during the war, Berthold Laufer, Dorsey's successor, wrote to Voth asking him if he had any manuscripts for publication and expressing a hope that they might be able to continue with the construction of altars and other projects. But Voth had not as yet put his notes and photographs of the Oraibi Flute ceremony together and the matter was apparently dropped.

What can one say about Voth's role as ethnologist and as missionary? The answers may be found in the H. R. Voth Collection at the Bethel College Historical Library in Newton, Kansas, and in the journals in the possession of his daughter; the correspondence I have consulted at Bethel College and in the Field Museum provides an outline of his career and indicates some of its contradictions. As a Mennonite missionary the Reverend Voth stood for pacifism and nonresistance to authority and for individual decision with regard to religion. Hopi converts were forbidden to watch Hopi ceremonies once they were baptized or to take part in any ritual activities, a policy which cut them off from their relatives and often forced them to move from conservative villages. When his own Mennonite communities turned on him Voth experienced a similar ostracism at first hand, but it did not cause him to rethink the mission operations.

As Voth became more interested in the Hopi in terms of their culture he began to systematically study their ceremonies and collect ceremonial objects. Hopi ceremonies are in the hands of societies which require initiation for admittance to the secret and sacred portions of their rituals, and Voth initially gained access to the Kiva rites through cultivating the friendship of the priests and through learning the Hopi language. Where there was opposition to his presence he sometimes forced his way into a kiva, justifying his intrusion on the grounds that he had permission

from the chief priests of the ceremony. Without their confidence in his activities he would never have received the information that he was given. More serious were the later accusations that he had "stolen their secrets" and published them for all to read.

In 1913 Voth was hired by the Fred Harvey Company to install three altars in the Harvey House at Albuquerque, and so authentic were the reproductions that First Mesa Hopis are said to have asked for their return, in the belief that they had been stolen and sold. Twenty years later a number of Hopis from Third Mesa were taken to the Century of Progress in Chicago; while visiting the Field Museum nearby they discovered the Hopi altars and other exhibits which Voth had built and installed around the turn of the century. So realistic were the figures that the Oraibi Hopis thought they could identify Don Talayesva, the author of *Sun Chief*, as one of the *Soyal* performers, an accusation which resulted in his being excluded from ceremonies until Mischa Titiev could secure statements from the Museum which cleared him of any connection with the exhibits.

Later, Panimptiwa, one of the critics of Voth, assumed the leadership of the *Powamu* ceremony at Oraibi when his elder brother died. Not knowing the details of the procedure, Titiev reports that he was forced to follow Voth's account, which was translated for him by his grandson, in order to carry out the ceremonial activities.

For some reason Voth never studied the major men's societies, *Wowochim*, *Tao*, *Ahl* and *Kwan*, which were collectively concerned with initiation into manhood and intimately associated with the dead and the underworld. The factional disruptions of the 1890s and early 1900s were such that tribal initiations were not held on Third Mesa until 1912, but Voth must have been aware of their significance. Nor did he ever solve the problem of who the kachinas were, since he had early rejected Fewkes' hypothesis of ancestor worship. Hence he missed the significance of the equation of the dead with clouds and masked

dancers, and their relationship to rain and crops. For all his interest in Hopi religion he never attempted to understand it in its own terms because he had already defined it as false.

Voth excelled as an ethnologist. The details fascinated him and he was never content until he had everything in place. The account of the *Soyal* ceremony, which Dorsey and Voth did together, is relatively brief and Voth kept adding more data until Dorsey wrote him that we "don't need to wait until the subject is exhausted" before publishing. As their collaboration continued the Hopi provided an inexhaustible supply of ethnological detail, built up over a millenium and more of addition and accumulation, as new groups joined the early settlers on Black Mesa. For Dorsey and the Museum he was an ideal investigator, one who could make collections, interpret them, and put them on exhibit for the general public. But as time went on he kept repeating what he had already done until he had practically all the Hopi altars on display. As an ethnologist of Hopi life he had no peers but the task of interpretation has had to be carried out by others, and particularly by Mischa Titiev for Third Mesa.

Why Voth never became a permanent member of the staff of the Field Museum, once he was free of his obligations to the mission, is more difficult to understand. We have provided some of the reasons above but only a detailed study of his journals will provide the full evidence. He did have the task of looking after his children from at least two marriages, and he undoubtedly had property in Kansas, and probably also in Oklahoma. But his reference group, first and last, was the Mennonites, and he maintained his relations to them until the end.

Laura Thompson's accusation that the Mennonites undermined the authority of the priesthood through conversion of the chief priests which led to the subsequent lapse of their ceremonies does not hold up under scrutiny. Neither Voth nor his successors ever converted a major leader; the closest they came was

the conversion of Charles Frederick, the younger brother of the village chief. The priests who gave up their ceremonies did so for quite other reasons, as Titiev's account of *Old Oraibi* (1944) clearly shows. Nor did the Mennonite influence "render difficult the implementation of any federal policy which fosters self-government," as she also claimed. The Indian Service bureaucracy (of which her then husband, John Collier, was Commissioner) didn't require assistance from the Mennonites to make self-government difficult.

In this brief essay we have tried to illuminate the Reverend Voth as Mennonite missionary and H. R. Voth as ethnologist, or perhaps better, ethnographer. We haven't been able to reconcile the two "persons," and indeed, Voth himself seems to have been unable to choose one role or the other or to integrate the two in a meaningful way. Despite his inability to make up his mind, or possibly because of the tension created by his two roles, Voth has left us with a remarkable series of studies of Hopi life and culture which form a foundation for all future studies, and for which we can be exceedingly grateful.

Note on sources. I am indebted to the Bethel College Historical Library at North Newton, Kansas for permission to utilize the Voth Archives, and to Dr. John M. Janzen, a former student, for his kindness in making a preliminary survey of their contents. I have also made extensive use of the files on the Dorsey-Voth Correspondence and other materials in the Field Museum archives. Voth's extensive photographic collection of some 1500 negatives, the majority of which pertain to the Hopi, have been made more available through the efforts of Professor Emil Haury.

This article was originally published as an introduction to a catalog of artifacts collected by Voth and now deposited in the Heard Museum, which kindly granted permission to reprint Eggan's essay in *Mennonite Life*: Barton Wright, ed., *Hopi Material Culture: Artifacts gathered by H. R. Voth in the Fred Harvey Collection* (Flagstaff: Northland Press, 1979).



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1. H. R. and Barbara Baer Voth
2. H. R. and Katie Hirschler Voth
3. Hopi weaving belt
4. Marau ceremony with corn stalks
5. Hopi women carrying water to village
6. Hopi women weaving baskets
7. H. R. Voth with Qoyawayma
8. H. R. and Martha Moser Voth

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- 9. Oraibi
- 10. Marau kiva
- 11. Mud Heads (*Ko yemsi*) in Oraibi plaza
- 12. Flute society at altar near Flute Spring
- 13. Snake society building *kisi* (snake house) in plaza
- 14. Oraibi mission chapel on mesa

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- 15. *Oaquol dance*
- 16. *Marau women with wands*
- 17. *Snake dancer*
- 18. *Burro with branches for snake kisi*
- 19. *Wuwuchim ceremony, controlling stars dance*
- 20. *Tassap Katchina procession*

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JUNE, 1982

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Research Note:

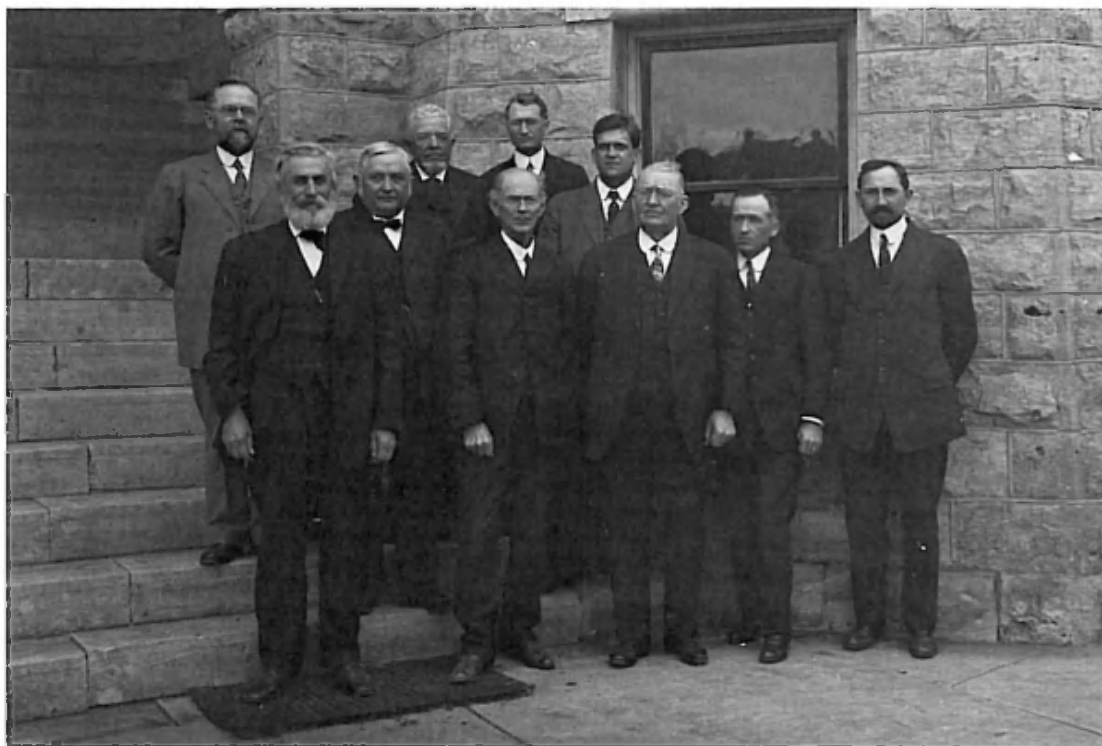
G. A. Haury Photographs

The Mennonite Library and Archives at Bethel College has produced over three hundred photographs from rare glass plate negatives stored in the archives. The photographs were taken between 1912 and 1918, and they illustrate a wide variety of activities at Bethel College. Classroom scenes and student groups predominate, but the collection also includes faculty portraits and college buildings.

Gustav A. Haury, Professor of Latin and English at Bethel College from 1893 to 1926, took the photographs. In addition to his teaching duties, Professor Haury served as editor of the *Bethel College Monthly*, business manager, forensics coach, and secretary of the faculty. Haury's many talents included excellence as a photographer, and few colleges have illustrations of their earlier years of the extent or quality of this collection.

A grant from the National Historical Preservation and Records Commission to the Mennonite Library and Archives made the reproduction of the photographs possible.

David A. Haury
Archivist



Bethel College Board of Directors, 1913 (left to right) D. J. Regier, J. J. Krehbiel, Gustav Harder, J. W. Penner, H. Banman, J. W. Kliewer, R. A. Goerz, Abr. Ratzlaff, J. G. Regier, and R. S. Haury.

Book Reviews

Cornelia Lehn, *Peace Be With You*,
Newton: Faith and Life Press,
1980, 126 pp.

"Often when I was a child" are the opening words of the Preface Cornelia Lehn writes for her book, *Peace Be With You*. These were the same words I heard Cornelia use in 1977 when she stood before the gathered people of the General Conference Mennonite Church triennial sessions meeting in Bluffton, Ohio. She was attempting to explain to this body of persons, the early source for her faith in the way of peace and non-resistance through love.

"Often . . . my father and I . . ." is like a "Once upon a time" beginning with which a storyteller frequently starts a story. And Cornelia does set out to tell, not just one story, but many—fifty-nine stories in this book.

Peace Be With You is a collection of stories that tell of men and women who chose the way of love, of not resisting the enemy, of forgiveness, of self-giving, of saying, "No" to the gods of war and power, of untold spiritual faith and courage, of struggling to find and follow Christ's way, even the willingness to experience suffering and death.

The stories appeal to the deepest emotions of the reader, but they never become sensational nor is there an attempt to oversentimentalize or to dwell on cruelties and suffering. They are told in a straightforward manner and bring to the reader just enough of detail and description to give adequate setting

so that the events in the stories can be visualized more readily and the persons become characters that are heard and understood by the reader.

The book contains peace stories coming out of our Biblical and Mennonite heritage as well as those that come from other traditions and cultures. A few stories are legendary but most of them are based on fact. The very first story tells about the faithful group of Jewish people who refused to worship the emperor's image despite the threat of execution. In chronological sequence, we meet men of the fourth and fifth centuries whose love for God gave them courage to confront their superior's use of evil by force. A little known story of Francis of Assisi is told in which his way of love and peace bears influence on others.

Of importance to the history of our Anabaptist heritage is the telling of Michael Sattler and his wife's martyrdom, of Menno Simon's struggle to follow Jesus Christ, reading about Christian Mueller, Elizabeth Dirks, and others. There is an especially poignant story, among many, about a little Mennonite girl living during the time of the Russian revolution who offers a gift to the one who comes to rob and kill.

There are also accounts of other Christians who were and are followers of the way of peace and love, such as James Addams and Muriel Lester. The saga of those willing to bear the pain for believing in justice and the way of non-violence continues with Rosa Parks boarding the bus and Martin Luther King, Jr. dying for a cause. A Kansas Mennonite farmer, an Alberta fami-

ly, a couple in Korea suffer the pain of mistreatment and the consequences of hate but they respond by turning the other cheek.

This collection of stories is a true legacy of our children and for us who are adult believers in the Mennonite and other historic peace churches. But, gratefully, these stories will be of interest and help to other Christians as well, those who are looking for alternative answers in a society that seems to suggest that might, force, and military power are the sources for protecting life and freedom. I believe that *Peace Be With You* will slowly, but surely, find its way into the homes and churches of a great variety of denominational backgrounds.

The content of quite a number of the stories seems a bit "heavy" for younger children and sometimes the telling becomes rather complicated. The language is often difficult. However, parents and teachers can re-tell or adapt the material for use with small children as long as they do not tamper with true facts or change the message. There are a few humorous incidents in the book which children would enjoy and even cause them to laugh.

Peace Be With You is a fine source for family reading in the home where talking about the stories could provide a time when children can ask, "What is the meaning of this Way?" ("What do these stones mean?"). Likewise, Sunday School teachers will find the book to be an excellent resource for stories. A book of peace stories with solid and exciting content such as these collected and written by Cornelia Lehn could also conceivably become the basis for a planned study series for

older children and youth.

Cornelia has a great gift for storytelling and has faith in the power of a good story. She also possesses faith in children's capacity to understand and want truth even when it's difficult and sad, as long as this truth is shared in honesty and without preachment. A good story never adds a moral. It does not need to, for the truth of the message is inherent within the story itself. Cornelia does not violate this important principle. Each story in *Peace Be With You* has its own meaning to which children, and older readers, can respond to with their own level of understanding and appreciation.

There was something that happened to me as I read one story after another in *Peace Be With You*. I experienced an ever-deepening emotional response—almost one of unbelief at the willingness and courage of people to face suffering and torture because of their faith in God and in the way of Christ's love. After finishing the very last story—ending with the telling about Mother Teresa's great compassion and love for the poor and destitute and with the suggestion that God's still small voice is saying, "Peace be with you" to the world, I was left with a contrite and grateful heart and with tears in my eyes.

Thank you, Cornelia, for sharing of your own faith in God and in the way of Jesus Christ, his Son, through your own inexplicable way of discovering and telling stories, first in *God Keeps His Promise* and now in *Peace Be With You*.

Peace Be With You is also an attractive publication—well designed and illustrated. The book and print are a good size for children's comfortable and enjoyable reading.

Bertha Fast Harder
Elkhart, Indiana

Harold W. Turner, *FROM TEMPLE TO MEETINGHOUSE: The Phenomenology and Theology of Places of Worship*. New York: Mouton Publishers, 1979.

Harold W. Turner was brought to this central Kansas community during this last year by the Council on International Ministries, an organization of Mennonite mission leaders. He came as an authority on new and emerging religions, particularly in Africa where he had spent considerable time.

What we did not know was that while teaching in the University of Nigeria in 1964-65 he had begun an extended study of religious structures and places of worship which eventually culminated in this book, published in 1979.

It all began with a basic critique—that Christian places of worship have repeatedly failed to express the distinctiveness of their own religious tradition. As but one example Turner cites the recent experience of the descendants of Anabaptism whose "places of worship have been assimilated in name and in form to the churches of other Christians."

The strength of this book however is not so much in the critique which it gives as in the methodology by which he approaches the subject. Turner begins his observations with the insights of phenomenology, asking for the basic characteristics of our concept of space and specifically religious space and places. His most basic observation is that we have essentially only two types of religious structures, which he calls the temple or *domus dei* and the meetinghouse or *domus ecclesiae*.

Next he turns to a survey of the biblical literature as it moves from the tent to the temple to the synagogue and finally in the New Testament to the temple as person in Jesus, the final step being the radical transformation of space.

Turner does not end with the Bible however, as if religious insight and experience concluded with the First Century A.D. He continues the story as it develops through history, testing and examining the church's structures as they portray characteristics of *domus dei* and *domus ecclesiae*.

Turner is not without his preference; the meetinghouse or *domus ecclesiae* is the Christian norm he asserts, but the tendency is for the Christian community to move in the

opposite direction. "Once the distinction between the *domus dei* and the *domus ecclesiae* is obscured the triumph of the former is sooner or later inevitable. . . ."

Gothic has been seen as the religious building *par excellence*, and Turner concedes that it has given "moving expression to the human thirst for the divine, and with a rich sense of the numinous in our midst." It remains however, the example of Christian temple construction.

"In twentieth century American Christianity their desire for an 'inspirational or devotional experience' promoted by the deliberate creation of a 'worshipful atmosphere' is deeply ingrained; for satisfaction it has usually turned to some form of Gothic, or at least to the internal arrangements of divided chancel and sanctuary associated with this style more than with any other."

If the *domus dei* does not express the true Christian understanding of worship space, it should be said that Turner is equally dismayed by the corruption of the *domus ecclesiae* into the auditorium which "...in the end transformed the auditory meeting house into a preaching auditorium and concert hall that ceased to be a suitable home for the Christian community."

After phenomenology, biblical study and historical survey Turner finally becomes a theologian, asking what contemporary understanding we can bring to religious architecture. If the church is visible as community, it is inevitable that it will need a place. "In the end the *ecclesia* will be found to need its *domus*."

Still maintaining the meetinghouse as the norm, Turner turns to an ancient Christian doctrine to discover a way out of the dilemma between the ideal and the real. The two natures of Christ is his answer and a new formula or synthesis is discovered, *domus dei et ecclesiae*, or in the words of S. Smalley, "the house of God for the people of God." The vertical dimension of the temple and the horizontal dimension of the meetinghouse have been fitly joined together on a firm foundation.

Turner continues the analogy: "To deny the divine character of

the building, i.e. its temple principles, is a lapse into Arianism, while to overlook the human nature of the building because of its inherent unworthiness amounts to a docetic or Appollinarian position." It is a surprise conclusion after 300 pages in which the opposites have been stood up against each other.

We should not have been surprised, though his term "meeting-house" was rather misleading and unfortunate from the beginning. Meetinghouse uniquely belongs to the Society of Friends for whom it does reflect their unique religious understanding. In the name of simplicity and sometimes starkness and austerity it has often been misappropriated by well meaning Mennonites; Turner's use of the term adds to the confusion.

Overall however, Turner greatly increases our understanding. His interdisciplinary approach ought to be a model for all religious discourse today. And before we build any more Mennonite places of worship or engage in remodeling and retrofitting we must begin with reflection around the insights Turner so generously offers.

John A. Esau
North Newton, Kansas

A Voice in the Land: Essays By and About Rudy Wiebe, Edited by W. J. Keith. Edmonton, Alberta: NeWest Publishers Ltd., 1981, Pp. 256.

W. J. Keith, *Epic Fiction: The Art of Rudy Wiebe*, Edmonton, Alberta: The University of Alberta Press, 1981, Pp. 158.

In his preface W. J. Keith, Professor of English at the University of Toronto, describes *A Voice in the Land* as "a gathering of Rudy Wiebe's more significant articles about his life, his beliefs, and his art; a selection of interviews with him in which he discusses the background

of his work; and a representative group of essays by literary critics." The reader discovers not only a "voice" (fully three-fifths of the book is composed of Wiebe's articles and conversations) but also a portrait of Wiebe as Mennonite-Christian-Western Canadian-teacher-novelist-prophet.

The image of Wiebe that emerges from his accounts of himself is of a complex person who struggles against all efforts to reduce him to any stereotype—such as Mennonite or artist. Wiebe is, of course, Mennonite and his essays provide an interesting glimpse of Mennonite history, culture and beliefs. But he sees Mennonitism as part of and judged by a larger tradition, a larger vision—Christianity. Admitting that "Blood and culture, not belief, make a Mennonite," Wiebe asks, "When will we repent of this and ask God's help to cut the spiritual life within our Mennonite churches free from this cultural hangman's noose?"

When asked, "How can the novelist, and above all, the Christian novelist be a critic of and witness to society?" Wiebe responds, "I say he will be both critic and witness if he does his job—if he writes a novel It is not the novel's duty . . . to teach anything directly. . . . Some of the most important things we as human beings must understand cannot be gotten directly. They can be seen and shown only by the indirection of art—by metaphor; by symbol."

It is not only to Mennonites and Christians that Wiebe gives the unexpected answer. To his fellow writers and teachers he expresses his scorn for the "pipsqueaks who people present day fiction" and for the bedroom-bathroom problems treated. In Wiebe's view the fictional world of modern novels is very small because the authors and characters lack a vision of the supernatural. Wiebe writes and speaks as one who believes in "a larger meaning of life, a larger meaning of the universe, which all the universe is going towards." "For me," he says, "dying is no end of anything." No wonder the characters in *The Blue Mountains of China*, a saga of Mennonite pilgrimages, have Old Testament counterparts, and

Riel in *The Scorched-Wood People* goes on narrating his story after his death.

The interviews give, perhaps, the most insight into Wiebe's personality. Interviewers ask him if he is a regional writer, if he is experimenting in historical fiction (since he puts actual historical events, persons, and speeches into *The Temptations of Big Bear*), if he is a prophet (since he often writes about religious, social, and political prophets), if he is not a bit didactic, if he intentionally makes his books hard to read. Wiebe's answer to the last question, given in frustration, is "Well, bullshit, I'm profounder than most of my readers and I don't mind; if I've got a character that's truly great, as I think Big Bear is, I'm not going to trivialize that greatness. I'm going to make you work for it." Wiebe's considered response is that he is trying to treat respectfully the complex view of the world of a profoundly wise old Indian man, which is not simple.

The worst thing that can be said about this collection is that the contributions of the literary critics are blanched by the superior passion, insight, and style of Wiebe's essays and comments.

In *Epic Fiction: The Art of Rudy Wiebe* Keith gives what he sees to be Wiebe's development as a writer, from *Peace Shall Destroy Many* (1962) through *First and Vital Candle* (1966), *The Blue Mountains of China* (1970), *The Temptations of Big Bear* (1973), and *The Scorched-Wood People* (1977). *Peace Shall Destroy Many* is described as an "apprentice work" which bears "all the signs of a first novel" and "falters because the author becomes too explicitly, and abstractly, didactic." *First and Vital Candle* is cited for being oppressively didactic and "vulnerable artistically." Keith asserts that in his first two novels Wiebe "has not yet succeeded in fusing meaning and action," but with *The Blue Mountains of China* Wiebe becomes a major novelist: "The earlier problem of reconciling his moralism with his literary artistry is solved. Didacticism is transformed into vision; what he has to say is now almost completely fused with how

he says it." It is an understatement to say that Wiebe's later fiction is given sympathetic treatment in this book. For example, Keith admonishes the reader at the end of one chapter, "Above all, we should approach *The Temptations of Big Bear* with the same humility that, if we are sensible, we are accustomed to show in the presence of an acknowledged work of genius."

The title, *Epic Fiction*, hints at the underlying thesis—that Wiebe's development as a novelist has culminated in a body of "giant fiction" that assimilates the dimensions of saga, myth, and epic. This aspect of Wiebe's art, according to Keith, is his *donnee* and his greatest achievement. Understandably, Keith gives little attention to Wiebe's short fiction.

Readers who are curious about Wiebe's own theory about the nature and function of literary art will find that this book gives them little information. However, Wiebe's essay "The Artist as a Critic and a Witness" (1965) is reprinted in *A Voice in the Land* and is excellent. It demonstrates Wiebe's sophistication as an art theorist. For example, he states, long before the Yale critics were in vogue, that "Art is never static," that "when a reader . . . encounters a work of art, it is no longer the . . . personality of the person who has shaped that work which confronts you but the work of art itself," that "there is probably no such thing as one absolute, correct meaning to a work of art. A work of art is: it is simply too complex to paraphrase and explain fully, satisfactorily. Its meaning depends upon the interaction between the work and the beholder."

In both of his books Keith seems to have approached his subject with an attitude similar to that with which Wiebe approached *Big Bear*. Even if readers do not agree with all of Keith's critical judgments, they will grant, I think, that Keith tries to treat respectfully Wiebe's complex art and the soil in which it flourishes. In *A Voice in the Land* he lets Wiebe speak for himself, express his own vision, discuss his own novels. In *Epic Fiction* Keith proceeds with the tacit understanding that the art of Wiebe's works

cannot be separated from the Mennonites, Indians, visions, quests—the real world—it represents. Since art, for Wiebe, has integrity only if what it represents is important, Keith and others who take Wiebe's work seriously must give ear to voices long silent or seldom heard.

John Sheriff
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Gerhard Wiebe, *Causes and History of the Emigration of the Mennonites from Russia to America*. Translated by Helen Janzen. Winnipeg, Manitoba: Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, 1981. Pp. 73.

The publication of an English translation of Gerhard Wiebe's *Ursache und Geschichte der Auswanderung der Mennoniten aus Russland nach America* (1900) was a project of the Research and Publication Committee of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society and was made possible by the assistance of Derksen Printers of Steinbach. This book represents a new activity for the historical society and begins its series, *Documents in Manitoba Mennonite History*.

Gerhard Wiebe was the elder of the Bergthal Mennonite community when it migrated from Russia to the East Reserve of Manitoba. Bergthal was a daughter colony of the settlement of Chortitza in South Russia, and in the 1870s Bergthal was one of the few Mennonite communities to migrate almost intact to America. Wiebe wrote his account of the migration in the 1890's to show "to the world and later generations how much travel, effort, and labor it entails to emigrate from one part of the world to another. . . ." (p. 2) Although always characterizing himself as "a poor worm," Wiebe played an important role in the negotiations relating to new restrictions being imposed by the Russian government on the Mennonite settlements. He recounts meetings with Russian officials and even depicts a personal encounter with the

Czar.

A description of the Mennonites' discussions of emigration and preparations for departure is the focal point for Wiebe's story. For example, he mentions the role of Cornelius Janzen in promoting the United States as a land with freedom from military service. The use of the *Weisenamt*, an institution originally designed to care for the orphans and poor, to finance travel for the poor illustrates the importance of community solidarity, a major theme for Wiebe. Unity was disturbed by disputes over property valuation. Wiebe describes in detail the steps leading up to migration, and the book is significant as one of the few primary sources available on this subject.

Nevertheless, the greatest value of Wiebe's work is its depiction of his world view and his understanding of his community's role in history. Developments after the Bergthal community settled in Canada, not the immigration experience, influenced him to prepare this account and shaped his interpretation of events.

Wiebe locates the Anabaptists/Mennonites within the course of Christian history as representatives of the true followers of Jesus. The dark ages of Christianity began in the fourth century when Constantine entangled the church with secular laws. However, the greatest error was the building of advanced schools where "the Word of God and human wisdom were mixed together, and through this simplicity and innocence decreased steadily." (p. 10) For many centuries the true faith was largely hidden and brought to light only briefly by Waldus, Hut, and others condemned as heretics. Menno Simons, who revived the unaffected and simple nature of the early church, founded a new movement opposing arrogance and ostentation. The non-resistant Mennonites suffered intense persecution but survived. Wiebe's context is the transplanting of Menno's seed to Russia and again to North America.

According to Wiebe, a variety of factors have threatened to overcome the simplicity and purity of the Mennonites' Christianity. Wiebe's primary theme is the delineation of

these threats. He writes against the "sleepy ones" whose humility has disappeared. Moreover, without unity the enemy would overcome the Mennonites. Wiebe reserves his strongest criticism for pride and attacks higher education as the primary contributor to this evil. He expresses concern for the new Mennonite school, Bethel College.

Although Gerhard Wiebe's interpretation of Mennonite history was common in the late nineteenth century, events in Manitoba had influenced his understanding of the menaces to Mennonite purity: "This is our story here in America too. We had not been here many years when the foxes began to penetrate the Lord's vineyard and to gnaw at the young vines, that is, with their worldly wisdom." (p. 34) During the 1880s and 1890s many of the Bergthaler had moved from the East Reserve to the West Reserve of Manitoba. Wiebe remained in the east, and Johann Funk became elder of the western group. However, this group soon split with Funk becoming the leader of a more liberal faction. The liberal group became known as the Bergthal Mennonite Church and espoused higher education, Sunday schools, prayer meetings, and foreign missions. The larger and more conservative group in the west united under Abram Doerksen to form the Sommerfeld Mennonite Church. Wiebe's congregation, which became known as the Chortitz Mennonite Church after the village where Wiebe resided, supported the conservative Sommerfelder. At stake between the liberals and the conservatives was adherence to many older religious practices, but acceptance of a Manitoba attendance requirement at standard English schools became the key issue.

Wiebe longs for a return to tranquility and humility among the Mennonites: "Oh, if we could only live like this now, with the *Kleine Gemeinde* and the *Holdemans*, that we could work together with them in spiritual matters; then we would not be so easily wounded by the evil one through the district schools, as is the case now." (p. 25) Wiebe writes as a prophet, and declares that he is a "despised and rejected man." His conclusion proclaims that

"Christendom is heading for destruction, and hardly anyone pays attention." (p. 72) Although Wiebe addresses his message to the Bergthaler and calls for a revival of the spirit which motivated the great emigration, his book belongs to a broader genre of prophetic literature.

The Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society should be congratulated for making this important document available in English. It is difficult for a translation to capture the nuances of Wiebe's style, world view, and self-identity, but Helen Janzen did an admirable job. A lengthier introduction for readers unfamiliar with the Bergthaler story would have enhanced the value of the book, but this account of the causes and events of the Bergthaler migration is essential reading for anyone interested in the Mennonite emigration from Russia in the 1870s.

David A. Haury
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Haury, Samuel S. *Letters Concerning the Spread of the Gospel*. Translated from the German by Marie Regier Janzen and Hilda Voth; Introduction by Wilbert R. Shenk. Herald Press, 1981, 64 pp.

Sometimes a reader can bypass an Introduction since it is often simply an appetizer for the rich fare that follows. But the Introduction to these *Letters* enriches the missionary menu that follows since Shenk provides a brilliant overview and insight into the life and times of both the author and the missionary movement.

This slim volume on 19th century Christian missions expands our understanding of that era and of the first General Conference-sponsored Mennonite missionary in North America, Samuel S. Haury. In 1876 Haury wrote these seven letters as an apologia for missions, convinced that missionary work was a divine imperative—"the Lord Jesus is indeed the originator of all mission work . . . if the world ridicules mission work, it ridicules the word of God."

Haury was among the first Men-

nonite mission publicists in North America and his seven letters written while in Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia provide a persuasive case statement for new birth (salvation) and the fruits of that renewal—a missionary church.

The publication of these tracts is useful today and the Mennonite Library and Archives at Bethel College is to be commended for sponsoring this translation from the German, so ably performed by Marie Regier Janzen and Hilda Voth. Haury's analysis is rooted in the language and concepts of his time, as the extensive use of "heathen" and "Satan" reflect, but his letters offer a window on the world of 19th-century missions and make a forthright theological argument for missions. Perhaps of equal importance is the rare glimpse of the early missionary movement among American Mennonites observed in the tracts and the fact that Haury interprets missions for us before the modernist/fundamentalist controversy arose to distract and often polarize theological positions.

Haury sees the church as a sleeping giant that is awakening as a result of the missionary spirit. He argues that Christianity is a product of a missionary God who sent His Son, a missionary Gospel, and a missionary early church. He is knowledgeable about missionary developments in Europe and America and challenges his own denomination to match this vision, convinced that without a missionary vision a denomination or a congregation perishes. "To what," he asks, "can we attribute this lack of love, this shortage of understanding, this scarcity of sacrificial spirit for mission work in our denomination?"

Is there a particular Mennonite viewpoint on missions? With the possible exception of ranking the Love of God as the highest of missionary motives, Haury reflects the general Protestant and pietist theology and interpretations of the day, but he reflects them often at their best, as a bearer of the Good News for those converted and convinced of the mandate to live out the Great Commission in every generation.

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