MENNONITE LIFE

MARCH 1982

In this Issue

Maynard Shelly, a free-lance writer commissioned by the Schowalter Foundation, provides a new look at the life and monument of Jacob A. Schowalter. The Schowalter Foundation has granted over $2,500,000 since its creation in 1954. Shelly's report updates Robert Schrag's article on Schowalter printed twenty-five years ago in *Mennonite Life* (April 1957).

In 1981 the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada discontinued its role in the publication of *Mennonite Life*. However, *Mennonite Life* still welcomes articles by or about Canadian Mennonites. This issue features a survey of Canadian Mennonite Writings by Lawrence Klippenstein, Archivist at the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg. Harry Loewen, Professor of German and Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg, introduces the reader to Ernst Behrends, whose six "Mennonite" novels are probably unfamiliar to most Mennonites in the United States.

Duane K. Friesen, Professor of Bible and Religion at Bethel College, analyzes the Mennonite understanding of political and social justice. Marian Claassen Franz addresses a theme related to Friesen's observations on Mennonites and social involvement when she describes a potential role for Christians as "pastors" and "prophets" in the political arena.

This issue includes a research note by Wm. Regehr, Administrative Secretary of the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren Conference, who comments on the study of the EMB conference by Calvin Redekop in the September 1981 *Mennonite Life*. Redekop's response to Regehr is also published.

During the past two years the printing costs of *Mennonite Life* have increased by about thirty percent and postage has doubled. Following the publication of the June 1982 issue, the subscription price will be $8.00 for one year and $14.00 for two years.

March 1982 Vol. 37 No. 1

MENNONITE LIFE

Editor
Robert Kreider

Associate Editor
David A. Haury

Front Cover

Henry, Jacob and Fred Schowalter on Schowalter farm near Halstead.

Back Cover

Headed-grain stacker patented by Jacob Schowalter in 1921 and second scene from the Schowalter farm.

Photo Credits

P. 15 Harry Loewen and pp. 25, 27 and 29 Marian Claassen Franz. All others: Mennonite Library and Archives.

MENNONITE LIFE is an illustrated quarterly magazine published in March, June, September and December by Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas. Second Class postage paid at Newton, Kansas, 67114.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: One year, $6.00; Two years, $10.00 (U.S. Funds)

ISSN 0025-9365

Jake Schowalter: He Made the Land His Monument

By Maynard Shelly

Swiftly, the night nurse swished into the darkened room to find her patient flailing at the mattress with his arms.

"Quick! Quick! Bring me a vessel," she heard him cry out. "The diamonds and the jewels are rolling all around. Help me save them."

She laughed. "Oh, forget it," she said, recognizing that once more the old man had been upset by his fever and his medications.

As she pulled the bed covers up around his chin, she said, "You're only dreaming."

And so he was. As his head cleared, Jake Schowalter remembered that he was in Bethel Deaconess Hospital in Newton, Kansas, not far from his farm home. For a number of years, he had been a trustee of this institution, but now he was learning at first hand how the hospital did its work.

Several months later, early on a spring morning in 1951, Jake made his way back to the hospital, this time to speak to the school of nursing's graduating class at its precommencement breakfast. He chuckled as he told the young nurses about his unsettling dream, which, he said, he really regarded as a genuine vision. He thought it to be a "peep into the third heaven" such as Paul the Apostle claimed to have had in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians.

"I will never forget your services I received while I was in the hospital," he told these ministers of mercy, telling them how their care had revived him. He also commended them for the dreams he knew they had for their future work. "That you have learned to serve well," he said, "is your greatest asset."

Dreams at night, he told these young women in the hospital dining room, reflect the experiences of a person's daytime environment. But he did not tell them about his visions for world peace and a growing church engaged in an earnest endeavor to establish the kingdom of heaven on earth.

And he said no more about the parallel that his noisy night dream about wealth slipping through his fingers might have had with his daytime anxieties. Jake, at 71, knowing that his days were numbered, must have felt unsure about the designs he had shaped for the use of the riches that fifty years of investing in Kansas and Oklahoma farm land had brought him.

A pointed insight about money

Indeed, for twelve years, he had been at work with his attorney, fashioning a monument that would make his land serve his waking visions. But would it work?

He had carried this notion about a monument inside his head for well over twenty-five years. It was in the spring of 1925 that his work as a buyer and seller of beef cattle took him on a freight train to Chicago riding with the crew. The train's conductor, perhaps to enliven the long journey, asked Jake, already an enterprising and successful young farmer, to share the secrets of his success with his men.

Carefully, Jake drafted his advice in an essay filled with homey illustrations. He pressed hard the point that only by hard work, by devotion to duty, and, most important of all, by thrift could a worker succeed.

"Those of you who have been masters of your investments and have arranged to save from 5 to 25 percent of your earnings," he told the railroaders at the outset, "can excuse yourselves. You'll only be wasting your time here. You have the secret!"

If any of them did leave the car, they missed his most pointed insight about money—not, this time, about how to make money, but rather what to do with it once it has been earned.

"No one has a right to say, 'The world owes me a living.' The truth is," he said, raising his voice and lapsing into the prairie idiom of the Kansas folk, "everybody owes the world a living and more: he owes the world a monument—something to show what we done while living."

That monument that Jake would give the world would be called the Schowalter Foundation, though almost thirty years would slip away before his dream would take form.

"This monument," he told the men of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad, "need not be of gold, iron, stone, or land; but it will be enshrined with visible things because you dealt in a visible world."

Gold, iron, or stone never figured at all in Jake's making of his monument. He chose the land.

First a field near Halstead

On May 20, 1903, Jacob Abraham Schowalter, the fourth son of Heinrich and Maria Risser Schowalter, immigrants from Germany, came into possession of his first fields—eighty acres of land near Halstead, Kansas. This was his share of the pioneer homestead of his parents, an inheritance which he immediately enlarged with the purchase of a similar tract from another member

of the family.

It was in 1883 that Jake's parents set out for America from their home village of Friedelsheim in the German Palatinate, a trip that took them via New York and Summerfield, Illinois, and finally to Halstead where a relative settled them on a farm. Jake was three years old at the time. His only recollection of the long journey to their new homeland was that somewhere along the way, he wandered away from his mother and fell into a canal.

Within seven years of their coming to Halstead, both of Jake's parents died. He, his three brothers, and his two sisters had additional hardships to bear. Anna, the elder sister, helped to rear the family, and then made her home with Jake when he went into farming on his own. Neither of them ever married.

For most of his life, Jake immersed himself in the business of farming—raising cattle, sheep, and wheat. Yet, he was also absorbed by a vision for the renewal of life in the Mennonite community of which he became a part on September 9, 1894, when he was baptized by Christian Krehbiel, a leading pioneer minister, into the membership of the Halstead Mennonite Church.

How had he prepared himself for farm management and investment? He attended Bethel College during the 1895-96 term. He tried his hand at teaching school near Halstead, but found it less interesting than farming.

In 1898, when farm work was scarce in Kansas, he and Fred, an older brother, bicycled almost 200 miles to Wisner, Nebraska, where they spent the year as farm laborers with a Leisy family, part of the Schowalter kin. Later, for two consecutive years, Jake enrolled in the winter courses given for farmers at Kansas State Agricultural College.

Along the way, he picked up the craft of a blacksmith. He began by repairing farm implements. But he soon went beyond fixing what others had devised. He found a way to make a cultivator attachment that would adjust for rows of different widths, a mechanism for which he received a patent on November 1, 1904, and which he later sold to a Chicago manufacturer.

Again, in 1921, he patented a portable hoist which he called a "headed-grain stacker," a tool which could be quickly set up and easily taken down and "moved under telephone and telegraph wires and under shelter of the ordinary barn sheds."

Anna's monument and a special bond

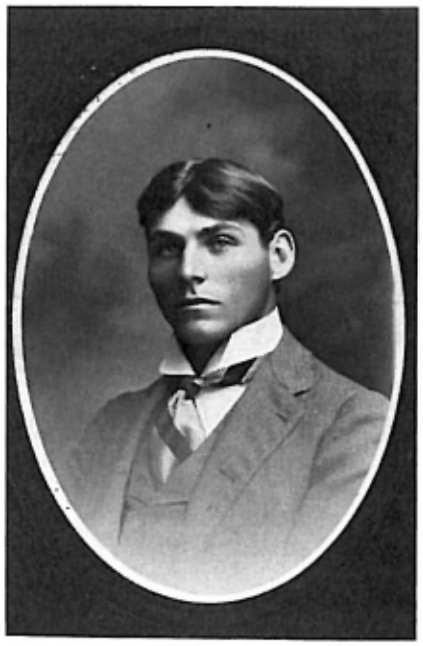
In 1917, he purchased 320 acres seven miles southwest of Newton which became his and Anna's home for the rest of their lives, though Anna's was to be the shorter of the two. Within ten years, she died at the age of 47, having been in frail health most of her life. A special bond that had grown up between the brother and sister caused Jake to grieve for her for a long time.

He wrote to his friend in India, Missionary P. A. Penner, more than two years later, confessing to a great inner sadness and to his desire that "her influence might continue as a monument to her memory." Anna left no will, but he intended to follow her wishes in the investment of her earthly property.

Jake had long had an interest in the work of Mennonite missionaries in India. He made special contributions to their work. From him came funds for building a home for the children of parents afflicted with leprosy for whom Penner was caring.

One project in India had special appeal to him and may have shown him how land could serve the work of the gospel. In 1931, he sent $2,000 to P. A. Penner for the purchase of land that could be rented or assigned to Indian Christians, especially to ministers and evangelists. The land would become a means of self-support for these Christian workers and open the way for the church to become independent of mission support.

Jake's own land empire grew slowly at first. Within three years after receiving his first land deed, he doubled his holdings, buying a quarter section near Bucklin in Ford County in western Kansas. But it was during the dust bowl and depression years of the 1930s that he bought most of his land. Hard times forced many people to pull back



Jacob A. Schowalter

from their investments. Jake, who had already established himself, had the resources to move forward.

Carefully, he invested in those farms that showed most promise. First, he tested the soil, using the hand auger that he always carried. And he gave special attention to the weather history of the region before signing the contract.

Compassionate in his investments

Yet he also exercised a measure of compassion in his buying. Often, the properties he bought were those held by families who faced eviction and the loss not only of their land but of all their assets. He did not deal with banks or loan companies even though through their powers of seizure, he might have secured land at a lower price. Rather, he dealt directly with the families involved, paying them at a rate that allowed them to escape the severest penalties of a mortgage foreclosed.

Some of the original families remained as tenants on the farms he purchased in Kansas and Oklahoma. "They respected him highly for this," says Ernest Bachman, Jake's friend and confidant for many years and later manager of these same farms when they became part of the assets of the Schowalter Foundation.

Ernest tells of a farmer in Butler County whose debts on his half sec-

Three farm hands of John Ruth, north of Halstead (Jake Schowalter, left)

tion of land were mounting ever higher. The farmer sought out Jake and offered him the opportunity to buy a quarter section if Jake would in return rent that land back to him so that he could continue farming and pay his debts. Jake agreed and the farmer was able to hold on. The arrangement has continued through the generations with the farmer's son, and, then, his grandson entering into the partnership.

On seven other farms now held by the Schowalter Foundation, descendants of the original renters continue to hold the lease.

So year by year, Jake's holdings grew. Though he bought land, he hardly ever sold any.

Eventually, he had farms in six Kansas counties: Harvey, Sedgwick, Butler, Scott, Sherman, and Stevens. In the latter county, much of the property's value lay under the earth, since this land was in the Hugoton natural gas field. Of the 400 acres which he bought in Oklahoma, much of it later produced oil.

And then the rains came and then World War II bringing a new prosperity for America's wheat farmers. Land values increased so rapidly that the properties that Jake had accumulated along with his other assets grew in value to more than a million dollars.

Only a custodian for God

Jake had been contributing to the work of the church as he had opportunity. He had a special interest in the building of new churches. And he aided young people who were preparing themselves for Christian service as ministers and missionaries. He donated an organ to the First Mennonite Church in Newton, the congregation that he joined in 1942.

Later, the members of a Methodist church in Marietta, Oklahoma, asked whether he might donate an organ for their church that they were then building. Jake owned an 80 acre plot of ground near the town and he assigned the income of its oil lease to the church. After he had shared in the dedication of this organ, an experience that gave him a great deal of personal pleasure, he was once more reminded of the urgency to make arrangements for the proper use of his wealth and the building of the monument he had so long envisioned.

This work began with the writing of his will which he started in 1940. He was careful, first of all, to point to the stewardship that was his. "I, J. A. Schowalter, of sound mind," he wrote, "thoughtfully, prayerfully and gratefully realizing that one is only a custodian of certain production properties and assets." He dedicated his land to an agency that would be called the Schowalter Foundation, the instrument of his vision for world peace and for the enlargment of the work of the church.

He amended his will several times during the next years, concerned that the foundation should really fulfill his vision. He had reason to be cautious. Once before, he had tried to lead the people of the Mennonite community and he felt he had not succeered.

It was in the midst of the depression that he decided to enter politics. He was aware that many people said, "Christianity and politics don't mix."

But he had a contrary conviction: "Put Christianity into politics and into national life and purify it," he said in a speech to his congregation when they asked him to speak on the theme: "teach all nations." Government, he was convinced, needed Christian people. But he was sure it wasn't the other way around: "Keep your politics, in its raw form, out of Christianity."

Beginning in 1935, he served three terms in the Kansas House of Representatives. Feeling that the policies of the Republican Party had brought on the economic decline in the country, he joined the Democratic Party and encouraged his Mennonite friends to follow his lead. Some did, but most didn't.

Then, he found himself in a legislature controlled by the other party. He introduced six bills, dealing with financial affairs and with landlord-renter relationships, but was not

able to get them passed into law. He had hoped that he had found a means to end the seclusion of the Mennonite communities, but the church had not followed or supported him.

Fixed on heaven on earth

Yet his vision was nurtured by the church and in the church he refined his views. He often discussed his concerns with the Sunday school classes that he taught, first, in the Halstead church and, then, in Newton's First Mennonite Church.

People who see and have visions, he told a class one Sunday, are those who climb mountains as did the disciples when they went with Jesus up the Mount of Transfiguration. Jacob, also, had a vision at Bethel, a vision of the past and of the future, a vision that changed his life.

Riches, Jake told the class, were given for service. He pointed to the example of Job, who after all his sufferings and after his recovery, was blessed with many good things, so that his life was "full of days." To be "full of days" meant that Job was of service to his fellow man.

To another class, he addressed the question, "When am I reborn?" The answer: "When I set aside self and fully accept Jesus Christ as my Savior, the fruits will show that I love God above all, and my fellow man as myself.

"When I love the ways of Jesus better than the ways of the world," and here he paused for emphasis, "*then*, I am reborn."

Often, as he gave his testimony, he would lift up the idea and vision of a heaven on earth, a thought that grew out of his meditation on the Lord's Prayer, "thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." These words appear in the handwritten notes that piled up as he tried to put on paper words to describe his life's objective.

As footnote to this theme, he then wrote: "Christ is the open door" and "Jesus saves." Then followed an incomplete sentence which seemed to indicate that he meant to say, Christ "will bring" heaven on earth.

He heard people talking about eternity and singing about "stars" in their crowns in the hereafter, he once said. Such, he felt, was of secondary concern. "Am I trying to live a heavenly life here?" he asked. Life here and now was more important.

"Surely," he would say, "heaven will follow a heavenly ambition and life."

It was wrong, as he saw it, to leave the shaping of the kingdom to God's activity alone. "How many people are idle today and just waiting for God to come in his second coming instead of praying and acting "thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven'?"

To get heaven on earth, Jake said, "we must do God's will here." The suggestion that God would provide even if we did not do our share did not fit his notion of how God had put the world together. "Are we satisfied with our garden full of weeds, saying, 'Well, Father keeps his garden clear. When we get home, we'll go into his garden and enjoy the flowers and good vegetables'?"

He had a remedy. "Learn to know God and bring heaven on earth." A study of the life and teachings of Jesus, he felt, would help people grasp that such was the nature of Christ's mission—a mission that planted the kingdom of heaven on earth.

Long a partisan for peace

Heaven on earth would be marked by peace, a vision that fixed itself strongly on Jake's soul at the close of the great conflict that was World War I. In 1918, he wrote some verses about the futility and cruelty of war, giving his remedy for a lasting peace. He fearlessly pointed out how inadequate were the foundations of a peace based on the violence of war. "Thank God! At last the war is won," he wrote in his folksy rhymes with all the fervor of a social critic. "But, oh, the strain when peace begun; / The Devil says, 'No peace without a bigger gun.'"

And he was critical of the church which in its zeal to evangelize had overlooked the larger concerns of social justice and so had left unhealed the festering sores that lead to war. "Oh, church, how inconsistent thou hast been, / Thou hadst sent missions to convert from sin: / The Indian, the black man, the Hottentot; / But never was concerned to change his lot, / But from your door you kept his urgent cry / For a chance to live as you and I."

In this poem which he used as his Christmas greeting that year, he called on Christian people to work for the cause of world peace, extending brotherly love to all people. "Enlist! and place your shoulder to the wheel, / Not for destruction, but for brotherly love; / Not for aggression, nor crush, but lift above, / Our standard: My neighbor's not defined by land or sea, / But the world is big enough for you and me."

But it was not until after World War II that he began to fit this vision into the monument he was building. This was the time that he found a new way to involve himself in the work of peacemaking. At that time, P. A. Penner, who had retired from his mission work in India and had become business manager at the General Conference Mennonite Church office in Newton, tapped Jake for a special venture.

Could he find a way to send relief to the people of Europe who had lost so much in the war just ended? Jake worked with Ernest Bachman to raise funds to buy a carload of heifers to replenish the breeding stock lost by European farmers during the war. As a leader of the men's group in the Newton congregation, he pressed the financial drive and donated animals from his own herd for the cause.

Bachman also secured the names of families in Europe, some of them distantly related to Schowalter, who were in dire need of aid. Jake accepted responsibility for 22 families and contributed regularly so that 28 food parcels might be sent monthly to these folks. Being personally involved in this relief ministry became a source of much satisfaction to him.

He amended his will on May 4, 1949 with special instructions to the foundation to relocate and rehabilitate refugees "from the war-ravaged European countries" in colonies in South America, a program already underway, and also to extend aid to similar programs for "any and all persons who in the judgment of the Mennonite Central Committee, are worthy of such aid, regardless of creed or color."

Fruit of a pilgrimage of discontent

Those whom Jake was able to help personally and directly, including those to whom he loaned money without a written agreement, appreciated his help and remained loyal to him even in his later years when he showed himself sullen and impatient with those who differed from his strongly held views.

Others snickered at his thriftiness seen as miserliness when on business trips he ate from a paper bag lunch brought from his kitchen while his colleagues dined on a restaurant meal. When travelling to inspect his lands in western Kansas, he would carry gasoline in a can from his farm stocks to avoid roadside service stations and save a few pennies per gallon.

When his counsel on a church building project in Halstead was rejected, he took his church membership to the First Mennonite Church in Newton. After a dispute with the leadership of the Newton church, he began attending a Mennonite Church congregation in nearby Hesston.

The sojourn in Hesston soured when he felt that the warm welcome extended to him showed more interest in his wealth than in him as a person. Before making his peace with the Newton congregation, he spent some time worshipping with the Church of God in Christ Mennonite.

His experience with the two groups outside his own General Conference Mennonite fold, though tinged with unpleasantness, did yield a positive fruit. He found a common faith in all three groups, yet elements in each that he thought would benefit the others. Thus, all three groups came to share in the monument that Jake Schowalter was then a-building.

God's people found in Paraguay

During the last year of his life, in 1952, Jake made his largest land purchase—37,000 acres in the vicinity of Filadelfia, in the Gran Chaco region of Paraguay. The land was intended for the use of refugees from Europe's wars, particularly German Mennonites who had come out of the Soviet Union during World War II.

Jake was not able to participate further in the resettlement program in Paraguay. He died on March 10, 1953. But the support of the Schowalter Foundation to the Mennonite Central Committee enabled this and other projects to go forward.

It was on his trip to Paraguay and Uruguay in 1952 that he saw in the development of the Mennonite colonies there the shaping of the vision that had become a part of his soul. He saw in the communities being assembled in Paraguay's wilderness a new creation emerging.

During a Sunday worship service at the Mennonite Central Committee home in Asuncion, just before he was to return to Kansas, he spoke of the good things which he had seen. He compared the developments as signs of "heaven on earth."

Starting with assets of just over a million dollars, most of it in farm land and oil and gas wells, the Schowalter Foundation received its charter in 1954, and since that time has increased its value to $3.8 million. This monument fashioned out of the land that Jake Schowalter accumulated has earned $2.2 million for the support of programs and causes as varied as were the interests of the builder himself.

This ministry has been administered by trustees appointed by the Mennonite Church, the General Conference Mennonite Church, and the Church of God in Christ Mennonite as Jake directed in his will. Following his guidelines, they have supported programs developed by these three groups plus the inter-Mennonite work of the Mennonite Central Committee. Aid has also been extended to other related groups and to community associations.

The flowering of a monument

The land that Jake left for his monument has provided homes in South America for Mennonite refugees displaced by war, settled Indians in Paraguay on new farm land, supported schools and hospitals, stretched out the meager pensions for retired ministers and missionaries, and enlarged the evangelistic and peace witness of the Mennonites both abroad and in North America.

In speaking to the students at Berean Academy in Elbing, Kansas in the early 1950s, he saw the life on earth and the life in the hereafter as a unity. "Compared to eternity," he said, "we have a short time for personal gratification, even though we might become 100 years old. Our eternity is a blossoming out of our life here. Like a flower, it is the final completion of a seed—a cultivation, a trimming, a budding, and some morning it's a beautiful flower, an enjoyment to the completed fruit."

The flowering of the Schowalter Foundation does indeed show what seed Jake Schowalter planted while living. It continues to show the stuff that was the life of this practical dreamer. It has served his people well.

THE SCHOWALTER FOUNDATION, INC.
Grants Analysis 1956 - 1978

I.	Overseas—Aid and Resettlement	$253,650
II.	Health—Physical and Mental	$222,309
III.	Christian Worker Retirement	$212,550
IV.	Christian Worker Preparation	$400,306
V.	Peace Education	$405,350
VI.	Studies in Church Organization and Higher Education	$52,210
VII.	Youth and Children	$53,600
VIII.	Studies, Writings, Tracts	$72,176
IX.	Seminars	$77,550
X.	Interracial Programs	$68,900
XI.	Miscellaneous	$200,775
	Total	$2,019,367

Additional Grants

1979	$173,550
1980	$200,450
1981	$239,102

Canadian Mennonite Writings: A Bibliographical Survey, 1970-1980

By Lawrence Klippenstein

The literary achievements of Mennonites in Canada may not constitute their forte, so a bibliography of those efforts should not assume voluminous proportions. The pioneer years took every ounce of available energy and a predominantly agricultural tradition, with only modest interests in education, left research and writing to the hands of relatively few. Their readers were not many more.

That situation has changed substantially, both with respect to materials and readership. Now people lament that no one can keep up with "Mennonite publications". Many now can find reasons to prepare a publication, and sooner or later discover a market for the product. This survey will list a few of the more significant recent works in order to help those who want to catch up a little at least.[1]

For very practical reasons such as the veritable flood of materials, limitations of space and the author's range of familiarity, this article will restrict itself essentially to the work of the seventies, and regionally to the Canadian west. Thematically, the following aspects will be noted: historical research, belle lettres, genealogical and family studies, the Low German "renaissance", translation projects, and some remarks on projects in progress, where new publications may appear very soon.[2]

Recent Canadian Mennonite historiography needs to begin a few years before our period, to consider a publishing event which added significantly to the existing literature, and prefigured the heightened activity that lay ahead. The impending termination of a long-standing organization, the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, created the impetus for two studies of a major immigration to Canada, the coming of Mennonites from Russia in the 1920's. The Board had guided, indeed created, that history-making event. Its sponsorship thus brought to the public Frank H. Epp's *Mennonite Exodus. The Rescue and Resettlement of the Russian Mennonites Since the Communist Revolution* (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, 1962), and a few years later, Dr. John B. Toews' somewhat more narrowly focused work, *Lost Fatherland. The Story of Mennonite Emigration from Soviet Russia, 1921-1927* (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, 1967).[3]

In this complementary duo, Epp's work really gave the public its first comprehensive look at the monumental achievement of the Colonization Board between the years of its founding in 1922, and its transformation into the Canadian Mennonite Relief and Immigration in 1960, finally to merge into the Mennonite Central Committee (Canada) in 1963. Toews then appropriately filled in the dramatic account of how that emigration could be launched in the deep shadows of the Russian Revolution with the Civil War which followed, and the part played by men like Benjamin Unruh, Benjamin B. Janz, Peter Froese, and others, to make this mass movement of people possible.[4]

The Mennonite "ethos" of those volumes had been already illustrated in two pictorial albums, prepared by Dr. Walter Quiring, then editor of *Der Bote*, and his assistant, Helen Hartel. The "old country" and the new were compared here in *Der Canadische Mennonit. Ein Querschnitt in Bildern* (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, 1961), and *Als Ihre Zeit Erfuellet War. 150 Jahre Bewaehrung in Russland* (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, 1963), which would appear in an English edition in 1974.[5]

Among other things, the 1970's also left us a growing title list of English-language community, congregational and institutional histories all pointing to an integration of the Mennonite community into Canadian life, which still remained largely unanalyzed and undescribed. Henry J. Gerbrandt's commissioned portrayal of the Bergthaler Mennonite Church of Manitoba appeared in 1970, with an impressive documentation of primary sources which no one knew existed.[6] The next year Derksen Printers of Steinbach, Manitoba, published *Reflections on our heritage. A History of Steinbach and the R. M. of Hanover from 1874* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1971), written by Abe Warkentin. Frank Brown's *A History of Winkler* (Winkler, Manitoba, 1973) appeared two years later, with a study of the Winkler Bible Institute by George D. Priess, *A Place Called Peniel* (Winkler, Manitoba), following in 1975. That year also saw publication of *Education With A Plus. The Story of Rosthern Junior College* (Rosthern, Saskatchewan, 1975) in which Frank Epp traced historical development with a thoroughness which none of the others quite managed to attain.

In quality and appearance it would be difficult to surpass Peter Zacharias' semischolarly, well-illustrated and broadly-researched book entitled *Reinland: An Experience in Community* (Reinland, Manitoba) published by the Reinland Centennial Committee in 1976. Complaints of inferior publication, inadequate

research, insufficient editing, and lack of photos, clarity or comprehension, which tended to fill the reviews of many Mennonite publications, especially those published "im Selbstverlag", could not readily be applied here. Zacharias' work remained upfront, helping to set a solid standard for effective and meaningful community history writing in the years ahead.

From all appearances the burgeoning publication enterprise of the Mennonite community in Canada had been stimulated particularly by the Centennial celebrations of the period 1973-1975, when the Mennonites of Western Canada as a whole, and a number of smaller communities, commemorated the first hundred years of residence in the dominion.[7] In that context a ladies' group from Steinbach, Manitoba had commissioned a compilation of documents and memoirs which would appear as *Manitoba Mennonite Memories* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1974), edited by Julius G. Toews and Lawrence Klippenstein, and then in a revised second edition by the same editors, as *Mennonite Memories: Settling in Western Canada* (Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1977). Both are already out of print. 1974 also appropriately became the year when Macmillan of Canada published Frank H. Epp's *Mennonites in Canada. The History of a Separated People, 1786-1920* (Toronto, Ontario: Macmillan, 1974).[8] Aided by a government grant, this study had all the earmarks of a lasting achievement—thorough research and documentation, careful writing and comprehensive coverage. The book provided a scholarly view and interpretation of this period, which while not beyond criticism (small details in part, not setting the story sufficiently firmly in the ground of general Canadian history, failing to recognize necessary distinctions between groups, a few factual errors, all have been noted) still offered a much needed definitive analysis which will aid a general readership as well as high school or college classes for a long time to come.

Somewhat in a class by itself was a rather ambitious lay publishing project undertaken by a church organization calling itself Canadian Women in Mission. When that group celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary in 1977 it commissioned Katie Hooge of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, to prepare a modest 37 page sketch of its activities entitled *The History of the Canadian Women in Mission 1952-1977* (Winnipeg, 1977), and invited regional groups to do their history as well. From this suggestion came six additional booklets as follows: *Ontario Women in Mission* (Toronto), edited by Margot Fieguth, *The Story of Women in Mission (Southwest Ontario)* (Leamington), *Manitoba Mennonite Women in Mission* (Winnipeg) edited by Justina Baerg, *SWM* i.e. Saskatchewan Women in Mission (Saskatoon), *Alberta Mennonite Women in Mission* (Coaldale) edited by Helen Redekopp, and *History of B.C. Mennonite Women in Mission 1939-1976* (Chilliwack), edited by Adina Janzen and Winnie Dueck. All were published during that same, or the following year.

A fresh interest in the East European, especially Russian background of many Canadian Mennonites became apparent also. To begin the decade Christian Press printed Erich L. Ratzlaff's *Im Weichselbogen. Mennonitensiedlungen in Zentralpolen* (Winnipeg, Manitoba) in 1971, almost simultaneously with Martin Hamm's *Aus der Alten in die Neue Heimat. Lebensgeschichte eines Schlichten Mennoniten,* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: 1971). CMBC Publications quickly sold out its 1974 German and English editions of Gerhard Lohrenz's pictorial survey of Mennonite life in Prussia and Russia, respectively titled *Damit es nicht vergessen werde,* (Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1974) and *Heritage Remembered* (Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1974).[9] A volume, almost all in German, *Selected Documents. The Mennonites in Russia from 1917 to 1930* (Calgary, Alberta, 1975) prepared by John B. Toews, of Calgary, soon disappeared from the bookstores too. Olga Rempel's German drama about the trek from Russia to Germany, and then Canada, in the 1940's, *Wer Nimmt Uns Auf?* (Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1977) was reprinted several times, and a more recent book about her father, *Einer von Veilen. Die Lebensgeschichte von Prediger Aron P. Toews* (Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1974) may soon be out of print. An English translation is under consideration. Needing reprints too are William Schroeder's *The Bergthal Colony* (Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1974), and Henry B. Tiessen's *The Molotschna Colony* (Kitchener, Ontario, 1979).[10] The theme of Mennonites and pacifism in the Soviet Union is treated in the latest of the Russian Mennonite publications, *Waffen der Wehrlosen. Ersatzdienst der Mennoniten in der UdSSR,* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: CMBC Publications, 1980) compiled by Hans Rempel and edited by George K. Epp.[11]

Mennonite publications in Canada have, as some have observed, tended more toward historical writing, rather than to other literary forms such as novels, poetry, short stories, etc. The publication by the Mennonite Centennial Committee of *Harvest. An Anthology of Mennonite Writing in Canada 1874-1974* (Winnipeg, Manitoba) in 1974 helped to initiate a better balance. This collection of material in English, German and Low German expression brought together handily a good deal of work in the belle lettres. That good German and Low German poetry deserves publication was proven by the publication, also in 1974, of Fritz Senn's *Das Dorf im Abendgrauen.* That fact found further abundant documentation in a second volume of writings by the *Harvest* editor, George K. Epp, this time excluding English items, and entitled *Unter dem Nordlicht. Anthologie des Deutschen Schrifttums der Mennoniten in Canada* (Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1977).[12] Both volumes are carefully edited, and now bring to the reading public much serious writing which had remained unpublished or forgotten far too long.

A better "Mennonite" novel than Rudy Wiebe's *Peace Shall Destroy Many* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: W. B. Eerdman's Co., 1962) and his *Blue Mountains of China* (Toronto, Ontario, 1970) may have gone to press, but in print they remain the major contemporary efforts in that genre. Barbara Claassen Smucker's award-winning and exciting story of Mennonites in the Russian Revolution, *Days of Terror* (1979), was an important contribution for younger readers; they also got Joanne Flint's very readable though brief *Mennonites in Canada* (Toronto, Ontario, 1980) a year later.

The brief fictional sketches of Isbrand Hildebrand's *Swath and Sheaf* (Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1970) had suggested a delightful form of self-criticism and communication, but the attempts to "fictionalize" the Mennonite story as in Ben Hoeppner's *Das Dorf Friedensruh* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1972) or Margaret Epp's *The Earth Is Round* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: Christian Press, 1974) are often more an attempt to "popularize", than a concern to say something original or provocative on the general theme.

A publication just off the press suggests some new directions and illustrates more diversified Mennonite concerns. Harry Loewen's edited collection of essays, *Mennonite Images. Historical, Cultural and Literary Essays Dealing With Mennonite Issues* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: Hyperion Press, 1980), is a deliberate attempt to point out the various dimensions of Mennonite life and thought on a wider canvas. The literary images are well represented here in contributions by university professors Al Reimer, Peter Pauls, Victor Doerksen, and Harry Loewen.[13] The poetical voices of Menno Wiebe on "native concerns" in "Algonquin Pulse" (1978) and Victor Dirk's latest booklet, *Journey to Peace* (1980), as well as those of Pat Friesen, *The Lands I Am* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: Turnstone Press, 1976), *Bluebottle* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: Turnstone Press, 1978), or *The Shunning* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: Turnstone Press, 1980), David Waltner-Toews, *The Earth is One Body* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: Turnstone Press, 1980), and Victor Enns, *Jimmy Bang Poems* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: Turnstone Press, 1980) should be acknowledged also in this context.

Interestingly, one detects on the borders of the literary enterprise some indicators of a Low German "renaissance" in various media and forms. Most recently in the scholarly field Jack Thiessen's study *Studien zum Wortschatz der kanadischen Mennoniten* (Marburg, Germany, 1963) preceded his rather modest *Mennonite Low German Dictionary* (Marburg, Germany) in 1977, as suggestions for further linguistic work in a dialect which normally seems suited best to verbal cartoons and related to types of humor.[14] Occasional "light" drama became the widely appreciated mode of statement for the Low German Drama Society in Landmark, Manitoba, about six years ago.[15] Reuben Epp's *Plauttdietsche Schreftstecka* (Dawson Creek, B.C., 1972) and such Centennial productions as *Kaunst du di noch dentji?* (Ste. Elizabeth, Manitoba, 1974) or *Aufsheed von de Heimstaed* (Ste. Elizabeth, Manitoba, n.d.) by Nicholas H. Unruh, and a short drama like *Dee Brotschuld. Ein Buehnenstueck in drei Aufzuegen* (Gretna, Manitoba, 1974) by Gerhard Ens provided stage performances by smaller, yet equally enthusiastic, groups.[16]

For short stories and poems there seems as yet to be no standard channel of publication. Periodicals and newspapers like *Mennonite Mirror, Der Bote* or *Mennonitische Post* will share occasional efforts, although countless pages remain the private property of individuals unable or unwilling to reveal themselves in the published literary world.

Translations are possibly in a class by themselves, not necessarily freshly creative, but significant for finding a wider reading audience and evoking new interest in many older, out-of-print, usually German, editions. Henry Dyck did this in 1974 with his translation of Arnold Dyck's classic *Verloren in der Steppe* (five short volumes published at Steinbach, Manitoba in the 1940's) as did Aaron Klassen, publisher of *In the Fullness of Time* (Kitchener, Ontario, 1974), the English version of Quiring's *Als Ihre Zeit Erfuellet War*. Al Reimer's lively translations, *The Russian Dance of Death. Revolution and Civil War in the Ukraine* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: Hyperion Press, 1977), and *No Strangers in Exile* (*Winnipeg*, Manitoba: Hyperion Press, 1979), a novel about Mennonite life under Stalin, quickly gained both general and classroom appeal.[17] Arnold Dyck continues to hold the interest of persons like Elizabeth Peters who published a translation of three pieces (including *Two Letters* and *Runde Koake*) under the title *The Millionaire of Goatfield* (Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1980). She hopes to tackle two other German items, one on the Mennonite trek to Central Asia in the 1880's (*Unser Ausflug nach Mittel-Asien*) and a much later flight from the Soviet Union (*Flucht ueber den Amur*) as her next translation project.[18]

Undoubtedly the most ambitious endeavor of its kind so far is the translation into English of Peter M. Friesen's 930-page *Die Altevangelische Mennonitische Bruederschaft in Russland (1789-1910)*, originally published by Raduga Press in Halbstadt, south Russia, in 1911.[19] As a compilation of documents, and keen participant commentary on the story of Mennonite development in Russia before World War I, this large study remains the richest single volume source of information on the subject. The second corrected edition, just off the press, will undoubtedly stimulate the study of the Mennonite experience in Russia even more. Aeltester Gerhard Wiebe's *Ursachen und Geschichte der Auswanderung der Mennoniten aus Russland nach Amerika* (Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1900) has not acquired classic acclaim, but its English version, prepared by Helen Janzen, and published this year by the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, will help to explain why many Mennonites left Russia in the 1870's, and what makes some of their descendents "tick" even today.[19a]

An almost unending list of new titles seems to be flowing from the busy nooks of the genealogists, biagraphers and memoirists for whom individual and family memories suggest the shaping forces of generations to come. In colour and style Johann Klassen's *Klassen: A Family Heritage* (Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1980) set rather unprecedented standards, but in significant family research recognition must be given as well to works like *The House of Heinrich* (Winnipeg, Manitoba 1980) edited by Anna Epp Ens, *Goertzen* (Edmonton, Alberta, 1976) and *Teichroeb* (Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1979) by Peter Goertzen, Sid Derksen's *My Father's House* (Langham, Saskatchewan, 1980), especially strong on stories, and *Kornelius Heinrichs and His Descendants 1782-1979* (Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1980) edited by Marianne Janzen, Neil Heinrichs and Art Toews.[20] *Ohm Franz, Aeltester Franz Enns* (Winnipeg, Manitoba) appeared as a tribute to an important Mennonite leader when Frank F. Enns pub-

lished an account of his father's life in 1977.[21] Among new biographies are also Nettie Kroeker's *Far Above Rubies. The Story of Helena Wiens* (Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1976), and John B. Toews' book *With Courage to Spare. The Life of B. B. Janz, 1877-1964* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: Christian Press, 1978).

Memoirs and full-scale autobiographies are just beginning to come into their own. C. A. DeFehr's *Memories of My Life* (Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1967), with its German version, *Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben,* provided an example in the sixties, with works like J. J. Neudorf's *Aus meinem Leben* (Osler, Saskatchewan, 1970), Anna Priess' *Exiled to Siberia* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1972), D. D. Rempel's *Erinnerungen* (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, 1973), and D. P. Heidebrecht's *Ein Holperiger Lebensweg* (Clearbrook, B.C., ca. 1979) following later. Anna Dyck, of Niverville, Manitoba, had her story published as *Anna: From the Caucasus to Canada* (Hillsboro, Kansas, 1979), after Derksen Printers had put out Mary Kornelsen's *Give Me This Mountain* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1974) and three volumes of *Hoehen und Tiefen. Eine deutsche Lebensgeschichte aus Suedrussland* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1973-1976) by Maria Winter-Loewen. Clara Dyck's typed transliteration of the remarkable diary of Anna Baerg, a young Mennonite woman in south Russia who ultimately moved to Canada, has sparked a search for other documents of this kind.[22] *Thy Kingdom Come. The Diary of Johann J. Nickel of Rosenhof 1918-1919. A Record of Violence and Faith During the Russian Civil War* (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, 1978), translated and published by John P. Nickel, is a case in point.

For a general survey of Canadian Mennonite literary activity one should note in conclusion the periodicals and newspapers in print at the present time. Those mentioned here provide a continued contact with 50,000 readers or more. Four of them remain as German-language editions, and at least six serve the English Mennonite reading public in Canada and in some instances, also broad.

Begun as *Der Immigranten Bote,* editor Gerhard Ens' weekly *Der Bote* will soon reach its sixtieth year of continuous publication. With the paper's office in Winnipeg, more than half of its 8500 subscribers reside in Canada; (a few in the U.S.A.), the rest in half a dozen countries of Latin America, and increasingly among the Umsiedler, especially in West Germany.[23] In a sense a counterpart for somewhat different Mennonite circles is the *Mennonitische Rundschau,* edited by Abe Schellenberg, also in Winnipeg. Having completed just over a century of steady publication, the biweekly *Rundschau* retains about 4500 subscribers, again with most subscribers in Canada, but some also in South America and West Germany.[24]

A three-year old weekly newspaper, *Mennonitische Post,* appeared in some ways to succeed the *Steinbach Post,* well known in Canadian Mennonite circles from late 1913 till its demise a half century later. The new *Post,* with its 5500 subscribers, and edited by Abe Warkentin also at Steinbach, Manitoba, possibly finds a stronger readership in Mexico and South America than its cousin predecessor but is widely read in Canada as well.[25] *Christlicher Familienfreund* published by the Evangelical Mennonite Conference at its office in Steinbach, Manitoba serves a numerically more modest community. It has just completed forty-five years of ministry, and Abe R. Reimer, its present editor, has had that responsibility since he began twenty-one years ago.

The English-language publications include three which view themselves as inter-Mennonite, and three others which cater more to denominational groups. *Mennonite Mirror* reaches metropolitan Winnipeg and other readers, mainly in Manitoba, monthly from its office in Winnipeg. Al Reimer of the University of Winnipeg edits what is in fact a trilingual enterprise, High and Low German as well as English. The Mennonite Heritage Centre at 600 Shaftesbury Blvd. in Winnipeg, mails out a quarterly four-to-six page newsletter and research bulletin, *Mennonite Historian,* under the auspices of the History-Archives Committee of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, and edited by Lawrence Klippenstein.[26] Now a well-established and widely recognized biweekly Mennonite national newspaper, *Mennonite Reporter* recently celebrated its tenth anniversary at its publishing office in Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ontario. Ron Rempel edits the paper, with Margaret Loewen Reimer and Karen Bowman assisting.[27]

The *Mennonite Brethren Herald,* with an office in Winnipeg, has attained a high stature among denominational periodicals under the editorship of Harold Jantz. It reaches its 21,000 member Mennonite Brethren constituency twice a month, and is also read by many outside that group. Another biweekly is the *Messenger,* provided by the Evangelical Mennonite Conference from its Steinbach centre under the editorship of David K. Schellenberg, who has been with the task since its initiation in 1963. The Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference monthly, *The Recorder,* a successor to *Der Leitstern,* followed the longtime editorship of Ben Hoeppner with that of Henry Dueck who took over about a year ago. *The Recorder* began publication in 1964. Both of the latter have their majority of readers in Canada, but extend to some Latin American countries like Mexico, Belize and Paraguay.

Much work still lies ahead. Projects in progress are almost too numerous to count. Fifteen or more community and congregational histories are underway, several novels await publication, an undetermined number of family studies continue, many anticipating publication, the second volume of Frank Epp's *Mennonites in Canada* is almost ready for the press, a volume or two of essays will appear shortly, translation projects multiply, more diaries will be published, and commissioning biographies may soon be a "fad". Of the making of books there seems, indeed, to be no end. An assessment of all this hustle and bustle has hardly begun, and even a brief overview suggests that this aspect of the publication blizzard should continue without delay.[28]

FOOTNOTES

1 Dr. Hartmut Froeschle plans to publish a bibliography of German Canadian literature, which will include a full listing of Mennonite titles. Most of these appear already on a holdings listing of the Canadian Mennonite Bible College Mennonite Historical Library, prepared in 1970 and updated in 1980. In 1977 Dr. Donovan Smucker of Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ontario, published *The Sociology of Canadian Mennonites, Hutterites and Amish: A Bibliography With Annotations*. (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1977).

2 This omits such categories as theological literature, theses and dissertations, articles, the Hutterites and the Ontario Mennonite materials which hopefully can be reviewed in another setting. Under the sections covered, there may well be other titles which should have been included, but have been overlooked. On the Hutterites Victor Peters published *All Things Common. The Hutterian Way of Life*, (New York, N.Y.: Harpers, 1965) on the basis of Canadian research, and more recently there appeared also John Ryan's *The Agricultural Economy of Manitoba Hutterite Colonies* (Ottawa, Ontario: Carleton University, 1977).

3 *Mennonite Exodus* got a second and third printing from Friesen Printers of Altona, Manitoba, in 1966 and 1976. *Lost Fatherland* came out in a German edition, *Ein Vaterland Verloren*, in 1971.

4 The very extensive records of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, upon which these books are largely based, are now located in the Conference of Mennonites in Canada and Mennonite Brethren archives in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

5 Dr. Walter Quiring had earlier published *Deutsche Erschliessen den Chaco* (Karlsruhe, Germany, 1936), *Russlanddeutsche Suchen eine Heimat: Die Deutsche Einwanderung in den Paraguayischen Chaco* (Karlsruhe, Germany, 1938), and *Im Schweisse deines Angesichts* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1953).

6 Henry J. Gerbrandt. *Adventure in Faith. The Background in Europe and the Development in Canada of the Bergthaler Mennonite Church of Manitoba* (Altona, Manitoba, 1970). The records of the Bergthaler Mennonite Church of Manitoba are now deposited at the Conference of Mennonites in Canada archives also.

7 Mennonites had arrived in Ontario (from the U.S.A.) as early as 1786, but came to Western Canada, i.e. Manitoba (from Russia), only in 1874. Cf. E. K. Francis. *In Search of Utopia, The Mennonites of Manitoba* (Altona, Manitoba: Friesen Printers, 1955), pp. 28ff., and Gerbrandt, pp. 48ff.

8 This work had been sponsored by a joint publishing group of Manitoba and Ontario Mennonites which eventually grew to include other provincial representatives in the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada from 1974 on.

9 CMBC Publications based at the Canadian Mennonite Bible College began its operation with the book *The Bergthal Colony* by William Schroeder, and continues to carry a special interest in publishing on Russian Mennonite themes. Inquiries may be addressed to 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3P OM4.

Lohrenz, it could be added, may well in recent years have become the most prolific writer of published books on the Russian Mennonite experience. Concerned to preserve and disseminate the stories of this era, he began by publishing three collections as *Lose Blaetter* (two in 1974 and another in 1976). *The Mennonites in Western Canada* (52 pp) appeared in 1974 as well. Besides titles noted above, he has also published *Stormtossed. The Personal Story of a Canadian Mennonite from Russia* (1976), *The Fateful Years 1912-1923* (n.d.), *The Odyssey of the Bergen Family* (1978), and *Stories From Mennonite Life* (1980). Further works, we are informed, will be forthcoming.

10 All these titles on Russian Mennonites are merely samples. One could mention many others, including especially a number of community studies of places like Jazykowo (J. Loewen, 1967), Ufa (Gerhard Hein, 1975), Omsk region (Peter Rahn, 1975), the Crimean Mennonites (Martin Durksen, 1977), Ignatjevo (Oscar Hamm, 1980), *Die Insel Chortitza* (I. P. Klassen, 1980). The typical approach in many instances is to assemble and edit the recollections of Mennonite emigres who came to Canada after leaving the Soviet Union in the 1920's and later.

11 A Canadian parallel to the Rempel work is a pictorial tribute to Mennonite conscientious objectors entitled *That There Be Peace. Mennonites in Canada During World War II* (Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1979), edited by Lawrence Klippenstein, and published by the Manitoba CO Reunion Committee.

12 Both German volumes were published by the Mennonitischer Sprach Verein of Canada. Analytical surveys of past efforts in the Mennonite literary world are helpfully and more adequately set out in Epp's introduction to *Unter Dem Nordlicht* (pp. ix-xxvi), and by Al Reimer in "The Russian Mennonite Experience in Fiction", in *Mennonite Images*, pp. 221-236.

Much of that literature, if it did not appear in single editions of "Selbstverlag" (published by the author), would find its way into *Mennonitische Warte* (also *Volkswarte*) published by Arnold Dyck from 1935-1938, and in his *Warte-Jahrbuch* 1943-1944. The formation of Echo Verlag in 1944 made possible the publication in the forties and fifties, of a dozen or more German language historical works on Mennonites in Russia and other themes. The latest titles to appear from this press were the works of Victor Peters, *Zwei Dokumente* (Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1965), and *Nestor Makhno. Das Leben eines Anarchisten* (Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1970), also in English, *Nestor Makhno. The Life of an Anarchist*.

13 *Mennonite Images* appeared as the first publication produced by the Chair of Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg.

14 An earlier Ph.D. study by J. W. Goerzen *Low German in Canada, A Study in Platdietsch* (Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto, 1952) appeared in print in 1970. Herman Rempel's *Waedbuiak, Low German to English Dictionary* (Morden Manitoba, 1980), has been surprisingly popular, although it does not have a transliteration of Low German words for persons not native in that dialect.

15 The Drama Society's efforts have included a Low German version of Gilbert and Sullivan's HMS Pinafore, and last year (1980) a dramatization of Arnold Dyck's *Verloren in der Steppe*. For a note on Low German drama in print, cf. Peter Paetkau "Low German Drama. A Research Report". *Mennonite Life* XXXIII (December 1978), pp. 27-28. The study of Low German songs has been undertaken seriously by Doreen Klassen of Steinbach, Manitoba. Cf. her article "Low German Songs? Ohha yo!". *Mennonite Life* XXXIII (December 1978), pp. 23-26. Some songs were published by Valeda Unger in *De Goldene Schlut* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1974).

16 Cf. also N. H. Unruh, *Gedichte und Plattdeutsche Gespraeche* (Ste. Elizabeth, Manitoba, 1973). Ens has written a few short stories in the dialect as well (cf. *Dee easchte Wiehnachten enn Kanada*, 1974) but his *tour de force* has been a series of over 400 Low German weekly half hour broadcasts on Radio Southern Manitoba, begun in 1972, and still continuing today. Mennonite history and literature themes have dominated the series.

17 *A Russian Dance of Death* combines Diedrich (Navall) Neufeld's three books, *Ein Tagebuch aus dem Reiche des Totentanzes* (1921), *Mennonitentum in der Ukraine: Schicksalgeschichte Sagradowkas* (1922), and *Zu Pferd 1000 km durch die Ukraine* (1922), into one volume. *No Strangers in Exile* was originally *In Wologdas Weissen Waeldern* published as a first novel by Johannes Harder of Germany in 1934.

18 Elizabeth Peters earlier wrote an MA thesis on Arnold Dyck entitled "Der Mennonitendichter Arnold Dyck in Seinen Werken". University of Manitoba, 1967.

19 This publishing venture was spearheaded by Dr. John B. Toews of Fresno, California, undertaken by the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches and printed by Christian Press, Winnipeg, Manitoba. The full title of the German edition is *Die Alt-Evangelische Mennonitische Bruederschaft in Russland (1789-1910), im Rahmen der Mennonitischen Gesamtgeschichte*, with the English edition, *The Mennonite Brotherhood in Russia 1789-1910*, having omitted a section on North America which appears in the original as Part Two. A second corrected English edition came off the press early in 1981.

19a The translation, entitled, *Causes and History of the Emigration of Mennonites from Russia to America*, is available in both paperback and hardcover editions, and may be ordered from the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg.

20 A list of genealogical publications in the Canadian Mennonite Bible College historical library contains approximately 60 titles. It is available upon request at Mennonite Heritage Centre, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3P OM4.

21 An English translation of *Ohm Franz* appeared as *Elder Enns* in 1979.

22 The Mennonite Historical Society of Canada plans to publish a portion of this diary in an English translation. The original is in the Mennonite Brethren Archives, 77 Henderson Highway, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R2L 1L1.

23 A published index to *Der Bote* for the years 1924-1947 may be obtained from the Mennonite Heritage Centre also.

24 The periodical began in the U.S.A. as *Nebraska Ansiedler* in 1878. It became the *Rundschau* in 1880, and in 1923 was moved to a publishing house in Canada. The entire run of the periodical has been microfilmed, with most of the set (1900-1980) available in bound volumes at the Mennonite Brethren Archives in Winnipeg. For 1920-1927 the *Mennonitische Rundschau* has now been indexed as well.

25 In 1980 the *Post* also began a book sale service to its readers. The response has been quite strong.

26 The Mennonite Heritage Centre headquarters the history-archives program of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, serves other organizations like the Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba and Ontario, the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference and Mennonite Central Committee (Canada), as well. Some archival holdings also deal with the broader German community in Canada.

27 The *Mennonite Reporter* carries an annual index to its contents. It succeeded *The Canadian Mennonite* published at Altona and Winnipeg, Manitoba, from 1953-1971, under the editorship of Frank H. Epp.

28 An organization called the Mennonite Book Publishing Service has recently begun to offer evaluation services for manuscripts whose authors consider publication. Inquiries about any books mentioned in these comments may be directed to the author of this article at the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Themes and Symbols in the "Mennonite" Novels of Ernst Behrends

By Harry Loewen

In this article I wish to introduce to Mennonite readers Ernst Behrends and his series of "Mennonite" novels, collectively entitled *Das Volk der Wanderschaft (People on the Way)*. While Behrends, a non-Mennonite, may not be a great writer, the very fact that he has devoted a lifetime to studying the Mennonites and writing six full-length novels about them, seems reason enough to take note of him in a journal devoted to the history and life of the Mennonite people.

Born in 1891 in northern Germany, Ernst Behrends became in 1911 a school teacher in Möln, south of Lübeck, Germany. When he was wounded in the early stages of World War I, he was forced to return to his home in Möln where between 1929 and 1935 Russian Mennonites on their way to the Americas had found a temporary haven of refuge from Soviet Communism. Becoming interested in the life and hardships of the German and Mennonite refugees, he wrote the novels *Beata* (1936) and *Der Rohrsänger* (1936). Besides these books and the series of novels *Das Volk der Wanderschaft*, Behrends' works include short stories and collections of his poetry.[1] When asked whether his life-long preoccupation with the Mennonites had confused or colored his own religious faith, Behrends replied: "It might not be amiss to ask this question of my Mennonite friends and my books."[2]

Before dealing with specific themes and issues pertaining to Mennonite beliefs and practices in Behrends' Mennonite novels, a listing of their titles and a brief summary of their plots might be in place.

Der Ketzerbischof (1966) tells the story of Menno Simons' life, struggles and death, faithfully adhering to the known biographical and historical facts relating to the organizer of the Mennonite movement. *Die Rose von Wüstenfelde* (1973) takes the reader to northern Germany and to the period of the Thirty Years' War where a Mennonite young woman experiences not only great hardships but also the joys and sorrows connected with love. The novel *Der rote Tulipan* (1977), taking place against the background of the Northern War (1710-13), is "a love story in which the protagonists, a brother and sister, are severely tried. *Stromaufwärts* (1970) deals with the world of the West-Prussian Daniel Willms who in his restlessness journeys to the Netherlands, Hamburg-Altona, and in the end to the Ukraine in an attempt to come to terms with himself and his Mennonite tradition. *Der Steppenhengst* (1969), in structure and theme similar to *Stromaufwärts*, takes us to the Mennonite colonies in Russia, the settlements beyond the Volga River, and to the steppes of Turkistan and Siberia. The last novel in the series, *Wir tratzen dem Irrlicht* (1976), tells in two parts the tragic yet heroic story of the Mennonite refugees during World War II and their emigration to the Americas.[3]

Behrends' least successful novel in the series is no doubt *Der Ketzerbischof*. One critic states that the Menno Simons novel is better as history than as a novel and that the book's world "is a flat world, reported, not experienced, discussed, not felt."[4] While this criticism applies in part to most of Behrends' creative prose, most of the other novels in the series *Das Volk der Wanderschaft* do comply at least to a certain extent with the principles of story telling and in some instances even rise to epic heights.

Perhaps the best novel in the series is *Die Rose von Wüstenfelde*.[5] While Behrends the "outsider" cannot be expected to portray fully and successfully the life of Mennonites "from within", this novel is a most touching story about the hopes, faith and love of a young Mennonite woman that finds universal appeal. A brief summary of the novel's plot and main issues will no doubt bear this out.

The action of *Die Rose von Wüstenfelde* takes place during the horrors of the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648). Anna Enns, the daughter of the Mennonite elder Dirk Enns, loves Fokko Feenstra, a childhood friend, but does not marry him when he proposes to her because he is not sufficiently firm in religious matters. Fokko eventually marries Anna's friend, while Anna rejects one suitor after another, including a famous Dutch artist.

The war, having devastated much of Europe, also comes to the peaceful Mennonite settlement of Wüstenfelde. When a soldier of the imperial army invades the Fokko Feenstra home and rapes Fokko's wife and kills his child, Fokko in desperation and self-defense kills the brutish intruder. For his violent action Fokko is put under the ban by the strict Mennonite congregation. Anna who otherwise is a loving and submissive daughter turns against her father who was instrumental in Fokko's excommunication. Fokko Feenstra leaves the village

and disappears for many years. Anna Enns continues to hope and love in spite of the general belief among the villagers that Fokko found his death when he left his home.

In a sort of poetic justice Anna's father is killed when the army ravages and burns Wüstenfelde. Anna, driven by a guilty conscience for having hated her father and compassion for the suffering, moves to the Danzig area where she devotes her life to caring for the poor and sick, hoping that some day she will find the man she loves.

After many years, shortly before the end of the war, Fokko arrives, searching for Anna. Although broken in body and spirit, Fokko hopes to confess his dark and sinful past and find peace in Anna's and God's forgiveness. In the end Fokko is received back into the church and into the arms of Anna Enns. The novel concluded with the words: "Fokko took Anna's face into both of his rough hands and drank from her blue eyes 'homecoming'." (R,215)[6]

Die Rose von Wüstenfelde comes to grips with many themes and issues which have characterized the Mennonites throughout the centuries. There is the question of the relationship between a separate people and their non-Mennonite neighbors and churches; there are practical problems arising from an attempt to adhere to the peace principle in a hostile world; there is the tension resulting from a collision between a conservative and literal interpretation of the Bible and the various forms of art; and there are the problematical issues arising from the application of church discipline and excommunication. Although the author at times seems to question the conservatism of the Mennonites, he nevertheless remains sympathetic toward the Mennonite way of life, believing that the Anabaptist ideals may come closest to what original Christianity was all about.

The various themes of Behrends' novels reflect the tensions that the Mennonites have experienced throughout their history in their contact with the "world", tensions which even today are still largely unresolved. It is in addressing himself to these unresolved tensions that Behrends' novels become interesting to the Mennonite reader.

One dominant theme in the novels is the Mennonite tension between denying the world and life on the one hand and affirming all that which is good on the other. The Mennonites in *Stromaufwärts* are known for their seriousness, thrift and sobriety which have made them wealthy, but in their wealth they have developed an uneasy conscience with regard to their prosperity (SA, 162, 164, 234). Consequently they find it difficult to express joy in its many forms. They know that to be sad is pagan, that there should be a joyous acceptance of what God has granted them, but even on festive occasions, such as Christmas, Palm Sunday and Easter, seriousness and sadness prevail (SA, 101, 107, 109, 111, 121). When Daniel Willms the hero of *Stromaufwärts* dances, he feels guilty (SA, 228-229, 232). It is the Lutheran teacher Krohn who has to tell Daniel: "Joy in all its forms is necessary for life and is, therefore, pleasing to God" (SA, 280).[7] Even Menno Simons in *Der Ketzerbischof* is uncertain concerning how far a Christian can go in expressing his delight in the things of this world: "...could not a joy of this world, a joy consisting of flesh and blood, a dance, a game, find God's favour? But he tried to resist such thoughts..." (K, 417).[8] Consequently, a decent Mennonite may laugh within his four walls to the extent that his Christian confession will permit him, we are told humorously; only indecent Mennonites will laugh outside their houses (SH, 6). And Menno's father says of his son who hardly ever laughs: "Is life by any means a laughing matter? But there ought to be light" (K. 22-23).[9] The old teacher Töws in *Der Steppenhengst,* however, points out: "...joy comes from God. All joy. The joy in children. The joy in nature . . . the joy of life" (SH, 171).[10]

Art and literature are further areas in which the Mennonites throughout their history have experienced severe tensions. In *Stromaufwärts* we learn of Enoch Seemann, a Mennonite artist in Danzig, who was excommunicated by his congregation because he painted portraits of God's creatures who were created in God's image (SA, 201-202). When Daniel Willms is reminded of the commandment about graven images and likenesses, he laughs in derision and instructs his conservative brethren that a wedding band, a communion table and the cross of Christ are also likenesses and symbols of the reality behind them (SA, 335-339). Even though Mennonites do not build church steeples and elaborate church buildings, they must, according to Daniel, climb spiritual towers and expand their mental horizons.

Ernst Behrends

Both *Stromaufwärts* and *Der Steppenhengst* pay tribute to the German poets and composers, notably Goethe and Schiller. The Lutheran teacher Krohn in *Stromaufwärts* extols Schiller as the poet of true freedom (SA, 197). When in *Der Steppenhengst* Schiller is called a "godless" poet, Johann Unruh exclaims indignantly: "Godless? not even lawless... What do you call worldly, what spiritual? Is not God's spirit everywhere in the world?" (SH, 374).[11] For Johann Unruh the ideal is a combination of the spiritual Menno Simons and the "worldly" and practical Johann Cornies. Art and science are not blasphemy,

as some believe, but can be "Gottesdienst" (SH, 353).

It is refreshing to read a contemporary novel without encountering the usual bedroom scenes of which modern literature abounds. The erotic elements are subdued in Behrends' novels, as it is to be expected in stories about Mennonites, yet the erotic symbols and the glow of youthful passion are not wholly absent. Daniel Willms sees Judith's full red lips, wishing he could bite into them (SA, 144). There is further the erotic image of Daniel and Judith swaying back and forth on a branch, with Judith whispering to Daniel that she is getting warm: "... she opened her bodice and leaned closer to Daniel. He hugged the dear girl and touched her gently" (SA, 170).[12] (Such visual scenes, however, are lamentably rare in Behrends' novels.) In the end Daniel will not marry Judith because he has discovered that she is more after his wealth than him. Nor can he marry the Lutheran Eleonore even though he loves her very much. Mennonite discipline and control are well expressed in the following lines: "They both looked in all directions and clasped each other's hands, and Daniel had an urge to kiss Eleonore and Eleonore was also thirsty for his kisses, but they did nothing but hold hands" (SA, 203).[13]

Similarly, Johann Unruh in *Der Steppenhengst* loves Elisabeth whom he cannot marry because Elisabeth and her parents belong to the more enthusiastic and fanatical group of Mennonites whereas Johann is considered less pious than they. The intense passion between the two lovers is described without sentimentality and titillation. In a heavy rain Johann covers his beloved with his jacket: "What he would have liked best was covering her with his own body" (SH, 107).[14] When Johann later marries another girl, Suse, he continues to think of Elisabeth, causing his wife sorrow and thus contributing to her early death. A second-rate writer would have exploited such a situation by allowing Johann to marry Elisabeth at last, but not so Behrends the realist. While Elisabeth still loves Johann, she feels that times have changed and they have grown apart, and that he, the restless Steppenhengst, would not be happy with her. Both renounce each other in an almost stoic fashion (SH, 282-283).

Politics and political issues have always presented problems to the Anabaptists and Mennonites. On the one hand Mennonites have always had to depend on the goodwill of the rulers in whose countries they lived, and on the other they knew that they were not part of this world which, according to their belief, is destined for destruction. In *Stromaufwärts* the Mennonites are tolerated by the "old Fritz" (King Frederick II) because the king does not believe in God and because the Mennonites are useful citizens and good farmers. To retain their privileged position the Mennonites occasionally "butter up" the Prussian king with good results (SA, 16). The emigration of the Mennonites to Russia is a combination of their fear that their privileges will be rescinded, a desire for land, and the attractive offer of the Russian government. While the Mennonites refuse to participate actively in government, they are most interested in the affairs of the political world. They comment on the French Revolution and its implications, Napoleon's Egyptian campaigns, the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71, and the political issues in Russia. They express their Russian patriotism; they are horrified at the assassination attempts on the Tsar; and they view the nihilism of the nineteenth century as a *Zeitkrankheit*. They also know of the American Mennonites who emigrated from Pennsylvania to Ontario, Canada, because they needed land and because some of them wished to remain true to the English crown (SH, 94-95).

The question of non-resistance causes Daniel Willms in *Stromaufwärts* some misgivings. He knows that the commandment not to kill and Christ's example of love demand the practice of peace and non-violence, yet after reading Goethe's epic *Hermann and Dorothea* he becomes convinced that the sacrificial dying for one's home and country may not be all that wrong (SA, 229). While personally holding to the principle of peace, Daniel knows that the principle has occasionally been ignored in Mennonite history (SA, 256).

Freedom and liberty in the religious and ethical spheres is another prominent theme in Behrends' novels. In *Stromaufwärts* we are told: "There is one type of freedom which breaks chains, but there is also another type of freedom which destroys dams" (SA, 232).[15] With regard to the freedom that the French Revolution promises, Daniel states that dams are necessary (SA, 240). Even Luther's talk about the freedom of Christians was more promise than fulfillment (SA, 345). On the other hand, when Gerhard Wall says that education must also be dammed in, and that an education that goes beyond reading, writing and arithmetic is evil, Daniel Willms contradicts the old man by saying that through a liberal education he has not only found himself but also experienced God in all aspects of life (SA, 309).

The tensions with regard to the external world are intensified by internal strains within the Russian Mennonite communities. In *Der Steppenhengst* the pietistic Lutheran pastor Eduard Wüst contributes to the spiritual restlessness among the Mennonite which eventually leads to the formation of the Mennonite Brethren Church. While Behrends seems to sympathize with the movement for reform (SH, 15), he points out that spiritual concerns were not the only factors which lead to separation: "Those who signed [the Mennonite Brethren Document of Secession, 1860] did so because they saw the decay of the Mennonite Brotherhood and could no longer be part of it for fear of God's wrath and the loss of the privileges granted by the government" (SH, 30).[16] The Mennonites' attempt to find meaningful renewal, freedom and joy led to the excesses of the exuberant movement and the belief in the imminent return of Christ in the eastern steppes of Russia. Johann Unruh's scorn for, and anger against, the enthusiastic and fanatical Klaas Epp, who has stolen the heart and mind of his beloved Elisabeth, knows no bounds (SH, 249-250). Similarly Menno Simons in *Der Ketzerbischof* rejects the poetic mysticism of Simon ter Veen, telling him that all excessive exuberance is out of the question: "Let me tell you: Every ocean, also the

ocean of love, needs to be dammed in" (K, 305).[17]

Several symbols in Behrends' novels are used most effectively. Daniel Willms "the farmer, cobbler and thinker" in *Stromaufwärts* sees life and the world in and through his cobbler's lamp (*Schusterkugel*). This lamp illuminates the darkness around him, it becomes for him the microscopic world, it breaks when he loses his beloved Maria, and when he drowns he sees all of life once more reflected in it. Similarly the symbol of the horseshoe in *Der Steppenhengst* accompanies Johann Unruh on his journeys and through life. The horseshoe becomes a bond between him and Elisabeth Willms and a protection against the fanatical Klaas Epp. But the symbol of good fortune and happiness appears deceptive in the end, with the result that Johann throws it into the well. The symbols of the apples and the appletree are less effectively employed. In *Der Steppenhengst* Johann thinks of love and his future when he sees Elisabeth standing under an appletree (SH, 103). In *Stromaufwärts* divine voices come from the appletree (SA, 46), and Maria sketches apples and expresses the thought that in Russia she wants to plant apple trees, which she does with seeds of an apple given her by Daniel. When Daniel and Eleonore talk about apples, the girl laughs and thinks about Eden and the serpent (SA, 203). Thus the apple symbol is somewhat confused, representing love and growth on the one hand and temptation and separation on the other.

The dead seem to be ever present among the living in Behrends' novels. In *Der Ketzerbischof* we find Menno Simons preoccupied with his dead father. "He saw himself wandering through a fog . . . but somewhere a light was shining. And he felt a dead man wandering by his side, a man more alive than the living: his father" (K, 19).[18] Daniel Willms in *Stromaufwärts* has his beloved dead mother always before his eyes. He cannot become a farmer in West-Prussia where his mother and sister died because of him, and when he journeys to Russia he brings his Maria an evergreen branch from the grave of his mother. The dead, however, do not have a stifling effect on the characters but instead spur them on to a higher and more fulfilling life.

The heroes of Behrends' novels are both pious and striving individuals. They love God, life and their brotherhood, but at the same time they look forward to new vistas, lands, experiences and ideas. They are full of life, but this throbbing life finds it difficult to express itself fully due to the traditional restrictions, customs and people around them. They try to combine the Christian Mennonite way of life with all that which is noble, good and beautiful in all spheres of human endeavour, art and literature. Their goodwill and tolerance extend to all people ("Christians? Heathen? Unitarians? In any case good people. If only all the Mennonites were such good people" SA, 324).[19] Behrends projects into his heroes that which he considers to be best in Mennonitism. He has thus succeeded in portraying Mennonites with a certain Mennonite identity, an identity which is colored by Behrends' Christian humanism.

As a writer of historical novels Behrends' strengths and weaknesses must be evaluated on the basis of the following questions: Does the author portray his characters accurately within the historical settings of his novels? Is the author successful in capturing and creating the mood and atmosphere of the period about which he is writing? Are the characters in their thoughts, speeches and actions psychologically well motivated? Has the author succeeded in making his scenes visible, pictorial—in a word, epic?

These questions can be answered in a qualified affirmative. The actions, speeches and motivations of Behrends' characters ring true within the world of the author's creation. However, Mennonite readers will not be able to identify fully with Behrends' characters as Mennonites. Behrends' characters are more German than Mennonite. Similarly the historical and geographical settings of Behrends' novels *resemble* the world in which Mennonites lived and are convincing within the context of the novels, but a Mennonite reader who knows the Mennonite world from within will not feel quite at home in Behrends' world.

Behrends is a most knowledgable writer. He knows his Mennonite history well and does not deviate from the known historical facts. While Behrends is obviously in sympathy with the Mennonite way of life, he treats his characters and issues objectively, without sentimentalizing or overly dramatizing them. Such potentially dramatic themes as erotic love and religious conflict are played down rather than exploited. This realism and matter-of-factness in Behrends' writing may not make for spell-bound reading, but it certainly reflects the often unemotional and practical lifestyle of the Mennonites.

Since Behrends deals with such an abundance of historical and cultural material, he has a tendency to include more in his novels than is necessary for the development of plots, characters and themes. Consequently most scenes remain underdeveloped and somewhat vague. The novel *Der Ketzerbischof* suffers, for example, from too much mere conversation and even preaching. *Stromaufwärts* and *Der Steppenhengst* often merely tell and inform the reader about events and people rather than showing the characters in action and conflict. In most of the novels the heroes are perpetually on journeys, but there is very little that they (and through them the readers) see and experience on the way. The vast expanses of the Russian steppes, the life and practices of the Cossacks, and the changes from one season to another could have been made to contribute to mood creation, but in Behrends' novels they are merely mentioned or passed over. Most characters in Behrends' novels—with the exception of the heroes who are reasonably well developed and motivated—are types rather than flesh and blood individuals; they merely represent the various opinions and views within the Mennonite world. Readers who are looking for a first-rate novel about the Mennonites will not find it among Behrends' Mennonite novels. However, those readers who are willing to experience Behrends' created Mennonite world and follow the life and struggles of the author's characters, will find Behrends' novels fairly good reading, educational and most interesting.[20]

NOTES

1 The following titles include Ernst Behrends' short stories and poems: *Ewige Fruehe*, Gedichte (1923); *Der Weg in die Heimat*, Gedichte (1960); *Die vergnuegte Kreatur*, Gedichte (1962); *Freunde sterben nicht*, Berichte und Gedichte (1964); *Ausser der Reihe*, Erzaehlungen (1967); *Till tollt immer noch*, Heitere Ezraehlungen (1968); *Dennoch*, Gedichte (1971); *Unsichtbare Bande*, Erzaechlungen (1974); *Herz ist Trumpf*, 66 Gedichte aus 66 Jahren (1974); *Mein brauner Protest*, Gedichte (1976).

2 Hans-Joachim Sander (ed.) Ernst *Behrends 19. Mai 1891—Freundesgabe*—(Goettingen: Arbeitskreis fuer deutsche Dichtung, 1977). p.35.

3 All further references to the novels are indicated in the text of the article by capital letters and page number: K for *Der Ketzerbischof*, R for *Die Rose von Wuestenfelde*, RT for *Der rote Tulipan*, SA for *Stromaufwaerts*, SH for *Steppenhengst*.

4 Mary E. Bender. Review in *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*, XLII (Oct. 1968). No. 4. p. 329.

5 See my review of this novel in *Mennonite Mirror* (January, 1979), p. 19.

6 "Fokko nahm Annas Antlitz in die beiden groben Haende und trank aus den blauen Augen 'Heimkehr'."

7 "Freude in allen Toenungen ist not zum Leben und also gottwohlgefaellig."

8 ". . . kann dann nicht auch eine Freude dieser Welt, eine Freude aus Fleisch und Blut, ein Tanz, ein Spiel Gott wohlgefallen? Aber er wehrte sich gegen derartige Regungen."

9 "Ist denn das Leben zum Lachen? Aber hell soll es werden."

10 ". . . die Freude ist von Gott. Alle Freude. Die Freude am Kind. Die Freude an der Kreatur schlechthin . . . die Freude am Leben."

11 "Gottlos? Nicht einmal gesetzlos . . . Was heisst weltlich? Was heisst geistlich? Ist der Geist Gottes nicht ueberall in der Welt?"

12 ". . . sie oeffnete ihr Mieder und lehnte sich nah an Daniel, der umhalste die liebe Deern und liebkoste sie."

13 "Die beiden lugten in alle vier Winde und gaben einander die Hand, und den Daniel geluestete es Eleonore zu kuessen, und Eleonore hatte ein Duersten, aber es blieb beim blossen Haendedruck."

14 "Am liebsten haette er sie leibhaftig zugedeckt."

15 "Es gibt eine Freiheit, die Ketten zerbricht, es gibt aber auch eine Freiheit, die Deiche durchstosst."

16 "Die unterschrieben, haben den Verfall der mennonitischen Bruderschaft eingesehen und koennen nicht laenger mitmachen aus Furcht vor dem goettlichen Zorn und dem Verlust der von der Regierung verliehenen Privilegien."

17 "Ich sage dir: jedem Meer, auch dem der Liebe, ist ein Deich not."

18 "Er sah sich durch einen Nebel wandern . . . aber irgendwo winkte ein Licht. Und neben sich fuehlte er einen Toten wandern, lebendiger als die Lebendigen: den Vater."

19 "Christen? Heiden? Unitarier? Jedenfalls gute Menschen.—Wenn doch alle Mennoniten so gute Menschen waeren."

20 It has come to my attention that Herta M. Funk has written a Ph.D. dissertation based on a study of Behrends' novels, entitled: "Die religioese Weltanschauung in Ernst Behrends' Romanreihe: *Das Volk der Wanderschaft*." At the time of writing this article I had not seen as yet this dissertation.

Mennonites and Social Justice: Problems and Prospects

By Duane K. Friesen

I. Methodological Issues.

I have restricted myself to an examination of the thinking of Mennonites in the U.S. since 1900. My sources have largely been official conference statements compiled in the document, *Mennonite Statements on Peace and Social Concerns, 1900-1978*, and the thought of Mennonite intellectuals, though I do make reference to other data.[1]

When I began to work on this project I soon discovered I needed a minimal definition of justice in order to know whether or when Mennonites were talking about justice. One temptation is to define justice in such a way as to find it implicit in past Mennonite thought, even though Mennonites have not used the language of justice. An equally unacceptable approach would be to define justice in terms of a set of alien concepts that would impose presuppositions upon Mennonite thought and practice that would prevent the illumination of distinctive Mennonite thinking about justice.

One way to work toward a solution to this problem is to ask what new set of problems have emerged in Mennonite thought and practice that lead Mennonites to concern themselves with justice. It seems to me that there are at least three sources for the concern for justice:

1. One source of concern is how we regulate our own institutions. Though we have run hospitals and schools for a long time, we have only more recently become more self-conscious about the norms that govern these institutions: hiring and firing policies, salary scales, decision making procedures, etc. For example, until the 1960's Bethel College had essentially no written guidelines about what were considered to be fair and legitimate procedures in institutional management. In the

last two decades, however, a set of procedures defining due process, decision making procedures, tenure decisions, etc., have come together into a *Manual of Operations*, which performs the function of law for the operation of the institution.

2. A second set of problems has to do with how we understand our relationship to the society in which we live. This is not a new problem. It has, however, become increasingly more complex and difficult to solve as Mennonites have moved into most of the major occupations and professions in society. Mennonites find themselves in legal, business, social and political situations where they find that they not only must relate to other individual persons (to which the guidelines of the tradition have often spoken) but that they are involved in making decisions about social institutions outside the church, both how they evaluate them and how they act within them. In this context the function of the term "justice" is to provide a standard for the evaluation of institutions, of the social order as a whole, and the way in which the church and individuals should shape these institutions.

3. A third source of the concern for social justice arises out of the heart of the Mennonite ethic itself, compassion toward those in need, or the ethic of servanthood. Mennonites have become increasingly uneasy with simply bandaging the wounds of suffering people, and have become more involved in trying to work on the root causes of suffering and human misery. As they have done that, of course, they have become increasingly aware that problems like disease, malnutrition, poverty, crime and violence arise in the context of certain environmental and social conditions. To have compassion for the poor and the oppressed not only requires direct work with persons, it requires changes in the social and political structures which are the source of human misery. Compassion for those who are hungry not only requires direct food aid or direct help in terms of agricultural development, it also requires that Mennonites concern themselves with trade policies, the operation of multinational corporations, patterns of income distribution, government environmental regulations, etc. Again this concern, as in the other two areas, requires some kind of vision for how social institutions should operate, i.e. a vision for the operation of political and economic systems.

Justice, then, is a norm that governs institutions. What Mennonites are searching for are the normative principles to regulate their own church institutions, the institutions within which they are involved in their various occupational and professional roles, and the larger social, economic and political systems which have a profound effect on the general human welfare. Though persons often also use the term "justice" to refer to the relationship of individuals to each other, the primary function of the term is as a normative principle for institutions. I shall use the term in that sense. What have Mennonites said about the normative principles that guide the operation of social institutions?

The basic Mennonite response in the past to these issues has been that *the* institutional structure in the world through which God is working is the church. Though we have said that the problem of justice for Mennonites today arises in connection with normative principles for institutions other than the church, I do not wish to de-emphasize the significance of Mennonite thought about the church for a concept of social justice. In the history of the church different political patterns have often reflected the corresponding ecclesiastical structures. Democratic institutions, for example, were more readily developed in societies where congregational ecclesiastical polity was prevalent. The concept of mutual aid practiced within the church for those in need has implications for one's vision of the economic system. A distinctive Mennonite view of justice will, therefore, need to remain firmly anchored in its vision for the gathered church. The task ahead is to think through what the vision for the gathered community means for its mission to the world, how the vision applies to the Christian's involvement in institutions other than the church.

II. The Mennonite Understanding of Political and Economic Justice.

I will turn now to examine what, if anything, Mennonites have said about political and economic justice.

A. Political Justice

A Mennonite view of political justice is most evident in the Mennonite witness to the state. Long before Mennonites self-consciously began to develop a theology of witness to the state in the 1960's, their statements to government contain an implicit view of political justice. Though not ever fully stated, Mennonites have implicitly adopted the basic principles of liberal democracy, rights guaranteed, for example, by the U.S. constitution. The basic principles of liberal democracy are the right of speech and freedom of assembly, the right to organize and advocate a point of view in the body politic, the right to vote and determine one's own political system, the right to the free exercise of religion and to a lifestyle that is sufficiently compatible with others that it does not destroy their liberty, the right to a fair trial and freedom from torture and unjust detainment and incarceration. As I said, even when Mennonites had not yet worked out a theology of witness to the state, they consistently used some of these principles of liberal democracy as a basis for assessing and critiquing public policy.

The Mennonite appeal to principles of liberal democracy has usually been made in the context of their witness against conscription. I observe this witness in MCC testimony before several U.S. congressional committees in 1944 and 1945. This testimony was particularly strong in the 1950's, but it is also evident throughout the Mennonite sojourn in the U.S., reaching back before the U.S. entered World War I. In this testimony Mennonites frequently appealed to the state to foster democratic processes and institutions. Military compulsion is a threat to democratic institutions. Conscription enhances the power of

the state over the individual. Military training tends to create a docile and submissive people unwilling to stand up to the state in the exercise of liberty.

They often appealed to government officials to uphold the principles of the U.S. Constitution which protects the "full liberty of conscience and the free exercise of our faith." This appeal was most frequently made when Mennonites faced conscription and they sought for recognition by the state of their own conscientious objection to participation in war. For some groups, particularly the Brethren in Christ and the Mennonite Church, this principle was also appealed to in their concern that persons be free not to join unions without losing employment. As one moves closer to the present time, Mennonites more frequently appeal to the principle of liberty of conscience by urging the state to recognize the conscientious principles of a variety of persons outside the Mennonite framework—religious pacifists of a variety of backgrounds, pacifists with humanitarian orientation, and more recently persons who are selective objectors based upon a "just war" orientation. This principle of liberty of conscience is the basis for the initiation in 1980 of a judicial action by the General Conference Mennonite Church (in cooperation with other historic peace churches) "based on the First Amendment of the U.S Constitution, which protects the church from laws causing it to violate the conscientious objection of its employees to contributing to war."

Occasionally, particularly more recently, Mennonites have expressed concern about the violation of rights in other countries. The early expression of this concern was most notable in the General Conference Mennonite Church which in 1933 addressed a letter to President Franklin D. Roosevelt and in 1935 to the Secretary of the League of Nations concerning the violation of religous liberty in the Soviet Union. In 1959 they addressed concerns about violations of religious liberty in Columbia to the United States State Department and the Columbian Embassy in Washington, D.C. One of the key motivations for the establishment of the MCC Peace Section Office in Washington, D.C. in 1968 was that Mennonites should not only be willing to testify to government when our own interests are at stake but "we should also be willing to testify when the rights of others are involved."[2]

The concern for the political and cultural rights for persons other than themselves was stated most during the civil rights era. A 1965 MCC Church-State study conference concluded that "where the church's concern for human welfare overlaps with the state in such areas as civil rights, the church will urge an emphasis on just laws, which protect and uphold the human dignity of all citizens and the fair and just administration of all such laws."[3] This concern has also been expressed in the Mennonite testimony against capital punishment—that capital punishment is not only a violation of the sanctity of life, but that it tends to be unjust in its application to the poor and racial minorities.

B. Economic Justice.

Mennonites have said very little, either implicitly or explicitly about economic justice. To be sure, there is considerable concern of Mennonites to relieve poverty, or suffering from disease, malnutrition, and other social ills, but one can find little recently to suggest what the Mennonite vision is for how the goods and resources of an economic system would be distributed. Judging by the largely Republican voting preference of Kansas Mennonites in the last several decades one might conclude that they have done very little thinking about how the Christian faith would affect an economic vision for society, and how this might appropriately carry over into how they vote. I suspect that the efforts of the minority of Mennonites working on issues of justice in the urban setting or in third world countries are largely cancelled out by the voting patterns of the majority of Mennonites living in rural Mennonite communities.

One of the notable exceptions to this general lack of thinking about economic justice is, according to James Juhnke, the leadership given on these issues by several Mennonite leaders during the Progressive Era, 1900-1917. One of these was Jacob Ewert who attended and taught at Bethel College. Later he taught at Tabor College and became editor of the Hillsboro *Journal*. According to Ewert, the three greatest evils of civil peace are capitalism, militarism and alcoholism. He stated his Christian Socialist vision in a 1909 pamphlet entitled *Christianity and Socialism*. There he tried to demonstrate the harmony between socialism and Christianity. James Juhnke summarizes Ewert's ideas in this way:

> He quoted examples of social justice from Hebrew law and prophecy. He pointed to the community of goods in the early Christian community and suggested that the Socialist's call for the abolition of class distinctions conformed to Paul's statement that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond or free.[4]

The rival Mennonite newspaper in Newton, *Der Herold*, edited by H. P. Krehbiel, challenged Ewert's socialism, particularly when Ewert charged that "capitalism is, in a certain sense, the Antichrist." Though Krehbiel did not offer a complete defense of Capitalism, he critiqued the socialists for equating their program with Christianity.

The war distracted Mennonites and they never did really recover their interest in a larger social vision. Their interest in the larger economic issues of society, other than the concern for relief of suffering from war and famine, was from the 1930's into the early 1960's largely concerned with the issue of unions. Here the concern especially in the Mennonite Church and the Brethren in Christ was not the plight of the laboring person and justice in the economic order but whether Mennonites should be members of labor unions.

We can speculate that during this period of time the Mennonite vision for the economic order was drawn implicitly from their rural experience. Guy Hershberger, who thought about economic issues in the context of the labor-management struggle, could not support the union move-

ment because its use of force and coercion was contrary to nonresistance, yet he supported an economic system of fair wages. He envisioned an ideal situation in which "Mennonite businessmen should create islands where ideal relations could exist between boss and worker without struggles for power."[5] According to Theron Schlabach, Hershberger reached beyond Mennonitism for his ideas to Thomas Jefferson and Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, "who had envisioned a pastoral United States without large-scale industry and its evils."[6] Schlabach says that Hershberger was also influenced by Oliver E. Baker, a U.S. Department of Agriculture economist whom J. Winfield Fretz had called to his attention. Baker believed that the traditional Mennonite community was a model other North Americans might well emulate. Schlabach summarizes Hershberger's vision as follows:

> Follow the Jeffersonian vision, and escape the capital-labor dilemma, by revitalizing Mennonite communities into ideal agrarian-and-small-business societies.[7]

Both Hershberger and Fretz channeled their thinking into a proposal for a well organized system of mutual aid where wealthy Mennonites should channel their surplus capital, not into industrial stocks and bonds, but into their own group by assisting young people in getting a start in farming. Some Mennonites also put a great deal of energy into cooperatives though probably more because of economic benefits than because of ideological commitments.

As a vision for the larger society, the Hershberger-Fretz vision became very rapidly obsolete with increasing urbanization and industrialization. The relatively simple rural vision of Hershberger stands in sharp contrast to the symbol of modern economics—the growth of the small town Mennonite owned and directed Hesston Manufacturing into a multinational corporation eventually taken over by Fiat, an Italian firm whose recent managerial practices have been brutal even by secular standards.

This agrarian and community oriented vision for society also shaped Mennonite mission work overseas. According to James Juhnke early Mennonite mission work in India reflected a community oriented wholeness which included both teaching about the name of Jesus and teaching orphans and others the techniques of modern farming. According to Juhnke, the assumption in the thinking of P. A. Penner was:

> that for Indian people to hear the name of Jesus, they would need to see the Jesus way of living incorporated in a new community. In the Christian community, people would keep their homes clean and healthy, use new methods, of growing grain, and receive a proper disciplined education. They would have a new identity, liberated from the ravages of the caste system.[8]

Probably the most creative contribution Mennonites have made indirectly to an understanding of justice is by the creation of alternative institutional models of how to care for human need. Mutual aid, disaster relief, PAX, The Teachers Abroad Program (TAP), agricultural development models, and V.S. units are examples of this approach.

It was especially in the 1960's that Mennonites began to reflect more seriously about justice and their vision for the economic order. The concern was pressed on the domestic scene, especially by minority groups in the various Mennonite conferences, who were impatient with more traditional non-political approaches. The concern also became more and more pressing for church workers in the overseas setting who confronted the huge gap between wealthy North Americans and the poverty of the third world. In the last decade some Mennonite intellectuals have also developed an interest in liberation theology.[9]

The concern for both political and economic justice today is probably focused most intensively in the work of the Washington Office of MCC Peace Section U.S. According to Delton Franz, Executive Director, who reflects upon the work of the office ten years after its beginning, one of the most significant actions of the office has been to communicate the concerns to U.S. policy makers of Mennonite workers serving around the world. Franz reports that:

> Our Middle East workers have been told repeatedly in Congressional offices that theirs was the first voice to be heard, reflecting the plight of the Palestinians. And from Laos, where our two Mennonites have been half of the total American presence (other than 3 U.S. embassy personnel). Their voice at the State Department was pivotal in obtaining U.S. release of 10,000 tons of grain so urgently needed in the famine area. A Mennonite in Argentina, one of only five Americans to be imprisoned and tortured there, brought a message to Congressional members concerning the on-going oppression of thousands that was timely in ending U.S. military aid... A Mennonite missionary wrote about the torture of innocents in Latin America and was quoted in a floor speech by his Senator whose legislation terminated a Washington area military-police academy where officials from oppressive third World regimes were being trained.[10]

The Washington Office has served to coordinate the Mennonite witness on crucial social issues. How is this different from traditional lobby groups in Washington? Franz explains the difference this way:

> The daily presence here, of hundreds of lobbyists representing major corporations, defense industries, labor unions—all exerting pressure on members of Congress for decisions favorable to their economic interests, has been a reminder to us that the posture and purpose of our church's voice to Washington must be different. The function of the Washington Office has not been one of seeking institutional benefits for our churches, but of facilitating communications of our people on behalf of the dispossessed. Often that witness has been received with great respect by governmental officials as a unique input into their decision-making task.[11]

If the church's concern for the poor is to move forward as integral to the mission of the church as a whole (not just the work of the Washington office or a few V.S. workers), several inhibiting factors that have been part of the Mennonite tradition need to be overcome. I would like to conclude by identifying four problem areas.

III. UNRESOLVED ISSUES

A. Conversion and Structural Change

Mennonites will need to rethink their understanding of the relationship between individual conversion and social structural change. Men-

nonite thought has consistently regarded appropriate change in the world to grow out of individual conversion to the Gospel which may then issue in or be expressed in appropriate social forms.

Though Mennonite thought should not lose sight of the importance of individual conversion and commitment, and the church as the primary focus of God's work in the world, a theology of social justice needs to give more attention to the fact that salvation in a wholistic sense does not come to individuals without a profound change in the social-political-cultural environment in which they are living.

More recently Mennonites have begun to look more at the underlying structural causes of human problems like hunger. At the heart of the hunger problem, for example, are economic systems which produce gross inequalities in the distribution of wealth, trade relationships between more wealthy and poorer states, the availability of and control of markets, technological developments, such as the mechanization of agriculture, or even food aid, which despite good intentions, can depress prices within a country so that it is no longer profitable for a country to produce its own food.

The need for a more profound understanding of the dynamic connection of structures to individual attitudes and change is reflected in several of the series of MCC monographs on development. In the monograph entitled, *Humanization and Development* by Merrill Ewert, Ewert describes the difficulties encountered in achieving significent change in Zaire by Program Agricole Protestant (P.A.P.). He reports that the Zairian farmers were slow to accept new ideas, there was a high level of distrust among them, they expressed a pervasive fatalism and a basic sense of self-deprecation. This was also despite many years of preaching the good news of the Gospel by both the Catholic and Protestant churches. These personal attitudes, says Ewert, developed over many years as a result of colonial administration and oppression, industrial paternalism and an ethic of domination reinforced by the church. These structural patterns were not fundamentally altered with independence.

> Trapped in a web of dominating structures, the Zairians were taught to accept exploitive social relationships as the inevitable result of their inherent inferiority and have been left alienated, powerless, dependent and in many cases without initiative to change the objective reality in which they live.[12]

The process of change in Zaire, says Ewert, requires both an internal change in peoples attitudes, especially that they are capable of changing their own social reality, and a change in the social reality itself, in the structures of domination that inhibit people from transforming themselves. If the mission of the church is both the transformation of individuals and the change of social structures, then the church must train missionaries not only with skills in anthropology or communication, but in political and economic analysis, community organization and social action. This then has implications for the kind of training students receive in our colleges and seminaries.

B. Managing Institutions

John H. Yoder, in his *Politics of Jesus*, critiques the Constantinian presupposition of typical Protestant and Catholic social ethics for their view that the church should take full responsibility for governing political and social life. When the church takes full responsibility for managing society, then it inevitably compromises its ethic and ceases to witness to the vitality of the Gospel. According to Yoder, the Christian need not concern himself with what the future ought to be. He simply is obedient because "the relationship between the obedience of God's people and the triumph of God's cause is not a relationship of cause and effect but one of cross and resurrection."[13]

I, of course, do not wish to quarrel with the legitimate criticism of the Christendom model with its hopeless compromise of the Christian ethic to the point that any distinctive Christian witness in society was almost lost. However, if there is to be a Christian involvement in changing structure, as Yoder also suggests, then I think the issue is not *whether* Christians should be involved in managing institutions other than the church, but rather how this management should be done. In the first place we need to point out that Mennonites are in fact actively involved in institutions other than the church of all kinds, political, financial, social, educational, medical, and others. As actors in these institutions, Christians must have norms to guide them: they need a vision of what these institutions should be like, how do they want to shape them (i.e. they need a vision of what a good or just society would look like) and they need guidance about the means by which they can help shape these institutions. Both of these questions involve calculations about relationships of cause and effect, and how to balance and weigh various conflicting norms that confront people in the complex situations of institutional decision making. The simple call to obedience does not help when a person is confronted by conflicting claims which are not easily harmonized with each other.[14]

I find Gordon Kaufman's theology helpful in correcting the problems of John Yoder's position. Kaufman views the image of God in man as man's historicity, i.e. man's capacity to create culture. Humans are able to project a vision of the future and then direct that energy and action toward the realization of goals. In other words, God has created human beings to be creators of culture, of institutions. I understand that mandate to mean that humans are called not just to the creation of the church or alternative institutions that are an extension of the church, but also to the creation and management of institutions necessary to sustain life—institutions for nurture and education, for economic exchange and technological development, and the political coordination of human behavior to meet common goals and needs. Mennonites need a more positive doctrine of creation, as provided by Kaufman, in order to find the impetus for the creation and creative management of institutions. Just because Christians have in the past often done a very poor job of fulfilling the creative intention of God does not mean that they should refrain from performing this task altogether. That would be to escape from the responsibility God has given to humans in his creation.

C. Political Activity

A third related problem area is the Mennonite reluctance to adopt political nonviolence. In his book, *War, Peace and Nonresistance*, Guy Hershberger drew a sharp distinction between Christian nonresistance and political pacifism. Though Hershberger later abandoned that sharp dualism and endorsed the nonviolent struggle of M. L. King, the reluctance to become political still permeates Mennonite attitudes. I especially noted in church statements this reluctance to endorse the political dimension of the civil rights struggles in the 1950's and 1960's. Though Mennonites often affirmed racial equality and proposed concrete actions, they were reluctant to endorse the civil rights struggle.

J. Lawrence Burkholder, critiques the earlier nonpolitical quietism of Hershberger and argues for the possibility of a Christian nonviolent resistance. Burkholder goes to the New Testament to show that Jesus not only died a nonresistant death on the cross, but that what led him there was his aggressive confrontation with the religious and political establishment. The issue is not between nonviolence and nonresistance, but between violence and serious forms of nonviolence. Burkholder states the issue bluntly:

> Only those who really disturb the peace bear the cross. Had Martin L. King, Jr. not resisted the world through various forms of moral and political intervention, he would probably be alive today. The people who bear the cross today are those who try to change things. Ironically, those who withdraw from world conflict as the "way of the cross" seldom die on a cross.[15]

I sense that one of the key factors that underlies the Mennonite reluctance to endorse nonviolent political methods is the lack of clarity about the role of strategy and tactical questions in Christian ethical discourse. This reluctance is often expressed in Mennonite criticism of an ethic of success or effectiveness. Often the ethical issue is put in such a way as if obedience to the Gospel stands over against being politically effective. If that is the case, then there is no way for Mennonites to become active politically, for the art of politics involves the attempt to organize people effectively to achieve certain goals. I think we need to recognize two levels here—indeed that all political action must be assessed in terms of ethical norms like nonviolence and justice, but then secondarily also in terms of effectiveness—what is the best way to organize people and what tactics can be used to accomplish political goals.

I suspect that Mennonites will be either forced to change or experience increasing polarization as those in the church working in situations of gross injustice call the church to greater political involvement. From them will come increasing impatience with the Mennonite unwillingness to go beyond theological and ethical platitudes and an increasing call to speak to the practical conditions in which they find themselves. This will call for us to increase our skills at applying our theology to social, political and economic realities. I suspect that if we take this seriously, we will find it necessary to be in more conversation at the college and seminary level with economics and political science, and that these disciplines are as critical to ministering to social needs as psychology is to pastoral counseling and anthropology is to missions.

D. Cooperation with others

Finally, Mennonites will need to overcome their reluctance to enter into conversation with and cooperation with those with whom they do not fully agree.

The most disconcerting attitude I found among Mennonites as I read through the documents of the church over the last eighty years is their concern to remain pure and untainted by isolating themselves from other people. Mennonites in the past several decades have emphasized how they are distinctive and different from everybody else. While this enterprise is an important part of any group's effort at identity formation, it can be overdone. It easily leads to self-righteousness and pride. It is time to put the emphasis elsewhere, to search for those grounds of commonality with other Christians and non-Christians, to search for areas of conversation and cooperation.

I like the spirit of John H. Yoder's book, *Nevertheless*, where he discusses the variety of forms of pacifism. He describes many types, pointing out the strengths and weaknesses of each type (including his own). But then he says "nevertheless" we can find ways to affirm and support a variety of these forms, for "after all," when viewed over against the power of militarism and its demonic violence, each of these represent, despite their weakness, a vision and approach that is far superior to the weaknesses of militarism. So too in the struggle for justice there are many approaches with their many strengths and weaknesses. Nevertheless how can Mennonites find ways to cooperate with the small minority who are speaking for the poor and oppressed of the earth, for after all even these weak voices shine as light in the darkness of political repression and economic exploitation.

ENDNOTES

1 Paper presented to a Bethel College Faculty Lecture Series, Sept. 21, 1981, and to the Peace Theology Colloquium III, sponsored by the Peace Section of the Mennonite Central Committee, at Bluffton, Ohio, Oct. 15-17, 1981.

2 Minutes, MCC Peace Section Committee, June 8, 1966.

3 Urbane Peachy, editor, *Mennonite Statements on Peace and Social Concerns*, 1900-1978, p. 8.

4 James C. Juhnke, *A People of Two Kingdoms*, p. 69.

5 Theron F. Schlabach, "To Focus a Mennonite Vision," *Kingdom, Cross and Community*, ed. by J. R. Burkholder and Calvin Redekop, p. 30.

6 *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 31.

8 James C. Juhnke, *A People of Mission*, p. 30.

9 I am aware of papers of lectures on liberation theology and its relation of Anabaptism by John Yoder, LeRoy Friesen, Marlin Miller and Howard Habegger. A workshop on liberation theology was led by LaVerne Rutschman at the sessions of the General Conference Mennonite Church in Estes Park in 1980. The theme of the Intercollegiate Peace Fellowship at Hesston College in 1979 was also liberation theology. Liberation theology was also part of the Peace Theology Colloquium II at Bethel College in 1979.

10 Delton Franz, "The Washington Office: Reflections After Ten Years," *Washington Memo*, July-August, 1978, p. 2.

11 *Ibid.*, p. 2.

12 Merrill Ewert, *Humanization and Development*, p. 30.

13 John Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus*, p. 238.

14 The study document, Justice and the Christian Witness, prepared by a Joint Committee of the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church makes a good beginning in identifying norms to guide our involvement in institutions. The General Assembly of the Mennonite Church, meeting at Bowling Green in the summer of 1981, recommended this document for further study by congregations.

15 J. Lawrence Burkholder, "Nonresistance, Nonviolent Resistance and Power," *Kingdom, Cross and Community*, op. cit., p. 136.

Pastors, Prophets, and Politicians

By Marian Claassen Franz

Political leaders make decisions which result in justice and injustice, life and death, for thousands of people. They confront fundamental moral issues in the midst of tremendous pressures. Most leaders feel a loneliness under the weight of that burden. Can we urge courageous stands without supporting them? Many leaders need to be sensitized to the consequences of their actions on human dignity and survival. The Church bears gifts that are desperately needed by policy-makers.

Public Demands and Public Image

The public demands on a Congressperson's time far exceed the hours of the day. It is not unusual for them to decline nine out of ten requests for an appearance and still meet with several different groups on a single afternoon. Members of Congress frequently shuffle between as many as three simultaneous subcommittee hearings on diverse subjects such as prison construction, school lunches, and aid to El Salvador. During the walk between hearing rooms, he/she usually encounters at least one persistent constituent who has tracked them down in order to confront him/her on an entirely different issue. The staff aide who rescues the "boss" and whisks him/her off to the next point on the agenda is normally armed with a battery of information which is pumped into the Congressperson as they race to the next encounter. A buzzer may sound. The Congressperson is then obliged to move immediately to the Senate or House floor in order to register a "yea" or "nay" on still another matter of significance. The trip to meet the roll call is often the occasion for more hurried consultation with staff and/or another round of handshaking before instamatics with flash cubes. (This description is from a Dunamis working paper by Carolyn Banker Cresswell).

The individual in power is subject to the tyranny of the modern age: obligated to justify him/herself, held to the worship of facts, and required to affirm allegiance to the modern gods of efficiency and progress. Considerations of cost and political favor also enter into the formal decision-making process. Actions are under constant public scrutiny.

Too often the microscopic rather than the macroscopic issues present themselves, and far too little time is left for the hard work of legislation which is the primary responsibility. The political system forces the decision-makers to pay far more attention to how effective they look, than to how effective they actually are.

Personal Conflicts

Whatever the visible religious commitments of policy-makers, they sustain profound internal conflicts. The deeply committed feel most acutely the rival pressures of Church and State. Public policy is formulated not by absolutes but by a clash of many relative values. Religious values must find expression in the relativities of political choice.

These conflicts are not simply intellectual but are borne at the deepest levels of emotion at great physical and psychological cost. The policy-makers must find some way to respond to the inner conflicts. Some repress them. Some compartmentalize their loyalties and rationalize their accommodations. Some deepen their insights into the meaning of conflict and release their tension into a renewed dedication of their calling.

"The only thing that matters is a right relationship with God," one Congressman was told, "then everything else will take care of itself." "When one is right with God," he replied, "then the dilemmas begin in earnest!"

Senator Mark Hatfield offered some observations about the Church's witness to those in political power to a Princeton Seminary audience. He spoke of the contemporary division in the Church between its "pastors" and its "prophets".

> "Our 'pastors' are those concerned chiefly about personal salvation; they see the primary responsibility of the Christian as ministering to the personal problems of other individuals."
>
> Our "prophets" are those concerned chiefly with seeing God's purposes for the world being realized. They hear a call for the "Kingdom of God" to be furthered on earth, and are concerned about the problems of war, poverty, and social injustice. Following in the tradition of the Old Testament prophets, they are not afraid to judge the social and political establishment.
>
> . . . Our need today is for "pastor-prophets". The prophet who is not also pastor does not fulfill his full prophetic calling. Christians must be committed to bringing about social justice and peace, and see this as their mission.
>
> . . . Prophetic words about the materialism destroying our society, about misplaced priorities as a nation, about war, about the injustice within our land will never be truly heard by those in the mainstream of society unless they know that the one who is speaking to them

also loves them. The prophet who is not also a pastor goes unheard and unheeded.

In a similar manner, the pastor who is not also a prophet has not realized his full calling as a minister of the Gospel. When the vision of the prophet is neglected, one isolates himself from the dimensions of suffering throughout the world.

...If the Church is not pastor to the politician, its prophetic message will not be received; it will fall on dry ground. But if the Church is not a prophet to the politician, its pastoral responsibility will remain incomplete; there will be no vision, no stimulus for growth, and "the people will perish."

Hatfield concludes that it is essential to grasp the uniqueness of the Biblical view of Christ as both pastor and prophet. As a pastor, he was totally involved with the immediate needs of the individual and addressed the inward unspoken search for faith. As a prophet, he was fearless in his condemnation of the political-religious establishment of his time. He spoke in clear judgment of those who supported the system of religious pretension and hypocrisy, and he called for rejecting the contemporary wisdom and seeing a completely new vision of life. He did not fulfill one mission at one point and the other at another time. "He spoke the truth in love" sets forth the harmony of the two roles.

Du n amis

In the early 1970s mission groups from the Church of the Saviour in Washington, D.C. were working for structural change as they struggled with questions of injustice among the poor in their city. Frustration and exhaustion caused them to question if their approach was appreciably different from that of any other interest group. Something was missing. They held retreats which searched for the Church's unique role to those in power and developed a structure called Dunamis.

Dunamis (doo-nä-mis) is the Greek New Testament word for power, the root word for dynamic, dynamo, dynamite. It is the word used to relate stories of the early Christians who received the dunamis of the spirit and then turned the world upsidedown!

Dunamis is an attempt to employ the compassion and power that are the unique gifts of the Church, to become contemplative critics of society, and to be faithful to both the pastoral and prophetic roles of the Church.

Dunamis groups do not wrestle in the abstract. Each group focuses on one critical issue of primary call or concern: hunger, military spending, human rights, unemployment, prison reform, etc. Each group chooses and claims the "Lazarus at its gate," and then the group identifies and acquaints itself with the functions, personnel, and agenda of the Congressional committee or power center which makes decisions for that area, their "Lazarus".

Each group is committed to simple, yet serious disciplines: 1) Study at depth the issue to which the group is called to give leadership, and Bible study; 2) Prayer daily (15 minutes minimum) for those to whom the group is called (their Lazarus), and for at least one person holding power over that call; 3) Active involvement with their call; and 4) Building an ongoing personal relationship with at least one decision-maker whose official responsibility is to make decisions for their call, which is defined as pastoral and prophetic. The four disciplines are the only way to go beyond good intentions, the only way to get from here to there. The principles of Dunamis are deceptively easy to grasp, but costly to embody.

Checks and Balances

Pastoral and Prophetic: What will be your pastoral style? The pastoral style will be informed by the prophetic dimension which prevents blindness to the moral, ethical, theological dilemmas of judgments that decision-makers must make. It checks against being "so heavenly minded that we are no earthly good."

What will be your prophetic style? There are a cafeteria of choices—Jeremiah, Amos, Moses, Mary. Whatever the prophetic style, it will be informed by pastoral caring and love. It will act as a check against abrasiveness, abusiveness and diminishment of the person to whom

the prophetic alternatives are addressed.

Receiving the Spirit vs. Doing Justice: Biblically these two are never separated, yet throughout the Church these two emphases of the whole are severed. The Christian presence on Capitol Hill mirrors this division.

On the one hand, there are those who perceive the anointing of the Spirit as a matter of personal piety, and they forget the doing of justice. A number of prayer groups meet weekly with members of the House of Senate, sharing prayer and personal concerns. These groups perform a valuable and necessary pastoral function. However, it is not natural in that context to discuss issues which are perceived as being political or social or to raise questions about the ways in which faith related to issues of the world.

On the other hand, there are those who work very hard on issues of social justice and human rights. They encourage grass roots organization around legislative issues and activate people on an agenda of social justice. However, it is not natural in that context to discuss the presence of the spirit of Christ or give a witness that is distinctively Christian and different from other citizen's groups with similar concerns.

Both groups face the danger of being co-opted. Both operate within the confines of the political order. The prayer groups unwittingly are reduced to a priestly function and become "chaplains" to people in power, making them feel good and blessing the status quo. The other groups, even though committed to justice, lose their uniqueness and forfeit their rare prophetic gift.

Inward and Outward: Groups come into existence with enthusiasm and excitement, and they soon fade out of existence. People get discouraged and weary because

when they grapple with the world, they confront its demonic dimensions. It is a tough world and structures do not change easily. Groups will not continue long without the inward sustenance to persevere over the years it takes to achieve any appreciable change.

Effective Christian action must grow out of a life that is consciously developed inwardly. Most groups tend to be either outward or inward. Most groups do not really want both dimensions. Yet each is necessary to balance and give authenticity and power to the other.

Being Present and Being Apart: At a time in their history, Israel's God looks with pleasure at his people and says, " I see a people that dwells . . . alone, that has not made itself one with the nations." Yet in that apartness how present we can be! In fact, only in that apartness can we be truly present. To be a people of hope in the context of increasingly depressing problems in our society requires a degree of detachment from the "patterns of this present world." Christians are a community with a deviant set of values.

Costs and Dangers

The prophetic calling must by definition be an extremely troubling one—as troubling to the prophets as to those who bear the brunt of any prophetic pronouncements. Idolatries of the establishment, both the culture and the counter-culture, need to be addressed. Self interest is easily cloaked with idealism. "Only sinners make good prophets," says Jim Wallis in a *Sojourners* article. Wallis states that smugness and complacency are the prophet's worst enemies. If a given message is prophetic it will challenge all: the nation, the leaders, the Church, and the prophet.

Religious elites, who do not perceive the tensions within policy-makers and call down moral judgment on their heads, alienate leaders from the more positive graces of Christian influence. Christians should be especially equipped not only to advocate their conviction forthrightly, but also to *listen to and learn from* those who hold other convictions. The trouble with prophetic pronouncements that claim the whole truth is that they beget intolerance and bitterness and more firmly entrench old ideas. They also deprive the prophets themselves of a chance to discover their ignorance.

During the Vietnam war, a group of clergy visited each congressional office with the message, "You've got blood on your hands!" A congresswoman told of her experience with the group. If they had bothered to check her voting record, they would have noted that hers was one of six votes (out of 435) against an escalation of the war. Questioning them, she asked, "How many of you have preached against war in your pulpits?" "You don't understand where our people are," they replied. "For us to preach such sermons would mean that some of us would lose our pulpits."

Accountability: To whom are prophets responsible? Many of the worst things in history are done out of prophetic zeal. Prophets who are accountable only to themselves can be dangerous and destructive. Groups also run the risk of being absorbed by the established political order and of forfeiting any definitive Christian presence and witness to the state. However, groups may re-evaluate their motives, assess their capabilities, study the Bible together, remain current on the issue, and open a dialogue between the Biblical world and our own. Groups may hold individuals accountable, guarding against being used and against exploiting the policy-maker.

Fear of Contamination: What keeps the Church from relating to decision-makers in this total way? Some individuals consider the structure of governments to be evil, and therefore its participants to be so evil as to be almost beyond the redeeming grace of God. "They are nothing but a bunch of . . ." is a sad thing to hear from Christians. Members of Congress, frustrated by these broadsides, remind us that when they hear that a few ministers are charletans, they do not implicate the whole lot.

Over-concern for Being Acceptable: Some ministers feel their work is effective if they are loved. Fearing controversy they do not risk any kind of confrontation. Certain subjects are never raised. They may have fine pastoral approaches in working through personal problems, but they prohibit any real and honest encounter with the world and its suffering. They are unwilling to *speak the TRUTH*. Others are so intent on uttering a word of judgment that they refuse to do the work required to *speak the TRUTH IN LOVE*.

"If you have a relationship with a member of Congress in which that member is free to pour themselves out and even to ask your opinion about certain Scriptures," said a Christian, "then do not jeopardize that relationship by talking about issues!" The automatic reply: "That's a relationship?!" Substantive and warm human interactions do not step gingerly around certain issues. In fact, a relationship in which each party feels secure can be strengthened by interaction and disagreement. If there is a risk of losing a relationship, temporarily or permanently, because one shares concerns about human suffering and nuclear threats, then the risk must be taken. Not to do so destroys integrity. Setting aside "political" questions in favor of relationship building implies that the gospel has no political content.

Idolatry of power: Some individuals assume that the possession of apparent power brings unquestioned fulfillment. They relate to the policy-maker's prestige, title, and influence. They are overcome with a sense of awe which inhibits any real dialogue. They treat the policy-makers with more honor than honesty. They assume the legislator's opinions must automatically be more accurate than their own. Strong disagreements rarely are expressed.

A danger is that the decision-makers become accustomed to being treated in a reverential way and emphasize their own importance, seeing themselves as more important, virtuous, and wise than the average citizen. Decision-makers need many things from us, but they do not need to be put on a pedestal.

Share the Price: It is an outrage when the Church's judgments show little understanding of or interest in

the dilemma our leaders may face in arriving at a decision or in defending an unpopular stance.

Consider the background of the Senator Hatfield's plea for a pastoral-prophetic approach. Early in the Vietnam war when the country and most of the Church were firmly committed to a continuation and escalation of that war, he co-authored an amendment to end the war. Pressure from the White House (the president was from his own party) was intense. Mail from Christian friends was addressed, "Dear former brother in Christ." The office staff had to stay late each night until all mail and telephone threats had been turned over to the FBI. If his wife had not regarded with suspicion a stuffed mail-box and wisely called the police, a personal tragedy could have occurred. There was a bomb in the mail-box. Its potential (and intent?) was to destroy a whole family, four children included.

The price will not always be this dramatic, but often the stands we urge would be taken at the risk of a political career. To urge such courageous stands and not be there in the loneliness, and even persecution, that follows is appalling. We need not fool ourselves to change structures and turn a country's direction on such things as armaments will be at high cost. How can leaders continue to respect church people who demand costly votes and offer in return no empathy, affirmation, and support? This "hit-and-run" approach has the same moral quality as the driver who speeds away from a wounded pedestrian.

Gifts The Church Can Offer

Our society needs contemplative critics. Communally contemplated convictions about war and peace, about the priorities governing the expenditures of federal funds, about the patterns of economic wealth and distribution, about the stewardship of our nation's resources, about the government's responsibility toward the oppressed and dispossessed both here and in other countries, about our nation's system of law and justice, and about the meaning of human liberty—are gifts the Church can offer.

We have not only responsibility, but also powers. Perhaps we have been unaware of the powers, and perhaps we have been unwilling to exercise them. If the Christian community is to give itself to the politician, it is essential for it to comprehend not only how deeply its presence is needed, but also how uniquely it is equipped for its mission.

The Gift of Identity: So much energy and money go into creating and maintaining a public image that it is easy for politicians to lose touch with themselves. In the midst of all the pompous pretention, the dehumanizing relationships, the prestige-seeking social life, and the seeming impotence, frustration, and emptiness of political endeavor, they are expected to be superhuman. A mistake must always be interpreted so that it works to their advantage. The politician is not allowed human responses like, "I'm sorry," or "I don't know." Every encounter with the world is judged by how it contributed to or detracts from one's acceptability to a coalition of values and forces which keep on in power. Even the politicians dedicated to the highest moral and spiritual values find themselves caught up in appearances. They are accountable not so much to what *is* right, but what has the *image* of being right. Perhaps the difference is subtle, but it is critical. In the first instance they are free to operate out of their own deepest understanding of the world and who they are. In the latter they can never really know themselves. The gift of identity often eludes the public person.

If the identity of a Dunamis-like group is deeply rooted in the Christian faith, it is uniquely free to unbind others from their public images. A different set of values operates among them. Concern for "respectability" and "righteousness" lose their significance. Here the weak are strong. In fact, it is those who "appear" good who have Jesus' harsh criticism. No need exists for false flattery, contrived petitions, and calculated commitments.

The gift of a relationship in which the power of the Living Christ can be encountered can be given by those who are in touch with themselves and are free to respond at that level. Here both parties mutually test their deepest religious commitments over the same fire, probing and searching. Unless the gospel is alive and present in a people, little hope exists that it will take root and flourish on the crowded path of public life. The accepting love and hard teachings of Jesus can be articulated in a variety of ways, but they are heard with greatest clarity when embodied in a caring, nurturing acquaintance. The same love which binds us to the victims of oppression binds us to the powerful.

Intercession: Peace and justice are the essence of our message to government. Our intercession includes peace and justice with no exclusions. "I urge supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving for all . . . who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life" (with justice and peace).

It is easier for us to criticize and condemn our public officials than to pray for them, especially for those with whom we disagree. Hymns or the Lord's Prayer substituting the name of the official become prayers of intercession: "____'s father who are in heaven, may ____ come to

Marian Claassen Franz

hallow thy name. Thy kingdom come to ____, thy will be done in ____, through ____. Lead ____ not into temptation. (Here list the many temptations.) etc., etc.

After such a prayer one church member said, "Now I'll never be able to verbally kick our representatives around anymore. I say this with a sense of loss. Taking it out on "them" had been a release for my frustrations, which will not have to find another outlet. My whole attitude toward the people for whom I had such contempt is different. My responsibility is different."

The Gift of Vision—Yes and No: Often the Church's prophetic messages are more clear in what they oppose than what they propose. There is a "yes" and a "no" to any prophecy. "No, we can no longer continue to arm ourselves and threaten to destroy whole continents." "Yes . . . here is a way to convert arms industries into peaceful, healing uses." Pastoral-prophetic messages will entail judgment and vision.

In the Church of the Saviour, in Washington, D.C., I watched the painful dilemma of Bill Price who worked at the Pentagon. He was in charge of a certain kind of weaponry, the highest ranking civilian in the Air Force. Confrontation by fellow church members was not always expressed in diplomatic terms as Bill defended his position eloquently. Yet he seemed anxious continually to engage in the painful dialogues. Bill was caught in the middle. The Church was adopting a pacifist position. Could he with integrity renew his membership and keep his job? In pleading terms he asked the church not to desert him in his painful dilemma. Continuing a deep search, which included a new look at the Scriptures, Bill made the decision to leave the Pentagon. He is now the head of World Peacemakers. When asked what the message should do to our own church, he said, "Tell them what you've always told me. *'There is another way!'*"

A Reflective View of the Issues: "It is tough to daydream in Congress; we have two year mentalities," one member of Congress noted. "We need help if we are to have vision as leaders of our country."

The cost of being a contemplative is always high, but for the powerful it appears almost prohibitive. Their life is so structured as to make the practice of contemplation almost impossible. However, it is not the constant pressure of the public that poses the greatest obstacle to contemplation for the politician. It is the lack of contact with community. The people around the public official are just as much captives of the system as their bosses. They are unable to provide the necessary environment in which the contemplative spirit can be nurtured. A clear need exists for the contemplative Christian community to embrace this person, and enter into a meditative consideration of the questions posed.

A Senator who was to represent the United States at the World Food Conference, declared to a group which had worked long and hard on proposals for our nation's response to world hunger, "You don't know how good it is to have a group come in at the end of the day and want nothing except to get their shoulders under the burden."

The deliberations on the moral and ethical aspects of decisions always take place within the self and among those trusted few individuals with whom one has confidence. Within a relationship of mutual freedom and respect, the Christian contemplative-in-community can offer the gift of a reflective view of the issues.

There are a wide variety of standards of moral judgment among decision makers. Each can be asked to live up to the highest ethic that they know.

Sensitizing: Our leaders are well aware of the interests of the rich and politically organized. It is aggressive caring for people who cannot defend themselves which is essential when the Church formulates political judgments. Christ himself concentrated on the people of greatest need—those who are neglected and despised and who must pay first-hand the cost of the sin of a nation. A prophetic view promotes a perspective and advocates solutions which include the welfare of the entire human family. The perspective, an equilibrium, a total world view gives decision-makers the capacity to deal with relative and changing structures.

The need is not only for *mediators* between the poor and the powerful, but also for the building of *bridges* over which these two can meet each other. Lack of compassion is often due to lack of contact.

One Dunamis group, whose issue or "Lazarus" was housing for the poor, invited members of Congress to join others who worked at renovating slum housing and turning ownership over to the tenants. No one knew that on a given Saturday morning one of the people in bluejeans was a Congressman. As the unidentified worker helped to improve the ghetto apartment, he learned to know the tenant family, saw the empty refrigerator, and heard the children talk of their fear of rats at night. When this unidentified worker returned to the halls of Congress to work with his committee on housing legislation, many "words" of advocacy were no longer necessary.

Let us not miss the dynamic at work here. The church that is not obedient can never be truly prophetic. The true contemplative is a person of action. This group of Christians not only *speaks* on behalf of the poor, but also are themselves *involved* with them. These Christians choose to develop caring, nurturing relationships with those in power. Thus they are able to build bridges over which first-hand encounters can occur. The bridges are crossed when MCC or missionaries visit decision-makers after years of experience in another country, or when policy-makers can be invited on their travels to visit those who pay first-hand the cost of the sins of nations.

"What we mean by being born-again," said Gordon Cosly, of the Church of the Savior, "is to be broken-hearted for the victims." Bridges provide a way to show what our broken-heartedness has caused us to do.

The gifts can be simple: Interesting questions arose as we planned a house-warming for a member of Congress: Since we could not take proper gifts, should we take any at all? What are we saying about hu-

man relationships if we say there is someone for whom we have no gift? So we took gifts of dish towels, garbage bags, furniture polish, drawings, potted plants, and a carry-in dinner. We sang "Bless this House O Lord we pray," had a prayer of gratitude for the Congressman. As he unwrapped our "gifts" he was moved, and said, "What I see is what you are." It may seem remarkable to us that he thought that was remarkable, yet in most of his contact what he sees is not what people are. They have overt or hidden agendas. They may want him on one side of an issue or another, wish to extract a favor from him, or clobber him over the head.

We pledged again our continued research and support on the issues which provided his southern Florida district with his greatest dilemmas —Cuban refugees and Haitian boat people. "The way you go about your work," he said, "so quietly, and wanting nothing for yourselves, is the single most powerful thing I have seen on Capitol Hill."

We did not have a gala house warming with proper food and proper gifts and proper people. We just did our thing and small was beautiful.

Relationships of this type are several years in the making, yet once established have an enduring quality. This Congressman never fails to attend a briefing that we suggest, or see someone we bring by. He invites his colleagues to such meetings. Although he was of another faith, when his daughter had a series of operations for a malignant brain tumor, he phoned our homes to ask for prayers, drawing on the group's pastoral as well as prophetic resources.

Just when we wonder whether the investment of our time and selves really makes any difference, we become aware of the loneliness and the hunger. One member of Congress wrote:

> "Dear Mrs. . . . . The Christian love you have shown me means more to me than I will ever be able to express . . . Perhaps you have found and are expressing a type of political involvement which will make more difference than any other kind. Many members of Congress (not all) if they had a relationship like this, would cherish that relationship more than any other. I do. Sincerely . . . . .

More than programmatic responses to social injustice or spiritual fellowship that are immune to political realities, the Church is to offer a whole life—a committed family of people whose very presence is at once a prophetic witness to a warped and oppressive social order and a pastoral environment that makes a response possible.

The Church is the bearer of gifts desperately needed by today's powerful. Perhaps a sick world rushes to death because the Church fails to offer its gifts on those upon whom are conferred the awesome responsibilities of governments . . . questions of justice and injustice, life and death.

Dunamis groups have formed in other parts of the country and use its principles to apply to state, city, or local governments. Some center on their own Washington delegations.

A Handbook for Dunamis Groups *is available for $5.00 from Dunamis, 2025 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036.*

Research Notes: Evangelical Mennonite Brethren

Calvin Redekop's article "The Embarrassment of a Religious Tradition" in the September issue of *Mennonite Life*, is an interesting and challenging analysis of the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren.

With certain exceptions in the earlier presentations, and one or two references to EMB positions, we fully agree to being evangelical and fundamental. We are humbled to know that we are recognized as such by our peers, even though these positions have always been emphasized in our ministry. This is cause for praise that our witness is showing. Even though in some circles the designations "Evangelical" and "Fundamental" are often ridiculed and despised, to EMBs these are goals and objectives for maintenance of true biblical doctrine.

The author's evaluation of the (non-denominational) missions emphasis also indicates the EMB concern for bringing people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and a continuing relationship with Him, without creating an institutional Christianity. The Lord has given

the EMB a great trust. He has called some 145 missionaries from our churches currently, primarily in evangelism and church planting, representing one missionary for every 30 members at home. These are duly processed by our Commission on Missions, and utilizing existing Interdenominational Foreign Missions Association (IFMA) agencies' administrative structures, rather than creating our similar structures and only adding to the cost of bringing the "Good News" to those who have never heard.

Redekop's understanding of the arguments for severing official relationships with MCC is not quite accurate. (Certain churches continue to participate in certain MCC programs.) The severance was occasioned by a frustration of EMB personnel in MCC overseas programs restricted in their concern to share their faith in Christ with the people they were ministering to physically. And, the fact that MCC did not have its own doctrinal statement on which appointees were evaluated, thereby allowing personnel to represent MCC overseas who were not living the life of an experiential, daily walk with Christ. EMBs are committed to the position that "faith without works is dead." In fact, EMBs have contributed more to world relief since the severance than during the relationship. I fail to understand Redekop's statement, "Without tradition there is no faith."

God says, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." (Col. 2:8). "For as much as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver or gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot." (I Peter 3:18, 19) (KJV).

God also says, "So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17) Our faith is not in tradition or experience, but in Jesus Christ. "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Romans 10:9)

The world is looking for broad-minded religious leaders—according to men of standing and influence in church circles. A tolerance that says we are all right is the proper and popular attitude to take toward the religion of other men. The only thing demanded is sincerity. Let's put our arms around each others' shoulders and whisper, "Brother!" Some men are proud of what they do not believe. Someone has said, "Entire intellectual toleration is the mark of those who believe nothing."

I also question the use of words like "hatred" and "embarrassment". If the author refers to sin or apostasy, then these words are in place. But in our relationships to our brethren, whether in our group or in other groups, then these words are out of place.

Further EMBs have no intention nor are they able to sever relationships with the "Mennonite" family. As long as there are family and church ties, there will be relationships. The name of a person or a group does not necessarily determine relationship, unless such relationship is based on ethnic or cultural values.

Again, it is encouraging to see that the years of evangelical, fundamental Bible teaching in our churches has not gone unnoticed. Redekop's analysis may be the best paper yet published supporting the positions EMBs have held through the years. May God give the EMBs an increasing commitment to His Word and the Great Commission. Thank you for sharing the EMB concerns and ministry with others of similar heritage.

Wm. Regehr
Administrative Secretary
Evangelical Mennonite Brethren Conference

I appreciate the opportunity to respond to William Regehr's note. I would be pleased if the exchange could result in more dialogue around the topic of how our faith and culture relate and interact.

Regehr's comments about the second and third paragraphs seem to substantiate the analysis I present in my paper. The use of the interdenominational mission structures seems to show that the EMB "mission" is that of nondenominational evangelicalism. (I do not want to project any judgment at this point, only argue the point.)

The fourth paragraph regarding EMB relationships with MCC also simply amplifies my proposition. That MCC did not have a doctrinal statement (there are a number of "position statements" which MCC produced) should not obscure the fact that MCC has had a clear position on the Christian purpose for serving "in the name of Christ." See, for example, chapter 1, "Guidelines for Serving in the name of Christ" in C. J. Dyck, editor, *Responding to Worldwide Needs* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1980). This chapter includes a number of statements, including, for example, "Our Heritage of Faith," produced in 1942, and followed by many others.

My statement "Without tradition there is no faith" expresses, I think, in a very terse way the central weakness in fundamentalist-evangelical theology, and I do not know of a very shorthand way to explain it other than to suggest by analogy that Jesus was a Jew, spoke Aramaic, taught in the idiom of his day, and recognized the importance of his tradition—although he rejected it at certain points—something both mainline and evangelical Christians should take to heart.

In my discussion, the words "hatred" and "embarrassment" may have been a bit harsh. The word "group hatred" has a history in sci-

entific literature and I utilized it on that account. The words "disaffection" or "alienation" might be just as good, but I rejected them for their esoteric nature. The word embarrassment seems to be less pejorative, and I would not want to water that term down any more.

The three paragraphs citing biblical texts are entirely acceptable to me as they stand. I do not believe, however, that to attempt to analyze why a "separated, non-resistant and evangelical church should leave these convictions" is necessarily being "intellectually intolerant." On the contrary, since my roots are in the EMB church and I can claim the first leadership as my ancestors, I consider my concern deep and "spiritual." This last claim God alone, however, can judge.

Calvin Redekop
Conrad Grebel College

Book Review

Rudy Baergen, *The Mennonite Story* and *The Mennonite Story: Leader's Guide*. Newton: Faith and Life Press, 1981. 71 pp. and 62 pp.

Rudy Baergen's *Mennonite Story* speaks to a genuine educational need of Mennonite congregations. In a student text and an identically sized teacher's book, he presents Mennonite history to older teens and adults in thirteen lessons, the length of a Sunday school quarter. Given the long standing interest of Mennonites in their history, perhaps the most surprising aspect of this particular work is that it has taken so long for such a lesson series to appear.

Baergen's initial chapter surveys Mennonite diversity, and explains why Mennonites need awareness of their history. The following lesson covers history up to the Reformation, emphasizing the effects of Constantinianism. Chapter 3 discusses the Lutheran and Zwinglian reformations. The next three lessons describe the origin and spread of Anabaptism from Zurich to Netherlands. Chapter 7 notes continuing persecution of Anabaptists in Europe and the beginning of their migrations to North America in the seventeenth century and to Russia in the eighteenth century. Two chapters deal with the Mennonite experience in Russia. Another treats the major conference groupings in North America—the General Conference, the Mennonite Brethren and the Mennonite Church. One chapter surveys the separatist groups of Amish, Hutterites, and Old Colony Mennonites. The 12th chapter discusses the peace tradition, while the last one sketches in the worldwide community. Appropriate discussion questions follow each section in the student's book. It also features a liberal number of maps and historical illustrations.

The preface to the *Leader's Guide* indicates that each student's lesson aims to present an image or give an impression. Baergen achieves this effect by constructing the student's lessons around quoted material from primary sources or prominent secondary literature. This contact with a variety of sources and writers constitutes one of the genuine strengths of the book. On the other hand, as the preface also admits, this methodology creates a student book which lacks a smooth narrative and historical continuity. Teachers are advised that they will supply this context and continuity from material in the *Leader's Guide*. They will do well to heed this advice. Without the teacher's guide, for example, students would know nothing of the Mennonite Church except John F. Funk or nothing of the Mennonite Brethren except the religious component of their origins in Russia.

The *Leader's Guide* presents a wealth of useful material. In addition to the historical survey which supplies the continuity for the lessons, each chapter includes a content outline, a statement of purpose, specific objectives for the lesson, a list of supplies needed, suggestions for teaching the lesson, a selected bibliography, a list of additional or alternative activities and teaching methods, and appropriate films and film strips which could accompany each lesson. Baergen notes that many of the suggested methods come from his own experience in teaching high school students. Use of all the materials would easily expand the series beyond the 13 sessions of a quarter.

If it is surprising that it has taken so long for such a lesson series to appear, it is also a bit disappointing. The books reveal no awareness of recent developments in the understanding of Anabaptist and Mennonite history. They present Anabaptist origins, for example, in the perspective of Harold Bender—originating as a homogenous movement from single point of Zurich when Zwingli compromised biblical principles under pressure from city hall. The materials do not reflect the diversity of early Anabaptism, nor the fact that not all Anabaptists were uniformly pacifist from the beginnings, nor the multiple origins of the movement in what James Stayer has popularized as the polygenesis view of Anabaptist origins. To cite another example, although Theron Schlabach's *Gospel versus Gospel* and James Juhnke's *A People of Mission* appear in the bibliography for chapter 13, the book does not reflect sufficiently the efforts of current Mennonite historians to interpret Mennonite history in the larger context of American society and the American religious environment.

Mennonite Story is eminently usable and has a real contribution to make in helping Mennonites to appreciate their history. The need for such a lesson series clearly exists. The need is such an important one, in fact, that I hope Baergen or the publishers will take immediate steps to revise the books along the lines of recent scholarly work. Then these lessons will truly fulfill their promise.

J. Denny Weaver
Bluffton, Ohio