MENNONITE LIFE

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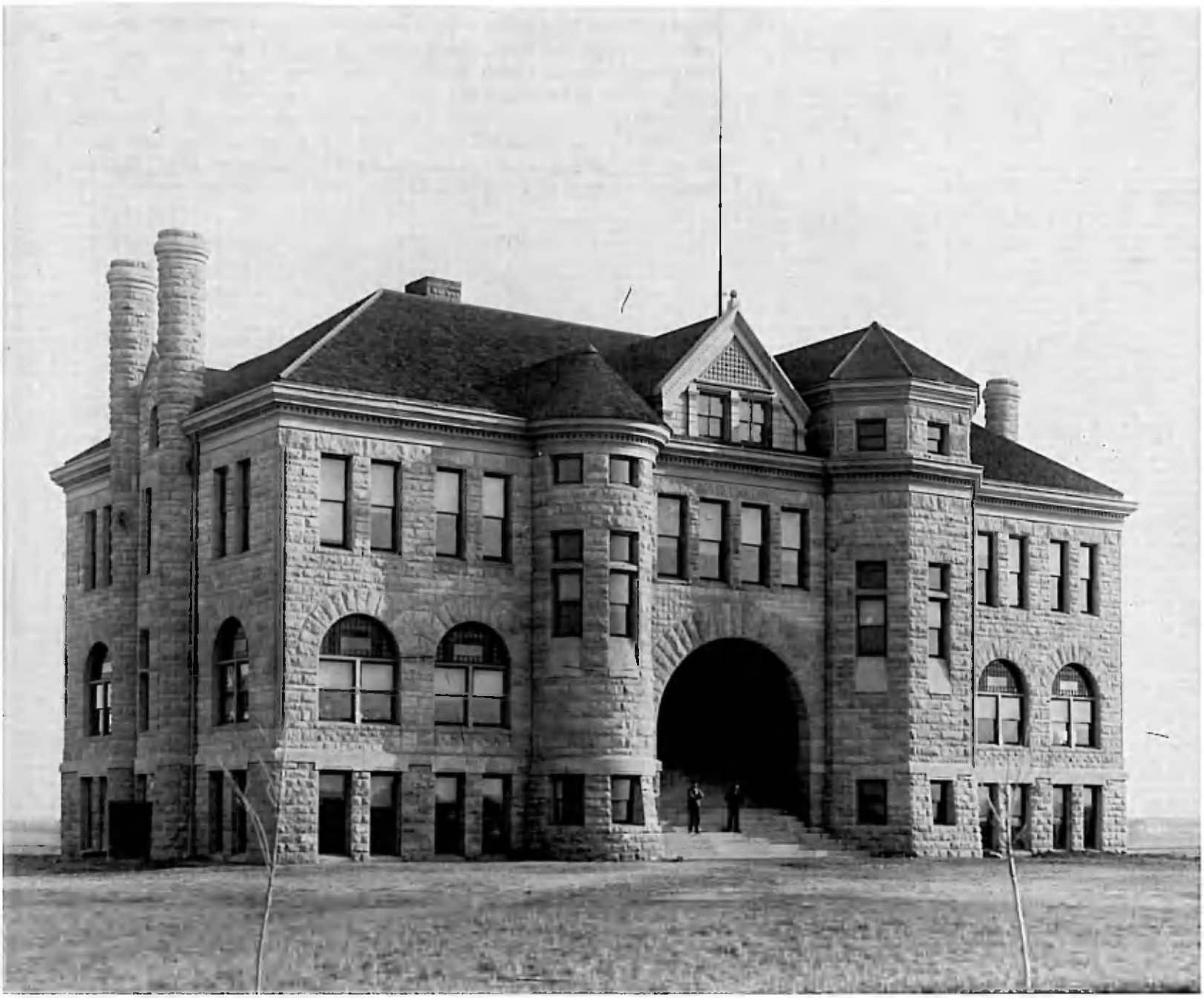

In this Issue

Peter Letkemann, who last year completed his monumental dissertation, "The Hymnody and Choral Music of Mennonites in Russia, 1789-1915," at the University of Toronto, shares his analysis of the influence of the *Christlicher Saengerbund*, a choral association of free churches in Germany, upon the choral music of the Russian Mennonites. Letkemann has recently moved to Winnipeg and is helping to run the family business.

Jeff Gundy, Professor of English at Bluffton College, reflects "analytically and systematically on just what in my experience has been uniquely Mennonite" in his essay, "Being Mennonite and Writing Mennonite." The following essays explore "the situation of a Mennonite who is largely acculturated in terms of the traditional markers yet still trying to remain connected to his heritage."

James C. Juhnke, Professor of History at Bethel College, examines the fate of Mennonite progressives during World War I in an important study of another challenge to the Mennonite theology of nonresistance in the United States.

This issue continues the series of articles and photo essays celebrating the centennial of Bethel College. Hilda Voth has translated a series of letters written for the occasion of the college's twenty-fifth anniversary and reflecting upon the early development of the college. A photo essay assembled by Selma Unruh, Bethel College photo archivist, and David A. Haury illustrates the many residence halls associated with the first century of the college. The special March issue will climax *Mennonite Life's* focus on Bethel College with articles on a variety of college activities and departments. This issue will be sent to all those who receive the Bethel College *Bulletin*. Additional copies may be ordered prior to March for $2.50.

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Front Cover
Bethel College Administration Building, ca. 1894

Back Cover
Aerial View of North Newton, mid-1940s

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The *Christlicher Saengerbund* and Mennonite Choral Singing in Russia

by Peter Letkemann

The nature and direction of choral singing among Mennonites in Russia in the years 1880 to 1914 owes more to the *Christlicher Saengerbund* (Christian Choral Association) than to any other single musical organization. Musical events such as *Saengerfeste* (choral festivals) and *Dirigentenkurse* (conductors' workshops), which became widespread and popular in Russia in the years after 1893, were modelled after those of the *Christlicher Saengerbund*. The musical repertoire of Mennonite choirs was borrowed largely from the same songbooks used by choirs in the *Christlicher Saengerbund*.

1. *The Christlicher Saengerbund.*

The *Christlicher Saengerbund* was one of the many fruits of the nineteenth century *Gemeinschaftsbewegung* in Germany.[1] This renewal movement led not only to the formation of new congregations and Christian fellowships, it also provided strong impulses for the production of new songs and songbooks. The desire for Christian fellowship, coupled with the desire to learn these new songs and teach them to the congregation led to the formation of countless choral societies.

One such choral society—*Der Christliche Gesangverein*—was formed in Elberfeld on April 16, 1875 under the direction of Friedrich Diedrichs (d.1905) and Wilhelm Elsner (1833-1892). The choir was ecumenical in nature, with singers from Lutheran, Unitarian, Baptist, Free Evangelical and Reformed congregations working together in complete accord. By May of 1876 the choral society had grown to a membership of 150 singers. Rehearsals were held weekly, and once a month the singers gathered for "eine erbauliche Zusammenkunft" (an edifying gathering). One of the main motives underlying the work of this society was the objective of "winning souls for Jesus."[2] The public performances of the *Christlicher Gesangverein* drew large crowds. Singers came from far and near to hear the choir and took with them the inspiration to found similar choral societies. One of the first of these was the choral society in nearby Vohwinckel.

Out of the association of these two choirs in Elberfeld and Vohwinckel grew the dream of uniting similar newly formed choral societies into a *Christlicher Saengerbund*. The achievement of this vision was largely the work of men like Wilhelm Elsner, Friedrich Diedrichs and Bernhard Heyer (1846-1901). On January 1, 1879 they sent out a small pamphlet inviting choirs to join in a *Christlicher Saengerbund*:[3]

> Dear Singers! It is a sign of our times that there are strivings toward unity around the world . . . . The battle between light and darkness takes on ever greater proportions. In order to win this battle we need not only Davids and Gideons, but also large united armies. The power of song is a recognized and accepted fact throughout the world. There is no nation without its songs. God has laid the desire to sing into every heart. It is also well known that singing, especially singing of religious songs, at all times and especially in our time, is a powerful medium to prepare souls for the willing acceptance of God's Word....
>
> Singers, let us put our hands to the work, let us go around the walls of Jericho in united ranks and lift up our voices like a trumpet. If we sing in faith, we will help to break the works of darkness; for true singing is also true prayer, and he who prays has the promise of God that his prayer will be heard . . . .

The pamphlet appeared again in April and July. On August 31, 1879, fourteen choral groups, representing 563 singers, joined together to form the *Christlicher Saengerbund*. They chose as their motto the words of Psalm 34:4, "Glorify the LORD with me; let us exalt his name together."

The purpose of the association was outlined in the opening paragraph of the statutes adopted on August 31, 1879:[4]

> The 'Christlicher Saengerbund' is an association of choral societies who strive to sing to the Glory of God, who desire to sing their songs for the revival and edification of others, and thereby to strengthen and encourage one another; in order that the name of Jesus may be glorified.

The official journal of the *Christlicher Saengerbund* was entitled *Saengergrus* (Singers' greeting). It grew from a quarterly in 1879 to a bimonthly publication in 1880 and finally to a monthly in the Fall of 1882. In March 1885 the format was enlarged from 4 to 8 pages, and the pictorial symbol of the "Harfenspieler" made its appearance at the head of the journal (see example 1 below).

The editors of the *Saengergruss* in the years 1879-1914, that is during the years in which Russian Mennonites would have had most contact with the *Christlicher Saengerbund*, were:[5]

1879-1880	Friedrich Diedrichs (d.1905)
1880-1892	Ernst Gebhardt (Methodist Preacher, 1832-1899)
1892-1910	Richard Schmitz (Teacher, 1858-1945)
1910-1914	Johannes Giffey (Merchant, 1872-1948)
1914-1943	August Ruecker (Methodist Preacher, 1871-1952)

The *Christlicher Saengerbund* was basically a "lay" movement; none of its founders and early leaders were professional musicians, most of them were teachers, preachers or business men. The members of the association were also musical amateurs, with an average middle class education. The *Saengergruss* was written in a popular, easily comprehensible language to meet the needs of this musical laity. Up to one

"Der Harfenspieler"—Title Page of Saengergruss

half of the contents of each issue consisted of general articles of a devotional, edificatory, or philosophical character. Articles of a more educational and technical nature also appeared, though less frequently than general devotional articles. Examples of such educational articles were: "Das Singen ist gesund" (dealing with correct breathing technique)[6]; and "Zwei Gesangstunden" (rehearsal techniques).[7]

For several years a section called "Briefkasten der Redaktion" (Letters to the Editor) allowed readers to seek answers to specific practical problems. In response to the above article entitled "Zwei Gesangstunden," Friedrich Schweiger wrote the following inquiry:[8]

> I would like some clarification on the manner in which the melodies were rehearsed, that is, whether by singing the note-names, the numbers (*Ziffern*) or merely by singing 'la'. We came to the conclusion that they were probably sung to 'la' and that the text was added later. In our choir it is the practice to learn the melody by means of numbers and to go over to the text once the melody is learnt.

The editor, Richard Schmitz, responded to Schweiger by saying that each of the three methods mentioned seemed to be "Umwegen" (detours). He suggested that the text be read first, either by the conductor or by the whole choir, and that the melody and text should then be learned simultaneously. Then he launched into a lengthy critique on the inadequacy of the *Ziffernmethode*.

This question is of interest because it indicates that Russian Mennonite choirs were not the only ones singing by *Ziffern* at the end of the nineteenth century! As will be indicated below, this method was introduced to Schweiger and his choir in Zyrardow by Karl Truderung, a local school teacher. It was also a school teacher, Heinrich Franz, who introduced the method to Mennonite schools in Russia in the 1830s.[9]

At least one quarter of the content of each issue of *Saengergruss* was made up of reports on the activities of the association. These included a lengthy annual report (usually published in the fall, after the annual meeting in late spring or summer), as well as descriptions of national, regional and local song festivals and workshops. These reports on song festivals and workshops give an idea of the repertoire being used and the level of performance of choirs and conductors. They are almost never technical in nature and often fall into the devotional or edificatory pattern, in which more is written about what the preachers said and the general "uplifting mood" of the gathering, than about what was sung.

Often, more in the earlier years than later, there is mention of the "Segensspuren" (beneficial effects) that a particular song had on some individual or group of individuals in the audience. The following is an example of such a report from the Mennonite village of Lichtfelde in 1892:[10]

> A communication from Lichtfelde reports on the blessed celebration of a festival on September 20 (in conjunction

with a love feast) with over 1000 persons in attendance. Many precious songs were sung at this occasion, and a young girl was brought to a decision for Jesus through the singing of the song "Ich will". . . .

A small portion of each issue was devoted to a) "New Membership Lists" (indicating location of choir, number of members, conductor and president of the choir); b) reviews of current songbooks and other relevant material; and c) advertisements for songbooks, musical instruments—especially harmoniums, pianos and zithers—and other items which might have been of interest to members. The reviews and the advertisements give a good indication of which songbooks might have been known to Mennonite choral conductors. Many of the books listed in *Saengergruss* were subsequently used as sources from which they borrowed the songs printed in *Liederperlen* and other Mennonite choral publications.

From the "New Membership Lists" in the January 1881 issue we gain the earliest information about Mennonite involvement in the *Christlicher Saengerbund*. The first known Russian Mennonite choir to join the association was the 20-member choir of Wohldemfuerst (Caucasus - Kuban Settlement). The conductor was Jacob Berg and the choir president was D. Fast.[11] The following year (1882) the 20-member choir in Berdjansk under the direction of Johann Fast also joined; the choir president was Abraham Jantzen.[12] In these years membership dues were set at 7½ Kopeks = 15 Pfennig per person, and payment was made through Mr. W. E. Galling of the British & Foreign Bible Society Depot in Moscow.[13] The 66-member choir of Lichtfelde (Molotschna), under the direction of Isaak Born, joined the *Christlicher Saengerbund* in the Fall of 1886.[14]

The *Christlicher Saengerbund* grew rapidly and within ten years of its founding counted 500 choirs with a total of 12,000 singers, located throughout Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Russia, England, Sweden, France, North America, and Australia. The majority of these choirs were from the "free churches"—predominantly Baptist and Methodist—with some from the Lutheran and Reformed "Landeskirchen" (State Churches). To facilitate the work of the association, it became necessary to divide these choirs into national and regional organizations.

Within Germany itself, the choirs were organized into fifteen regional "Vereinigungen" (unions).[15] There is no indication that Prussian Mennonites, who would have been part of the "Nordostdeutsche Vereinigung," were members of the *Christlicher Saengerbund*.

The Dutch choirs established their own association in 1886 and began publishing their own journal, *De Lofstem*, in 1888. Whether there was any contact between this Dutch association and the Dutch Mennonite (Doopsgezinden) congregations is not known.[16]

The Swiss choirs appointed their own "Verwaltungskomitee (supervisory committee) in 1885 and formed their own "Saengervereinigung" in 1888. In 1893 this national association was divided into twelve "Kreise" (regional chapters). There is evidence that Mennonite choirs in northwestern Switzerland were members in this association.[17] In 1914 the *Christlicher Saengerbund der Schweiz* was formed as an independent choral organization, publishing its own journal and musical supplements.

2. *The Russian Choral Association.*

To provide leadership for the growing number of choirs in Russia (including Polish Russia), a "Verwaltungskomitee" (supervisory committee) was organized in 1886, under the direction of Karl Ondra, pastor of the German Baptist Church in Zyrardow (near Warsaw). Pastor Ondra died on January 9, 1887, and the leadership of the association passed to Friedrich Schweiger. Other members of this committee included Josef Herb, Friedrich Lohrer, Eugen Mohr, Adolf Challier, and the pastors W. Mantai, Heinrich Pufahl, Friedrich Brauer and August Liebig.[18]

August Liebig was a German Baptist preacher, who was well known to Mennonites in the Khortitsa settlement. He had visited the colony briefly in 1866 and later lived in Andreasfeld (17 miles east of Khortitsa) for a whole year from June 1871-1872. He had been influential in the growth of the Mennonite Brethren church in that area. One Mennonite Brethren writer wrote, "he has done much good among us."[19] Among the good things that Liebig introduced were the Sunday school and the public prayer meeting, "Gebetsstunde," as part of the Sunday morning worship service. It may well be that Liebig also provided an important link between the *Christlicher Saengerbund* and the growing number of choirs in Mennonite Brethren churches. Two prominent Mennonite Brethren musical leaders of the 1890s, Prediger Wilhelm Dyck and Aron Sawatzky, both came from Andreasfeld.

The choirs of the *Christlicher Saengerbund* within Russia were organized as a separate national association, *Russische Saengervereinigung*, on May 30, 1889. Membership at the time consisted of 26 choirs, representing a total of 540 singers. Leadership within the *Russische Saengervereinigung* came largely from the German Baptist communities in Zyrardow and Lodz.[20]

The "Zionschor" of the Baptist Church in Zyrardow had been founded in 1871 by Karl Truderung, a local teacher who began giving musical instruction ("Notenunterricht") to a group of twenty-one young people, most of them recent converts to the Baptist church. They met for three hours on Sunday afternoons and for one hour each weekday evening. In 1873 Truderung began teaching the use of *Ziffern* to his choir. Friedrich Schweiger was among the young students who took part in this instruction at that time. Schweiger took over the choir in 1876. In 1881 the "Zionschor" became a member of the *Christlicher Saengerbund*.[21]

Friedrich Schweiger (1856-1925) deserves a place of honor in the music history of Russian Mennonites. Through his personal contacts with Mennonite conductors such as Bernhard Dueck, Isaak Born, Aron Sawatzky, Wilhelm Dyck, and Johann Froese he helped to shape the direction of Mennonite choral development in the years from 1886 to 1914.[22]

Friedrich Schweiger

Schweiger had connections to Russian Mennonites not only by reason of his position as chairman of the *Russische Saengervereinigung*, but also through family ties. His wife was of Mennonite background (her maiden name was Wedel), and her brother was a farmer in the Molotschna Settlement. It was through this brother that Bernhard Dueck of Friedensfeld first established contact with Schweiger. This led to Dueck's attending the conductors' workshop in Zyrardow in January/February 1894. In May of the same year, Schweiger arrived in the Molotschna colony to lead the second annual *Saengerfest* in Rueckenau, an important event in Russian Mennonite music history that will be described in more detail below.

Schweiger gave leadership and direction to the Russian Choral Association for almost forty years, from 1886 until his death in 1925. Little is known about his life, but one can get a good impression of the man—his devotion to God, his love for fellow Christians and his dedication to the cause of Christian choral music—from the many reports and articles he wrote for *Saengergruss*. An example is the article entitled: "Welches sind die moralischen Erfordernisse eines christlichen Dirigenten," which lists five important moral attributes of a Christian conductor:[23]

> 1. Above all, the conductor of a Christian choral society should be an active and committed Christian. As such he should unceasingly support the choir with his prayers, and practice constant self-discipline . . . .
> 2. All incidents within the rehearsal should be met with wisdom and impartiality . . . .
> 3. He should be enthusiastic about his good profession. He must never lose heart, he must always have the goal of his work clearly before his eyes: to do a work for the Lord . . . If we do our work for God, it will carry the stamp of godliness, it will bring rewards to us and satisfaction to Him.
> 4. He should derive strength from his joy in the Lord . . . .
> 5. He should always be conscious of his great responsibility, recognizing that he will one day be called to account for his work as conductor . . . .

These comments give us an insight into the priorities and emphases of this important musical figure. They were published in December of 1893, only a few weeks before Bernhard Dueck made the long trip from Friedensfeld to Zyrardow to attend the annual conductors' workshop there on January 21-23 (February 2-4 on the Russian calendar), 1894.

3. *The "Dirigenten-Kurse" Tradition.*

This was the first time that a Russian Mennonite conductor had attended such a workshop. Dueck recorded some of the impressions of his trip in a report published in *Saengergruss* under the title, "Die erste Reise eines Dirigenten aus Suedrussland nach Polen":[24]

> For some time already, I had felt the urge to visit some of the more accomplished choral societies, if not in Germany then at least in Poland. Then I received the kind invitation from Brother Schweiger to attend the conductors workshop in Zyrardow from January 21-23. I believed in faithfulness to God that I must follow this invitation, and nothing could stop me from making the long 200-mile journey, even though I had to travel alone. In expectation of the many things I would see and hear there I was so excited that I could hardly sleep during the two days and one night of the journey....

Dueck says very little in his account about the workshop itself, primarily because a full report had already been published in the March issue of *Saengergruss*. He does say, however, that he was looking for practice in matters of "Aussprache" (diction) and "Betonung" (accentuation)—concerns which appear on the agenda of every Mennonite conductors' workshop in Russia (and even later in Canada).[25]

The workshop in Zyrardow followed a pattern that was to become normative for Mennonite workshops both in Russia and later in Canada. It began with "elementary" matters and gradually progressed to actual "conducting." Educational articles from *Saengergruss* were read and discussed. The participants then worked especially on aspects of "Aussprache der Vokale, richtige Phrasierung und gute Betonung" (pronunciation of vowels, correct phrasing and good accentuation). Then they were drilled in conducting patterns, "Taktieren." In the evening the participants were allowed to practice their skills with the Zyrardow choral society. For many this was a frightening experience, but their desire to learn helped them to overcome their nervousness. This pattern was repeated the following day, and the workshop was closed on Sunday with a worship service and a "Theeabend" (tea party). Bernhard Dueck's presence and contribution were given special note by the reporter, A. Challier:[26]

> A most special contribution to the celebration were the songs which the dear brother Dueck, conductor in Friedensfeld (southern Russia), sang to his own guitar accompaniment. We were very pleased that the dear congregation in Friedensfeld had such an active interest in singing that they sent this dear brother to us from this great distance. This should encourage all of us to do more for the Lord and engage all of our energies for the advancement of singing.

Other Mennonite conductors followed Dueck's lead. Aron Sawatzky, from Andreasfeld, attended the workshop held in Zyrardow the following year in February 1895.[27] Bernhard Dueck, together with Wilhelm Dyck (Andreasfeld), again attended a workshop in Zyrardow in the spring of 1901.[28] The first Mennonite conductors' workshop in Russia was held under Bernhard Dueck's leadership in Friedensfeld on December 29-31, 1894 (Russian calendar). In a brief report for the *Saengergruss*, Dueck wrote:[29]

> The number of conductors and other participants climbed to 18. The purpose of our gathering was to receive practical training to improve our pronunciation, expression and conducting technique. Many fine articles from *Saengergruss* helped us in this. Gebhardt's *Gesangschule* was not forgotten. The time passed quickly and proved to be a blessing for all.

Thus, one can see that the Russian Mennonite "institution" of choral workshops was a direct result of contacts with the *Christlicher Saengerbund* and with Friedrich Schweiger in particular.

4. *The "Saengerfest" Tradition.*

The influence of Schweiger and the *Christlicher Saengerbund* can also be seen in the *Saengerfest* (choral festival) tradition, which became popular among Russian Mennonites after 1893. These choral festivals were patterned after those read about in *Saengergruss* and more particularly those experienced by Bernhard Dueck and Aron Sawatzky in Zyrardow.

The *Saengerfest* tradition was not unique to the *Christlicher Saengerbund*. The idea of bringing together large groups of amateur singers into mass choirs for regular choral festivals may have originated with the "Volkschor" of Hans Georg Naegeli in Zurich. The nationalistic, humanistic and pedagogical ideals embodied in Naegeli's work found a welcome echo in the rising middle class society ("Buergertum") of Switzerland and Germany and led to the formation of countless amateur choral societies (both mixed choirs and male

Ernst Gebhardt

choirs). The first *Saengerfest* in Germany was held in Plochingen in 1827.[30]

The *Christlicher Saengerbund* was an outgrowth of this nineteenth-century lay choral movement, but in its choral festivals religious ideals took precedence over nationalistic and musical aims. The three-fold purpose underlying the choral festivals in the *Christlicher Saengerbund* was outlined in an article entitled: "Wie koennen unsere groesseren Saengerfeste zweckentsprechender gefeiert werden?" (How can our larger song festivals be celebrated more appropriately?).[31]

The first purpose of a choral festival was to provide the "Volk" with "einen heiligen Kunstgenuss' (an artistic treat of a sacred nature), in contrast to the secular choral societies. To this end, leaders should not try to compete with the artistic goals of large secular choral societies but rather choose simple songs which speak to the people and perform them well.

The second purpose of a choral festival was the religious revival and edification of the people. The choice of repertoire should be governed by these aims of "Erweckung" and "Erbauung," rather than purely musical reasons. The writer recommended the songbooks of Ernst Gebhardt and Rudolf Wyss's *Neue Pilgerharfe* as being appropriate to this end. Furthermore, the spoken word was to be given equal importance to the sung word. These festivals were not concerts, rather religious meetings in which there were always at least two or three, and often more, speakers. The writer stressed the importance of choosing speakers who could speak out of the context of the songs and be inspiring.

Finally, the third purpose was "die Pflege einer rechten bruederlichen Gemeinschaft" (to foster a true Christian fellowship). Song festivals were not only for the public, but also for the choir members themselves. They were to foster not only Christian fellowship, but also Christian unity, and help to lead Christians into the "Johannine Era," based on Jesus' prayer in John 17.

The first *Saengerfest* of the Russian Choral Association was held in Zyrardow in 1886. The following year Ernst Gebhardt himself came to the second *Saengerfest* and provided a detailed description in *Saengergruss*.[32] Five choirs from Rypin, Radawczyk, Kicin, Lodz and Zyrardow, with a total of about 100 singers, had gathered for this festival. The program was held outdoors on the estate of Brother Witt and began with the singing of the Russian anthem, "Bozhe Tsaria." The numerous songs of the individual choirs and the massed choir were punctuated by the devotional talks of five speakers, including Ernst Gebhardt, G. F. Alf (founder of the Baptist Church in Polish Russia), Pastor Lasch, Reiseprediger Mueller, and Brother Brucks (who spoke in Polish). The songs sung by the massed choir were all taken from the *Beilagen zum Saengergruss*, while the individual choirs sang from the following books: *Zions Perlenchoere, Evangeliums-Lieder, Frohe Botschaft, Zions Weckstimmen, Geistliche Choere*, and *Hoffnungslieder*.[33]

The third *Saengerfest* of the Association was held in Lodz on May 30, 1889. The program included six choirs, with a total of 110 singers, and 5 speakers. As far as performance standards were concerned, Friedrich Schweiger wrote:[34]

> As far as the achievements of the choirs are concerned, it is good that this report is not being written by a critic . . . It should be noted that the importance of clear pronunciation of the text by each singer is still not recognized sufficiently. Without this, much of the text is lost to the listener, and we should remember that we are singing not only for the ear but also for the heart.

Russian Mennonites adopted the aims of the *Saengerfest* tradition, as expressed above, and the pattern of choral selections punctuated by speakers, from the *Christlicher Saengerbund*. The emphasis on "Aussprache" found in Schweiger's report above is also a concern expressed in many written reports on Mennonite choral festivals.

The first Russian Mennonite *Saengerfest* was held in the village of Rueckenau (Molotschna) on May 30, 1893. A brief report appeared in the *Saengergruss* later that year:[35]

> On May 30 of this year our cherished wish of holding a choral festival in Rueckenau was fulfilled. In spite of the rainy season (although the weather was quite good on the day of the festival) 7 choirs, with a total of 120 singers, and about 2000 guests came together to share the blessings of the "Saengerfest."

In somewhat "typical" fashion, the writer then goes on to outline what was said by the five speakers and says nothing more about what was sung or who was singing.

Another *Saengerfest* was held in Rueckenau in May of the following year. For this occasion, Friedrich Schweiger was invited to come as guest conductor. For most Russian Mennonite choirs and conductors, the visit of Friedrich Schweiger was probably their first and only direct contact with the *Christlicher Saengerbund*.

Although the choral festival was not to take place until the end of May 1894, Schweiger travelled to southern Russia at the beginning of May in order to visit his sister-in-law, Mrs. Wedel, and to conduct rehearsals with choirs in Memrik,[36] Alexanderheim, Andreasfeld, and Friedensfeld prior to the final joint rehearsals in Rueckenau. Of Bernhard Dueck's choir in Friedensfeld Schweiger wrote:[37]

> The choir there is making progress in clear pronunciation and more expressive singing; there is also a male choir singing there. This choral society differs from the others in that it is comprised almost completely of young people. I find that it is better if older members form the core of the group, provided they remain eager to learn, for they still have much to learn about singing.

The joint rehearsals in Rueckenau began on Thursday, May 26 (Russian calendar, June 7 in modern time). Schweiger noticed that some of the singers present had read *Saengergruss* and felt that he could place the instruction on a more technical level. He remarked, however, that this was probably a mistake, since a number of the singers seem to have been terrified by his approach.[38]

The *Saengerfest* itself was held in

Rueckenau on Sunday, May 29 (June 10), 1894. Ten Mennonite Brethren choirs from Andreasfeld, Ebenfeld, Friedensfeld, Reinfeld, Alexanderthal, Rosenort, Sparrau, Rueckenau, Waldheim, and Memrik, plus the choir of the *Kirchliche Gemeinde* in Gnadenfeld were present.

The morning began with a *Gebetsstunde*, led by Brother J. Reimer, followed by the morning program, which consisted of one song by each of the eleven choirs and one massed choir song and two speakers, Pastor Brauer (Baptist preacher from Zyrardow) and Wilhelm Neufeld (director of the Gnadenfeld choir and a minister in the Gnadenfeld church). The latter directed his words primarily to the singers:[39]

> . . . and spoke about the nature of this precious gift from God and stressed that they should cultivate beauty and purity of tone without neglecting clarity of pronunciation and expression . . . The text was the main thing and the melody was of secondary importance, for the melody was only the means to an end . . . .

The noon meal following the morning service lasted two and a half hours, during which time about 2,000 persons were fed with coffee and rolls. The afternoon program lasted two hours, followed by a light supper (''Faspa'') and more singing in the evening. In all, over fifty songs were sung during the day, which indicated to Schweiger:[40]

> . . . what a great joy in Christian singing is found there, which also seems to be characteristic of everyone, since the congregational singing is good, although, unfortunately, it is only in unison. The singers are good sight readers, thanks to the help of their *Ziffern* notation, and they practice much more than in other congregations. All of their songbooks are also printed in *Ziffern*. One must also say that the quality of their voices is good. As far as pronunciation is concerned, the choirs from Gnadenfeld and Friedensfeld were exemplary, and one could see that the listeners were much more attentive. The other choirs were lacking this virtue . . . .

In closing his report for the Mennonite paper *Zions-Bote*, Schweiger made some practical suggestions based on his experiences in Rueckenau, and recommended the *Saengergruss* and Gebhardt's *Gesangschule* to the singers for further study. He also encouraged the formation of a choral association for Mennonite choirs.

This suggestion was taken seriously and discussed at the first conductors' workshop in January.[41] Rev. Wilhelm Dyck and a Brother Neufeld from Rueckenau were instructed to prepare a report, together with a constitution, for presentation to the annual conference of the Mennonite Brethren church in the Spring of 1895. The *Suedrussische Vereinigung* was officially organized on December 31, 1898 under the leadership of Rev. Wilhlem Dyck.[42]


Gesangſchule

für

chriſtliche Sänger und Dirigenten

nebſt

einem Vereins-Statut,

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Gebhardt's Gesangschule

By 1907 there were 31 Mennonite choirs listed as official members of the *Christlicher Saengerbund*.[43] In 1908 the association was stunned by the sudden withdrawal of 23 of these choirs (with 276 singers). Schweiger wrote:[44]

> The Mennonite congregations do not want to have connections to a foreign organization and have withdrawn.

The growing ''anti-German'' sentiment in the Russian press, especially after the 1905 Revolution, probably made some members uneasy about belonging to a ''German'' choral association. This anti-German sentiment dated back to the early 1890s, and the annual *Saengerfest* in Rueckenau was almost cancelled in 1895 for fear of government intervention.[45]

Whatever the reasons for the sudden withdrawal in 1908, there seem to have been some hard feelings on the part of

the *Christlicher Saengerbund* after this. Johannes Giffey writes:[46]

> Without any pangs of conscience they continue to copy songs belonging to the Association, transcribe them into *Ziffern* and sing them . . . .

Though most Mennonite choirs withdrew from membership in the *Christlicher Saengerbund* in 1908, Friedrich Schweiger continued to send reports of the association's activities for publication in the Russian Mennonite newspaper *Friedensstimme* in 1912 and 1913.[47] These reports focussed on the work of the *Christlicher Saengerbund* in general and on its interdenominational and ecumenical character in particular. They said nothing about the withdrawal of Mennonite choirs in 1908 and gave no indication of Mennonite involvement in the association since that time. While the affiliation of Mennonite choirs with the *Christlicher Saengerbund* lasted little more than two decades, it had a lasting effect on Russian Mennonite choral singing for decades to come.

ENDNOTES

[1]This account of the *Christlicher Saengerbund* is based on Johannes Giffey, *Fuenfzig Jahre Christlicher Saengerbund* (hereafter cited as Giffey); (August Bucher), *Die Entwickelung des christlichen Saengerbundes deutscher Zunge in den ersten 25 Jahren seines Bestehens; Hundert Jahre Christlicher Saengerbund, 1879-1979*; and articles in the periodical *Saengergruss* (hereafter cited as SG). On the relationship of the *Christlicher Saengerbund* to the *Gemeinschaftsbewegung*, see Paul Fleisch, *Die moderne Gemeinschaftsbewegung*, 36.

[2]Giffey, 14.

[3]Ibid., 15.

[4]Ibid., 18.

[5]Ibid., 191-192; and *Hundert Jahre Christlicher Saengerbund*, 72-75.

[6]SG 14, No. 11 (November 1892), 3.

[7]SG 17, No. 2 (February 1895), 3.

[8]SG 17, No. 10 (October 1895), 7-8.

[9]For more on Heinrich Franz and the use of *Ziffern* among Russian Mennonites, see Chapters III and VI of the present author's unpublished Ph.D. dissertation on "The Hymnody and Choral Music of Mennonites in Russia, 1789-1915" (U. of Toronto, 1985).

[10]SG 14, No. 12 (December 1892), 8.

[11]SG 2, No. 3 (January 1881), 4. Note: from 1879 to 1889 the numbering within each volume ("Jahrgang") of the *Saengergruss* goes from September to August. During the first year, the periodical appeared quarterly; from 1880 to August 1882 it appeared bimonthly. From September 1882 onwards it appeared every month. Beginning in January of 1890, the numbering of each volume goes from January to December.

[12]SG 3, No. 3 (January 1882), 4.

[13]SG 4, No. 10 (June 1883), 3.

[14]SG 8, No. 2 (October 1886), 4.

[15]Giffey, 92-158.

[16]Giffey, 178-184.

[17]SG 29, No. 10 (October 1907), 74 indicates that 5 Mennonite choirs belonged to the Swiss Chapter of the Association. It does not identify the choirs.

[18]Giffey, 171-172.

[19]This unidentified writer is cited in J. A. Toews, *A History of the Mennonite Brethren Church*, 74.

[20]Giffey, 170-172.

[21]A brief historical sketch of this choir is given in SG 18, No. 12 (December 1896), 94.

[22]The following discussion of Friedrich Schweiger is based primarily on his obituary in SG 47 (March 1925), 20; and his articles on "Ein Besuch in Russland," SG 16, No. 9 (September 1894), 69-70; and "Ein Besuch unter den Saengern in Russland," *Zions Bote* 10 (Sept. 26, 1894), 2-3.

[23]SG 15, No. 12 (December 1893), 92-93.

[24]SG 16, No. 5 (May 1894), 37-38.

[25]See the minutes of conductors' workshops found in the "Protokoll Buch der Noerdlichen Saengervereinigung der Mennoniten Brueder Gemeinde von Nord Amerika," February 11, 1906-July 11, 1923; and the "Protokoll Buch der Kreis Saenger Vereinigung zu Winkler, Manitoba," February 23, 1912-June 13, 1936. Both of these books are found in the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies in Winnipeg.

[26]SG 16, No. 3 (March 1894), 22.

[27]See Sawatzky's report "Von meiner Reise nach Polen," *Zions Bote* 11 (April 24, 1895), 2.

[28]SG 23, No. 6 (June 1901), 43.

[29]SG 17, No. 3 (March 1895), 22. For a full report of this workshop, see J. Loewen, "Eine Dirigenten-Versammlung in Friedensfeld, Suedrussland," *Zions Bote* 11 (February 27, 1895), 3.

[30]Cited in the article "Maennerchor," *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* 8, 1461; see also "Chor," MGG 2, 1254-56.

[31]SG 12, No. 8 (August 1890), 2.

[32]SG 9, No. 1 (September 1887), 5.

[33]All of these song books were also used by Russian Mennonites. The first four are by E. Gebhardt, long-time president of the *Christlicher Saengerbund*.

[34]SG 11, No. 12 (August 1889), 5.

[35]SG 15, No. 9 (September 1893), 69. This report is initialled J.F. [= Joh. Froese?]

[36]See the report of Johann Froese, director of the choir in Memrik, on this visit of Schweiger in *Zions Bote* 10 (July 25, 1894), 2-3.

[37]SG 16, No. 9 (September 1894), 69.

[38]Schweiger, "Ein Besuch unter den Saengern in Russland," *Zions Bote* 10 (Sept. 26, 1894), 2.

[39]Cited by Schweiger in his report in *Zions Bote* 10 (Sept. 26, 1894), 2.

[40]Ibid., 3.

[41]"Eine Dirigenten-Versammlung in Friedensfeld, Suedrussland," *Zions Bote* 11 (February 27, 1895), 4.

[42]Giffey, 174.

[43]SG 29, No. 10 (October 1907), 74.

[44]SG 30, No. 10 (October 1908), 76.

[45]For discussions on "anti-German" sentiment in Russia at this time, see J.B. Toews, *Czars, Soviets and Mennonites*, 51-55; and Harvey L. Dyck, "Russian Mennonitism and the Challenge of Russian Nationalism, 1889," MQR 56 (1982), 307-341. On the Rueckenau *Saengerfest*, see the Monthly Supplement to *Zions Bote* 11 (July 31, 1895), 1.

[46]Giffey, 175.

[47]Fr. Schweiger, "Christlicher Saengerbund deutscher Zunge," FRST 10, No. 65 (Aug. 22, 1912), 3-4; Fr. Schweiger, "Christlicher Saengerbund deutscher Zunge," FRST 11, No. 67 (Aug. 28, 1913), 2-3.

Essays

by Jeff Gundy

Being Mennonite and Writing Mennonite

What is it, being Mennonite? What does it mean to someone trying to be a writer, trying to make some small gatherings of words out of experience and revery and desire, trying to be true to both the present moment and the heritage out of which I grow?

For some it means history: the martyrdoms of Europe, migrations, farms that have been Mennonite since the Revolution and before, stories of prosperity and peace on the Russian steppes ended forever by Makhno and the Bolsheviks. I have been reading some of those stories, and they are poignant and important. But they are not mine in any real way; my people came over mostly from Switzerland and South Germany in the mid-nineteenth century and have lived quiet and unexceptional lives since.

For others it means material culture or language: plain coats or borscht, shoofly pie or Plattdeutsch. For my wife and her family the German language and the ethnic dishes her grandparents brought with them from Russia help define who they are. But in central Illinois we ate corn on the cob, potato salad and watermelon, just like the Lutherans and the Methodists, and if you saw us in the street you couldn't tell us apart unless the other folks were smoking cigarettes.

For still others it might be fiery religious drama, personal piety, revival meetings. But though my great-grandfather was a minister, my family tends to be shy and close-mouthed about such things, distrustful of words and reliant on actions rather than words. Only in brief, rare moments did we break through our reserve and the usual formulas.

We knew who we were, of course, and so did everyone else in the little farm town. But we were taught that what set us off was not so much appearance and material culture as other markers that were more significant if less obvious: resisting the worldly attractions of alcohol and tobacco, keeping our yearnings for material goods under some kind of control, and most importantly, refusing to go to war. I remember small controversies in my childhood over the wearing of coverings in church and over dancing, but the liberals won out rather easily in both cases. The most serious debate in my teen years, during the late sixties, was over going CO versus refusing to register altogether.

When I went to college and began to write, I was preoccupied with the usual concerns of young writers: personal relationships and social issues. I was not interested in or conscious of being a "Mennonite" writer. Since then I have spent my time, except for four years in graduate school, living in one Mennonite center after another, writing steadily, but finding my audience almost entirely among literary types who read small periodicals and magazines. Along the way I did find a few Mennonites with similar interests and discovered that almost all of the "serious" ones found the main outlets for their work outside the church.

In the last year, for a variety of reasons, I have found myself trying to get my work into church periodicals and to understand just what it is about a poem, essay or short story that makes it "Mennonite." The simplest definition, that Mennonite art is art produced by Mennonites, does little good; it clearly includes much work which may or may not be "real" literature but which shows no discernible traces of Mennonite history, culture or concerns.

Yet for someone like me, whose immediate background is largely without the colorful, obvious markers of Mennonite identity, it is not all that easy to decide how to go about making my work distinctly Mennonite. Do I dredge up any scraps of "heritage" I can, like the dim memory of the great-aunt asking "Sprichen sie Deitsch?" after hearing I was taking eighth-grade German? Do I try to make someone else's past my own? Do I write about the things that happened inside the church building?

In the brief sketches here I have taken a route that I hope is economical rather than lazy: attempting to capture something of my experience growing up and becoming an adult, midwestern Swiss Mennonite. I have taken fictional liberties, especially with the characters of the great-grandmother in "Trains" and the mother in "Climbing in a Fallen Tree." I have hoped to capture something of the voices of people I know and love and something of their blend of practical wisdom, deep faith and deep reserve.

In writing "The Standard Tour of the New Old House," I found myself reflecting on the ways in which the past persists and coming to see that, like an old house, the past remains useful to us even if we don't know all about it. Still, the work of maintaining a usable past, like the work of maintaining an old house, demands constant attention and labor. These sketches are far from the whole story, but I hope they may have some worth as fragments, as parts of one story.

Trains

Whenever the train whistle blew on Sunday, the reverend's widow felt a chill. She knew her great-grandkids would be out of the backyard like sparrows, flying down the street to watch the heavy thing throb and rumble past, trying to beat the engine there so they could count all the cars.

Her boy Ralph had loved trains, had been out the door and gone, no matter what his chores, whenever he heard the whistle. How many times had she spoken to his back: Don't get too close to the tracks, now! Be careful! When he was very young he said OK, OK, not slowing down. Later he just laughed at her, mocked her motherly whine in his teasing way, not meaning to hurt, but sure nothing could hurt him.

In the winter of '26 they drove to Chicago for a mission meeting, the roads icy half the way. A message was waiting; they drove back over the same ice and found him in the Pontiac hospital, with only a small mark on one ankle, his insides terribly changed. He lasted until midnight. Her first, terrible thought was that now he would know she had been right to warn him. Later she remembered that the boy who drove the car had turned out to be a drinker and that God knows best.

And the children now were no worse, she knew; they just had his casual ignorance of the deaths waiting for them. Her son and his wife were far too proud of their boys to keep them close to home, and they ran wild all over town when they came to visit, playing follow-the-leader through the coal dump and rigging ropes precariously in the backyard trees. She saw the troubles in front of them as she had seen her Ralph's, and when the Sunday train came through she never drew an easy breath until the children yelled their way back home, demanding lemonade and cookies.

As she drew the pitcher from the refrigerator, she felt how her arm had thinned. Beside the young ones she felt pale and fragile and thought of her solid son dozing in the living room and her other one, sleeping more deeply in the ground north of town. And she thought how little her fears had been able to change, and how alive the children were, as they drained their glasses and noised off without thanking her. And when she died at ninety-three, she left eleven grand- and thirty-odd great-grandchildren, and they all remembered Sunday dinners and the trains in Meadows, and not one had ever heard her say to be careful.

for Clara Strubhar Gundy
1885-1979

Climbing in a Fallen Tree

Our oldest was always into something, a nervous boy, thin until he hit his teens and took on the squat, broad family look. He read so much he needed glasses by the fourth grade, and some summer days I despaired of ever getting him outside the house. There he'd be, his chest on the hassock and his book on the floor, some Tom Swift or Chip Hilton book he'd already read twice, knowing he should be out gathering eggs or helping Ron in the machine shed.

But he must have found those books more exciting than farming; I knew from the start he wouldn't stay around. And the land is pretty flat around here. When I was a girl, growing up a mile south, it seemed like there were more trees. Lots of people had hedgerows, and my sister and me used to go out and pick up hedgeapples and pretend they were for supper. And everyone had trees around their house and buildings, lots of times along the road too. Of course the cows girdled most of those, some of the rest just got old and died, and the elm disease came along.

We used to have more neighbors, too, when the farms were smaller. Now all those people are dead or moved to town, and after the old houses set for a while, somebody tears them down for the lumber, pushes in the foundation, and fills in the hole so they can farm right over it. Sometimes they leave a crib or barn, but the coalsheds and wash-sheds and chicken houses, the ones built small and low, don't last long without someone to paint them and patch the roof every third year. There are four of those places within two mile of here, and it seems like the crowd at church gets smaller and older every year too.

So I can understand how he was greedy for company, for something to take his mind off the fields and the crops and the weeds. I remember when Ron cut a big tree down in the back lot, how all the kids ran around for weeks on the fallen branches before he got around to cutting it up and burning it. And I remember when they found a broken tile in the field, walking beans. The boy came in all excited, telling how the water was running in it, so cold and clear, just a few little rocks in the bottom, how Ron had let them crawl down and drink from it, how good it had tasted, sweet water cold on a hot day, in the middle of what he had thought were miles and miles of nothing but soybeans and dirt.

Walking Beans

1.

The great need is to slow down, break your stride, refuse the easy quick steps, keep your eyes from glazing over. At this stage the buttonweeds look so much like beans; only the little points on the leaves and the color, a bare shade yellower, give them away. "When I find one," my father says, "if I turn around and look back seems I always see two or three more." I try it, and he's right.

But they aren't bad in this field, mostly in the tire tracks, where for some reason the weedkiller doesn't work as well. I say that I wonder why, and Dad laughs and says, "So do a lot of people." A few milkweeds and stalks of volunteer corn stick up, mostly browned by the weedkiller my younger brother put on with the pipe-wick. The beans are crinkled and a little brown where the pipe bobbed too low, but we think they'll bounce back.

2.

Everybody hates walking beans, though with the chemicals it's better than it used to be. Twenty years ago the bad patches would be more weed than beans; we'd hack and hack for a hundred yards at a stretch, leave the spindly rows of beans poking out of green, pungent wreckage and say wishfully, "They'll bush out." It was always hot, it seemed, and no shade even on the ends, and a half-mile round would take most of the morning. We begged and wheedled and complained steadily all July and most of August, but they had to get done.

My mother said to me not long ago, "That was where it started, your poetry, don't you remember?" And I didn't, until she told me again about Kathy and the prickly little weeds we called bull nettles. "Blue metals?" Kathy asked once, between whining about the heat, her hoe dug into the earth to sit on. With bean leaves under my cap to keep my head cool, I wrote my first song, for Kathy, the sister I

picked on far too much:

I've got the blue metal blues,
I'm as blue as I can be.
I've got the blue metal blues,
Everybody's picking on me.

3.

Near the road I spot something in the dirt and pick it up. A broken piece of plate, sea-green, fine ridges on the top rim and heavier waves on the underside. I remember then the house and buildings that stood on this forty, where my parents lived the first years of their marriage, just before I was born. I may have just walked on the spot where I was conceived. The house I barely remember, small and shaded and empty, but the barn we tore down when I was fourteen, and it seemed we spent all summer putting boards across saw horses and banging the rusty nails through. The gray siding and two-by-tens would spring and jump like grasshoppers; then we'd turn them over and strain on the crowbar to haul the bent brown iron out. We got hot and complained and threw nails at the bucket in the grass and missed and piled the boards slowly in the pickup and finally got to quit and sit in the back of the truck as Dad drove slowly home. Some of that lumber is in our bookcases now, some still stacked in the barn at home, getting older, gray but still sound, waiting to be used again.

4.

I leave for home, grown up and on my own, bean-walking just a nostalgic interlude. Ten days later I am washing my feet in the tub after a softball game, when I suddenly remember washing them under the tap outside after walking beans, the same splash of cold water sluicing away the fine dust that sifts through sneakers and socks. And then I remember my father washing my feet at church the night when my friends all somehow got paired up, and I was left over. I must have done his first, because when he finished he stood up and put his hands on my cheeks, hard, and kissed one of them, and whispered in my ear, "God bless you," the only time he ever said anything like that to me.

The Standard Tour of the New Old House

We bought this one, ugly as it is outside, for the tenant who makes half of the payment, for the location close enough to everything that the car sits idle for days at a time. The asphalt shingles aren't pretty, as my dad told me, but they'll never wear out either. We've got plans: new gutters, paint the soffits, even vinyl siding someday, but not too soon.

The inside's been mostly redone, people not too long before us sanded and varnished the hardwood floors that everyone notices first. They're all uneven, but a couple of floor jacks in the basement seem to help a little. The walls are paint over plaster, only a few cracks, nice high ceilings. The living room's a little small, the dining room too big, but they run into each other, and my brothers are still young enough to doze on the floor after Sunday dinner.

We papered the kitchen and the downstairs bathroom, and the kitchen looks fine, doesn't it? This bathroom I'll do again someday with better paper, and maybe it'll stick. With the paper and the new linoleum, though, and the long counter the last people put in, and the cupboard doors that nice blue, the kitchen looks pretty sharp, doesn't it?

Sometimes I wonder about the others, what quarrels and lovemaking and yelling at their children they did in these rooms, what furniture they moved in and out before we were born. Sometimes I think a house should have its book, and those who live there should write in it what they change, what they cherish, why they came, where they went.

As it is, we know almost nothing about those people, less than we know about our ancestors who came over in boats or died on stakes in the old countries. We know only what we see and what a few people tell us, folklore cryptic and shaky as the old lady next door: that the upstairs bath was a tiny bedroom, that the garden was under a horsebarn, that one set of renters hauled away loads of rock to make it fertile. Fifty quarts of beans last summer, did I tell you?

But here we are, now. And if the walls have new paint, if the stairs have peach carpet from Sears, still the spaces we inhabit change slowly, the doors and windows and walls. We use them without knowing who made them, shape our lives to fit these rooms someone else imagined into the world, plant the garden made rich by someone else's labor. We inhabit the past every day, use it, practical as a suit of clothes, as a skin, too familiar and essential to notice.

Mennonite Progressives and World War I

by James C. Juhnke

The Great War of 1914-1918 was a crisis of disillusionment for all in the western civilized world who believed in human progress. Mennonites traditionally were not optimistic about the worldly human prospect. On American college campuses, however, there was a new generation of youthful progressives who had only recently learned to dream the confident dreams of American democracy. World War I posed an acute dilemma of ideas and commitments for young progressive teachers at Mennonite colleges—Bethel College (North Newton, Kansas); Goshen College (Goshen, Indiana); and Bluffton College (Bluffton, Ohio). They were part of the first generation of American-university-educated Mennonite intellectuals. Some of them had drifted away from their heritage of church world dualism. They had embraced the alternative ideals of Woodrow Wilson's "New Freedom" and of John Dewey's philosophy of progressive education.[1] The Great War exposed a troublesome conflict between Mennonite nonresistance and American progressivism.

At Bethel College there was a generation gap. From the beginning of classes in 1893 until the death of President C. H. Wedel in 1910, Bethel kept close to its conservative, rural, German-speaking Mennonite heritage. Between 1912 and 1918, however, Bethel took on a corps of younger progressive insurgents whose public philosophy was more attuned to popular American democracy than that of earlier leaders. Wedel had spoken for an older German-speaking Mennonite "congregation christendom" *("Gemeinde Christentum")*, rooted in rural Mennonite communities. The new progressives looked more expansively to the possibilities of social democracy in a new American civilization.[2] Among Bethel's young progressives were Samuel Burkhard, Jacob Frank Balzer, David H. Richert, Andrew B. Schmidt, and Emil R. Riesen.[3] They affirmed their Mennonite identity and heritage, but their task was to bring their people out of parochialism to wider horizons, from authoritarianism to democracy. In 1919, when Balzer left for a second term of study at the University of Chicago, he wrote, "I want to give my church another chance to use me two years hence . . . . I believe I see a field of action opening up."[4] In fact the "field" for the insurgent progressives was shrinking, and their response to the great war was partly to blame.

In the spring of 1918 Samuel Burkhard, who had been studying under the noted progressive educator John Dewey at Columbia University in New York when the war broke out, addressed a Hesston (Kansas) Red Cross kick-off meeting and justified the war against Germany in language much like Dewey's.[5] The war, he said, was a necessary struggle between the diametrically opposed philosophies of German *Kultur* and Democracy. The notion of *Kultur*, built on the ideas of Kant and Hegel, taught "that man is moral who conforms to the will of the state." Democracy, by contrast, held that "the world will get on best when there is freedom and liberty to work out one's own destination." *Kultur*, like the Pharisees of the New Testament, saw custom and tradition as sacred. Democracy, like Jesus, saw sacredness in "the needs of men in an ever changing world." Burkhard believed there could be "no final peace in the world without a final victory of democracy." Given the wartime mood of Americans, his speech helped deflect attacks on Bethel College. In the Mennonite church context, Burkhard critiqued ethnic-religious tradition and authority. C. H. Wedel had had a far different and much more positive view of German national culture. Wedel had called Bethel to draw upon the spiritual resources of the "land of poets and philosophers" for Mennonite cultural uplift. But in 1918 Wedel was gone and the war was making a shambles of his kind of dual identity German-Americanism.

The youthful Mennonite progressives said they wanted to get involved in the democratic crusade, but their involvements were curiously limited. In registering for the draft, Burkhard "waived all consideration as a C. O.," claiming to be "not much of a Mennonite but I hope a Christian, at least, moving in the direction of Jesus."[6] But he was not inducted, and he did not volunteer. Cornelius C. Regier encouraged his brother to take officer training and wrote, "if the government wants me, I'll go without a kick—and I'll go *straight*."[7] Regier received a medical exemption. Jacob F. Balzer, who proudly claimed to be "one of the first ones in Harvey County to see the inevitable need of America's entrance into the war," volunteered for war work under the YMCA but was turned down because of his "connection with the Mennonite Church."[8]

At other Mennonite colleges, progressive faculty members were equally ambivalent. It was important for the Democratic powers to win the war, they believed, but they were not sure just how they should contribute personally.

Cornelius H. Wedel

Cornelius C. Regier

Jacob F. Balzer

John E. Hartzler, after his 1918 resignation at Goshen College, was "on the verge of going to France" (apparently for Red Cross or other noncombatant military work) but went to the University of Chicago instead because his absence would have been "so hard for Mrs. Hartzler."[9] Noah Byers of Bluffton College did go to France as a psychology professor in the American Expeditionary Force University, serving after the war ended, from February to September of 1919.[10]

In private correspondence, college presidents J. E. Hartzler of Goshen and Samuel K. Mosiman of Bluffton emphasized a need to contribute to the defeat of Germany more than a need to adhere faithfully to the teaching of nonresistance. To a young man in Camp Taylor in Kentucky who had written how meaningful it was to "stick up for what one believes," Hartzler wrote no words to encourage the youth to refuse service but did say that the war could not end honorably "until the Kaiser is licked off the earth."[11] Mosiman dealt with five former Bluffton College students who were in the medical corps at Camp Greenleaf, Georgia, and who wrote to him saying they were "forced to sign the papers and wear the uniform" and were "forced into something which is against our conscience." Instead of clearly affirming and defending their position of conscience, Mosiman wrote a long letter formally explaining the various options for conscientious objectors. He said such decisions were matters of in-

Samuel Burkhard

dividual conscience, expressed a personal preference for medical work, and underlined the importance of defeating "the menace of German militarism." He sent a copy of his letter and of the draftees' statement to Camp Greenleaf's commander. The camp's YMCA newspaper published the letters in full on its front page, with the subtitle, "Reply of College President Tells C. O.'s Their Duty in Plain English."[12] Mosiman appeared to be more on the side of the military authorities than of his own nonresistant people.

Not all educated Mennonite progressives compromised their nonresistance during the war. Those who did so often found themselves in trouble with a conservative Mennonite constituency in the months and years after the war. However, the conservatives tended to complain more about the progressives' alleged theological modernism than about their abandonment of the Mennonite heritage of nonresistance. In 1919 the Bethel College Board of Directors examined Samuel Burkhard for orthodoxy. But they did not challenge his military registration or rhetoric. Perhaps such a challenge would have aroused the wrath of patriotic Americans in Newton. Instead, the board asked about Burkhard's stand on the doctrine of Christ's virgin birth, a common bone of contention in the contemporary debate between Protestant fundamentalists and modernists. By adopting the terms and the style of the fundamentalist-modernist conflict, antimodernists on the Bethel board ironically gave evidence that they had been Americanized as surely as had been the insurgent progressives.[13]

The wartime experience delivered a severe blow to the German roots of Mennonite culture and set a new context for the Mennonite teaching of nonresistance. Conservatives and traditionalists who believed that the world was evil had their doctrines confirmed. The progressives were discredited. Mennonites became involved in new agendas, and most of the insurgent progressives such as Burkhard were forced out of the Mennonite colleges.

ENDNOTES

[1]This article was first drafted as part of the Mennonite Experience in America project, Theron Schlabach editor.

[2]Linda Schmidt, "Patriotic Servanthood: Bethel's Role in WWI," (undergraduate seminar paper, Bethel College, 1975). Delores Reimer, "Jacob Frank Balzer and the Experience at Bethel College 1913-1918," (Bethel College Social Science Seminar, 1974).

[3]Keith L. Sprunger, "C. C. Regier: Progressive Mennonite Historian," *Mennonite Life* (March 1984), 12.

[4]Letter from Balzer to Shailer Mathews, July 15, 1918. Balzer Collection, Box 2, folder 29, Mennonite Library and Archives (MLA). Quoted in Reimer, "Balzer," 30.

[5]Samuel Burkhard, "Bethel College is Not Pro German," *Newton Evening Kansan Republican*, September 20, 1918. See John Dewey, "On Understanding the Mind of Germany," *The Atlantic Monthly* (February 1916), 251-262.

[6]Samuel Burkhard letter to J. F. Balzer, December 22, 1918. Balzer collection, Box 2, folder 29, MLA.

[7]C. C. Regier letters to Emil Regier, August 9 and October 30, 1918. Emil Regier Collection, Box 1, folders 4 and 6, MLA. Quoted in Sprunger, "Regier," 14.

[8]Balzer letter to "the editor of the Kansan," November 2, 1918. Balzer Collection, Box 2, folder 29. Letter from Allen B. Crow to Balzer, July 19, 1918. Balzer Collection, Box 2, folder 29.

[9]J. E. Hartzler letter to B. F. Hartzler, May 13, 1918. J. E. Hartzler Collection, Box 3, folder 4, Archives of the Mennonite Church (AMC).

[10]Noah E. Byers letter to J. E. Hartzler, March 18, 1919. J. E. Hartzler Collection, Box 4, folder 3. AMC.

[11]B. F. Hartzler letter to J. E. Hartzler, May 7, 1918, and J. E. Hartzler reply, May 13, 1918. J. E. Hartzler Collection, Box 3, folder 4, AMC.

[12]"Fitting Reply to an Inquiry," *Trench and Camp* (September 23, 1918), copy in H. P. Krehbiel Collection, Box 51, folder 13, MLA.

[13]Samuel Burkhard oral interview, June 28, 1975. Showalter Oral History collection.

John E. Hartzler

Samuel K. Mosiman

Bethel College's Twenty-Fifth Anniversary

Edited by David A. Haury
Translated by Hilda Voth

On Sunday, October 12, 1913, two thousand people gathered to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of Bethel College. Elder Abraham Ratzlaff of Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church read the text for the occasion, "Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations." The college *Monatsblätter* printed the following letters, and President J. W. Kliewer read several of them to the audience. While much has changed in seventy-five years, events commemorating the centennial of Bethel College have reflected many of the same concerns or themes.

Br. David Goerz writes as follows:

Los Angeles, California
1127 Gower Street
October 8, 1913

Rev. J. W. Kliewer
Newton, Kansas

Dear Brother,

In response to your request of September 28 I am happy to send you my hearty and sincere greetings and good wishes for the anniversary celebration of Bethel College on October 12. May all festival guests and participants be gripped with the significance of the verse in I Cor. 3:11, "For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ," and also I Cor. 3:10, "But let each man take heed how he buildeth thereon." May the anniversary of the laying of the cornerstone awaken a new impulse for greater things, including successful growth and expansion for Bethel College. The past twenty-five years have exposed how much and what type of building material are necessary to accomplish the original purpose of Bethel College.

May the next twenty-five years, without any exception, bring about the desired clarification of a Mennonite secondary school. This is a tremendously important area of learning that will serve to avoid many dangers and pitfalls that we are aware of and many that we cannot even foresee. Progress has been made in the area of Mennonite education, but it has not been without painful disappointments. Just how many erroneous decisions will be made in this area cannot even be estimated. Every secondary school has its highlights and its shadows, and Bethel College is no exception. The speakers at this anniversary festival will no doubt be encouraging all the friends of our school by pointing out the blessings and successes that have obviously been a part of our college. Certainly they will also make us aware of the seriousness of the state of things as they are and will request a courageous solving of our problems. This includes the financial status of Bethel College, which leaves much to be desired. My heartfelt wishes include the easing of the financial tension in our school.

With best wishes,
David Goerz

The following is a letter from our dear old brother in Pennsylvania:

Quakertown, Pa.
October 4, 1913

Dear Brethren,

When we reflect upon the twenty-five years that are climaxed by the festival of the anniversary of the cornerstone laying; when we think back of the founding of our institution; when we realize how God's grace has been lavished on our efforts, we must agree with the words of the psalmist and call out, "The Lord has done great things and has caused us to rejoice." When the cornerstone was laid twenty-five years ago, the entire event was enveloped with a certain obscurity, and that was enlightened only by faith and trust in God. There were hindrances, difficulties, and even opposition. These could be overcome only by faith and by the sacrificial devotion of its leaders. It was a new venture for our denomination in a new country, and just like any new undertaking it met with opposition and with the feeling of doubt about its success. However, the Lord added encouragement in his own way, and by his grace the projected plans for the opening of the school were fulfilled soon after the laying of the cornerstone. Actually, the success of the project has been greater than even those founders of twenty-five years ago had imagined. And even though we honor the founders, Brothers Goerz, Krehbiel, Warkentin, and others, for their sacrificial service in their efforts to found Bethel College, we need to bear in mind that it is the Lord who has added his blessings to the project and thus has allowed Bethel College to become what it is.

We get new inspiration and great joy when we consider the fruits of our school. We see the schoolteachers, the ministers, and the missionaries who have come from its ranks, and a new reason for joy and thankfulness to God overtakes us. More than a few of the teachers in our denominational and state schools have been educated in Bethel College. Quite a number of former students are active ministers in our congregations; just about all of our mis-

sionaries in foreign mission fields have studied here for various lengths of time. If all those who were educated in our school were removed from our congregations and from our denomination, the loss would indeed be noticeable. Truly, the Lord has done a great deal for our denomination through Bethel College, for which we are very grateful. Even though our eastern congregations do not derive the direct benefits from Bethel College that the western ones do, we are still thankful for the blessings derived from our institution in the western area and in our denomination as a whole. Bethel College was founded upon the faith and the confidence of our Lord; so it must remain. It must carry on its work in the future without veering off this firm foundation if it wants to continue being a blessing to our congregations. There will always be difficulties to surmount, and these must be met head-on by calling upon the Lord for guidance through grace. In the same measure that we remain within the boundaries of the Lord's will and put our trust in Him, we can expect to receive his help and can depend upon success. In modern times many educated men as well as entire institutions of learning have wandered from the straight path. They have replaced the simple truth of the gospels and salvation through the blood of Christ with a more philosophical teaching that tries to improve the old. This is merely an effort to criticize the Bible and to try to find a better way to teach its contents. Therefore, an institution such as Bethel College, which is founded on faith in God and on its service to God, must remain steadfast on its simple foundation based on the apostles and the prophets. We know Jesus Christ was their cornerstone. In this way and this way only will Bethel College survive. Not only that, but it will then grow and will become a great source of blessings throughout our denomination that will spread out into ever widening dimensions. Only then will it be an institution of learning that has a right to exist; only then can it depend on God's blessings; only then can it be a blessing to others.

May God grant his help and grace so that Bethel College may always remain what its founders envisioned it to be! May it continue to be a fountain of blessings as it has been in the past!

I would so much like to be in your midst today as I was twenty-five years ago and share the joys and blessings of this anniversary with you. The distance that lies between us and the advancement of my age make it impossible for me to share this joy with you in person.

May the Lord in his graciousness shower you with his blessings! May the bond of love tighten around us through this celebration!

With greetings,
A. B. Shelley

A letter from Brother and Sister Langenwalter, who held responsible positions here in the past years. They are still loyal supporters of our school.

Cambridge, Mass.
October 8, 1913

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

A greeting of love from a distance!

We would really enjoy being with you during the time of meaningful celebrating. We would like to be a part of it. Since that is impossible, we will participate with our thoughts and prayers.

The history of the development of our school automatically shifts our thoughts to the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. This historic day with its great significance would never have dawned if men and women of strong faith and obedience to a higher calling had not worked with this venture. They had a long waiting period before their hopes were fulfilled. They had to be encouraged a great deal, but they remained true to the cause. Today there are hundreds of ambitious young men and women who give credit to those faithful workers who provided broadened opportunities for them. Our privileges have come as a result of many sacrifices that must have been burdensome at times.

Many of those have changed from believing to seeing. They "have gripped the evidence but missed the promises." The work they undertook with utmost confidence in the Lord was too much to be completed in their generation. It is now up to us to take hold of these opportunities and the responsibilities and reward them for their work. We can do this by making use of our time and opportunities to work with the same faith and power, be equally obedient to our higher calling, and be willing to carry on all unfinished work with the same patience and the same self-sacrificing spirit.

We are happy to hear that so many young men and women have enrolled and have decided to develop their talents. We wish them all the best success, joy, and the richest blessings in these years of preparation for their lives.

We hope that this day will bring much encouragement to our dear colleagues in the faculty. May the current school year be an effective one in encouraging the work to reach its highest degree of achievement.

We also want to encourage the board to continue its responsible decision making. They really have a discouraging job to do, but it also has its peculiar possibilities. May the Lord give them the strength to overcome the former and wisdom to fulfill the latter.

A sincere greeting to all those present.

Yours,
J. and J. H. Langenwalter

The following letter comes from the editor of the *Bundesbote*.

Berne, Indiana
October 4, 1913

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I would like to send my sincere good wishes to the anniversary jubilee festival of Bethel College. The Lord, our God, has made Bethel a blessing to our denomination and we thank Him for this.

We also remember those men who gave their self-sacrificing time for the service of establishing our school. Above all, we are deeply indebted to our dear suffering brother, David Goerz. We also remember our dear deceased brother, C. H. Wedel, who dedicated his whole life to this work.

May the blessings of God rest upon Bethel College in the future so that our youth may be educated in a Christian way. They can learn to look up to the Lord and be educated to become Christian men and women at the same time. May the Lord grant our teachers wisdom and grace to lead our young people wisely. May the Holy Spirit be in their midst as they study the word of God!

May God watch over our instructors that they remain steadfast in the infallible word of God, and may they never be swayed by a wind of doctrine that would mislead them! God bless Bethel College —that is the hope and prayer of a friend of long standing to Bethel College.

Carl H. A. van der Smissen

The Houses of Bethel

by David A. Haury and Selma Unruh

Over the course of nearly a century, Bethel College has provided a variety of residence halls for its students. This photo essay illustrates a few of these facilities from Bethel's early history, as well as the more recent past. This survey is not comprehensive, and many homes—including Leisy Hall, Kliewer Home, Welty Home, Green Gables, and Warkentin Court, the most recent dormitory—are not pictured.

The principal and students resided in the Administration Building during the first school year, 1893-1894. During that year five buildings from the Halstead Seminary were purchased and moved to the Bethel campus, where they were reconstructed into three residence halls west of the Ad Building. The Boarding Hall, located about one hundred feet northwest of the Ad Building, is not visible in the scene below, taken about 1900. The C. E. Krehbiel (Wirkler) House, left of center, is now a college guest house. The Western Home and Students' Home are to the right.

Minnesota Home (above) was erected in 1899 directly west of Western Home at a cost of about $1900. It served as a men's dormitory and was later moved and rebuilt to serve as the Music Hall.

Western Home (below) was moved from Halstead in 1893-94 and contained a teacher's dwelling and rooms for ten students.

Boarding Hall (above) was also moved from Halstead and contained the dining room on the first floor and rooms for students upstairs. The manager of the dining hall resided in the east wing, and the kitchen was on the west. The attractive building was surrounded by flower beds, rose bushes, and a large garden behind the lath fence. Also called Maple Hall, it was dismantled to make room for the Library and moved west of Krehbiel House.

The Students' Home (below) was between the Boarding Hall and Western Home. It contained eight bedrooms, each with an adjoining study.

The Ladies' Cottage (above) was constructed in 1895 south of the Boarding Hall. C. H. Wedel, who resided in the building until the completion of his residence, and Bernhard Warkentin were the primary donors. The long porch was along the north side. This building was also known as Elm Cottage and later was moved further southwest to become the Health Center.

The Schweizerheusle *(not pictured), southwest of the Ladies' Cottage, burned in 1901. It provided housing for the Swiss students. Carnegie Hall (below), occupied in the fall of 1908, was in many respects Bethel's first modern building. The Ladies' Cottage housed only twelve women and was immediately full. Carnegie, constructed with a $10,000 gift from Andrew Carnegie, contained a kitchen, dining facilities, a matron's room, running water, and lodging for forty students. After 1895 an electric bell system connected all residence halls and signaled rising time, devotions, recitation periods, and retiring time.*

(Left to right) Minnesota Home, Western Home, Students' Home, Boarding Hall, Administration Building, and Ladies' Cottage are viewed from Krehbiel House looking east.

In 1936 the old Goessel High School building was moved to North Newton and became a men's dormitory. During this period the top floors of the Leisy Home, Goerz Hall, and the White House also were remodeled into student rooms. Even the attic of Carnegie Hall was converted into rooms.

The White House was constructed shortly after Carnegie Hall as a men's residence hall, and its accomodations for thirty-six students relieved the pressure on the original 1890s facilities. A group of friends of the college donated the building on the condition that the college pay $200 a year for twenty years to the Mission Board of the General Conference. The structure was also known as the Mission House.

Goerz Hall, constructed in 1893 by founder and first business manager, David Goerz, was the first private residence erected on the campus. The college acquired the property in 1921, and the top floors have contained student rooms and studies.

The Martin home was renamed The Pines when it was acquired by the college in 1937. It was located east of the tennis courts, and the trailer camp and barracks were soon located on the same site.

The view south of the Administration Building included only four structures around the turn of the century: (left to right) a barn; the David Goerz residence (now Goerz Hall); the Gustav A. Haury residence (now Hohmann house); and the C. H. Wedel residence (J. R. Thierstein and now Willard Unruh home on west 27th Street).

After World War II the shortage of student housing became more severe. The college acquired four barracks, sawed them in half in order to move them, and relocated them east of the tennis courts near The Pines. They originally served as men's residences. A dozen government surplus trailer houses provided apartments for married students at the same location.

Goering Hall (above) and Haury Hall (below) today house primarily the underclass men and women, respectively. Completed in several phases and additions during the late 1950s and early 1960s, these modern facilities relieved the tremendous shortage of housing which had developed. The enrollment had increased to over five hundred with only two dormitories, Carnegie and White House, housing about forty students each. Goering and Haury were overflowing upon completion, and Warkentin Court, with an innovative modular design, was added in the mid-1960s. The original Halstead buildings and other early frame structures served Bethel well and were remodeled or moved several times, but little remains to remind current students and visitors of the facilities which for most of the first century were the "houses of Bethel."

Commentary

by Johannes Harder

Some feelings of concern over Horst Gerlach's article "Mennonites, the Molotschna, and the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* in the Second World War" in the September 1986 issue have come to our attention. As is the case with most publications, the views expressed in articles in **Mennonite Life** do not necessarily reflect the position or opinions of the editor or publisher. Thus **Mennonite Life** is not endorsing either Gerlach or the Nazi regime. The article addressed an important topic in a scholarly and well documented manner. The topic of Mennonites and National Socialism—in Germany, Paraguay, and elsewhere—is one from which Mennonite scholars have too frequently shied away. **Mennonite Life** desires to provoke scholarly discussion, and perhaps that will sometimes open old wounds by studying events one would rather forget. We would welcome further articles on this theme.

The following letter by Johannes Harder provides additional information on his encounter with the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* (see page 5 of original article). The English translation is by Hilda Voth and John D. Thiesen.

"I was 'transferred' from the *Volksbund für das Deutschtum im Ausland* [League for Germandom Abroad, a private, non-governmental association] to the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* under threat of concentration camp. Since I was known as someone familiar with the land and people, I was originally to be in charge of the collection of archival materials in the German colonies in the area. This proved unsuccessful. At that point I was kept in the VoMi to *copy-edit* the German-language farmers' newspaper. I could hardly have been 'editor' in the sense of having editorial responsibility or authority [*Herausgeber oder Schriftleiter*] because I was known all over as the long-standing travel secretary [*Reisedienst-Sekretär*] of the confessing church. This was corroborated by the fact that an evangelical pastor, a communist, and I were given special rooms for our living quarters and that I was barred from the meetings of the SS officers. In addition, I was denounced by those people and brought before a political interrogation. There can be no question of any editorial responsiblity. At no time did I belong to a 'staff.' Finally, I was and am not in any way a 'prominent' Mennonite."

Prof. Emeritus Johannes Harder
Schlüchtern, Fed. Rep. of Germany

Book Reviews

Hans Georg vom Berg, Henk Kossen, et al., eds., *Mennonites and Reformed in Dialogue: A Study Booklet Prepared by the Mennonite World Conference and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches*. Lombard, Illinois: Mennonite World Conference and World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 1986. ($3.00, $2.50 for 5 or more)

During the 16th-century Reformation, Protestants broke into rival branches: Lutheran, Reformed, Anabaptist, and Anglican. This led to acrimony, even violence, among them, as well as with Catholics. The Anabaptist-Reformed split was sharp and permanent; note the break between Zwingli and the Anabaptists Grebel and Manz at Zurich in the 1520s and the Strasbourg debates between the Anabaptists Denk and Sattler and the Reformed Capito and Bucer in 1526. The two sides became separate churches with little in common. In the present ecumenical spirit, the broken dialogue between Anabaptists and Reformed has been renewed.

In 1983 Mennonites and Reformed met for a joint communion service in the Grossmünster in Zurich. At Strasbourg in 1984 leaders from the two groups met for a conference. Now the Mennonite World Conference and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches have jointly produced this study booklet in hopes of encouraging dialogue at the local level. The various chapters were originally presented as papers at the 1984 Strasbourg conference.

The book contains the following chapters: Introduction by the editors; "Who are the Mennonites today?" by C. J. Dyck; "The Reformed Family: A Profile" by Alan P. F. Sell; "Who are the Reformed today?" by Jean-Marc Chappuis; "The Attitude of the Reformed Churches Today to the Condemnations of the Baptists in the Reformed Confessional Documents" by Hans Georg vom Berg and Lukas Vischer; "A Mennonite Response" by Heinold Fast; plus various appendices. According to the editors, the two communions should consider themselves "twin-brothers of the same family," holding common belief in *sola scriptura*, *sola gratia*, and *sola fide*. Issues in conflict from the 16th century, and to some extent to the present time, are infant baptism, nonresistance, and nonswearing of oaths. In an earlier 1892 Mennonite-Calvinist dialogue in the Netherlands, theologians identified six areas of discussion between the two groups: the covenant, word and spirit, Christology, the church, baptism, and the Messianic way of life. Regardless of past disagreements, the editors hope that new unity can be found. "Today is a new situation," they say.

Any Mennonite or Reformed with a theological interest could profit from studying this book. More valuable would be an inter-church study group of Mennonite and Reformed people (including Presbyterians, Congregationalists, United Church, as well as Reformed). The two sponsoring conferences request to be "informed of local and regional initiatives." Mennonites of the General Conference Western District several years ago entered such an "initiative" by forming a united Mennonite-Presbyterian church in Oklahoma City, but this did not endure. Past

setbacks, however, should not prevent new dialogue. This book can be recommended for groups looking for a stimulating study and discussion topic. Individuals will find it equally worthwhile.

Keith L. Sprunger
Professor of History
Bethel College
North Newton, Kansas

Tieleman Jansz. van Braght, *Het bloedig tooneel, of martelaers spiegel der Doops-Gesinde of weereloose Christenen.* 2nd ed. Amsterdam, 1685. Reprinted in facsimile edition by De Bataafsche Leeuw, 1984. Pp. 1464. (255 guilders)

Readers of *Mennonite Life* will be interested in the fine reprint of the 1685 Dutch edition of the *Martyrs' Mirror*. This appears in two volumes, a total of 1464 pages. The quality of the facsimile reprinting is good, for the most part, including the famous etchings by Jan Luyken. The book was published by the Mennonite congregation of Haarlem in honor of the 200th anniversary of the establishment of "De Vereenigde Doopsgezinde Gemeente te Haarlem." A new historical introduction was written by S. L. Verheus and T. Alberda-van der Zijpp. This martyr book, say the editors, "gives a view of the past, but possibly also a new inspiration for the future."

Copies of this book may still be available from De Bataafsche Leeuw of Amsterdam. This Dutch edition would add an international flavor to any library.

Keith L. Sprunger
Professor of History
Bethel College
North Newton, Kansas

J. Lawrence Burkholder, *Sum and Substance: Essays*, ed. by Edward Zuercher. Goshen: Pinchpenny Press, 1986. Pp. 86. Paperback.

Plato admires the "philosopher-king" in his observations on models of governance in the classical world. Readers of this slim volume will admire and reflect on the essays of Lawrence Burkholder, the "philosopher-president" in Mennonite college circles until his retirement in 1984.

There was a special interest in this reviewer's reflections. Lawrence Burkholder happened to be one of my two most influential professors in college and graduate school. His Introduction to Philosophy course opened up a whole new world for me. And then, nineteen years later, we both began presidencies of Mennonite colleges on the very same day, July 1, 1971, and shared together in Council of Mennonite College settings many common agendas. Certainly the topics and issues Burkholder addressed are "universals" in the experiences encountered in all our Christian, liberal arts colleges, although the "particular" environment may vary.

The author never stopped being a teacher, even when administration claimed most of his time. He is at his best as an advocate of Christian liberal arts, articulating in understandable language—in contrast to contemporary philosophical jargon—the many ways that faith and learning must always come together in the Christian educational community.

As you read these short essays selected from Burkholder's column, "Sum and Substance," in the *Goshen College Bulletin* from 1971 to 1984, you also conclude that the author reflects liberal arts education at its best in the breadth of his interests and knowledge and in the transferable skills that liberal arts cultivates. Not many writers today can illuminate sports, music, fishing, the mystery of Chinese morality, or freedom and transcendence with such insight and understanding.

It was the philosopher Rousseau who lamented that "we have physicists, geometricians, chemists, astronomers, poets, musicians, and painters in plenty, but we have no longer a citizen among us." Burkholder is Rousseau's world citizen, a Christian humanist who is able to understand and interpret the world of linkages in our world and in our faith. Faith, philosophy and learning come together in these essays and make life both whole and holy.

These 24 essays are selected from the 100 or more written in Burkholder's tenure as president of Goshen College. Another editor may have selected additional or alternative essays for this book. There were other essays that were more open-ended and ambiguous, offering more questions than answers as they examined the darker side to the church-college partnership or the theological ambivalence of Mennonites dealing with institutions. Life is made up of sunshine and shadow. That holds true for institutions as well, even our church colleges. These essays generally show the "sunny" side of the church-college environment.

The essays are provocative and stimulating, the kind you keep thinking about after you finish reading. Some of the essays are dated by time, but very few. Most are "timeless," dealing with the great issues of faith and learning that will be as contemporary tomorrow as when written for the *Bulletin*.

Perhaps the most influential of the essays is "The Particular and the Universal," which Burkholder wrote after ten years of teaching at Harvard and thirteen years as president at Goshen. The essay is a brilliant juxtaposition of two fundamentally different approaches to philosophy (Hegel versus Kierkegaard) and their counterparts in education (the University versus the small denominational college). For all who care about such colleges—what Burkholder terms the "significant particular"—this essay will spark both affirmation and argument, exactly what Lawrence Burkholder's teaching and writings have done all these years.

Harold J. Schultz, President
Bethel College
North Newton, Kansas

Ida Yoder, ed., *Edward—Pilgrimage of a Mind: The Journal of Edward Yoder, 1931-1945.* Wadsworth, OH: Ida Yoder, and Irwin, PA: Virgil E. Yoder, 1985. Pp. 482. (20.00—hardback)

Edward, the journal of Edward Yoder (1893-1945), is entrancing reading. These fourteen years of journal, "occasional notes" he called them, with flashbacks covering a lifetime, have no equal in North American Mennonite literature. Edward Yoder, born in 1893 of an Amish-Mennonite family in Kalona, Iowa, taught at Hesston and Goshen College, was a Latin scholar (a University of Pennsylvania Ph.D.), translated the Latin letters of Conrad Grebel, wrote Sunday school lessons for laity, and for fourteen years until his death in 1945 wrote candidly in his journal his private observations and thoughts, illuminating a period of storm and stress in the Mennonite Church, 1920-1945. Edward's sister Ida is the editor and co-publisher of this volume.

Revealed in these journal entries is the way in which a sensitive and faithful

Mennonite scholar maintains a spiritual poise and analytical mind in a troubled era of the church. The shadow side of the period was characterized by doctrinal prescriptiveness, legalism in the requirements of nonconformity, sometimes heavy-handed rule by the elders, and suspicion of higher education. Incredible it is that this Ivy-League-educated Latin scholar, humanist, and professor from sometimes suspect Goshen College should be invited in 1938 to the Scottdale of John Horsch and Daniel Kauffman to write Sunday school lessons for the rank and file.

In his journal Yoder describes the oppressive climate of his conference: "blind, literalistic, often ignorant, and always dogmatic approach to the Bible . . . political ecclesiastical methods . . . which serve to keep a certain group dominant and concurrently suppress the expression of minority or conflicting opinion." (p. 220) He writes of educational and religious leaders who spend practically nothing from year to year for books and periodicals: "minds and souls . . . starved, weak and sickly . . . The spectacle of such a person for twenty years having as staple mental pabulum the *Farm Journal* and the *Pathfinder* is one to make angels weep." (p. 3)

In those censorious times he escaped the rod and was called to the sensitive post of interpreting the Bible to the people. One observes the factors and qualities which permitted him to survive with grace. His favorite motto was Paul's admonition: "Make it your ambition to be quiet and to attend to your own business." (p. 108) Reserved of manner, he closeted his candor in his journal. He had no desire for nor was he called to the exposure of higher administrative positions. Although he is critical in his journal of prescriptive dress regulations, he continued to dress plain. He remained a layman. His sharp comments in his journal were invariabley cushioned with charitable comments. He found solace in his books and periodicals, his Biblical and classical studies, his walks, his garden, and his wife and son. His journal was undoubtedly a therapeutic outlet.

Although he wrote sparingly of his piety, he was sustained by a sense of God's leading. Reflecting on his life as a teacher, he comments: "I cannot believe that any other course . . . would have been of the leading of God. All this gives me faith and courage to believe that He will continue to lead us as we face the future." (p. 66) Gratitude runs as a theme throughout his writing: "We are willing to face the coming years trusting God who has been good to us." (p. 61)

He voices his aversions: crowds, emotionalism, organized athletics, consumerism, certitude, institutional structures (committees and conference organizations), politics and politicians. He expresses his joys: the arrival of periodicals, quiet time for reading books and writing in his journal, invitations to be a guest for dinner, local history, his phonograph and classical records, gardens, orchards, picking and canning season, birds, letters reporting acceptance of articles for publication, Kansas and sunshine, dreams of travel to Greece and Rome, cutting wood, walking, and observing the development of his son.

In his fond memories of boyhood in Johnson County, Iowa, in his latter-day affection for Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, and in his love of nature, one finds sensitivities akin to a Henry David Thoreau or a Wendell Berry. (p. 210) He writes of reading "hungrily" the articles in the *American Magazine* by Archibald Rutledge on wildlife:

> Many times I sense . . . that I can learn and experience more truth about God, the Creator and preserver of all Nature, by observing and reading others' observations of this incomparable handiwork, than by studying the . . . speculations of theologians . . . Spiritual truth seems real only as it is felt. Definitions and propositions are almost meaningless where there has been no experience of this truth." (p. 35)

Along with the lyrical passages there is just enough of the trivial to assure us that Edward Yoder was quite human. He records meticulously data on the cost of milk, periodicals and rent and notes the amount of unpaid salary owed him by the college. (pp. 346-347) He identifies in a fourteen-year span the precise years he bought suits. (p. 329) The journal yields much data on the austere, scavenging life of Mennonite faculty families in the Depression years. In the journal pages 173 to 180 he describes in fascinating detail the family's trip from Hesston to Goshen in late August 1933. It reads like a *Grapes of Wrath* tale of bad roads and flat tires.

He read many books and in widely diverse fields. He read ten to twenty periodicals regularly. He ordered books from Blackwells in Oxford. He read the major writers on pacifism: Gregg, Muste, Allen, Abrams, Gray, Cadoux, MacGregor, Herring, and more. He was fascinated by Reinhold Niebuhr. He read the novels of Melville, Undset and Buck. His reading in Biblical studies merits a review article all its own. He devoured Deismann, Dummelow, Angus, Harnack, Hobhouse, Marston, Moulton, Plummer, Ramsay, Zwemer, and many more. Surely he was walking through a mine field of higher criticism. Despite this supping with publicans and Pharisees at the tables of modern Biblical scholarship, he was not censored but was invited to Scottdale.

In his reflections on reading, he says almost nothing about Mennonite authors. His assessment is sharply critical of conventional Mennonite literature:

> "Our own church literature and periodicals . . . are too stereotyped, not diversified enough to adapt themselves to varied types of minds and intellects. They all smack strongly of elementary Sunday school stuff, the preaching and moralizing are too very evident all the time for best results with youth who are mentally alive." (p. 107)

The title *Edward—Pilgrimage of a Mind* suggests one of the major themes of this journal: the shaping of the mind and character of a uniquely creative and perceptive person. A "milestone" in his spiritual growth dates back to 1910, when S. G. Shetler of Pennsylvania conducted an eight-day Bible conference in his home congregation. "It started me on a program of personal Bible study that lasted for a long time." (p. 106) He began to teach a Sunday school class as early as January 1913, the year he worked through a Bible correspondence course from Moody Bible Institute. (p. 107) He bought a Revised Version of the Bible for study as early as 1912. After leaving home in 1915 he began to mark his Bible when he read it for devotional purposes. His next advance was to learn to read the New Testament in Greek.

He acknowledges that "practically all my Bible study has been independent . . . of formal class work." (p. 108) He concludes one of his many reflections on Biblical study with the comment: "The study of Biblical writings as historical documents appeals strongly to me of late, using archaeological, linguistic and historical aids in gaining a fuller appreciation of the messages of the Biblical writers." (p. 108) He

writes that at one time he was impressed with the *Sunday School Times* and *Moody Monthly*: "heavenly manna to my hungry soul. But they no longer satisfy my heart and mind as they once did . . . The simple, literalistic, superficial, dogmatic, cut-and-dried ideas of premillennialism, dispensationalism do not seem to me to really get at the meat and marrow of the message of the Bible." (p. 294)

Discussions of premillennialism invariably trigger his thoughts on the meaning of history:

> As to my philosophy of history . . . a few dim strokes of the broadest outlines are visible . . . History has been a complex system of ups and downs, ins and outs, depressions and upward movements, advances and retrogressions . . . The verdict of reason as well as of the Bible is that righteousness, truth, and God must and surely will triumph over their opposites in the final end. And as a key to the vicissitudes observed in the visible part of the stream of history, I have a decided "hunch" that the Biblical doctrine of Sin, with all its consequences, is the correct one. (p. 186)

He is ever the seeker and scholar who conditions his affirmations with touches of tentativeness.

"Religion," he states, "has been to me essentially a personal affair, the quiet inner fellowship with the personality of God, the contemplation of God's character and His work, the yearning and striving to conform more nearly to His will." (p. 108) He continues:

> The features of formal and militant Christianity which include any forms of display, noise, blatant ballyhoo and the like have always been more or less distasteful to me. I think it is necessary to witness for one's faith, to exercise the expressional side of one's religion. But for me living day by day in the strength that comes from intimate fellowship with God is as potent as any form of religious expression . . . However, to be dogmatic in insisting on any specific pattern of experience or any set formula or slogan in such matters, even if it be a latitudinarian formula, is still one degree worse than a noisy expression of religion. (p. 108)

His cameo glimpses of church leaders are carefully tooled and penetrating. He speaks of George R. Brunk, D. H. Bender, Daniel Kauffman, J. B. Shenk, John Horsch, Gustav Enss, A. J. Metzler, Harold Bender, Orie Miller, and many others. An example is this description of Horsch:

> He is very sure and positive that he is right, whereas I lack such a dogmatic temper. Horsch fills a rather unique but unofficial position at Scottdale, in that he seems to be the theological and philosophical watchdog about the Publishing House. The editors in general lean upon him for smelling out all the rats of modernism and near-modernism. Yet he has had no special training so far as I know. (p. 247)

He concludes: "Perhaps I shall some day have an equivalent equipment."

Yoder never uses labels to identify his position; for example, "evangelical," "Anabaptist," "pacifist," "Christian humanist." He predates the present era when Mennonites stamp all approved qualities with the label "Anabaptist." An Erasmian/Anabaptist humanist in spirit, he probably would be uncomfortable with the current put-down in evangelical circles of humanism. He probably would be uncomfortable with Mennonite scholars who insist on a radical discontinuity between Erasmian humanism and Anabaptism. Yoder engages in no name-calling. He labels no one a "fundamentalist" nor a "modernist." He identifies neither modernism nor fundamentalism as enemies.

Additional random observations suggest the rich ore to be found in this book. In that era of Mennonite isolationism he shows little awareness that Hesston was surrounded by a sea of General Conference Mennonites and Mennonite Brethren. He has nothing to say about overseas missions, inter-Mennonite relations, or church planting. He says almost nothing about the congregation as the locus of caring and discernment, nurture and discipline. He rarely comments about academic camaraderie and collegiality with his teacher peers at Hesston and Goshen. He does not acknowledge testing doubts and new ideas with faculty colleagues. He has little to say of the sending or receiving of letters to and from fellow scholars and churchmen. He kept quiet and pondered in his heart his misgivings.

This is one of the most important books in years to come out of the Mennonite experience. I commend it to anyone who wants to understand the Mennonite story in the period between the two great wars.

A bibliography of Yoder's writings would have strengthened the usefulness of the volume. That could come with a critical essay on Yoder as a Biblical scholar and popular interpreter.

One word of disquietude. I welcome Guy Hershberger's introduction to the book but am uneasy with his reflections on the "amazing" watershed year of 1944, when he writes of ten men in their fifties changing the course of history in the Mennonite Church. This is an interpretation of history which does not seem to be inductively demonstrated from a reading of Edward Yoder's journal. If there was a "watershed" for the Mennonite Church in this period, and I think there was, one would look to many factors, including the enveloping presence of World War II, with more than two thousand Old Mennonite young men in CPS camps forced to live with men from other conferences with whom they discovered spiritual kinship; a world in travail calling the faithful to lift their eyes from domestic preoccupations to a broader mission. Larger forces were undoubtedly at work which behooved leaders to change course if they wanted to have followers. Instinctively I hesitate to accept men-in-a-smoke-filled-room interpretations of history. But that calls for a separate essay on the Mennonite Church in pilgrimage from the end of World War I to the end of World War II—from the closing of Goshen to the opening of the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries.

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Delbert F. Plett, *The Golden Years: The Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde in Russia (1812-1849)*. Steinbach, Manitoba: D. F. P. Publications, 1985. Pp. 355. Paperback.

Mennonite historians have been critical of the Kleine Gemeinde, which was established in 1812 in Russia. P. M. Friesen wrote in his *The Mennonite Brotherhood in Russia*, p. 93: "The *Kleine Gemeinde* was a messenger calling the Molotschna Mennonites to repentance, but, it would appear to us, because it was too narrow-minded, too frightened, too isolationist and opposed to education, it never made a profound impact." And C. Henry Smith referred to Klaas Reimer, the founder of the Kleine Gemeinde, as "a rather sensitive soul, with a somewhat narrow religious horizon, contentious and critical in spirit" (Plett, 200).

In Delbert Plett, a lawyer in Steinbach, Manitoba, the Kleine Gemeinde has found an able defender, and with the publication of *The Golden Years* this

small Mennonite church takes its rightful place in the historiography of Russian Mennonitism. What Harold S. Bender and his colleagues have done for the "rehabilitation" of Anabaptism, Plett is doing for the Kleine Gemeinde. In his attempt to correct the image of the Kleine Gemeinde, Plett argues persuasively that Mennonite historians, with the exception of John Horsch and Robert Friedmann, have been unfair and wrong in their assessment of this group.

According to Plett, the Russian-Mennonites can be divided into three main groups: the cultural Mennonites, the pietistic Mennonites, and the Anabaptist-Mennonites, represented largely by the Kleine Gemeinde. The cultural Mennonites, according to Plett, were concerned with progress in agriculture, industry, education, and openness to the larger world. The pietistical Mennonites, who later developed into the Mennonite Brethren, had been influenced by German Pietism, whose emphasis on an individualistic, emotional and inner faith caused them to neglect discipleship and brotherhood. Millennialism, according to this view, also made inroads into Russian Mennonitism. Klaas Reimer and the Kleine Gemeinde, Plett argues, sought to restore the Anabaptist-Mennonite faith and practice, with special emphasis on nonresistance and practical Christian living.

In developing his thesis, Plett begins his study with the Apostolic church, then summarizes the "fall" of the church under Constantine, and proceeds to show—before coming to the establishment of the Kleine Gemeinde—that the Swiss Brethren of the 16th century restored original Christianity. Bender's "Anabaptist Vision" is reprinted in Chapter 2 to show that what Bender considered to be "normative" Anabaptism was part of the Kleine Gemeinde theology and practice. In the main parts of the book, Plett argues that in their emphases, struggles, and publications, leaders like Klaas Reimer, Heinrich Balzer, and Abraham Friesen were consciously promoting the Anabaptist-Mennonite faith.

While Plett acknowledges the merits of P. M. Friesen and C. Henry Smith, he demonstrates convincingly that their assessment of Klaas Reimer and of the Kleine Gemeinde was based either on their insufficient knowledge of the sources or on their cultural-pietistic bias. Plett goes to great lengths to show from the writings of the Kleine Gemeinde—many of which are translated and published here for the first time—that the leaders and members of this Mennonite church were neither joyless in their faith and life nor opposed to learning and publication of books. Indeed, to some readers it may come as a surprise that it was the Kleine Gemeinde that promoted the publication and distribution of Mennonite writings in Russia, including those of Menno Simons, Peter Jansz Twisck (1565-1636) and Pieter Pietersz (1574-1651). The Mennonite Brethren in the 1860s, according to Plett, were more anti-intellectual than the Kleine Gemeinde, which valued highly Anabaptist-Mennonite scholarship and education (Plett, Chapter 17).

As a corrective to the traditional image of the Kleine Gemeinde, *The Golden Years* is a most welcome and necessary addition in Russian-Mennonite historiography. No serious historian of this area of Mennonite studies can afford to bypass Plett's work and interpretation. It might be added that Plett continues to study and write the history of the Kleine Gemeinde. *The Golden Years* was preceded by a collection of documents and maps (*History and Events*, published in 1982) relating to the Kleine Gemeinde and will be followed by another volume telling the story of the later development of this group.

This stimulating book, however, raises many questions and invites critical responses, both concerning Plett's general thesis and his interpretation of personalities and events in Russian-Mennonite history.

Plett is not a trained historian, but a lawyer. He argues, pleads and confronts. In advancing his case he at times over-simplifies and generalizes, often at the expense of the truth on the other side. It is simply too general, perhaps even artificial, to divide the Russian-Mennonites into cultural, pietistic and Anabaptist groups. Plett fails in this to take into account the subtlety and complexity of the 19th-century Russian Mennonite world and the world beyond which influenced and shaped the Mennonites.

Plett's definition of Anabaptism does not take sufficiently into account the historiography in this area. He follows implicitly Bender's "Anabaptist Vision" and Friedmann's theology of Anabaptism and applies them to the Kleine Gemeinde. Plett refers only briefly to the great diversity of 16th-century Anabaptism and the manifold expressions of 19th-century Mennonitism and then concludes that individuals and groups that deviated from Bender's normative Anabaptism were not genuine Anabaptist-Mennonites. There is even a touch of anachronism when Plett throughout the book speaks of Anabaptist-Mennonites in 19th-century Russia. It is doubtful that many in Russia were aware of *Anabaptism* as it was later developed by Bender and others.

Plett's biases show through as well, something he criticizes in P. M. Friesen and other historians. For example, he treats Johann Cornies, the Russian-Mennonite "enlightened despot," as he has been called, with kid gloves. The man who was most responsible for *cultural* Mennonitism and progress in many areas of Mennonite life should have been condemned by Plett as one who led the Mennonites spiritually astray. Yet because Cornies was instrumental in bringing about state recognition to the Kleine Gemeinde, he escapes Plett's censure.

Physically the book suffers from the shortcomings that annoy readers, especially editors. This 355-page book will discourage all but those who are interested in the subject because of its very small print. The numerous long quotations and the footnotes are set in an even smaller type. Spelling mistakes and misprints abound and are too numerous to list here. It is regrettable that this important book was not edited and proofread more carefully. Also the grammar and style leave much to be desired. Hopefully in a new edition all this will be corrected.

In spite of the criticism, this book is to be recommended highly to all those who are interested in the Kleine Gemeinde and the Russian-Mennonites. Delbert Plett is to be commended for his labor of love, which goes far to set the record straight with regard to the Kleine Gemeinde. Even the historian who might not agree with Plett's method and interpretation will nevertheless appreciate the many translated documents in this book.

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