

# MENNONITE LIFE

JUNE 1987



## In this Issue

The June issue again features the Radical Reformation and Mennonite Bibliography. The bibliography contains three sections: 1986, 1984-85, and undated publications. The elimination of materials published prior to 1984 has reduced the length of the bibliography about fifty percent when compared with last year's. The bibliography represents the acquisitions of recently published materials by major Mennonite libraries.

The centennial of the mission activities of the General Conference Mennonite Church among the Indians in Oklahoma (then Indian Territory) has stimulated the interest of historians in exploring the foundation and philosophy of these early missions. Stanley P. Dyck, Professor at Cowley County Community College in Arkansas City, examines the history of the Halstead Indian Industrial School which operated on the Christian Krehbiel farm near Halstead from 1887 to 1896. This endeavor reveals much about the attitudes and success of early Mennonite missions.

Berniece Kropf Schmucker has edited and provided an introduction to an interview with her father, Frank Kropf. The interview provides extensive insights into the Mennonites' persecution during World War I, and Kropf's career documents the early experiences of Mennonites in the Pacific Northwest.

Robert D. Linder, Professor of History at Kansas State University, examines the challenges to the traditional separation of church and state within the United States through an analysis of Constantinianism and its relation to religious freedom. The continuation of E. G. Kaufman's autobiographical reflections from the March issue is the final article.

# MENNONITE LIFE

June 1987 Vol. 42 No. 2

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## Front Cover

Halstead Indian Industrial School, Krehbieltown

## Back Cover

The Christian Krehbiel Family

Halstead Indian Industrial School, Krehbieltown

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

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: U.S. — One year, \$10.00; two years, \$18.00. Foreign — One year, \$11.00; two years, \$20.00 (U.S. Funds).

ISSN 0025-9365

The Halstead Indian Industrial School 4

*Stanley P. Dyck*

An Interview with Frank Kropf 11

*Edited by Berniece Kropf Schmucker*

No Constantine Here!: The Case for the  
Preservation of the American Heritage of  
Separation of Church and State 13

*Robert D. Linder*

E. G. Kaufman: Autobiographical Reflections  
(continued from March issue) 17

*Edited by Robert S. Kreider*

Radical Reformation and  
Mennonite Bibliography, 1986 19

*Marilyn Loganbill*

Book Reviews 27

# The Halstead Indian Industrial School

by Stanley P. Dyck

In February of 1882, Christian Krehbiel, a prominent Mennonite farmer and church leader from Halstead, Kansas, made a hurried trip to the General Conference Mennonite mission at Darlington in Indian Territory to survey the damage resulting from a tragic fire. The mission's newly-constructed boarding school for Arapaho Indians lay in ashes; four children, including the infant son of missionaries Samuel and Susie Haury died in the flames. Krehbiel, then president of the Mennonite Board of Mission, came to assess the damage as well as the future of the Mennonite mission at Darlington.<sup>1</sup> Despite this unfortunate event, Krehbiel and the Mission Board rallied support for the rebuilding of the mission school and the fledgling missionary effort continued.<sup>2</sup>

Christian Krehbiel's journey to Darlington was productive in another tangible way. While in Indian Territory, Agent John D. Miles and Haury recommended that a young Indian boy named Smith (Wa-ha-ha-nie, his Indian name) who had been convicted for robbery be paroled to Krehbiel. Krehbiel agreed to take Smith to his farm in Kansas in order to teach the Indian boy how to work.<sup>3</sup> It is not known how long Smith remained on the Krehbiel farm, but the experience must have proven beneficial to both parties. Krehbiel himself noted that this event gave birth to another phase of Mennonite work with the Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians: the off-reservation industrial training of Indian youth. This development blossomed into a recognized Indian contract school, the Halstead Indian Industrial School, which operated at Halstead from 1885 to 1896.

The Halstead Indian school has been only briefly mentioned within General Conference Mission literature.<sup>4</sup> Yet its story bears telling for two reasons.

First, it was an important element in the General Conference mission to the Native American: significant financial investment occurred, numerous Mennonites sacrificed their time and efforts, and over one hundred Indian youths were affected by their attendance at the school. Second, the Halstead school uniquely represents the interaction of Mennonite missions with United States Indian policy. It is the intention of this paper to chronicle the relatively short history of the Halstead school, and to place the existence of this school within the broader context of American Indian policy. The evidence suggests that Mennonite work with the Cheyenne and Arapaho was not formulated and conducted solely with evangelical objectives in mind, but that it significantly paralleled the Indian reform movement of the later nineteenth century which attempted to totally acculturate Native Americans.

In the final two decades of the nineteenth century, Indian policy was largely shaped by an influential body of religious reformers. This reform movement had its roots in President Ulysses S. Grant's "peace policy," a policy which attempted to diminish violent confrontations between whites and Indians. Through the utilization of religious organizations and leaders, the government hoped to provide Indians more humane treatment.<sup>5</sup> To implement this shift in emphasis, a ten-person Board of Indian Commissioners comprised of all Protestant clergymen was created by Congress in 1869. Its function was to oversee the Department of Interior's Indian Bureau. Congress also shifted control of all Indian agencies to the religious denominations working on each reservation.<sup>6</sup> Although the 1870s was anything but amicable between whites and Indians, religious reformers

became an integral part of the Indian policy-making process.

Several important reform organizations came into existence during the early 1880s to further enhance the position and power of the Indian reform movement. In 1882, Herbert Welsh helped establish the Indian Rights Association and became its first secretary and primary spokesman.<sup>7</sup> In the following year, the initial Lake Mohonk Conference of the Friends of the Indian convened. This gathering at the Lake Mohonk resort in New York was hosted by its Quaker proprietor, Albert Smiley. Each fall representatives (primarily patrician and all Protestant) from various reform organizations and religious denominations, met with federal officials to discuss and to formulate Indian policy. Although it enjoyed no official status, the Mohonk Conference became the mouthpiece for the mainstream of Indian reform during this period.<sup>8</sup>

These Indian reformers were united in the belief that United States government policy should be designed to "civilize and Christianize" the Indian. Their goal was to assimilate the Indian into American society, and in so doing, destroy any vestige of Indian culture. Representative of this sentiment is the following quote from the Statement of Objectives of the Indian Rights Association:

The Association seeks to secure the civilization of the Indians . . . and to prepare the way for their absorption into the common life of our own people. The Indian as a savage member of a tribal organization cannot survive, ought not to survive, the aggressions of civilization, but his individual redemption from heathenism and ignorance, his transformation from the condition of a savage nomad to that of an industrious American citizen, is abundantly possible.<sup>9</sup>



Specific measures were outlined by the reformers in order to achieve this objective. Carl Schurz, Secretary of the Interior under President Rutherford B. Hays, wrote the following in 1881:

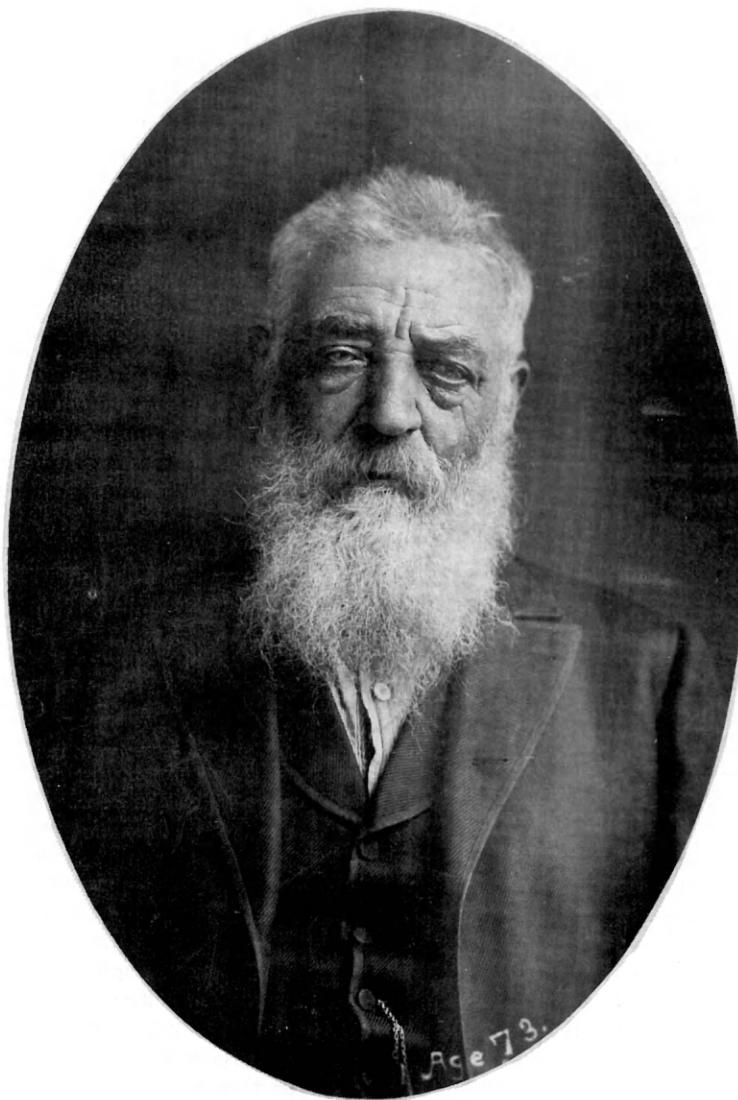
To fit the Indians for their ultimate absorption in the great body of American citizenship, three things are suggested by common sense as well as philosophy.

1. That they be taught to work by making work profitable and attractive to them.
2. That they be educated, especially the youth of both sexes.
3. That they be individualized in the possession of property by settlement in severalty with a fee simple title, after which the lands they do not use may be disposed of for general settlement.<sup>10</sup>

In the following decade each of these points—the work ethic, increased educational efforts, and conversion of reservations to individually-owned land—was adopted as official government policy.

It was in the context of this reform movement that the Mennonites began their mission work with the Cheyenne and Arapaho. Although no evidence exists that the General Conference Mennonite Board of Missions or any of its members actively participated within any Indian reform organizations, the Board, its missionaries, and at least some of the church membership were aware of these reform goals and objectives. *The Mennonite*, the General Conference Mennonite Church monthly, included several reports that indicate an awareness of the reform agenda. For example, A. B. Shelly, Secretary of the Mennonite Board of Missions, attended and submitted a report to the annual meeting of the Board of Indian Commissioners which met in Washington D.C. in January 1888.<sup>11</sup> Missionary H. R. Voth was also aware of the reform movement. In a report which protested government policy of providing food rations and supplies to the Indians which he believed fostered laziness and dependency, Voth stated that the “. . . Mohawk [sic] Conference and Indian Rights Association protest this same thing.” He urged the Mission Board to join these organizations.<sup>12</sup>

Mennonite missionaries and leaders were cognizant of recognized Indian reform measures, and the goals and objectives of their mission work with the Cheyenne and Arapaho were consistent with the reformers platform: individualized land, the work ethic, and education. From its inception, the Mis-



*Christian Krehbiel.*

sion leaders firmly believed that the Indians should abandon their communal life for individual farms. As early as 1883 Missionary Samuel Haury endeavored to establish a colony of Indian farmers at Cantonment, an effort which proved only marginally successful.<sup>13</sup> Several Mennonite missionaries worked specifically to assist Indians in agricultural endeavors. Echoing the reformers' demands to end reservation handouts, Voth noted that the government should . . . “[give them] their own land, supply them with farming implements, etc., and place over them capable farm superintendents and then say to the able-bodied now, ‘swim or sink!’”<sup>14</sup> Hand in hand with the establishment of Indians on individual farms was the promotion of a strong work

ethic, a belief totally in line with Mennonite thought. Haury wrote in 1886, “In civilizing these Indians, it is of great importance that the rising generations learn to work.”<sup>15</sup> D. R. Krehbiel, assistant to his father, Christian, at Halstead Indian Industrial School, stated, “To the Mennonite it would be as strange to forget to work as to forget to read the Bible; their life would be incomplete without either.”<sup>16</sup> Clearly, the Mennonites viewed work as more than simply a means to a livelihood. Industrious work was perceived as an essential trait of a Godly, civilized Christian, and as such, the Mennonites desired to instill within the Indians the value of toiling “by the sweat of the brow.”

The reform movement recognized

that education was the key to "civilizing and Christianizing" the Indians. Mennonites, too, understood the value of education as a means of acculturation. Foremost was the task of converting the Indian students to Christianity. Missionary S. S. Haury stated, "I do believe that the Indian can never be truly and permanently civilized without the Christian religion. Show me an Indian who has accepted Christ as his personal Savior, and I will show you an Indian radically civilized."<sup>17</sup> Yet salvation alone would not prepare the Indian for a "civilized" life. Academic training and, more importantly, industrial training were necessary ingredients to achieve acculturation, preferably away from the negative influence of the reservation. Off-reservation industrial schools for Indian students were extolled by the reformers during the 1880s and the value of extracting students from their tribal communities was not lost on the Mennonite missionaries. It was this conviction that caused them to begin sending Indian youths to Kansas "... where they could be educated and trained to work while they were away from the influence of their former associates in the camps."<sup>18</sup>

In the fall of 1883, one year after Christian Krehbiel brought the young Indian, Smith, to his farm, three promising Indian boys were enrolled in the Halstead Seminary, a Mennonite normal school.<sup>19</sup> The following June, Haury transported eighteen Indian boys to work on Mennonite farms during the summer months. According to Krehbiel, "the purpose was to bring these young Indians under Christian influence and to teach them how to work."<sup>20</sup> This practice of transplanting Indian youths to farms was identical to Captain Richard Pratt's famous "outing system" at Carlisle Institute in Pennsylvania. Reformers and government officials were highly impressed with this method of Indian acculturation.<sup>21</sup> The success of these initial efforts encouraged Mennonite leaders to continue and expand this venture. Ten young Indians spent the 1884-85 school year in Kansas, five studied at the Seminary and five worked on Mennonite farms.<sup>22</sup>

In the fall of 1885, the satisfactory results of these efforts prompted Mennonite leaders to embark on a bolder endeavor, the establishment of an Indian school in Halstead. An agreement was finalized between the Kansas Conference of the General Conference Mennonite Church, which operated the

Halstead Seminary, and the Mission Board, to begin an Indian school which would share facilities and some functions with the Seminary, but would maintain separate classes and faculty.<sup>23</sup> To support the school the Mission Board accepted for the first time a government contract for the accommodation and education of fifteen Indian students at \$150 per child per year. By December, nineteen Indian students (fifteen in the Indian school, four in the Seminary) were permanently located at Halstead. The school hired Peter Krehbiel, brother of Christian, as teacher of the Indians. In a letter to Rev. Carl van der Smissen, secretary of the Mission Board, Krehbiel wrote that arithmetic, grammar, spelling, geography, handwriting, drawing, singing, and of course, Bible study, comprised the curriculum.<sup>24</sup> Boarding the Indian students in the town of Halstead afforded little opportunity to fulfill an important objective of the school, industrial training, so in March 1886, thirty acres were rented for the Indian students to work.<sup>25</sup>

The 1886-87 school year began in August with fourteen Indian students in attendance. However, the agreement between the Indian school and the Seminary was not satisfactory. A committee reported to the Kansas Convention of the General Conference Church in October 1886, that the agreement was beneficial to neither the Indians nor the Seminary students. It is interesting to note that the Seminary teachers believed that much of the disciplinary problem stemmed from too little physical exercise (manual labor) for the Indian youths. As a result they were difficult to control and brought discredit to the Seminary. Furthermore, the Indians were unhappy because they observed Seminary students with fewer restrictions and less supervision. The Convention concluded that the Indian school should be relocated to a rural setting.<sup>26</sup>

Most of the Board of Missions as well as Samuel Haury were in favor of closing the Indian school at that time.<sup>27</sup> However, Christian Krehbiel, who had originally promoted this venture, continued to believe that an off-reservation industrial boarding school was the best means of preparing the young Indians for civilized life. Consequently, in an October 14, 1886 letter to van der Smissen, he offered to move the school to his farm, one mile from Halstead. The following conditions were pro-

posed: 1) with the Mission Board's financial assistance, he would build a school building and dormitory for the boys while his own home, recently enlarged, would serve as a dormitory for the girls, 2) the Mission Board would be responsible for necessary dormitory and school supplies; 3) the Mission Board would turn over to Krehbiel all monies received from the government. In return, Krehbiel would provide for the teachers, helpers, food, clothing and other provisions for the Indian students. Krehbiel further stipulated that he would serve as superintendent, his wife would be matron, and that he alone would choose the teachers for the school.<sup>28</sup> This proposal, already approved by the Kansas Conference, was also approved by the Mission Board. By the spring of 1887 the building was completed and in April sixteen Indians moved to their new quarters.<sup>29</sup> The Halstead Indian Industrial School at Krehbieltown, as it came to be called, was born.

It is not surprising that Christian Krehbiel undertook this venture. Born in Wierhof, Germany in 1832, he, along with his family, emigrated to America in 1851 in order to avoid military service. The family settled in Iowa where Christian married Susanna Ruth in 1858. Nine sons and three daughters grew to adulthood. Two sons, Daniel and Henry, served in the Indian school. Krehbiel was active in many facets of the General Conference Church. After moving to Illinois in 1860, he was chosen to be a minister and elder, posts he held for forty-five years. Krehbiel was instrumental in founding the Foreign Missions Board in 1872 and served as its president for twenty-four years. He also founded and directed the Mennonite Board of Guardians which assisted Mennonite immigration to Kansas. In 1879 he moved his family to Halstead where he continued his active role in church affairs. As a farmer, businessman, and pastor of the Halstead Mennonite Church, Krehbiel was a prominent member of the Halstead community until his death in 1909.<sup>30</sup>

The Halstead Indian Industrial School operated on the Christian Krehbiel farm from 1887 to 1896. The Indian Bureau contracted with the Mission Board to educate and house a specified number of Indian students for a twelve month period. Students were primarily recruited from the Mennonite schools in Indian Territory. No special



*The Christian Krehbiel Family at Krehbieltown near Halstead.*

academic or personal qualifications seemed to be required of prospective students. Susanna Krehbiel noted the anxiousness of Indian children to return to their families and the reluctance of Indian parents to part for long periods of time with their children.<sup>31</sup> Apparently, the only qualification was the willingness on the part of the parents and children to attend the Krehbieltown school. Prospective students were medically inspected and approved by the agency doctor and agent before embarking for Kansas.

Available records indicate that the ages of the Indian youths ranged from nine to nineteen. In most years boys outnumbered girls by approximately two to one, probably to facilitate the labor needs of the farm. The government allowed students to remain at the Halstead School for up to three years.<sup>32</sup> The following chart indicates the total number of students enrolled and the average attendance for each school year.<sup>33</sup>

School Year	Enrollment	Average Attendance
1885-86	NA*	15
1886-87	22	16
1887-88	NA*	22
1888-89	29	26
1889-90	NA*	28
1890-91	36	32
1891-92	33	31
1892-93	31	31
1893-94	29	24
1894-95	22	22
1895-96	23	18

\*Statistics not available

In addition to Christian Krehbiel and his wife, two teachers were employed, one for academic subjects and one for industrial training. A cook, seamstress, and a laundress, along with Indian girl assistants, aided Mrs. Krehbiel. Eight full-time employees as well as voluntary help from Krehbiel's sons operated the school.

The Halstead school was a branch of the Mennonite mission work in Indian Territory. Quarterly attendance and financial statements were submitted to the Cheyenne and Arapaho Agency through the superintendent of the Mennonite mission. Contract money from the government was then sent to the Board of Mission and given to Krehbiel. In some respects the Halstead school remained detached from the main mission effort to the Indians. *The Mennonite* printed reports and letters from the missionaries in Indian Territory almost every month. However, reports from the Halstead school were only intermittently included within this denominational periodical. The fact that the school was primarily a private operation perhaps contributed to this independence. Relations between the Halstead and Indian Territory mission personnel did appear to be very congenial and supportive, based upon reports and correspondence.

In a report by Christian Krehbiel published in the Commissioner of Indian Affairs' annual reports for 1890, a clear statement of the goals and objectives of the Halstead Indian Industrial School was stated:

We try to treat the children as we treat our own children, and we try to give them a good education in the language

of our country, in all branches that are being taught in a public school. We also endeavor to acquaint them with the duties and privileges of a citizen of this United States, inculcating in them such patriotism as will make them worthy citizens of this country. Teaching them all kinds of farm and house work in such a manner that they will perform such work willingly and readily is another thing we lay great stress upon. But realizing that all this work will be a structure erected on sand if it is not built on the solid foundation of true Christianity, we make it a principle point to teach Christianity and its great principles as laid down in the Bible.<sup>34</sup>

A regimented schedule was maintained to achieve those goals. School was conducted both in the morning and afternoon during the winter months and only half-days during the heavy work months. No school was conducted during July and August. In 1891 John W. Richardson, a district superintendent of education, inspected the school and reported that it was well equipped and that the instruction in the English language was surprisingly excellent.<sup>35</sup> Religious education and training remained an important element in the school program. Bible lessons and devotions were conducted daily. Attendance at Sunday School and worship service at the Halstead Mennonite Church was required.<sup>36</sup>

Industrial training, however, was ". . . the most commendable feature of this little school," according to Richardson.<sup>37</sup> He noted that ". . . the boys are not taught simply *how* to work but the *business* of farming is practically presented."<sup>38</sup> The Indians assisted Krehbiel in the cultivation of his section of land and a half-section of his sons.<sup>39</sup> According to Department of In-



*Left. Four Indian students, back row, left to right, Maggie Leonard (first person baptized by General Conference missionaries in Indian Territory), Blanch High, Lucretia Arrow, and, front Annie Porsal. Right. Unidentified male student at the Indian Industrial School.*



dian Affairs reports, the school officially farmed 400 acres, making it the third largest industrial training farm for Indians, next to the Chilocco Indian Training School (600 acres) and the Hampton Institute (450 acres). Production for one year, 1891-92 was reported as 3,000 bushels of corn, 4,300 bushels of wheat, 439 bushels of vegetables and fruit, twenty-five tons of hay, and 1,900 pounds of butter and cheese.<sup>40</sup> Krehbiel intended that the Indian boys also learn the satisfaction of reward for their labor so each year he set aside some land for the boys to work and share in the profits.<sup>41</sup> Some of the older students received wages for their work, particularly in the summer months.

The Indian girls were trained in domestic duties. They assisted in gardening, and some farm work, but more importantly, according to Richardson, “. . . they occupy the sitting room with the family, do their own cooking, assisted by a competent cook, mend their clothing, and are taught to ‘cut and fit’ [sewing] and in short, are trained as a well-to-do intelligent farm lady would train her daughters.”<sup>42</sup>

The Krehbiels evidenced a parental concern for the Indians and attempted to provide the Indian students with a family-like environment. According to Richardson, discipline was administered fairly, although some of the boys did run away because of being punished.<sup>43</sup> The health of the students was of continuous concern. Consumption (tuberculosis) was the most common cause of serious illness and death. Susanna Krehbiel noted in 1889 that seven of the first eighteen students brought to the school died from this ailment.<sup>44</sup>

By means of academic, religious, and industrial training, the Halstead Indian Industrial School attempted to “civilize and Christianize” the young Indian students. According to John Richardson, the only known government official to inspect and visit the institution, “[t]hese people are doing a good work and deserve to be encouraged.”<sup>45</sup> If one can judge from letters written by the students, they enjoyed and appreciated their Halstead experience. One wrote, “The greatest thing that we want to learn is how to talk good english, and

above all, too, to love Jesus . . . I hope the Indians will soon find out that their way is all different from the white man’s way, and I hope they will turn at once from their old ways and take the white man’s ways.”<sup>46</sup> Another confessed, “I pray the Lord every time when I don’t think good.”<sup>47</sup> At least these letters indicated that the Indian children knew what was expected of them.

Despite these statements, there is little tangible evidence that Indian students at Halstead were successfully converted and assimilated. Christian Krehbiel stated that fourteen Indian students were baptized at the Halstead Mennonite Church, but further noted that “. . . [a]llas, many returned to their Indian ways.”<sup>48</sup> This falling away of “converted” Indian youth also bothered Mission Board secretary, A. B. Shelly, who wrote in his annual report for 1895:

One sad and in a great measure discouraging feature is the fact that many of the young Indians after having attended school for a while and having given great promise for the future, among them some who made an open profession of



religion, go back to the camps and ultimately fall back in their heathen mode of living.<sup>49</sup>

The Halstead Indian Industrial School was a casualty of a political/religious controversy concerning Indian policy which pitted Protestant against Roman Catholic. In the latter 1880s and 1890s the central issue was control of Indian education. The controversy began with the "peace policy" of the 1870s. The fact that no Catholics were chosen to the Board of Indian Commissioners and that only eight agencies were assigned to them resulted in animosity. Nevertheless, the Catholics expanded their mission work with the American Indians by establishing the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions in 1874.<sup>50</sup> Under the able direction of Father Joseph A. Stephan, the Bureau increased the number of Indian boarding schools from two in 1874 to eighteen in 1883.<sup>51</sup> Government funding for Catholic Indian schools increased from \$65,220 in 1884 to \$347,672 in 1889.<sup>52</sup>

The existence and financing of off-reservation denominational Indian contract schools became central issues at the Lake Mohonk Conferences. In 1888 Rev. Lyman Abbott noted that of fifty religious schools supported by the government, thirty-eight were Roman Catholic.<sup>53</sup> The Mohonk reformers condemned the government's policy of supporting both sectarian and government schools among the Indians claiming that the former violated separation of church and state. The Protestant reformers argued that all schools must promote Americanism and that Catholic schools among the Indians were promoting Romanism.<sup>54</sup> Rev. James King, a prominent reformer, in a speech at the Mohonk Conference of 1892 stated, "In this Columbian year it becomes us to remember that our civilization is not Latin, because God did not permit North America to be settled and controlled by that civilization. The Hugenot, the Hollander, and the Puritan created our civilization."<sup>55</sup> To these Indian reformers, Americanism was synonymous with Protestantism. As they, the Protestants, operated only a few contract schools, Halstead among them, and as they did control the leadership of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, they lobbied for the termination of religious Indian contract schools. Despite strong opposition from Roman Catholics, the Protestant reformers "won the day." As a first step in the gradual abolishment

of religious Indian contract schools, Congress mandated a twenty percent cut in appropriations for the 1895-96 school year.<sup>56</sup> (Nonsectarian off-reservation Indian contract schools such as those at Chilocco and Carlisle were not affected by these cuts. The growth of those schools were, in fact, encouraged by the Protestant reformers.)

Mennonite leaders were no doubt aware of this controversy but did not openly comment until the early months of 1896. In the January edition of *The Mennonite*, it was reported that of the total of \$453,505 spent on contract schools, \$359,215 went to Roman Catholic institutions. "Truly the Church of Rome has no cause of complaint in this particular," the report commented.<sup>57</sup> In March 1896, Mission Board secretary, A. B. Shelly stated in *The Mennonite* that Protestant churches had been refusing money from the government because of the Roman Catholics. He did not blame the government, but rather the Catholic Church for abusing and taking advantage of the government, and recommended that continued funding be "speedily abolished."<sup>58</sup>

Congress continued to terminate religious contract schools. Appropriations for the 1896-97 year were reduced by fifty percent. The Halstead Indian Industrial School was among the twenty-five schools which received no contract. (Thirty-eight schools continued to receive government money, including two Protestant schools.)<sup>59</sup> In his annual report for 1896, Shelly stated:

The Indian Contract School was continued until the close of this past school year. A new contract for another year had been offered by the Indian Department, but was refused on our part, partly on account of prevailing sentiment among our own people, as well as among the Protestant churches of our country in general, against supporting a system of Indian education which has been sadly abused for selfish and improper ends. Our Indian Contract School has thus been discontinued and the buildings used for this purpose have since been changed into an orphanage.<sup>60</sup>

It is not clear whether a contract for the Halstead school was not issued by the government for 1896-97, or if one was refused by the Mission Board as Shelly suggests. What is clear is that the Mission Board was willing to close the Halstead school in order to facilitate the termination of Roman Catholic Indian contract schools.

It is questionable whether the Halstead school would have continued even if the Mission Board had agreed to receive contracts for 1896-97. Financial pressures were felt by Christian Krehbiel as government funding declined. In November, 1895, Shelly reported that the cost of operating the school for 1894-95 was \$4900. Of that amount, almost \$2000 came from the farm and from Krehbiel himself. Only \$30 were donated by friends of the school. Shelly commented that ". . . [b]y this it is seen that the school, instead of being a pecuniary gain to Brother Krehbiel calls for many financial offerings on his part, besides causing him a great amount of labor, care and anxiety all the time."<sup>61</sup> Enthusiasm and support for the school seemed to have waned on several fronts. Perhaps Krehbiel, too, grew weary of the pressures and frustrations. He remarked in his autobiography, written in 1906, "He who wants to learn patience should take over an Indian school" and "How much self-denial this [Indian school] cost us."<sup>62</sup>

The Halstead Indian Industrial school was born, thrived, struggled, then died within the great era of Indian reform. It was the desire of the reformers and the United States government during the last two decades of the nineteenth century to bring the Indian into the mainstream of American life. They believed that the Indians were capable of transformation to a civilized and Christianized people like their white "benefactors." Historian Francis Paul Prucha noted that Christians believed it was their duty to speed up the process of acculturation by various means, ". . . the chief of which were instruction in agriculture and education in Christian schools."<sup>63</sup> The Mennonites fully supported this vision and the Halstead school was a bold experiment to achieve that end. Every point on the reformer's agenda was followed by the Mennonite educators: the conversion of their souls, instruction in academics and industrial training, extraction from the reservation, and the promotion of patriotism and the English language. Eventually they even joined the movement in surrendering the education of Indian youths to the government.<sup>64</sup>

But the efforts of the Indian reform movement to acculturate the American Indian fell short of its intended long-range goal, and the Mennonite effort at Halstead was no exception. The well-intentioned goals of the Mennonite

educators, as well as the entire reform movement, were based upon two faulty assumptions. First, they erroneously believed that because the Indian culture should be transformed in one respect—religion—it should be transformed in every respect. Second, the idea that acculturation could be achieved so rapidly was also incorrect. As a result, the efforts to plant the seeds of American culture in the hearts and minds of Indian students quickly blossomed but frequently died.

It is perhaps not fair to judge the efforts of these early Mennonite missionaries and educators too harshly. The sincerity of their motives is unquestioned and the sacrifices they made are commendable. In many ways the Mennonites were on the cutting edge of the progressive Indian reform movement, in deed, if not in overt leadership. However, it is clear that they, as with all the Protestant reformers of that era, failed to understand the complex cultural dimension of Indian/white relations. Mennonite historian James Juhnke's conclusion of the Mennonite missionary movement could be said of the entire reform movement:

The tragedy was that the best Mennonites had to offer—education, medical aid, agricultural development, and the gospel of a God of love—was inextricably bound up with a massive political and cultural confrontation which turned the good news, for the most part, into bad news.<sup>65</sup>

#### ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup>Christian Krehbiel, *Prairie Pioneer* (Newton, Kansas: Faith and Life Press, 1961), p. 110.  
<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*  
<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 130.  
<sup>4</sup>See Lois Barrett, *The Vision and the Reality: The Story of Home Missions in the General Conference Mennonite Church* (Newton, Kansas: Faith and Life Press, 1983), pp. 15, 16; James



C. Juhnke, "General Conference Mennonite Missions to the American Indians in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* (April 1980): 125; Edmund G. Kaufman, "Mennonite Missions Among the Oklahoma Indians," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* 40 (Spring 1962): 44; H. P. Krehbiel, *The History of the General Conference of the Mennonites of North America* (Saint Louis: A. Wiebusch and Son Printing Co., 1898), pp. 306, 307.

<sup>5</sup>Francis Paul Prucha, *American Indian Policy in Crisis: Christian Reformers and the Indian, 1865-1900* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976), p. 31.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 33-43.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 138, 139.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 143, 144.

<sup>9</sup>Indian Rights Association, "Statement of Objectives," in *Americanizing the American Indians: Writings by the "Friends of the Indian," 1880-1900*, ed. Francis Paul Prucha (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1973), pp. 42, 43.

<sup>10</sup>Carl Schurz, "Present Aspects of the Indian Problem," in *Americanizing the American Indians*, ed. Prucha, p. 17.

<sup>11</sup>*The Mennonite* 3 (March 1888): 91.

<sup>12</sup>*The Mennonite* 4 (May 1888): 123.

<sup>13</sup>Juhnke, "Mennonite Missions to the American Indians," p. 125.

<sup>14</sup>*The Mennonite* 4 (May 1888): 123.

<sup>15</sup>S. S. Haury to Capt. J. M. Lee, Agent, 3 September 1886, Cheyenne and Arapaho Letterbooks, Vol. 15, Oklahoma Historical Society, p. 276.

<sup>16</sup>*The Mennonite* 10 (July 1895): 83.

<sup>17</sup>*The Mennonite* 1 (January 1886): 59.

<sup>18</sup>*The Mennonite* 3 (January 1888): 53.

<sup>19</sup>H. H. Ewert to Rev. C. J. van der Smissen, 4 June 1884, Christian Krehbiel Papers, Mennonite Library and Archives, North Newton, Kansas.

<sup>20</sup>C. Krehbiel, *Prairie Pioneer*, p. 130.

<sup>21</sup>U. S. Department of Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior for the Fiscal Year Ended 30 June 1890*, p. 30.

<sup>22</sup>*Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1885, p. 82.

<sup>23</sup>Minutes of the Kansas Conference, General Conference Mennonite Church, October 12-14, 1885, p. 10.

<sup>24</sup>Peter Krehbiel to Rev. C. J. van der Smissen, 6 February 1886, Christian Krehbiel Papers, MLA.

<sup>25</sup>A. B. Shelly to Rev. C. J. van der Smissen, 31 March 1886, Christian Krehbiel Papers, MLA.

<sup>26</sup>Minutes of the Kansas Conference, October 11-13, 1886.

<sup>27</sup>H. P. Krehbiel, *The History of the General Conference*, pp. 306, 307. Reference to Haury's

opposition to the Halstead Indian School is included in a letter from Christian Krehbiel to Rev. C. J. van der Smissen, 14 October 1886, Christian Krehbiel Papers, MLA.

<sup>28</sup>Christian Krehbiel to van der Smissen, 14 October 1886, MLA.

<sup>29</sup>H. P. Krehbiel, *The History of the General Conference*, p. 307.

<sup>30</sup>*The Mennonite Encyclopedia*, 1973, s. v. "Krehbiel, Christian."

<sup>31</sup>*The Mennonite* 4 (February 1889): 65.

<sup>32</sup>Vouchers and Attendance Records of Halstead Indian Industrial School, 1884, 1886, 1888, 1889, 1890, 1891, 1892, Christian Krehbiel Papers, MLA. Only the 1884 and 1886 records included ages.

<sup>33</sup>These statistics are extracted from *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1885-1896.

<sup>34</sup>*Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1890, p. 185.

<sup>35</sup>John W. Richardson to T. J. Morgan, 5 December 1891, Christian Krehbiel Papers, MLA.

<sup>36</sup>Christian Krehbiel to van der Smissen, 14 October 1886, Christian Krehbiel Papers, MLA.

<sup>37</sup>Richardson to Morgan, 5 December 1891, Christian Krehbiel Papers, MLA.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup>*Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1892, p. 768.

<sup>41</sup>Account Book, Halstead Indian Industrial School, June 30, 1893 to June 30, 1894, Christian Krehbiel Papers, MLA.

<sup>42</sup>Richardson to Morgan, 5 December 1891, Christian Krehbiel Papers, MLA.

<sup>43</sup>"The Indian Industrial School," *The Halstead Independent*, 12 August 1937, p. 32.

<sup>44</sup>*The Mennonite* 4 (February 1889): 65.

<sup>45</sup>Richardson to Morgan, 5 December 1891, Christian Krehbiel Papers, MLA.

<sup>46</sup>*The Mennonite* 3 (February 1888): 71.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup>C. Krehbiel, *Prairie Pioneer*, p. 132.

<sup>49</sup>*The Mennonite* 11 (February 1896): 38.

<sup>50</sup>Francis Paul Prucha, *The Churches and the Indian Schools, 1888-1912* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979), p. 2.

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup>Harry Sievers, "The Catholic Indian School Issue and the Presidential Election of 1892," *The Catholic Historical Review* 38 (July 1952): 146.

<sup>53</sup>Lyman Abbott, "Education for the Indian," in *Americanizing the American Indian*, ed. Prucha, p. 209.

<sup>54</sup>Prucha, *The Churches and the Indian Schools*, p. 24.

<sup>55</sup>James M. King, "Sectarian Contract Schools," in *Americanizing the American Indians*, ed. Prucha, p. 291.

<sup>56</sup>Prucha, *The Churches and the Indian Schools*, pp. 30, 32.

<sup>57</sup>*The Mennonite* 11 (January 1896): 30.

<sup>58</sup>*The Mennonite* 11 (March 1896): 46.

<sup>59</sup>*Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1896, pp. 14-16.

<sup>60</sup>*The Mennonite* 11 (November 1895): 14.

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup>C. Krehbiel, *Prairie Pioneer*, p. 131.

<sup>63</sup>Francis Paul Prucha, *Indians in American Society From the Revolutionary War to the Present* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), p. 10.

<sup>64</sup>The Mennonite on-reservation boarding schools at Darlington and Cantonment closed in 1898 and 1901, respectively. Barrett, *The Vision and the Reality*, pp. 22, 23.

<sup>65</sup>Juhnke, "Mennonite Missions to the American Indians," p. 134.

*Krehbieltown, as later expanded to serve as an orphanage.*

# An Interview with Frank Kropf

Edited by Berniece Kropf Schmucker

## Introduction

Frank Kropf, the oldest son of pioneer parents, was born in 1886 near Garden City, Mo. He came with his parents to Oregon in 1889. They came by train in an immigrant car to Portland, Oregon, and then they settled in the area near Hubbard, Oregon, where they lived in a log house and cleared land for farms. There was a large Old Order Amish congregation but no Mennonite church in the area. In 1893 a Mennonite church was organized and Frank's father was ordained as a minister of that church. In 1911 the family moved 75 miles south to Harrisburg, Oregon and started a church there.

Frank Kropf had a large family and was concerned for their spiritual welfare and for the work of the church. He was a farmer and builder. He supervised community projects and the first building of the Mennonite Home for the Aged near Albany, Oregon. He also helped to build churches in various places, a task which he enjoyed very much. He had a clear mind until his death at the age of ninety-two.

His daughter and granddaughter recorded interviews with him to preserve some history of the past. His voice in the recording is a treasure to the family. The following is a small excerpt from the interview:

## Interview

KROPF: Well, we built the church in 1915. In 1916 Uncle Sam got mixed up in the war. Our services were all in German because we had two sisters in the church who couldn't understand English, Pete Neuschwander's wife and Chris Widmer's wife. Neither one of them could talk English or understand English, so the services were all in Ger-

man. Well, we moved in the community, hadn't lived here very long, and they didn't know anything about non-resistant people, and they thought it strange that we were not interested in the war, and in going to war. Then, since we all spoke German they accused us of being German sympathizers, and we weren't. Now Widmer was probably more than he should have been, but the rest of us weren't.

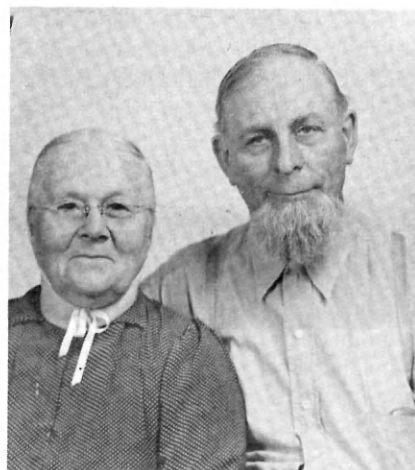
INTERVIEWER: Part of it was because you spoke German?

KROPF: Yes, because we spoke German. Old Cersovski could talk German too, and they branded him the same and he was a Catholic. Anyhow, they had it kind of in for us. Old George Wilhelm was the banker and he had to raise money for the war in war bonds. People had to buy war bonds. We felt that we couldn't buy war bonds, we'd be helping the war. Well, that made it pretty bad. About that time the government made a ruling that we could take government bonds instead of war bonds. When they did that, we told Wilhelm, if that's okay with the government, we'll do that. So we did that, but still there was that feeling.

Well, one morning when I got up, I looked up to the church house and there was a yellow streak painted around the church house, on the siding boards. You see, when you didn't go along with the war, you were yellow. We went up and looked and here they had bored holes in the two front doors, a big hole in each door, and they had a steel chain through there and a new padlock. Locked us up. There was a porch but no roof above the doors. They had a one by twelve, about two feet long, with

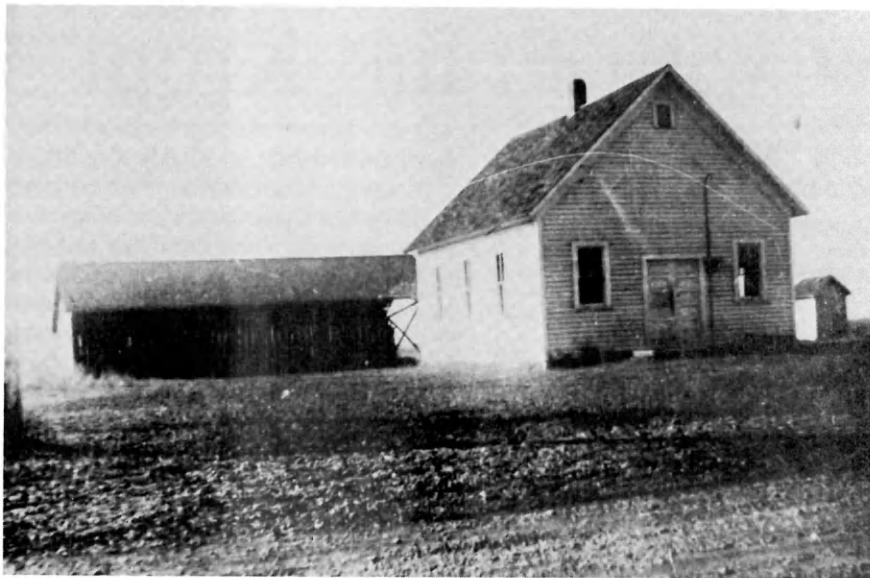
large letters written on it and nailed above the door, "This Church is closed for the duration of the war." Then they had another board of the same size above that and had two flags on long sticks nailed on that board, and there was some writing on that but I forgot what it was.

Well, the question was, what should we do? It seemed the feelings were quite intense. Should we go back to having church and Sunday school in the homes again or should we unlock the doors and just leave everything and have it in the church? It was Tuesday morning when we saw what was done during the night. Well, our group was very small at that time, too, and we just didn't know what to do. Saturday morning Father came walking up here and came into the yard where I was doing some carpenter work. He said that we should make a decision today about the church. But what should we do? We were afraid that they might burn the church house down if we'd open it up. So I said, "Let's walk up to the church house." So we walked up to the church house and looked things over, but we didn't know



*Frank and Annie Kropf.*





*Harrisburg Mennonite Church, built in 1915.*

what to do. Finally I walked over to the door again. I had my carpenter apron on and had my hammer with me. I took the padlock, a new steel padlock, in my hand like this, looking at it. I guess the Lord had a hand in it and I took my hammer and hit the padlock. I hit it the second time a little harder and that steel padlock flew all to pieces; the doors were unlocked. I said, "We've got the answer. We'll leave everything just as it is and have our services in the church." They never bothered us after that. The church was still that way after the war and Wilhelm, the one who had it put on, said to me, "It's a disgrace to have that, why don't you paint it over?" And I said, "I guess the fellows that put it on can paint it over if they want to!"

But things went from bad to worse. That was at the time when my sister Idy died and my wife almost died. One evening she was almost gone, and very slow getting better. The doctor suggested that we put up a tent in the yard between the house and the driveway, and sleep in the tent at night. The fresh air might help her regain her strength, so we did that. There were a bunch of rowdies, and they would come along in the evening after people had gone to bed. They'd yell and holler and yelp. When they would get even they'd shoot. And the bullets, time and again, would hit on this side of the tent in the grass, or on the other side, and sometimes close to where our heads were. More than once that happened. They'd go down to Father's place, about  $\frac{1}{8}$  mile

north of us, and shoot in there in the bedroom windows and there were beds right there by the windows. I think I could show you the marks on the walls yet where the bullets scraped the walls.

It went on like that and in 1918 they had another drive to raise money. It was near the close of the war so the drive was to take victory bonds, hundred-dollar victory bonds. The others were also hundred-dollar bonds. They said, "You'll have to take these, you can't take the others." We said, "No, we can't do that." In September, on a Monday morning, I went in to the bank to make a deposit. Nobody was in the bank but the cashier, Wilhelm, himself. He said, "Now you'll have to take them, the Albany church is taking them." I said, "Well, I was in touch with them yesterday, and no one had taken them." "You'll have to take them, they're taking them." I said, "I have to go to Albany this afternoon, and I'll see."

I went to Albany in the afternoon and while I was gone a mob came out. They came first to my father-in-law's place between here and town. My father was the bishop and he was Sunday school superintendent. Two car loads of young husky fellows came. I knew them all. There was a yard fence there and a gate. They didn't go inside the yard. They stopped outside and called to him to come out, so he came out to the fence and then they started in on him. He surmised at once what was plain, that it was a mob. Of course, you don't argue with them and you don't say more than

you absolutely have to. Well, they talked and after a bit they left and didn't do anything!

Then they came here and I was gone. They drove in the lane and they called, and my wife went out and said I was gone, I had gone to Albany. They said, "Well, we'll be back tonight." They drove down to Father's place. There were two cars and eleven men, five in one car and six in the other. There was a yard fence with ivy and a gate. Father went out but stayed on the inside of the fence and talked with them. He didn't say much either, because he knew what it was. They soon left and didn't do anything.

When I came home in the evening, Mom said what had happened and she said they said they'd be back again this evening. She had supper ready, so we ate, and getting about sundown here they came. Just one car came. One big husky fellow got out and the others stayed in the car. He came to the fence, I was on the inside, and he wanted to know why we don't want to fight for the war. Well, I said we don't believe in killing other people. And so he said, "If someone would molest your wife you'd fight!" All I said was, "If there's any killing to be done, somebody else will have to do the killing." That's all I said. The Lord gave me what to say. He jumped in the car and said, "If that's the way you feel about it, you'll have to take the consequences!" and just zoomed out of here like the devil was after him. Now how would you feel going to bed when they talk like that? Well, we came in, had family worship and put the children to bed. We just committed ourselves to the Lord, whatever we'd have, He'd take care of it. We went to bed and went to sleep and they never came back.

We never knew what had taken place, but several years later one of the fellows told my brother Levi, "I'm sorry I was with that gang." But only a few years ago, I found out why they didn't carry out their plans. They were prepared and ready to take us out and tar and feather us, but when they came there was a heavenly being that stood between them and us and they couldn't get ahold of anybody. It happened at all three places. One of the fellows said this many years later. Just a few years ago—not over five years ago I found it out. The angel of the Lord encampeth round about those that fear Him.

Those were some of the experiences that were outstanding.

# No Constantine Here! The Case for the Preservation of the American Heritage of Separation of Church and State

by Robert D. Linder

In the three centuries after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ the movement which had him as its center took form.<sup>1</sup> During this period it won the professed allegiance of the majority of the peoples of the vast Roman Empire, and even spilled over beyond the boundaries of that realm. Here we have one of the most astounding developments in history. Humanly speaking, it should not have happened. No Gallup Poll would have found any basis for it had one been taken on the subject in A.D. 35, or 50, or even 100. No computer would have predicted it on the basis of the data available in the first century. Still, it happened!

However, the struggle to win acceptance in the Empire was long and bloody.<sup>2</sup> In the first two centuries, the persecutions of the Christians varied in intensity from period to period and place to place. At times, these persecutions were ferocious, at others Christians were tolerated reasonably well. On two or three occasions emperors tried to wipe out the fledgling faith, at frightful costs, but for the most part persecution was limited in scope to specific areas.

Things changed in the third and early fourth centuries. The Empire was in a state of decay and the great imperial persecutions of the third and fourth centuries were products of the profound crisis that Roman civilization was then undergoing. As the Empire fell apart, the government looked for scapegoats. Scapegoats usually are some large, easily identifiable minority—and the early Christians filled the bill. Official wrath turned rather naturally and easily on the growing Christian movement, which in imperial eyes appeared more and more to be a "state within a state."

The greatest imperial persecution—and the last—occurred at the beginning of the fourth century under the Emperor

Diocletian (284-305). However, by then Christianity was too strong to be destroyed. Estimates vary regarding the numerical strength of Christians in the Empire by the year 300, ranging from 10 to 60 percent of the population. The best estimate is that Christians probably constituted around one-third of the total population by that time. In any case, the failure of Diocletian's great persecution must have made it evident that the Empire had no choice but to accommodate itself to the Christian faith. A decade after the outbreak of this last great empire-wide persecution, after a period of fearful suffering on the part of Christians everywhere, the first Christian Emperor—Constantine I (306-337)—undertook a dramatic reversal of imperial religious policy. After his conversion in 312, the Empire legalized the faith and endorsed Christianity instead of fighting it. By the close of the fourth century, there is little doubt that the majority of people then living in the Empire were Christians. Rome and Jerusalem had at last come to terms.<sup>3</sup>

But what did this mean for the Christian faith? It had never been a legal religion before 313. Moreover, when it became the sole official faith of the Empire in the last years of the fourth century, it seemed a far cry from the trials and tribulations which had characterized its existence for nearly three hundred years. Many of the old norms no longer seemed to have meaning. Would success spoil Christianity? And how would this affect the future development of the movement founded by Jesus Christ?

The answers to these and related questions centered around the conversion of the Emperor Constantine himself. That conversion occurred at a famous battle fought at the Milvian Bridge, not far from Rome, in the year 312. It was a confrontation between

Constantine and his chief rival for the imperial throne, the possession of which was then under dispute following the abdication of the Emperor Diocletian in 305. Diocletian, in despair of conquering the Christians and bringing order to his Empire, had turned his government over to other men. However, no clear succession had been determined, thus leaving several powerful generals to vie for the imperial crown. Two of these powerful military men were Constantine and Maxentius, who met in battle at the Milvian Bridge in 312.<sup>4</sup>

After a series of successful skirmishes and a brilliant march, Constantine's army came face to face with that of Maxentius as Constantine pressed toward Rome. Constantine had to cross the Milvian Bridge over the Tiber in order to continue his push toward the capital city. It was at this place and in this context that Constantine committed himself to the Christian camp.

Maxentius was relying on pagan magic to bring him victory in the battle. Constantine probably felt the need of a more powerful supernatural force to offset the black arts of his opponent. Years later Constantine told the story of what happened there at the Milvian Bridge to his friend Eusebius, the first historian of the Christian faith. Constantine told Eusebius that after noon of the first day of battle he had a vision. He saw a cross emblazoned in the sky bearing the inscription beneath it: "By This Conquer!" Confirmation of this vision came that night in a dream when God appeared to him with the same sign. Eusebius recorded that God told Constantine to make a likeness of the cross and to carry it with him at all times. Therefore, the next day Constantine ordered a cross fashioned on a pole in order to carry it before the troops into

battle. He also had the letters *chi* and *rho*—the first two letters of Christ's name in Greek—painted on his helmet and on the shields of all his soldiers. And by that sign, he did, in fact, conquer.<sup>5</sup>

In some sense, then, Constantine must have become a Christian on that day in that battle. Constantine marched into Rome and accepted the imperial crown, a crown that he was to wear for the next 25 years. Whatever else may be true, this is certain: Constantine's faith in the effectiveness of the Christian cross and in the power of the Christian God was confirmed! In the following year, Constantine issued the Edict of Milan, which for the first time in history gave Christianity full legal recognition and equal status with all of the other officially recognized religions of the realm.

But was Constantine really converted, or was he only a shrewd politician who nominally embraced the Christian faith for reasons of state? The genuineness of his turning to Christianity has been hotly debated by historians. Some feel that he was nothing more than an irreligious political schemer bent on harnessing the vitality of the Christian faith to the faltering Roman state. Others argue that his conversion was sincere if somewhat superficial—just as the conversions of many others down through the centuries have been sincere if somewhat superficial. The distinguished historian Kenneth Scott Latourette suggests that Constantine himself probably did not know why it was he turned to the Christian faith and certainly did not understand the implications of his commitment. This is also quite possible.<sup>6</sup>

What is clear is that, as time passed, the Emperor came out more and more pronouncedly in favor of Christianity. He gradually granted members of the Christian faith a favored position in the state. For example, Christian clergy no longer had to pay taxes. The Christian Sunday was ordered placed in the same legal position as the pagan feasts. Wills in favor of the church were now permitted. The Emperor had his children instructed in the Christian faith. He also began to keep Christian chaplains at court and supplied Christian chaplains for his army. He called Christians in ever-increasing numbers to the higher administrative posts of the Empire. He himself paid for the construction of church buildings and encouraged other

public officials to do likewise. And he personally took an increasingly active part in the affairs of the church-at-large—including calling and presiding over the great ecumenical council at Nicea in 325.<sup>7</sup>

The impact of Constantine's conversion and his obvious favoritism for the Christian faith were immediate and wide-spread. It was apparent to the people of the Empire that their ruler approved of Christianity and intended to give it a special place among the religions of the realm. The wave of the future was with the Christian faith! Consequently, there was a great influx of new people into the Christian churches, many of them concerned only with imperial favor and not the cause of Christ. Thus, the curse of nominalism came to Christianity—a curse that has been with it ever since. From that day to this, the Christian church has had to deal with people in its ranks who have professed the Christian faith for reasons other than a heartfelt belief in Christ.

So the fourth century was a decisive one for the Christian religion. Constantine had been converted to Christianity. The faith had been legalized. Christianity, in the latter part of the century, had become the official state religion. The feeling among Christians was one of triumph and optimism, and it was, indeed, a watershed in Christian history.

Unfortunately, this victory was also something of a defeat. The victory was accompanied by compromise on a number of fronts. Consider how the faith had changed from the first to the fourth centuries. First, Christianity had gone from poverty and outcast status to a new era of wealth and prestige. No longer could the leaders of the faith say with Peter of old, "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have I will give unto thee." (Acts 3:6) Rather, now they could say: "Silver and gold have we aplenty, and now we understand better the world and the exercise of power therein." Second, it had gone from a strict prohibition against taking part in the shedding of blood to participation in forcible conversion and the condoning of violence. Third, it had gone from being persecuted by the state to support of the state and at least a tacit agreement to help suppress other religions. And, last, it had gone from requiring heartfelt belief for membership in the household of God to acceptance of nominal

confession.<sup>8</sup>

Most important of all, the Christian church now allowed itself to be manipulated by the state for its own purposes. In essence, Christianity became the civil religion of the Roman Empire. The Emperor now uttered certain "God words" acceptable to the Christian community and accorded Christianity general favor in return for Christian loyalty and Christian support of his political programs. The faith became the social glue which held the Empire together. The interests of the Church and the state were blended together until it was impossible to tell where piety ended and patriotism began. In short, Christianity became the public religion of the Roman Empire and much of its spiritual vigor was channeled into supporting the political goals of the state. The God of the Universe had been coopted to become the tribal god of the Roman Empire.

These developments have led many historians to speak of the "Constantinian Fall of the Church." And since the fourth century, the Christian faith has been plagued with Constantinianism—that practice of the state to *use* Christianity for its own ends, that habit of politicians to appropriate Christianity for their own political purposes, that propensity of Christianity to allow itself to be captured by civil religion.<sup>9</sup>

The founders of the United States were fully aware of the problem of Constantinianism in the history of the Church. Many of their forebears had fled to American shores to escape governments which used religion for their own purposes and which persecuted those who would not sup at the table of spiritual compromise. Others had been persecuted by established churches on these shores during the colonial period and wanted none of that in the new nation they were in the process of creating. Many learned Founding Fathers knew the evils which resulted from the intrusion of the state into the affairs of the church and, conversely, the evils which occurred when the church interfered in the affairs of the state.

Therefore, Bible-believing Christians joined with Enlightenment Deists to write into the Constitution of the United States of America the immortal words of the First Amendment: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; . . ." Of course,

the Enlightenment Deists were more concerned with keeping the church out of government than with keeping the government out of the business of the church, but they recognized the undesirability of both. On the other hand, evangelical Christians—such as Baptists, Mennonites, Quakers, Presbyterians, and Wesleyans—led the way during the colonial period of American history in contending for full religious freedom—freedom guaranteed by the institutional separation of church and state. This was no accident. They were motivated by theological conviction rooted firmly in Holy Scripture. “Soul liberty” was their cry, liberty founded upon God’s creative act.<sup>10</sup>

These believers of the period of the foundation of this nation discovered the thread of freedom that runs through the Bible, including the exodus from slavery of God’s people Israel, followed by priestly and prophetic reminders of Israel’s heritage of freedom. They followed that thread through the New Testament as well, from Jesus’ self-declared role of deliverer of the oppressed to Paul’s exhortation to stand fast in Christian freedom.<sup>11</sup>

Bible-believing Christians have drawn their conviction about separation of church and state most particularly from the incident described in Matthew 22:15-22, Jesus’ confrontation with Pharisees and Herodians about the legality of paying taxes to Caesar. Jesus’ reply to the representatives of those rival Jewish parties forever set the norm for proper church-state relations: “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s.” George W. Truett, that distinguished Baptist preacher of the last generation in America, in a famous address on religious liberty delivered May 16, 1920, in Washington, D.C., said of this incident: “That utterance of Jesus is one of the most revolutionary and history-making utterances that ever fell from those lips divine. That utterance, once for all, marked the divorcement of church and state.”<sup>12</sup>

One of the most pervasive myths about American history is the commonly-held assumption that religious freedom was present on these shores from the very beginning. Nothing could be further from the truth. A true perspective can be gained by remembering that 184 years elapsed between the first English settlement at Jamestown in 1607 and the adoption of

the Bill of Rights with its religious guarantees in 1791. Put another way, Bible-believing Christians in this society waged a battle for religious freedom that took nearly half of America’s history to date—184 of the 379 years between 1607 and 1986—to win! Thus, Truett, in his noted 1920 speech on the east steps of the nation’s capitol, cited the credit which both English philosopher John Locke and American historian George Bancroft had given to Bible Christians for the development of the concept of “freedom of conscience,” and called religious liberty and its corollary, separation of church and state, “the supreme contribution of the new world to the old.”<sup>13</sup>

Despite its roots in Scripture and church history, the historic American commitment to separation of church and state faces serious challenges today from both inside and outside the community of faith. Some well-known television preachers have openly attacked governmental neutrality toward religion required by the principle of separation, if not the principle itself. These preachers, in turn, are courted assiduously by opportunistic politicians. There is a hue and cry among many well-meaning Christians to introduce governmental-sponsored prayers in the public schools of this nation. In so doing, they do not realize that they are calling for a return to Constantinianism and playing into the hands of politicians whose main concern is neither “true religion” nor vital Christianity, but a powerful nation. In other words, the so-called prayer amendment to the Constitution is a classic example of Constantinianism as the political leaders of this nation attempt to woo Christian believers into supporting American civil religion. It implies that there is something “magical” about making sure that God is on our side through ritual acts of piety in public places. It is the ancient mindset of religious tribalism in which the people try to make certain that God is their God, the special God of a particular people—in this case, the American nation. Whatever else it is, ritual prayer in the public schools is conducive to the preservation of neither vital Christian faith nor American constitutional principles.<sup>14</sup>

Our American heritage of separation of church and state is under assault in other ways today as well. It is being attacked in the form of advocating tax credits for those who send their children

to private religious schools. It is being undermined by those who attempt to identify partisan political goals with what is often purported to be *the* Christian point of view. It is being subverted by attempts to subordinate biblical Christianity to American civil religion, which is the real religious establishment in the nation today.<sup>15</sup>

Because of the powerful forces at work to undermine, subvert, and eventually destroy our heritage of separation of church and state and to reintroduce Constantinianism into American life, Christian believers who understand and value this heritage must redouble their efforts to preserve it. The First Amendment is one of the main reasons why America is different—why America is a fit place to live.

Roger Williams, that erstwhile Baptist dissenter, used his exile imposed by the Massachusetts Puritans to establish Rhode Island and, in so doing, established in America radical religious freedom for believer and unbeliever alike. Moreover, he separated church and state and made it clear that there was no such thing as a Christian nation, only Christians in a nation. His vision was of a country where the Gospel could be preached freely to every person and where every person could respond freely to the Gospel message according to the dictates of his or her own conscience and of his or her own free will. That freedom, he believed, could best be preserved by the institutional separation of church and state, an arrangement in which Christians could “render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s.” Williams wrote: “The Civill state of the Nations being merely and essentially civill, cannot be called Christians States.”<sup>16</sup> And in another place, he declared: “A national church was not instituted by Jesus Christ. That cannot be a true religion which needs carnal weapons to uphold it.”<sup>17</sup>

Christians today must decide if they really want Constantinianism in the United States; if they really want to abandon their American heritage of genuine religious liberty and vital separation of church and state; if they really want to sell their precious heritage for a mess of political pottage.

To glimpse the implications of canceling this historic separation, one may turn an eye toward Northern Ireland. Sometimes called Ulster, Northern Ireland is a place of great passions,



strong beliefs, and much graffiti. One of the first things the visitor notices when visiting that ravaged land is the graffiti everywhere—mostly political and religious. (Actually it is hard to separate the two in Northern Ireland.) In one of the Protestant enclaves in Belfast back in 1971 one graffiti proudly proclaimed the local cry, “No Pope Here!”—under which in smaller letters, someone had written the rejoinder, “Lucky Pope!”

Irish humor notwithstanding, the cry “no pope here” has had great religious and political meaning for many people in that unhappy and devastated land. Many Protestants are determined to keep papal influence, real and imagined, out of Northern Ireland by opposing any unification of that part of the island with the Republic of Ireland to the south.<sup>18</sup>

Slogans are sometimes useful in rallying people to a cause and giving it cohesion. “No pope here” has little meaning in the United States because that is not an issue as far as most Americans are concerned. However, perhaps the cry “No Constantine here!” is more meaningful. Thus far in our history, thanks to the Constitution of the United States, possibly the most enlightened political document yet devised by human beings, the U.S. had been spared the curse of Constantinianism. Ironically, the ancestors of many present-day Americans fled to this land to escape that curse. Now, it seems that there are those in our midst who are bent on bringing it to these shores and fastening it upon the American nation. Do Christians really want that? Or will they join together in a high resolve that the principle of religious freedom and the practice of the separation of church and state be preserved inviolate through all our days and the days of those who come after us? Will they proclaim throughout this great land the historic cry: “No Constantine Here!”

#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>This essay is a revision of the Annual American Heritage Lecture delivered at Mid-America Nazarene College, Olathe, Kansas, October 9, 1986.

<sup>2</sup>Henry Chadwick ed., *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, texts and trans. by Herbert Musurillo, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972); Herbert B. Workman *Persecution in the Early Church* (London: C. H. Kelly, 1906; reprint ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980); G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, “Why Were the Early Christians Persecuted?,” *Past and Present*, 26 (Nov. 1963):6-38; A. N. Sherwin-White, “Why Were the Early Christians Persecuted?—An Amendment,” *Past and Present*, 27 (April 1964): 22-27; G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, “Why Were the Early Christians Persecuted?—A Rejoinder,” *Past and Present*, 27 (April 1964): 28-33; and W. H. C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981).

<sup>3</sup>N. H. Baynes, “The Great Persecution,” in J. B. Bury, S. A. Cook, F. E. Adcock, M. P. Charlesworth, and N. H. Baynes, eds., *The Cambridge Ancient History*, 12 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1923-1939), 12:646-677; and Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church*, pp. 477-535.

<sup>4</sup>The story of Constantine’s struggle for sole control of the empire is much more complex than indicated here. For full details, see H. M. D. Parker, *A History of the Roman World from A.D. 138 to 337*, vol. 7 of Methuen’s *History of the Greek and Roman World*, rev. ed. (London: Methuen, 1958), pp. 223-290.

<sup>5</sup>Eusebius, *De Vita Constantini*, in J.-P. Migne, ed., *Patrologiae cursus completus, latina*, 221 vols. (Paris: Migne, 1857-1887), vol. 8, col. 22; A. H. M. Jones, *Constantine and the Conversion of Europe* (London: English Universities Press, 1948), pp. 89-99; and András Alföldi, *The Conversion of Constantine and Pagan Rome*, trans. Harold Mattingly (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1948), pp. 16-24.

<sup>6</sup>Kenneth S. Latourette, *A History of Christianity* (New York: Harper and Row, 1953), p. 92; N. H. Baynes, *Constantine the Great and the Christian Church*, 2nd ed., preface by Henry Chadwick (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. 1-9; and Alföldi, *The Conversion of Constantine*, pp. 21-35.

<sup>7</sup>Especially insightful in this regard is Alföldi, *The Conversion of Constantine*, pp. 36-81. In his magisterial work on the history of early Christianity, W. H. C. Frend entitles his chapter on Constantine’s impact on the Christian Church “The Constantinian Revolution.” See Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), pp. 473-517. Also see Robert M. Grant, *Augustus to Constantine: The Thrust of the Christian Movement into the Roman World* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), pp. 235-249.

<sup>8</sup>For examples of Constantine’s new pro-Christian legislation, see James Stevenson, ed., *The New Eusebius: Documents Illustrative of the History of the Church to A.D. 337*, 2nd rev. ed. (London: SPCK, 1987), pp. 297-396. For Kenneth Scott Latourette’s eloquent assessment of the victory of Christianity as something of a defeat, see Latourette, *A History of Christianity*, p. 108. For a discussion of the aftermath of Constantine’s conversion in terms of the changes it brought to the Christian community, consult Frend, *The Rise of Christianity*, pp. 484-505 and 554-579. For a stimulating interpretation of Christian history in which he attempts to explain how and why present-day Christianity is fundamentally different from the community of faith established by Christ,

see Jacques Ellul, *The Subversion of Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985).

<sup>9</sup>Ethelbert Stauffer, *Christ and the Caesars* (London: SCM Press, 1955), pp. 205-286; and Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ed. J. B. Bury, 7 vols. (New York: F. De Fau, 1906), 1:35-36.

<sup>10</sup>See Gen. 1:27. A classic study of the subject under discussion is Sanford H. Cobb, *The Rise of Religious Liberty in America* (New York: Macmillan, 1902). For an excellent brief account of how Christians and Deists cooperated in the establishment of religious freedom in the new republic, see Leo Pfeffer, *Religious Freedom* (Skokie, IL: National Textbook Company, 1977), pp. 3-21. The contributions of Bible-believing Christians to the foundation of religious liberty in the United States are highlighted in A. P. Stokes and Leo Pfeffer, *Church and State in the United States*, rev. ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), pp. 3-103; J. Leo Garrett, Jr., ed., *Christianity and Religious Liberty* (Dallas, TX: The Christian Life Commission, 1964); David S. Lovejoy, *Religious Enthusiasm in the New World: Heresy to Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), pp. 178-194; and William G. McLoughlin, *New England Dissent, 1603-1833: The Baptists and Separation of Church and State*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971). For “soul liberty,” see Roger Williams, *The Hiring Ministry None of Christs*, 1652, in *The Complete Writings of Roger Williams*, 7 vols. (New York: Russell and Russell, 1963), 7:183-184.

<sup>11</sup>See Luke 4:18 and Gal. 5:1.

<sup>12</sup>George W. Truett, *Baptist and Religious Liberty* (Nashville: The Sunday School Board, 1920), p. 19.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>14</sup>For an example from recent history of how this wedding of civil religion and the goals of the New Political Right takes place, see Robert D. Linder, “Ronald Reagan at Kansas State: Civil Religion in the Service of the New Right,” *The Reformed Journal*, vol. 32 (Dec. 1982):13-15.

<sup>15</sup>For further discussion of this point, see Robert D. Linder and Richard V. Pierard, *Twilight of the Saints: Biblical Christianity and Civil Religion in America* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1978), pp. 135-159; and Samuel S. Hill and Dennis E. Owen, *The New Religious Right in America* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1982), pp. 100-116.

<sup>16</sup>Williams, *The Hiring Ministry None of Christs*, 1652, in *The Complete Works of Roger Williams*, 7:159.

<sup>17</sup>Williams, *The Bloody Tenant of Persecution*, 1644, in *The Complete Works of Roger Williams*, 3:200.

<sup>18</sup>Of course, many Roman Catholics are also unhappy with the situation in Northern Ireland and equally upset that they are subjects of a British Queen. Anti-British graffiti in Catholic neighborhoods of Belfast is often focused on the Queen and is just as virile as are anti-papal slogans in Protestant areas. For an introduction to the current troubles there, especially from a church-state perspective, see A. T. Q. Stewart, *The Narrow Ground: Aspects of Ulster, 1609-1969* (London: Faber and Faber, 1977); J. H. Whyte, *Church and State in Modern Ireland, 1923-1979*, rev. ed. (London: Gill and Macmillan, 1980); and Padraig O’Malley, *The Uncivil Wars: Ireland Today* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1983).

# E. G. Kaufman: Autobiographical Reflections

Edited by Robert S. Kreider

*(Continued from March Issue)*

We've got to pay that debt. So what did we do? We started Memorial Hall in memory of the fathers: some to build and some to pay off the debt. Mennonites are of a number of cultural backgrounds: four different Swiss groups; then you had the Prussians, Galicians and Molotschnaer and Cantoner—all Low German. How are you going to weld these people together? They all were suspicious of each other. When they came to America each one was right and the others were all wrong. How to get these people integrated? That was what the Memorial Hall was supposed to do: public forum to get them to come together, see the same programs, hear the same music. [150]

I was in Topeka with Jonas Graber, a schoolmate. We heard chimes; he took me down into the park where they had chimes playing religious songs. I thought, "My goodness. That's something we could do." And we got chimes. They could hear the music clear into town. It tied the whole area together. When these North Central inspectors came. It was noon and the chimes started, not prearranged at all. These fellows got out of the car and took their hats off and stood at attention. One said to the other, "Well, one thing we know mister, we're at a Christian school." The other thing that impressed them here was our historical library. They said that shows that you tried to save the best of your past and pass it on to the next generation and to the world. They said, "Only you can do that. The Methodists can't do that for the Mennonites." [151]

The Mennonite background appeals to non-Mennonites: hard work, honesty, frugality, genuineness. Grattan had

lived among Mennonites in the McPherson area. He was attorney for a number of Mennonites. He was also attorney for the Swedes. When he gave money he gave as much to the Swedes as he gave to us. He gave \$50,000 to build the Grattan Building. He was impressed seeing our kids working on campus. He often said "What I do I do to preserve some of the Mennonite characteristics. Your word is your bond." Joliffe was a big cattleman in Peabody and an oil man and elected to the legislature in Topeka. Mennonites supported him. He gave \$50,000 for Memorial Hall. Mrs. Watkins in Lawrence was a widow and rich. We got \$80,000. Bethel students worked in her home. She thought there was something different about those young people. Sam Schneider had a gas station in Buhler. His good friends were Pete Schellenberg and Pete Goertz, both MB professors. He gave us gas books. That helped finish the basement of the Science Hall. Willis Rich was the public relations man. Erwin Goering solicited students. Harry Martens was the finance man, solicited money. Harry was Low German, Erwin was Swiss and Willis was from town. They were good fellows, all three of them. [177, 187-190, 195-96]

Bethel Fellowship was another thing, to get the fellowship organization in every church. To visit every family in the church once a year in the interest of Bethel College. Three things: to try to get some contributions, some students, criticisms and suggestions. These fellowships got so big we had districts with officers. The whole area was covered every year. We gave a dinner to everybody who paid \$10 or \$11 with his wife. We tried to solicit students through the churches, not through the high school. High school seniors were guests; high school juniors waited tables. We tried to get them ear-

ly into this feeling that this is their college, this is where they're going without question. I went to Eden church first and I started it there because I thought they'd understand and they would probably not say no. You have to reach your people before you reach out. I think I got this fellowship idea from Garrett. Whenever I saw something I thought we could use, we'd try to use it. [133, 170, 174]

Ralph Kauffman and Dave Wedel graduated about one of the first years I was here. I pled with them, "Go on to school. We'll need you here." I made a practice of interviewing every senior about life plans. R. C. Kauffman came back. I thought I can't get the museum without getting R. C.. And R. C. moved it all here [from Freeman, S.D.] with a truck and a trailer, making a number of trips.

I think in my classes some of them were scared, both of me and of the ideas. I think I was considered a pretty good teacher. I remember Dean Goertz made a study once, sent out a questionnaire to all the students of the last five years, tried to find out how all the different teachers rated. He called me into his office one time after he got through and said, "Listen here, look here, you're at the top of the list." [196]

E. L. Harshbarger—he's one of the best teachers we ever had. When I was at Bluffton teaching, I went to Harshbarger's Sunday School class and he was a pretty good teacher. He was teaching high school, didn't have his degree yet but said he was going to get it. I was in correspondence with him while he was in school. He said he would come here to teach social sciences and sociology, although history was his field. He'd teach that until we found somebody else to teach sociology. He made a trip to Europe one summer to study international rela-

tions. I sent Harshbarger to attend an Institute of International Relations. He came back very enthusiastic. This led to the Kansas Institute of International Relations coming to Bethel. We had fellows like Eduard Benes—former president of Czechoslovakia, Leyton Richards, Muriel Lester, Sidney Fay, Y. T. Wu and others. Friends and Mennonites worked together. The first Kansas Institute of International Relations met at Bethel College in the summer of 1936. It was one of eight such institutes held over the country. Harshbarger was dean of the Institute. This was viewed with a critical eye because it was progressive. [152-153]

### The Presidency—The War Years

World War II drove a wedge between Newton and the College. The Rotary committee laid it on me one time: "You've been around the world. You know how things are. The Mennonites, of course, they're still in the woods, but you don't believe in this crazy CO business. Get off the fence. Oh, we know you had to go along with them in order to work with them but now in wartime you better get off the fence." And I told them, "Well, if you think I'm on the fence and ought to get off, there's only one side I can get off on. That's on the side of my people, the Mennonites." They couldn't understand that. [201]

There was this Lawrence Templin, not of Mennonite background, also a pacifist. You know, when you get some of these folk that don't grow up that way, they go farther than the folks that are acquainted with it. So he took up this idea of refusal of registration. He wrote an article in the paper on that. He didn't get it done in time. At that time there was much closer supervision. Lester Hostetler, the faculty adviser, always looked over the material before it was printed. He didn't find Hostetler and had it printed. The next day the fire was on. We had a number of telephone calls, "Look out tonight. They're coming to blow up the building." We started a night watch, always by two. They were going to tar and feather him and shave him bald. I went to where he roomed and said, "You come over and sleep at my house." He slept at my house. The next day early in the morning I took him to the train. Off he went. Home. Quit. He went home on his own volition. I thought maybe it's better to

go rather than to have some blood shed here. It settled down. The board passed a resolution. The faculty passed a resolution, published in the paper, that Bethel College does not stand for non-cooperation. I drew up that resolution for the faculty and also for the board. I signed the resolution. I had to. I talked Gordon out of not going to register. There were a bunch of them: Gordon, two Bargen boys, Andres. The Bargen boys were in prison. I went down to visit them. There were other incidents. They painted some stores uptown yellow: Rich's store and the *Herald*. [202-205, 217-225]

I felt like quitting in the 1940's. It was an awful burden. I wanted to teach. Fifteen years ought to be enough. Well, I was in twenty. And as I look back maybe I should have stayed twenty-five. But when I quit, I wasn't well. In 1948 Dean Goertz had come back from Europe and he died before the school opened. Later after school opened Hazel died. And I had ulcers. I once didn't know whether I could make it from the main building to the car. Carolyn was married in 1949 and Gordon got married. Here I am all alone. I had traveled to Chicago with another president from Kansas and I was discouraged. I told him, "I think maybe I'll quit." He said, "Don't you quit. After all, what do you want to do? You want to teach. All right. So is it greater to teach or to make it possible for somebody else to teach? Don't you quit." He said on his board they don't put a man on the board unless he agrees to give \$1,000 a year. In those times that was pretty much. I told it to our board one time and they didn't appreciate that very much. [184, 199-200, 235-36]

I remember after I was here about ten years I was home one time and I told Dad I've got a notion to quit. It's getting too hard. After all, ten years at that time seemed like a long time. When I left, he said in German: "Now don't throw the corn knife into the field as you're chopping corn." When you feel like doing it, you wait until you can look at it objectively. If it's a tough situation now, these things go up and down. You wait till things go better and then if you think it's time to get out, all right, but don't get out when it's a low, when things go hard. And I've never forgotten that. I thought that was good advice. [130]

*In 1950 E. G. Kaufman married Anna Miller Baumgartner and during a year's*

*leave of absence, 1950-51, he taught at the University of Cairo, Egypt. In 1952 he resigned as president and continued to teach at Bethel College. In 1957 he taught at Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Indiana. In 1959-60 he taught at Bluffton College. In 1961 his wife Anna died. In 1964-65 he taught at Spelman College, Georgia. In 1965 he married Edna Ramseyer of Bluffton, Ohio. From 1965 to 1967 he and his wife were at the Agricultural University, Punjab, India. They returned in 1967 to live on the edge of the Bethel College campus. In 1980 at the age of eighty-eight E. G. Kaufman died.*

### Final Reflections

When I came home from Egypt my desk was piled high with papers. From what I could hear, the faculty liked that year very much. Sometimes when I look back I think maybe I could have stayed another five years, but I don't know. I don't know. It's all right. I got out and then I taught fulltime for a time. I asked to be relieved and one of the big reasons was because I thought D. C. Wedel was still available. I wanted to have a say as to who comes in. I was on the committee to find a new president. I said, "I'll go and talk to him." I did. He didn't say he wouldn't but the board then gave him a call and he accepted. I was relieved. I was very happy that it would be one of my students to take over. He was sort of vice-president, at least next to me there. [237-38]

I used to regret getting old, but I don't anymore. I'm getting towards eighty. I've got to sleep in the forenoon. I usually sleep a little right after dinner. I haven't got the energy I used to have. I always walked ahead of people. Now they walk ahead of me. Like Aunt Het said, "I used to regret getting old, but I don't anymore. The fix the world is getting in now, I'm plumb reconciled to being somewhere else." [299]

If you don't have any faith in young people, then what's the future? Young people want a better world. God wants a better world. [300, 305]

My words of advice? Take Jesus Christ not only as your Savior but your Lord. Always ask, "Would he be pleased with this? Would he do this?" You're on a good track and you'll live the pioneering life, the creative life. You can't help but live the creative life if you follow Jesus Christ. Look at the creative character he was. Sure he was crucified. [310]



# Radical Reformation and Mennonite Bibliography, 1986

by Marilyn Loganbill

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Assisted by Ina Ruth Breckbill, Mennonite Historical Library (MHL); Grace Schowalter, Eastern Mennonite College (EMC); Barbara Thiesen, Mennonite Library and Archives (MLA); and Kevin Enns-Rempel, Fresno Pacific College (FRESNO).

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## Book Reviews

James C. Juhnke. *Dialogue with a Heritage: Cornelius H. Wedel and the Beginnings of Bethel College*. North Newton, Ks.: Bethel College, 1987. Illustrated. Pp. 113.

The 1986 Menno Simons lectures published in this slim volume accomplish a number of things. A professor of American history at Bethel, Juhnke helps the college celebrate one hundred years of legal incorporation. The lectures highlight the man and the vision of historically neglected Cornelius H. Wedel, the first president of Bethel College. They sketch the context in which Bethel came to life and the dynamics operative in her early years. They celebrate a Mennonite peoplehood. They call for renewal on the basis of Wedel's early agenda.

Throughout the book one senses Juhnke's profound empathy for C. H. Wedel. This empathy is appropriate to Juhnke's first audience—the Bethel College constituency, whose celebration it is. They should receive the lectures' provocative message both appreciatively and thoughtfully. At the same time, the message of the book reaches well beyond the Bethel audience. Juhnke's report on Wedel is not hero worship, but an empathy which involves the reader in appreciating one of the important Mennonite intellectuals of the era. Juhnke did an admirable job of formulating these lectures in such a way that they can inform and inspire all Mennonite readers, whether or not they have a personal tie to Bethel College. In fact, the content could prove relevant for any individual who identifies with a believers' church orientation.

The six chapters of the book were originally a sermon and five lectures delivered in several Bethel College, church and community settings. The printed format retains the oral flavor of the original settings, including humorous comments and a few remarks of local interest. A unique literary device in each lecture is a conversation with C. H. Wedel himself. Originally done via a reader off stage, Wedel posed questions or challenged lecturer Juhnke about some contemporary Mennonite outlooks. Juhnke used these conversations to make contemporary applications of Wedel's thought, as for exam-

ple, Wedel's wondering why in spite of their emphasis on peace, Mennonites are still using their war-oriented American history texts rather than writing a new text which studies American history from a peace perspective. Wedel's six-volume series which covers all of church history from the alternative perspective of *Gemeindechristentum* stands as the obvious example to emulate.

The sermon which opens the book provides the data of C. H. Wedel's life without being a formal biography. The first lecture sketched the cultural orientation of Wedel and early Bethel College, and illustrated how furtherance of German culture and language was central to the college's early mission. The second lecture described the three sources which shaped the spirituality of early Bethel College—the quietism of Anabaptist-Mennonitism, the pietism of German *Volkstum*, and the revivalism of American democracy. These three have existed in various proportions—not without some tension—throughout Bethel's history.

At this point, Juhnke's characterization of the Anabaptist-Mennonite component of the triumvirate as quietist relied perhaps too much on the stereotypical idea of *Stillen im Lande* (p. 30). Various writers have used the term *Stillen im Lande* to depict virtually all Mennonite ethnic groups and to describe all epochs from the sixteenth century to the present. The term does not have a uniform meaning. Given the characteristics which Juhnke attributed to the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition—including discipleship and a faith lived out via the churchly community—as well as such things as Wedel's interest in missions and in education, and the competition between Alexanderwohl and Halstead to have a school, the term quietist seemed too passive, even if it envisions only their religious outlook.

The third lecture is perhaps the most important one for understanding C. H. Wedel. In it, Juhnke lays out Wedel's alternative reading of church history. Wedel saw sixteenth-century Anabaptists and their descendants the Mennonites as representatives of an alternative Christendom, which he called *Gemeindechristentum* or congregational Christianity. It existed throughout

Christian history as an alternative to and in tension with state church Christendom. This view of church history attributed universal significance to the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition, but avoided an exclusivism or triumphalism by fitting Mennonite history into a larger entity.

The fourth lecture emphasized community as the basis of Wedel's vision, and emphasized the importance of the concept of community for modern Mennonites. I believe Juhnke is correct when he states that such emphases as peace and justice take shape within a community and cannot long survive outside of one. The final lecture develops the wholistic aspect of *Gemeindechristentum*. Juhnke shows how Wedel's comprehensive approach to community within a context of *Gemeindechristentum* can include art and culture as integral components of community. Wedel's vision thus provides a rationale for the artistic and cultural expressions virtually absent from much of Mennonite experience.

In a postscript added to the lectures for this volume, Juhnke compares the outlook of Wedel with that of Harold S. Bender, whose "Anabaptist Vision" became the touchstone of Mennonite identity in the era since World War II. While the two men would have agreed on much—discipleship, the church, nonresistance, religious freedom, the authority of Scriptures—Juhnke indicates three significant differences. First, Bender formulated Anabaptism in a way that separated it from the rest of church history, whereas Wedel saw Anabaptism as a phenomenon within church and world history. Second, Wedel had a broader definition of Anabaptism. It enabled him to deal with figures whom Bender discounted, and his historical methodology left him freer than Bender to offer negative judgments on key figures without having to read them out of the Anabaptist movement. Finally, much more so than Bender, Wedel provided a theoretical basis within Anabaptism for Mennonite cultural development. These differences make clear why Juhnke considers Wedel one of the most important turn-of-the-century Mennonite writers, and why Wedel richly deserves our attention—finally—as we near the end of the

twentieth century.

This series of lectures does not claim to offer the definitive treatment of C. H. Wedel, nor does it engage in a lot of overt scholarly controversy. However, the book has good footnotes to both primary and secondary literature, and it does take stands on issues and position itself within the recent scholarship on American Mennonite history, to which Professor Juhnke is one of the major contributors. For one example, while these lectures do not advocate pietism, they continue the recent trend in Mennonite scholarship to rehabilitate it as a legitimate past contributor to Mennonite spirituality. For another example, this book positions the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition as a clear alternative to both fundamentalism and modernism, rather than choosing one of the two as did many Mennonites in our immediately preceding generations. At the time of Bethel's founding, American evangelicalism had not yet separated into fundamentalists and modernists, and Wedel belonged to neither camp. In almost wistful hindsight, Juhnke notes that Mennonites "shouldn't have had to make this choice" between modernists and fundamentalists, since "at least by their heritage . . . [t]hey were not American evangelicals in the first place." (p. 41).

Central to Juhnke's agenda throughout these lectures is renewal for contemporary Mennonites on the basis of Wedel's vision. With its renewal dimension, the book models the evangelical nature of history and the way history is—or can be—relevant to the present. As an alternative Christendom to state church Christendom, *Gemeindechristentum* emphasized community, peace, the Bible, discipleship. This vision has much which applies to late twentieth-century Mennonites. It should challenge them to treasure the unique perspective of their heritage rather than joining one or the other of the sides in a modern version of the modernist-fundamentalist controversy. It establishes an alternative church, in an age when a universal and pervasive temptation is to identify Christianity with western civilization. It emphasizes community in an age of rampant individualism and relativism. Finally, the *Gemeindechristentum* vision provides a comprehensive outlook, including a place for the art and culture which have been absent from much of Mennonite history.

Given the lecture format and the primary purpose of the book, one cannot criticize it for not doing everything. Juhnke's depiction of Wedel establishes him as a subject worthy of more study in a variety of areas, and in general the book invites one to more study. Juhnke situated Wedel and Bethel College within the milieu of immigrant Russian Mennonites of the late nineteenth century. Also important for understanding these Mennonites would have been some comparisons with the Swiss Mennonite tradition in North America. While the book rightfully focuses on the college whose century it celebrates, a few remarks, for example, on the educational outlook of other Mennonites would have enlightened us even further on the character of early Bethel. Juhnke raised the issue of the extent to which Bethel faculty and students absorbed Wedel's outlook. A legitimate question, not really answered in this book, is how typical Wedel was of the Russian Mennonites. Are the majority more like Wedel, or like the students whose debate questions in the literary societies reflected only the American democratic story, and the Bethel faculty members who proclaimed proudly that they were among the first to see the "need" for the first world war? A perhaps related question concerns the attitudes of the ethnic German Mennonites toward the English world. Juhnke presents the German identity and Wedel's espousal of it in a very positive light. Before the German questions related to World War I clouded the issue, was there a uniform acceptance of the Germanness? Or was Wedel's clear and sympathetic expression in some way also a statement of conservation in the face of an American-born generation of youth anxious to become more American?

This is a stimulating book—not only for the Bethel College family, but for any reader interested in understanding the Mennonite story. It describes Wedel and Bethel College in such a way as to illuminate the Russian Mennonite immigrant tradition, and by extension it provides some norms against which others can measure their own tradition and experiences. But perhaps most important of all, the Wedel vision as presented by Juhnke is one vitally important for late twentieth-century American Mennonites. All should read it with Juhnke's renewal emphasis in mind.

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James O. Lehman. *Salem's First Century: Worship and Witness*. Kidron, OH: Salem Mennonite Church, 1986. Pp. 235.

During the 1820s and subsequent decades, Wayne County, Ohio, served as a stopping point for countless Swiss and Alsatian Mennonite immigrants aiming to homestead farther west. Even as Sonnenberg, the mother church community near Sugar Creek in Wayne County, refreshed friends and cousins bound for Indiana, Illinois and Iowa, it gathered in those who chose this rural Ohio setting as their new home. With the Sonnenberg meetinghouse as its center, the community grew and eventually broke into new centers of church life. The 1986 centennial celebration of Sonnenberg's daughter congregation, Salem Mennonite, occasioned the publication of this congregational history.

James O. Lehman is a native of the Kidron, Ohio, community and grew up in the Sonnenburg Mennonite Church. Presently the Director of Libraries at Eastern Mennonite College in Harrisonburg, Virginia, Lehman is well acquainted with his subject. He has authored numerous histories of Ohio Mennonite congregations as well as the 1969 book *Sonnenberg: A Haven and a Heritage*, which commemorated the 150th anniversary of Wayne County's Swiss Mennonite community.

In *Salem's First Century*, Lehman greatly expands his previous research. He portrays the church split that produced the Salem congregation in 1886 as almost inevitable, given the divisive views in the mother congregation as to the worthiness of the Wadsworth Institute, the General Conference school begun in 1868 just north of Wayne County. Although at least seven of Sonnenberg's young men studied at the Wadsworth Institute before it closed in 1878, many Sonnenberg members were suspicious of the newfangled notions that the school promoted: Sunday school and missions, modern dress and use of High German. In fact, some feared that "to resist the evil of pride

[at Wadsworth] a dam had to be built up against it."

In his description of the breakaway group, Lehman relies perhaps too heavily on the terms "liberal," "progressive," and "broad-minded." These are powerful words that can easily slight the spirit of faithfulness of those who remained a part of the mother congregation. Yet his inquiry into the parting of ways yields a useful glimpse into the methods by which the Sonnenberg pioneers dealt with this thorn in their side.

One method was to avoid conflict, an approach that resulted in an uneasy, thirteen-year truce: after a falling out in the early 1870s between Wadsworth supporters and the Sonnenberg church leadership, the two sides stayed together despite increasing differences of opinion. As the breach approached, dissenting members made a brief attempt at conflict resolution by calling in Samuel F. Sprunger, minister of the large General Conference church at Berne, Indiana, and inviting the Sonnenberg ministers to a joint meeting. The leaders of the mother church, however, considered Sprunger more a troublemaker than a peacemaker and declined to attend. In subsequent years, the Sonnenberg group coped through disassociation. After the fledgling Salem congregation dedicated its meetinghouse, Sonnenberg's senior bishop, Christian Sommer, forbade his followers to have anything to do with the new church, save attending funerals. Serious tensions remained for at least eighty years. Not until the 1960s, when Heinz and Dorothea Janzen occupied Salem's parsonage, was a Salem minister invited to preach a sermon at the mother church.

Salem Mennonite Church, with its abiding interest in missions and education, has been an active congregation in the Central District Conference and the wider General Conference. Two talented daughters of the congregation, Martha Moser (who married H. R. Voth) and Sylvia Tschantz (who married S. F. Pannabecker), ensured the congregation's support of General Conference missions in Arizona and China, respectively. Over the years, young people from Salem headed west for study at Bluffton College and Witmarsum Seminary.

Students of American Mennonite history will appreciate Lehman's meticulous research into the most

serious controversy in Salem's history, a division of members over the non-resistance issue. In 1917 the son of a deacon enlisted in the Marine Corps, hoping to avoid active duty. The attitude of neighboring Ohioans toward Mennonite "slackers," and their incredulity upon learning that the sailor had been excommunicated by his own church, led Salem into a congregational crisis over leadership and nonresistance. A painful break occurred when Salem's pastor left the church and took with him a small group of followers who became known as the Kidron Tabernacle congregation. Lehman tells the story with sensitivity, and in a later chapter follows the nonresistance issue into World War II.

Much less is said about the impact of the Vietnam War on the congregation or critical faith pilgrimages in recent years. Many pages are devoted to the ebb and flow of congregational life, with detailed accounts of membership, marriages and deaths, and the personalities of Salem's various pastors. The strength of *Salem's First Century: Worship and Witness*, however, lies in the author's treatment of major events in Salem's more distant past.

Considering the deeply rooted stresses between the Salem congregation and nearby Sonnenberg, readers will note the significance of Salem's invitation to James O. Lehman to write this history. Lehman acknowledges in the preface that during his years of membership at Sonnenberg he "had little close contact with Salem." Additional recent evidence of the healing taking place among Sonnenberg, Salem, and a third congregation, Kidron Mennonite, has been a special communion service, held only a few months before Salem observed its centennial. One who was present at this event of reconciliation concluded, "We have celebrated anniversaries thankful that God has helped us learn from our past and has shown us how to put some of it to rest."

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Al Reimer. *My Harp Is Turned to Mourning: a novel*. Winnipeg: Hyperion Press, c. 1985. Pp. 440.

The dedication of this novel is to "the

survivors and all their children . . ." and is followed by Job's lament, "When I looked for good, then evil came unto me . . .," climaxing in the verse from which the title is taken: "My harp also is turned to mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weep" (Job 30:26-31). I expected to find here a mournful tribute to the many martyred Mennonite forebears whose story is here imagined; I was grateful to find a very unvarnished treatment of these German Mennonite immigrants to Russia in the fictional account of their saga during the tumultuous years between 1905 and 1924. In fact, one finds here a depiction of the character of a people, more than any particular interest in specific characters, who seem to play their roles in a much bigger unfolding drama. It appears that Reimer is asking in this novel, "Who were these people and what were their sins?" Depending on one's interpretation of Job, one can compare them to him in the sins of pride and insensitivity or forgive them their natural humanity which fails to rise to sainthood in the test. Either way, the harp is an apt symbol of the golden affluence achieved by the Mennonites in the years they sojourned in Russia, and this novel depicts the erosion of that golden period.

The story begins in 1905 with the Fast family and especially the young boy, Wilhelm, the sensitive artistic protagonist. The earlier history comes to us in the memories of old Daniel Fast, Wilhelm's ancestor, rethinking the Blumenau experiences, basically a chronicling of the divisions and bickering among the colonists in their attempts to settle in Russia and find direction and an appropriate lifestyle for their communities. Here we see the beginning of an important theme in the novel as old Daniel notes, "Perhaps our big mistake right from the start was to think we could live in our little world like ducks on a pond, without ever letting the fox get near us" (p. 140). This relationship between the Mennonite community and the world in which it finds itself provides the major tension of the novel. The years of chaos ahead will test (and break) that careful balancing act between purity and progress.

It is the world of Mennonite progress which we experience through most of the novel. Wilhelm, the school boy and young college man, attends the Academy of Fine Arts in St. Petersburg where he leads a kind of dandy's life



in the company of the wealthy Bocks, successful Mennonite industrialists—squiring the lovely singer, Clara Bock, to fine restaurants and meeting important people within and without Mennonite circles. His major concern is his art and what he should do with it, his uncultured background, his lack of an artistic vocabulary, “like trying to write poetry with the words of a peasant, or painting pictures with your toes” (p. 117). This is the spring of 1913, the Romanov tercentenary, and Wilhelm’s major “political” problem is that he clearly is not good enough for Clara Bock in the eyes of her uppity mother.

The first half of the novel culminates with the short interlude “The Great Commission of Erdmann Lepp,” the prophetic evangelist who is in and out of the story like a flame of conscience. As is so often the case in historical novels like this one, the weaving of the various stories and memories is careful, painstaking, and tests the patience of the reader until the second half of the book. Only when we get to the chaotic war years, 1914-1919, and Part Three of the book, “Sword of the Oppressor,” is Reimer able to begin to paint some very memorable scenes.

In this major final section of the novel, Reimer gives us intrigue, sex, love, rape and murder—all woven into the once-peaceful lives of the Mennonites who do suffer dreadfully and pay dearly, many with their lives, for their part in Russian society. Perhaps the most striking scene in the novel is a hellish scene which occurs as retribution to the Bock family in their summer home, Selenaya. The havoc is wreaked upon the Bocks by the ghastly light of the moon at the hands of the vulgar, mannish, lustful and even satanic Chaika, formerly the Bocks’ maid, and her band of peasants, depicted as the very scourge of humanity in their raping, looting and butchering ways. Yet Reimer does not give us such a scene without proper motivation—the Bock family had wronged the vengeful Chaika, and she is used by the family’s egotistical, smart-mouthed son and dismissed for her impertinences to young Clara, who holds herself high above the maid. This depiction of German superiority and racial pride lorded over the Russian peasantry is strongly present in the latter part of the novel. It creates very interesting conflicts for the Mennonites; for example, there is the scene of the Mennonites who come to welcome as their saviors the German

soldiers at the train station and then flee in horror after the Germans shoot in public ceremony some Russian captives. With whom shall they align themselves?

Reimer has created several memorable characters about whom, at least in the latter pages of the novel, we do come to care, though he seems more capable of creating horror than believable good. There is the historical figure, Makhno, here a charismatic, troubled, but quite magnificently portrayed leader until his deterioration—who is, interestingly, sought out and followed loyally by one of the Fast brothers, Kolya, a disenchanted and recalcitrant youth who rebelliously fights for the Russians and later kills his own as part of Makhno’s band. His presence does give the novelist a chance for interesting speculation in several scenes where he must face his own people; he is on hand, for example, at the Bock tragedy, and then later must face Clara in need. There is the fiery evangelist, Erdmann in a face-to-face showdown with Makhno—a kind of larger-than-life battle of good vs. evil. Also there is the lovely Katya Loewen, almost too good to be true, whose terrible end is moving and powerful.

When I finished this novel, I felt a sense of condemnation of my own apathy about the society in which I live, and of my faith in all I possess. All across Kansas we are presently celebrating 100-year sojourns—towns, institutions, Bethel College. We take great pride in our accomplishments. But what happens to a people in 100 years of “settling?” It is a question this novel asks. Reimer’s main character finds no alternative but a militant stance for self-defense. One major theme of *My Harp* is lent by the analysis of those characters who try to understand how their role in Russian society could have been different. Implicit in their musing is the condemnation of blind trust, the false faith and total belief in *Wirtschaft*, the farm, the small circle of their own making. Clara Bock, after all she has suffered, noted, “I can’t believe how naive I was—we all were—criminally naive, so stupidly trusting” (p. 428). Mennonites, in their hope of being in the world but not of the world, apparently must be especially watchful, lest they be swept up in the world’s events beyond their control, lest they be forced into disastrous compromise.

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James R. Klassen, *Jimshoes in Viet Nam*. Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1986. Pp. 390. (\$14.95 paperback)

The United States is still struggling to come to terms with its disastrous encounter with Southeast Asia. Much work has gone into revisionist history to show that American intervention in Vietnam was morally right, and if only we had not made certain tactical errors or caved in to the peace movement, the press, the liberal clergy, or the Congress, we would have won and everyone would have been better off. Major allies in this effort have been the successful ministers of the electronic media.

To this idolatrous patriotic gospel, *Jimshoes in Viet Nam* by James R. Klassen will be a powerful antidote. *Jimshoes* is the unpretentious, first-person story of Jim Klassen, a farm boy from Goessel, Kansas, who lived and worked in Vietnam with the Mennonite Central Committee and the Mennonite Mission from October 1972 until April 1976. Despite his down-home style of writing, Jim is not just any Goessel boy, but is a Bethel College graduate, with a “Highest Distinction” award from Pi Kappa Delta (a national forensics honorary society) and a Master of Divinity degree from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries. Although most of the book is simply a description of life in Vietnam as Jim experienced it, at crucial points Jim goes out of his way to destroy popular American mythology about Vietnamese and American history. His descriptions of how the U.S. got into Vietnam, the negotiations of the Paris Peace Accord and its aftermath, the poverty and lack of development in post-war Vietnam, and the flight of Vietnamese refugees are all carefully constructed, well-documented arguments, in the best forensic tradition, for an alternative vision of the U.S. and Vietnam that corrects even what is carried in the “liberal press.” Carefully woven throughout the book, and perhaps its core theme, is Jim’s vision of Christianity: a powerfully stated Anabaptist interpretation of the Gospel which shows up in numerous sermons, letters, and conversations and is often contrasted with the “God and

country" gospel of many of the foreign missionaries and Vietnamese Christians.

*Jimshoes* covers the crucial years of America's involvement in Vietnam. Jim was in Vietnam starting two and a half years before the "fall of Saigon" and continuing a year after the establishment of the new government in the South. Although much has been written about events in Vietnam before April 30, 1975, very little has been available about post-war Vietnam. In addition, few have carefully recorded the lives and affairs of ordinary Vietnamese during the "America era." Jim's journal is mostly anecdotal and non-polemic. He records the lives and experiences of himself and his friends in honest fashion. All warts are visible in the lives of Jim's compatriots, his Vietnamese friends, and himself. Perhaps the greatest value of the book is its inside look at Vietnam and the Vietnamese church during the first year after the end of the war. With the flight of American troops came the flight of American and Western media, and American and Western Christians. The sources of information about a country whose history had been intertwined with ours vanished. For most Americans this was welcome. Vietnam had raised too many uncomfortable questions about ourselves and our nation. Jim captures this desire to forget Vietnam through the words of the pilot of the plane who took him from Bangkok to Los Angeles, on his way home from Vietnam. "We'll be circumventing Vietnam—staying about 30 miles off the coast." But Jim's response is "Yes, I thought, that is how many people would like to respond to Vietnam—staying just far enough away so they don't have to feel the hurts or share the joys of the Vietnamese. Christians serious about following Jesus, however, could not circumvent Vietnam."

The outstanding characteristic of the book is its absolute Christian orientation. Jim had originally come to Vietnam to work for MCC in maintenance of the medical clinic in Pleiku, but later was asked to work half time with Mennonite Mission in Saigon as a Bible teacher. "Missionaries, I had thought, are inherently arrogant when they provide answers to deeply religious questions. To avoid arrogance, I wanted to quietly replace burned out light bulbs and repair sagging screen doors at the Pleiku Clinic." But the work in Pleiku was being cut back, and the Mennonite

Mission wanted a Bible teacher for the Mennonite church in Saigon. "If I could teach Bible without claiming to have all the answers," Jim rationalized, "then I would be willing to stay in Saigon and teach Bible in the midst of a predominantly Buddhist culture." The weakness of this approach is that one learns nothing about the revelation of God to the Vietnamese through the three great religious traditions of Vietnam: Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism. Christian chauvinism is very deep in the Mennonite tradition as exemplified in one of Jim's letters home where he writes, "I remember John Yoder's suggestion that perhaps only a Christian orientation permits a truly fair understanding of the facts of history."

But Jim's distinctly Christian orientation is the book's strength as well, and although we learn nothing of traditional Vietnamese understandings of God, or the deep Buddhist teachings and practice of the way of peace, we do learn a great deal about Jim's theology and get a chance to look at the Anabaptist faith as it is tested by the fires of war and revolution. Jim's accounts of the experience of the Protestant churches in South Vietnam during the transition and under the first year of revolutionary government are the only extensive published accounts available in English. The crucible of revolution is an excellent testing ground for anyone's faith, and the exciting accounts of the Christians that Jim met with at the Mennonite Fellowship reads like the Book of Acts. Some congregations experienced rapid growth after the change of government, some Christians discovered the ability to forgive even their torturers, and others learned that some Mennonite values were also valued by the revolution. Ngoc, one of the Mennonite Fellowship members, reported her advancement after the revolution: "The idea of service has really become part of my life. Even at school people have noticed that I've been motivated by the ideals of love and service like you MCCers always emphasize, so I'm now vice-president of a unit of 30 students at my university."

It was revealing to see the effect on the Mennonites, both Vietnamese and North American, of the coming of a socialist revolution which brought with it an ethic of radical egalitarianism and service very similar to our own Anabaptist values. Suddenly, after the revolution, the MCC staff felt uncomfortable not inviting the Vietnamese

cook to eat with them as one of the family, and the Gia Dinh Mennonite School felt that they should open their doors to the public, so that non-Mennonite children could also participate. There was also the growing unease of the MCC staff with their comfortable living quarters in the midst of poverty and fear of playing too much of a leadership role in the local fellowship and fostering an unhealthy dependence.

It is clear that the Vietnamese Mennonites, at least those who had been exposed to Anabaptist thought (apparently not the emphasis of much of the Mennonite mission work in Vietnam), were much better able to adapt themselves to living a Christian life in a revolutionary socialist society than were other Christians. This was due in part to the Anabaptist separation of faith from nationalism and anticommunism. Second, the Mennonite service ethic and egalitarianism were recognized by many in the new society as being similar to socialist ideals. The third factor, and the one which was most obvious to all, was the fact that four expatriate Mennonites stayed when the Americans left, and MCC continued its program of assistance to the people of Vietnam despite the change in government. This stood in stark contrast to all of the other American mission or relief organizations, with the exception of the American Friends Service Committee.

*Jimshoes in Viet Nam* is an extremely important book for North American Christians to read. It is an attempt to reexamine our Christian faith in the light of a revolution. It will be dismissed by some as biased, despite its almost brutal honesty. Although Jim has positive things to say about events and situations not often favorably reviewed in the American media, he is also openly critical of all that is encompassed in his careful observations, be it Vietnamese or American, missionary or Mennonite, socialist or capitalist, or even Jim himself. I fear also that many academics and church historians will disregard the significance of this book because of its conspicuous lowbrow style of writing. But beneath the simple anecdotes and the Kansas humor is a serious challenge to Mennonites and other Christians that should not be ignored.

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