MENNONITE LIFE

SEPTEMBER 1987

In this Issue

The March 1987 issue of *Mennonite Life* was devoted exclusively to Bethel College. One is almost tempted to apologize for a second issue which focuses heavily on Bethel, but centennials, after all, only come around once every hundred years.

This issue begins with an article by Rachel Waltner Goossen on Bethel's efforts to gain North Central Association (NCA) accreditation in the 1930s. The article is especially timely since Bethel is now undergoing a self-study in preparation for an NCA review in 1988.

Brent Zerger, a 1987 graduate of Bethel, has utilized Bethel's unique collection of correspondence from architects Proudfoot and Bird (the only such collection extant) in his examination of Bethel's first architectural expression, the Administration Building.

Bethel's most recent architectural expression is Mantz Library, and we include two speeches given at the dedication of that facility. The first is by a former editor of this journal, Robert Kreider; the second was delivered by Dale Schrag, director of libraries.

The present editor of this journal, David A. Haury, has contributed a short history of the publisher of this journal, the Mennonite Library and Archives at Bethel.

Richard Kyle, professor of history and religious studies at Tabor College, contributes his careful examination of the sect/denomination typology applied to the Mennonite Brethren as the final article in this issue.

Finally, readers of this journal should know that its present editor, David A. Haury, is on sabbatical this year studying at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Those of us who are filling in during his absence will do our best to maintain his standards of quality.

d.r.s.

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Cover

The Bethel College campus ca. 1937

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No "Easy Street": Bethel's Struggle for Accreditation, 1930-38

by Rachel Waltner Goossen

Bethel College's centennial celebration coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of the school's accreditation in 1938 by the North Central Association. Presently, the college is preparing for the spring of 1988, when a team of on-site examiners will arrive for a scheduled review of Bethel's accredited status. The N.C.A. review process, which punctuates campus life approximately every ten years, has grown more sophisticated since the 1930s, when evaluations such as the one described in this article took place at Bethel College.

One March morning in 1938, Bethel College chemistry professor Leonard C. Kreider observed two distinguished-looking guests being escorted across campus by Willis Rich, Bethel's public relations director. Kreider recognized them as President O. R. Latham of Iowa State Teachers College and Dean C. H. Oldfather of the University of Nebraska, who had come to Bethel as inspectors on behalf of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. The two men would spend several days on campus, meeting with administrators and faculty to determine whether—after failed attempts for the better part of a decade—Bethel College would finally meet the requirements for accreditation.

It was eight a.m., and a familiar hymn resonated from the college chimes tower. As Kreider neared the inspectors, he heard one say to the other, "Well, I see they have the band out to meet us this morning." A day or so later, when the professor submitted a report to President Edmund G. Kaufman on the inspectors' meetings with science faculty, he added a postscript: "I think it might have been just as well if the "band" had been silent at that time, especially as it was playing during a regular class period."[1]

He need not have worried about the indiscretion. Within a month, the inspectors submitted a report of their own, bestowing on the college its long-awaited entrance into the North Central Association. It was a notable achievement. In the spring of 1938, Bethel was only one of six institutions of higher education—ranging from Ohio to New Mexico—to receive accreditation by the regional agency. By passing the rigorous criteria for N.C.A. admission, Bethel had demonstrated high academic standards and an ability to face financial difficulties. To students, accreditation meant that transcripts could be transferred with assurance to any graduate school in the nation. To faculty and staff, it meant that personal sacrifices had not been made in vain. To the church constituency, it meant that Bethel could pursue with confidence its mission as the only A.B. degree granting Mennonite school west of the Mississippi River.[2] And to Newton promoters of the local college, it meant that "the ball has been bucked over the goal line."[3]

Difficulties, Sacrifices, Heartaches

President E. G. Kaufman, at the helm of Bethel College, was arguably the person with the most to gain from the N.C.A.'s favorable decision. But by 1938 he was a tired man. For eight years he had worked twelve months on eleven-month contracts, a self-imposed ban on vacations. "This was necessary to get the school on the accredited list," he declared in the autumn of 1938, ". . . but I cannot keep up this pace."[4]

Kaufman was not the only one who felt that way. The years leading up to 1938 had been as trying as any in the institution's history. From the beginning of his presidency in 1932, Kaufman had pursued single-mindedly the goal of attaining accreditation. And in the process, he exacted a heavy toll from those who worked with him. Kaufman, in retrospect, emphasized that the pre-accreditation years "offered an opportunity to solve certain problems and go forward to a greater and better Bethel."[5] The school's official history, *The Story of Bethel College*, concedes that during this period "difficulties, sacrifices, heartaches had been the lot of president, board, and faculty."[6] In fact, the early 1930s saw an all-time low in faculty morale and led to a residual bitterness among many longtime Bethel supporters.

The two main stresses of these years were financial and academic. In an attempt to bring the debt-ridden college to par financially, the new Kaufman administration imposed salary cuts and trimmed departmental spending to the bone. Through cost-cutting measures and direct appeals to the constituency, Bethel hoped to decrease its indebtedness, which in 1932 peaked at $141,000.[7] The administration also outlined new academic standards in order to attain a favorable rating by the North Central Association. A half-dozen middle-aged faculty members received leaves of absence in order to earn doctoral degrees. Bethel's new emphasis on doctorates led to "currying for administrative favor" among some who wished to be released from this obligation.[8]

During the thirties, the climate about campus was hardly collegial, even though most faculty and staff members remained with the school. Jobs elsewhere were practically nonexistent, so many endured what they regarded as insult added to injury. Moreover, a majority of the faculty were alumni of

Bethel College and felt an intense loyalty. One declared, "I don't know what kind of proposition would induce me to leave Bethel. Of course, I am not rejoicing over the salary scale . . . ."[9] Mariam (Penner) Schmidt, who taught Spanish and French, recalls that in 1932 Kaufman called the faculty together in the chapel to report on worsening financial conditions. Among the group a certain cohesiveness prevailed, a feeling that "we can't abandon Bethel at this moment."[10] Indeed, the faculty recognized that accreditation was a matter of institutional survival.

Prelude to the Kaufman Era

Previous administrations had made numerous efforts to earn and maintain a place for Bethel among accredited schools.[11] From 1911 to 1916 the college worked toward and achieved recognition by the Kansas State Board of Education. A decade later, in 1926, the State Board announced a stunning policy change: only the first two grade levels would retain state accreditation. Meanwhile, junior and senior levels would be evaluated by the stringent standards of the North Central Association.

During the 1926 fall term, a group of Bethel upperclassmen, fearful that their diplomas might not be worth the paper they were written on, took steps to transfer to the University of Kansas. Although nearly all remained at Bethel in the end, the episode underscored the gravity of Bethel's annual deficits. Without sound financial backing, the school had no hope of achieving accreditation. Without accreditation, it could not hold its students. And without students, the college faced certain death.

John W. Kliewer had served as president from 1911 to 1920, during Bethel's original attempt to win accreditation. From 1925 to 1932 he led the college again while it struggled on several fronts. In one school year, 1927-28, the number of regular students plunged from 349 to 286, and tuition income dropped accordingly. The college fell far short of the North Central Association's financial standards. During the late 1920s, the N.C.A. required a $500,000 endowment. Bethel's endowment, which hovered at about half that amount, was based largely on pledges, a form of financing that the accrediting agency looked upon with some skepticism.[12]

In 1930 the State Board made another onerous decision. All four-year colleges in Kansas would have to become members of the N.C.A. if they wished to be recognized by the state. An optimistic Kliewer believed the goal was within reach. Spirits rose in the fall of 1930 when Peter S. Goertz arrived as dean of the college. Enrollment was up again, and the faculty was pleased to have on campus a "splendid body of young people," not only Mennonites but also the children of Newton's "upper crust."[13]

Despite these hopeful signs, the college endured several major disappointments as Kliewer's tenure came to a close. Early in 1931 Bethel submitted its application to the N.C.A. The Association deferred its decision, citing three major problems: substandard salaries, insufficient endowment, and the low educational level of the faculty (languages professor John R. Thierstein had for some years been the sole Ph.D. on campus). Still optimistic, Kliewer announced plans to upgrade the faculty and enhance the endowment. He told college backers that the accrediting agency "practically gave its assurance" that Bethel would receive good news in the coming year.[14]

But such good news was elusive. In 1932, as the Depression deepened, Bethel withdrew its second application and the weary president resigned. Kliewer, whose departure from the presidency earned him the title "President Emeritus," had faced harsh criticism from factions within the faculty. By his own admission, the dignified, seminary-trained Kliewer was not a dynamic fund-raiser. To be sure, the times boded ill for small colleges;

President J. W. Kliewer

(Clockwise) Gordon, Edmund, Karolyn, and Hazel (Dester) Kaufman

Tabor, Hesston, and other neighboring schools stood on the brink of financial ruin. Kliewer had tried several times to step down before Bethel's board of directors accepted his resignation.[15] Despite his continued efforts on behalf of the school, his final weeks in office left him dispirited: "I think it would be a good thing if we would just close down the college and let the people know what they're missing," he confided to a friend.[16]

In the spring of 1932, Mennonite constituent support for the college dwindled. Some backers became worried when reports of budgetary mismanagement at Bethel circulated in the local papers. In early April, these persons called a special session of the Western District Conference and questioned whether the college deserved continued church support. At issue was the control of a $100,000 fund that in 1918-20 the Western District had provided to the Bethel College Corporation. Some wanted to transfer the money from the corporation back to the conference. Had this proposal succeeded, it would have crippled the school. But by a narrow vote of 149 to 131 the corporation prevailed, and the crisis passed.[17]

Vigor and Enthusiasm

Ten days after the tense Western District meeting, Edmund G. Kaufman agreed reluctantly to step forward as Bethel's fifth president.[18] Kaufman, despite his own misgivings about the task ahead, had received a welcome from the Bethel community that gave no hint of the pain that some would later experience under his administration. In the summer of 1931, he had moved to Newton from Bluffton, Ohio, to teach sociology and to assume the post of vice president. His arrival, together with that of psychologist Peter E. Schellenberg from Tabor College, increased the number of faculty Ph.D.s to three. Friends and colleagues expressed a sense of relief when Kaufman consented to give leadership to the school. "It takes young men with vigor and enthusiasm," declared librarian Helene Riesen, "to tide over critical times."[19]

Bethel was only one of several small church schools in the area experiencing difficulties. In addition to downward economic trends, the fundamentalist-modernist controversy of the 1920s contributed to a high turnover among faculty at Bethel and elsewhere. As early as 1927 a series of proposals surfaced, ranging from cooperation to consolidation with neighboring colleges. In 1930, Bethel administrators approached the leaders of Tabor College about a possible merger. But even Bethel supporters appear to have regarded the proposal with tongue in cheek: "Tabor will fear to lose its identity and Bethel will want to be careful lest she has a severe case of indigestion."[20]

More serious was an arrangement advocated by Kaufman involving Bethel, Friends University, and McPherson College. In the fall of 1932 these three invited renowned educator Robert L. Kelley to their campuses. He concluded that membership in the North Central Association was, for Bethel, a "necessity," and urged that the peace-oriented schools affiliate with each other and relocate at a neutral site, possibly the state fairgrounds at Hutchinson. Discussions continued, but by the end of the year Bethel's faculty resolved to "lay this motion on the table indefinitely."[21]

Under Kaufman's guidance, the college made a renewed effort toward accreditation. A five-year program adopted in 1933 served as a blueprint for college-wide improvement. The endowment, for example, would increase from $200,000 to $500,000 through careful planning of investments and by rewriting pledges. The Bethel College Fellowship, an ambitious network of congregational support groups, would strengthen constituency relations. And in seeking to upgrade academic standards, the administration would tackle faculty and curriculum weaknesses head-on.[22]

"The Coffers are Depleted and I Must Have Money!"

Budget-cutting was the order of the day. Kaufman admonished at faculty meetings that "lopse play" in spending was intolerable. Department heads, he said, should plan a month ahead when making requisitions, so that the business manager would have ample time to check their accounts. This directive "elicited questions and discussion on the part of faculty members, and cleared up points which did not seem to have been understood formerly."[23]

Students also felt the pinch. Some who found themselves in dire straits pled with members of the faculty to let them continue in school. The proposition was this: A student would enroll on the amount that the college owed a particular professor, promising to pay the debt as soon as he or she could earn an income.[24] While professors considered how to respond to such queries ("Would you consider favoring me in this way?"), the college sought to diminish delinquent student accounts. A new regulation went into effect that instructors must turn in exams to the business office, ungraded, until payment was received.[25]

The Depression and stringent business measures at the college forced families into lowered standards of living. Most coped by making their homes on college property, tending large gardens, and butchering their own chickens. Those who occupied Goessel Hall, White House, or other college buildings received a break on utility bills and relied on the college farm for cheap eggs, milk, and meat. Spouses performed a variety of services gratis. The family of Professor Jacob H. Doell lived on the first floor of Leisy House. Leisy's second floor housed students, so Myrtle Doell served for some time as unofficial housemother. One year, however, she received fifty dollars—but her husband's pay was docked by the same amount.[26] Professor John E. Linscheid, in graduate study at Lawrence, Kansas, wrote to the college with a desperate request for a summer school job. "Don't you say me nay!" he implored. "The coffers are depleted and I must have money or mortgage a wife and three children."[27]

During the 1930s, accreditation standards tended to intensify the already-sensitive salary issue. In 1931, for example, the N.C.A. ruled that each full professor should receive $2,500, a sum that Bethel could ill afford to pay. At contract-signing time, the president called the faculty together and handed out slips of paper containing two phrases: "Salary suggested by the North Central Association," and "Amount you would be willing to return." Accompanying this, reported one professor, was "the remark that it would be nice if we responded well to the second part."[28]

The administration could not guarantee the amount a person might receive. A grim disclaimer accompanied salary contracts: "If at the end of the year the income . . . should not be enough to pay the entire salaries, the accounts shall nevertheless be closed and considered settled with no further claims on the part of the faculty members."[29] Otto D. Unruh, who served as Bethel's athletic director, recalls one scene that happened time and again. On payday, he'd visit the college business office, where John F. Moyer would greet him: "Well, Coach, we only have twenty-five dollars for you today. But, the Lord willing, we might have a little more for you next week."[30]

The college strained to pay its personnel the most minimal of salaries. Out of such straining came a policy, the so-called "donation," that rankled many faculty members. Each year the college subtracted a certain amount (usually ten percent of an employee's salary) to help meet annual operating expenses. As a token recognition of this "donation," each employee received shares in the Bethel College Corporation. But the arrangement was not reflected in salary contracts or negotiated with prospective faculty members; thus, many regarded it as unethical.

Faculty concerned about the "camouflaging" of their earnings felt their complaints fell on deaf ears. Some questioned the legality of imposed donations, but apparently the North Central Association encouraged this sort of financing. Bethel's administration saw the donation as a legitimate way of elevating salaries (albeit on paper) to required levels. The issue remained a sore point. "I gladly donate," declared business instructor Bennie Bargen, "but I am convinced after three years that the matter of a donation is a matter of bookkeeping only, and not made a part of the contract is unchristian."[31]

"Cheap eggs" (part of the faculty benefit package at Bethel in the 1930s)

Keeping the Men Intact

Despite the common plight that Bethel faculty shared during the first years of the Kaufman administration, division rather than unity pervaded the campus. Faculty members did not know what peers were making (or donating); thus, rumors were "a dime a dozen."[32] And administrative pressure on some of the faculty to return to graduate school bred competitiveness. For mature professors with families to support, pressures were extreme. In the early 1930s, Bethel lacked a policy for sabbaticals, scholarships were hard to come by, and procedures for granting tenure varied widely. Thus faculty members pursued graduate study at their own risk and on their own time. One man trekked to the University of Chicago for eight summer sessions over a sixteen-year period.[33]

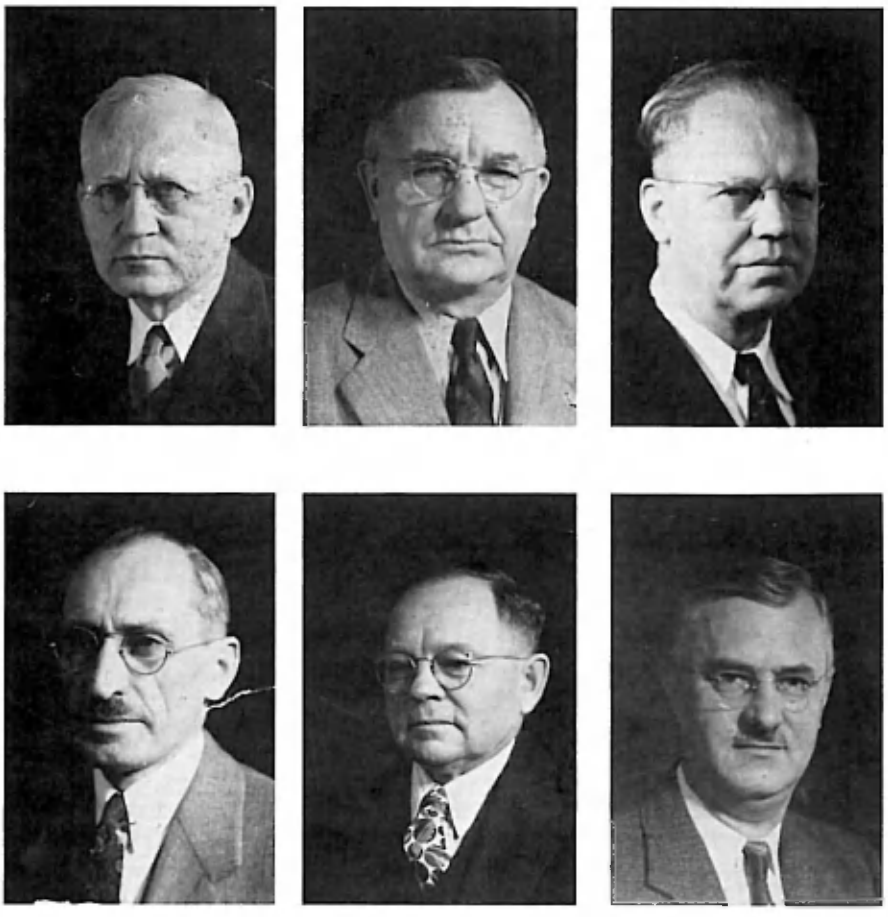
Dean P. S. Goertz supported Kaufman's academic objectives wholeheartedly and completed his doctorate at Yale University in 1933. While studying for exams in Connecticut, Goertz received encouragement from Kaufman: "I still have the feeling that probably next year will be the low water mark for Bethel and I am looking forward to having you here to help us through that crisis . . . . If we can keep the better men of our faculty intact we ought to be able to pull through."

The message from Kaufman to those returning to graduate school was to push forward expeditiously. In 1934, he prepared another application to the North Central Association. To each of the four Bethel men at the University of Kansas he urged: "If at all possible get your thesis fully accepted and final examinations taken before December 15th, so that in the next report . . . this fact might be included."[34] Kaufman's critics charged that he failed to take into account the age and health of these men, who had already given sacrificially to the college for years.[35] But Kaufman found a way to use the argument as leverage in dealing with subordinates. In 1934, he told one: "A number of men who have been in school longer than you and who are financially hit very hard begged the board of the college to be permitted to come back before they have degrees, and the college was adamant and insisted that they stay on the job . . . . We must not stop now with you."[36]

Those who completed Ph.D.s while at Bethel included Jacob H. Doell, John E. Linscheid, Abraham P. Friesen, and Aaron J. Regier (all University of Kansas, 1935), and Abraham Warkentin (University of Chicago, 1935). John J. Voth, Gustave R. Gaeddert, and others embarked on graduate study as well. A few were able to postpone school and ultimately avoided it. The administration waived the requirement in the case of D. H. "Uncle Davy" Richert because he was nearly deaf. A decade later Bethel College granted Richert an honorary doctorate.[37]

Bethel Nears Its Goal

The year 1935, with its flurry of graduations among Bethel faculty members, signified an easing of tensions. The administrative pressure on longtime faculty had peaked, and the college had turned its attention to hiring new personnel, such as historian Emmett L. Harshbarger, who brought to the school salutary credentials. Newcomers during the mid to late 1930s altered the makeup of the faculty; they had been spared the difficult early years of the Kaufman administra-



The unsung heroes of Bethel's struggle for accreditation, the men who earned their Ph.D.s during the 1930s: (top row) Dean P. S. Goertz, J. A. Doell, A. P. Friesen; (bottom row) J. E. Linscheid, A. J. Regier, A. Warkentin

tion and tended to be less critical of college policies. In addition, student growth reinforced an upbeat mood. Students at Bethel during the mid and late 1930s sensed that a quickening of campus life was underway.[38] Bethel's ascending enrollment figures for the years 1932-38 (273, 312, 378, 403, 412, 469), demonstrated an improving climate as the decade progressed.[39]

Bethel's five-year program emphasized curriculum and teaching methods as well as faculty preparation, and during the mid thirties the college engaged in a thorough housecleaning. The administration encouraged professors to join learned societies and to donate their academic journals to the college library. The college required standardized aptitude tests, offered honors courses, and administered comprehensive final exams. Self-studies of the institution and its locale were in vogue. One year Kaufman cited fifteen ongoing research projects, including "a comparative diet study of light housekeeping students with boarding hall students" and an analysis of "the Negro population of Newton."[40]

Although the North Central Association in 1935 had turned down Bethel's third application for membership, the college was nearing its goal. On the basis of a detailed on-campus study, N.C.A. inspectors compiled a seven page report.[41] Among the deficiencies they named, the debt, salary scale, lack of scholarly productivity, and deterioration of buildings were the most serious. But the evaluation was more encouraging than discouraging, and the Kaufman administration pushed ahead.

In 1935 Bethel took new steps to erase its debt, which stood at $121,000. The board of directors initiated an ambitious campaign, and congregations of the Western District Conference contributed approximately $25,000.[42] In the next years the economy gradually improved, and Bethel's financial health took a turn for the better as Mennonite and non-Mennonite friends gave annuities, farm land, equipment and cash.[43] A second fund-raising initiative in 1937 aimed to retire the debt and to launch a $100,000 "memorial building," a combination gymnasium and auditorium. Bethel College eventually achieved these goals, but not until the wartime economy of the next decade boosted donor gifts.[44]

In 1937 the college reapplied for accreditation and then withdrew, partly out of fear that another rejection would bring undesirable publicity.[45] By that time, the N.C.A. seesaw had grown tiring for the entire Bethel community. Students complained that several new professors, hired because they possessed Ph.D. degrees, lacked competence in the classroom. Some felt that the administration invoked the term "North Central" too easily and too often; that the whole accreditation process was beginning to assume inflated importance.[46] A frustrated Kaufman told N.C.A. officials that "our people are rather dubious about the willingness of the North Central Association to let small colleges live at all . . . ."[47]

The Jubilee Year

Finally, in April 1938, after submitting five applications in seven years, Bethel College became the first Mennonite school to join the 250-member North Central Association. The N.C.A examiners praised Bethel's solid academic program, rated its faculty highly, and noted that the construction just begun on Memorial Hall signified progress in campus development. The examiners cited several weaknesses as well, namely the $85,000 debt and persistently low salaries. Nevertheless, they concluded, Bethel's strong showing in many areas outweighed these remaining financial problems.

The N.C.A. decision prompted much "rejoicing in this place."[48] President Kaufman, attending N.C.A. meetings in Chicago at the time of the decision, relayed a triumphant telegram to Newton. Later, he recalled: "When we got in, that was really something. The kids met me when I got off the train. They carried me . . . a block or two."[49]

The Bethel community during that year experienced not one high point but two. October 1938 was the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the college. A four-day celebration commemorated the cornerstone laying of the Administration Building, with "an historical pageant of the Mennonites and of Bethel College" capping the week.[50]

An era of struggle was over, although contemporary observers noted that Bethel College was still not, nor would likely ever be, on "easy street."[51] President Kaufman's critics—many of whom remained loyal members of the faculty and the larger campus community despite unhappiness—acknowledged the victory. The anniversary autumn of 1938 was a season of celebrations—much like the centennial autumn of 1987. Yet the mood was darker, for the memories were still fresh of one of the most difficult passages in Bethel's history.

ENDNOTES

[1]Kreider to Kaufman, March 9, 1938, Kaufman Collection, folder 542, Bethel College Archives (BCA).

[2]Annual Report of the President, November 25, 1938, folder 11, BCA. Tabor College in Hillsboro, Kansas, had granted the degree previously, but functioned as a two-year school for some time after losing its state accreditation in 1932.

[3]"Bethel Arrives," *Evening Kansan-Republican*, 11 April 1938.

[4]Kaufman to Board of Directors, November 14, 1938, Board of Directors Collection, folder 5, BCA.

[5]Kaufman, "Crisis in Bethel's History," Kaufman Collection, folder 270, Mennonite Library and Archives (MLA).

[6]Peter J. Wedel, *The Story of Bethel College* (North Newton, KS: Bethel College, 1954), p. 459.

[7]Annual Report of the Treasurer, November 25, 1938, folder 11, BCA.

[8]Interview with Norma Walker, Newton, KS, May 8, 1987.

[9]P. S. Goertz to E. G. Kaufman, February 18, 1933, Faculty Collection, folder 125, BCA.

[10]Interview with Mariam and Herbert Schmidt, Newton, KS, May 8, 1987.

[11]Accreditation developments throughout the school's history are detailed in Wedel, pp. 229-34, 332-68, and 454-59.

[12]Wedel, pp. 333, 591.

[13]J. R. Thierstein to E. G. Kaufman, February 10, 1931, and David H. Richert to Kaufman, January 4, 1931, Kaufman Collection, folder 247, MLA.

[14]"Defer Action on Approving Bethel," *Evening Kansan Republican*, 21 March 1931.

[15]Faculty petition to the Board of Directors, September 24, 1931, and Kliewer to C. C. Wedel, September 29, 1931, Kliewer Collection, folder 26, MLA.

[16]Interview with Otto D. Unruh, Goessel, KS, May 8, 1987.

[17]Wedel, pp. 341-43.

[18]"Kaufman Accepts Presidency," *Evening Kansan-Republican*, 19 April 1932.

[19]Riesen to E. G. Kaufman, Kaufman Collection, folder 247, MLA.

[20]E. G. Kaufman to R. S. Haury, December 18, 1930, Kaufman Collection, folder 247, MLA.

[21]Wedel, p. 455; Faculty minutes, December 6, 1932, folder 6, BCA.

[22]Wedel, pp. 351-54.

[23]Faculty minutes, November 24, 1936, folder 8, BCA.

[24]Vera Warkentin to J. R. Thierstein, August 22, 1933, Thierstein Collection, folder 55, MLA.

[25]Faculty minutes, May 23, 1933, folder 6, BCA.

[26]Walker interview.

[27]Linscheid to Kaufman, November 15, 1933, Faculty Collection, folder 212, BCA.

[28]J. R. Thierstein to P. H. Richert, December 31, 1931, Thierstein Collection, folder 51, MLA.

[29]Annual Report of the President, 1933, p. 8, Bethel Corporation Collection, folder 1, BCA.

[30]Unruh interview.

[31]Bargen to E. G. Kaufman, June 9, 1938, Faculty Collection, folder 14, BCA.

[32]Walker interview.

[33]See Abraham Warkentin, "Doell, Jacob Homer," in *Who's Who Among the Mennonites* (North Newton, KS: The author, 1943), p. 47.

[34]Kaufman to Doell, Friesen, Regier and Linscheid, November 1, 1934, Faculty Collection, folder 181, BCA.

[35]The death in 1939 of Dr. John E. Linscheid at the age of fifty-three was attributed by some to work-related stresses. See the transcript *E. G. Kaufman*, Fred Zerger, interviewer, John D. and Barbara Thiesen, eds. (Mennonite Library and Archives, 1986), p. 127.

[36]Kaufman to Abraham Warkentin, July 22, 1934, Faculty Collection, folder 372, BCA.

[37]Interview with Otto D. Unruh, Goessel, KS, May 11, 1987; Wedel, p. 372. During the 1940s Walter H. Hohmann, longtime professor of music, also received an honorary doctorate.

[38]Telephone interview with Robert S. Kreider, Akron, PA, May 25, 1987.

[39]Wedel, p. 591.

[40]"Studies in Process at Bethel College, 1935," Kaufman Collection, folder 543, BCA.

[41]"Report of the Survey of Bethel College of Newton, Kansas," P. S. Goertz Collection, folder 75, BCA.

[42]Wedel, pp. 380-82.

[43]Wedel, p. 385.

[44]Wedel, pp. 382-84.

[45]Kaufman to George A. Works, January 23, 1937, and February 9, 1937, Kaufman Collection, folder 542, BCA.

[46]Telephone interview with Robert S. Kreider, Akron, PA, May 19, 1987.

[47]Kaufman to C. H. Oldfather, March 16, 1936, Kaufman Collection, folder 543, BCA.

[48]E. G. Kaufman to C. H. Oldfather, April 13, 1938, Kaufman Collection, folder 542, BCA.

[49]*E. G. Kaufman* transcript, p. 150. See also "Bethel Wins Coveted Place," *Evening Kansan-Republican*, 8 April 1937.

[50]"Anniversary Festival Begins Sunday," *The Bethel Collegian*, 6 October 1938.

[51]Wedel, p. 459. Findings of the N.C.A. inspectors are excerpted in the Annual Report of the President, 1938, folder 11, BCA.

The Bethel College Administration Building: Proudfoot and Bird's Expression in Richardsonian Romanesque

by Brent J. Zerger

It is indicative of America's renewed interest in preserving its architectural heritage that in the coming year, two cities will recognize the works of the architectural firm of Proudfoot and Bird. This fall, Wichita will celebrate four of its unique structures, designed in the Richardsonian Romanesque style, and as Bethel College enters into "Celebration '87" to recognize the centenary of its incorporation, the following year will bring a celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of the cornerstone laying of the Administration Building, also designed by Proudfoot and Bird. Without question, the building has a unique historical, architectural, and spiritual significance as an expression of the goals of the first Mennonite college in North America.

Introduction

The Bethel College Administration Building, designed by architects Proudfoot and Bird in the Richardsonian Romanesque style, is one of the most interesting and enigmatic Mennonite structures in the Midwest, if not the entire United States. Its place in the history of late nineteenth-century architecture in Kansas is an important one—one which reveals much about the outlook of Kansas in the mid- to late 1880s, and the vision and purpose of Bethel College.

To appreciate fully the significance of this position, this paper will first briefly analyze the spirit of H. H. Richardson's prolific mode of architectural expression—the Richardsonian Romanesque style. Secondly, the consequences of this style will be related to the character of the architectural firm, Proudfoot and Bird, and their work during the Kansas "boom" years, 1885-1888. Finally, with these first two points serving as contextual backdrops, the Bethel College Administration Building will be considered in terms of its architectural and historical significance, and as a spiritual expression of the goals of the first Mennonite college in North America.

Birth of the Expression: H. H. Richardson

Although his Romanesque vision is employed rarely today, Henry Hobson Richardson (1838-1886) figures as one of the most important stylists in the story of America's ever-progressing search for a distinct mode of architectural expression. Born in Louisiana, and educated at Harvard and the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, Richardson attempted to answer the puzzling architectural philosophy of America in the latter half of the nineteenth century.[1]

The civil war that had divided the States in the 1860's had splintered the nation's architectural philosophy as well. Influences such as Transcendentalist philosophy and the theories of Ruskin and Darwin only added to the disparity.[2] Thus, America turned a bewildered architectural eye to romantic and neoclassical designs in Europe. The result was a confused medley of Gothic universities and churches standing along-side Tudor, Byzantine, Italian Villa, and English Queen Anne residences. These disparate designs made it quite evident that "A major reconciliation, an intelligent and sensitive intellectual and intuitive thesis . . . was manifestly needed in American architecture."[3] Such a design stimulation was found in the works of H. H. Richardson.

Richardson moved his practice to Boston in 1874, where the Richardsonian Romanesque style was given its first distinctive expression in one of the great hallmarks of Richardson's career: Boston's Trinity Church. Here, the basic characteristics of Richardsonian architecture were born—a well-executed and energetic balancing and counter-balancing of large geometric forms into a coherent unit. With churches, libraries, courthouses, railway stations, private homes, commercial and collegiate buildings, Richardson's individualized Romanesque achieved great popularity throughout the Atlantic states and beyond. The characteristic broad arched entrances, towers, and rhythmic window lines set deep into rugged mason exteriors provided a bold and functional alternative to the picturesque and eclectic chaos of the nineteenth century.

Although Richardson's simple, solid forms would help to untangle the stylistic disorder of the 1860's, his rejection of the use of developing cast-iron construction sentenced his unique style to a relatively short life. By the end of World War I, his buildings had fallen into the shadows of emerging skyscrapers, and the Richardsonian Romanesque style fell into obscurity as well.

The strong, fixed character of his works, however, gave to his age the idea that buildings could have an integral "goal of quality, an index of scale, a sense of stateliness possible in an architecture for an industrial civilization."[4] The design elements and philosophy of the Richardsonian Romanesque style were not only expounded frequently throughout late nineteenth-century America, but were also the necessary bridge towards the creative freedom of the twentieth century.

Boston's Trinity Church

Freedom of Expression: Proudfoot and Bird

Even though Richardsonian Romanesque did not become a permanent national style, it was copied frequently by architects all across the nation from 1880 to 1905. In the Midwest, Richardsonian interpretations were built in cities from Minnesota to Texas, where "there developed a family of Richardsonian styles, based on his forms but using local materials or emphasizing the particular parts of the Richardsonian vocabulary that suited local needs."[5] In general, architects who copied the Richardsonian style modelled their plans upon Richardson's earlier, more decorative designs, instead of concentrating on the truer, simpler, more unified forms of his later works. Anomalous interpretations of Richardson's vision occurred in Kansas, too.

Richardsonian Romanesque "made its first appearance in Kansas about 1885."[6] Although used primarily for the designing of county courthouses, the Richardsonian style was also executed in the construction of businesses, educational facilities, and libraries. There were several prominent Kansas-based Richardsonian architects.

John G. Haskell (1832-?) came from Vermont to establish his Lawrence, Kansas, practice in 1857. Working with associate Louis H. M. Wood, Haskell's buildings of the 1860s and '70s exhibited "a variety of styles including Italianate, Gothic, and Second Empire."[7] Several of his Richardsonian buildings still stand today, including two county courthouses.

James C. Holland (1853-1919) settled in Topeka, Kansas, where his work soon won him state-wide prominence. From 1857 to 1897, Holland was State Architect, during which time he supervised some of the later construction of the State Capitol.[8] His work was extensive and included twelve Richardsonian county courthouses.

The most invigorating and stylized Richardsonian works in Kansas, however, were designed by the short-lived Wichita firm of W. T. Proudfoot and G. W. Bird. During their brief stay in Kansas from 1885 to 1891, they created many of the most lively and expressive Richardsonian buildings in Wichita and the surrounding area.

Willis T. Proudfoot (1860-1928) was born in Warren County, near Indianola, Iowa, on May 2, 1860. After completing his preparatory education in Iowa, he attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where he "completed a course" in architecture.[9] Although Proudfoot did not receive a degree from M.I.T., his keen business sense was sharpened there. And Proudfoot must have been exposed to many of the popular buildings designed by Boston's lauded contemporary genius, H. H. Richardson.

Less is known about Proudfoot's partner, George W. Bird (1857-1956). *Directory of the City of Wichita* listings indicate that he came to Kansas from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and it is assumed that this was the city of his birth. Whether or not Bird had any formal architectural training is not known. It is possible that he received his training at the Philadelphia Tee-Square Club, a Beaux-Arts system where students were assigned a local atelier and taught "the current ways of architecture."[10] If this was the case, exposure to the popular Richardsonian Romanesque style was certainly part of the curriculum.

While it is assumed that Proudfoot and Bird met somewhere in the East, details of the formation of their partnership are unknown. Without question, the motivation of the young firm, and its decision to come to the West, was one of entreprenurial profit-seeking. To offer their services in the rapidly growing "boom towns" west of Chicago must have seemed to them a very logical route to take. The firm operated in three major cities, moving according to the dictates of substantial contracts and local economic climates. The great variety shown in their floor plans and exterior designs indicate that the two responded to different design challenges with a dynamic approach.

W. T. Proudfoot came to Wichita in the late winter or spring of 1885, and was joined by his associate, G. W. Bird, the following year.[11] Advertisements for "Proudfoot and Bird, Architects and Superintendents," appeared regularly in the local papers by 1886.

Proudfoot and Bird found the economic opportunity they were seeking in Wichita. The city had experienced unprecedented growth in population, land speculation, and income in the mid-1880s, providing for a boomtown optimism that led the city to hail herself "The Peerless Princess of the Plains," "The Winning Wonder of the West and the Mecca of Men."

As prepared as the two young men were to take advantage of this opportunity, the city was equally eager to promote their designs. Above all, the city favored a "progressive" label for itself. Its citizens fancied themselves as cosmopolitan, and they were determined to bury the crudities of pioneer life beneath new schools, opera houses, street car systems, theatres, and impressive public buildings. No longer would simple frame construction

buildings suffice. Thus, many local architects were catapulted to prominence, but none more so than Proudfoot and Bird. Part of their appeal must have been due to the fact that their Richardsonian designs represented the most contemporary of American architectural thought:

> Their [Proudfoot and Bird's] preference for the Richardsonian Romanesque style was very likely the hallmark of their short-lived success. The grand, imposing nature of the many structures designed by these two young men was just what the people of Wichita wanted for their newborn city. After all, it was the best of times for such a young town, which was off on an extravagant building spree designed to create a city of the finest quality that would rival all others in the Midwest.[12]

With the refreshingly original and professional message of Richardsonian Romanesque, the two architects answered Wichita's stylistic call for the modernity of the eastern United States.

Proudfoot and Bird's first two buildings, Garfield University and the Young Men's Christian Association Building, were received favorably by the Wichita populace. Their approval of the innovative style was so wholehearted, in fact, that the city awarded the two architects the contract to design the Wichita City Building in 1889.[13]

These buildings exhibited many typical Richardsonian elements: alternating wide and narrow courses of rough-hewn stone separated at each floor-level by a band of carved or smooth stone, variations of long courses of rectangular and round-arched windows, broadly arched entrances, and vertical treatment consisting largely of cylindrical towers topped with conical or pyramidal roofs.

After only two years in Wichita, the firm of Proudfoot and Bird found themselves "running over with business," and their designs included a great number of business buildings, churches, schoolhouses, and private residences.[14] The two were so confident of their—and the city's—future that they both built permanent homes outside the city in an area both felt would become a popular residential district.

Their confidence was misplaced, however, and neither they nor the city were prepared for the end of prosperity and progress as the boom ended in 1889. An agricultural depression, coupled with wild over-speculation, spelled the end for those whose livelihood depended upon construction. As property values and population dropped, and as bankruptcies increased, Proudfoot and Bird, heavily in debt, left the city some time in 1891. Behind them, they left many of their buildings unfinished or boarded over.

The two travelled to Salt Lake City where they joined forces with architect Henry Monheim to create the unparalleled Richardsonian design of their careers—the colossal Salt Lake City and County Building, completed in 1894.[15] Towards the turn of the century, Proudfoot and Bird moved to Iowa where their firm enjoyed statewide prominence, serving as the official architects for the State Board of Education.

Proudfoot and Bird left behind them in the state of Kansas a rich variety of buildings. Although the basic elements of these buildings were strictly Richardsonian, there were elements of energetic, almost capricious, design, such as an occasional gargoyle or comical faces carved into the stringcourses. The composition of their early buildings in Wichita often seems as though it were beyond their control. But so was the philosophy of the prairie boom town.

(Above) Wichita City Hall
(Below) Salt Lake City and County Building

A Lasting Expression: The Bethel College Administration Building

Although many of Proudfoot and Bird's buildings outside of Wichita have been razed or refaced, one structure stands almost as it did upon its completion in 1893—the Administration Building on the campus of Bethel College, North Newton. The "Ad Building," as it is often referred to by students, is Newton's only surviving example of the Richardsonian Romanesque style. It was placed on the National Register of Historic places in 1972.

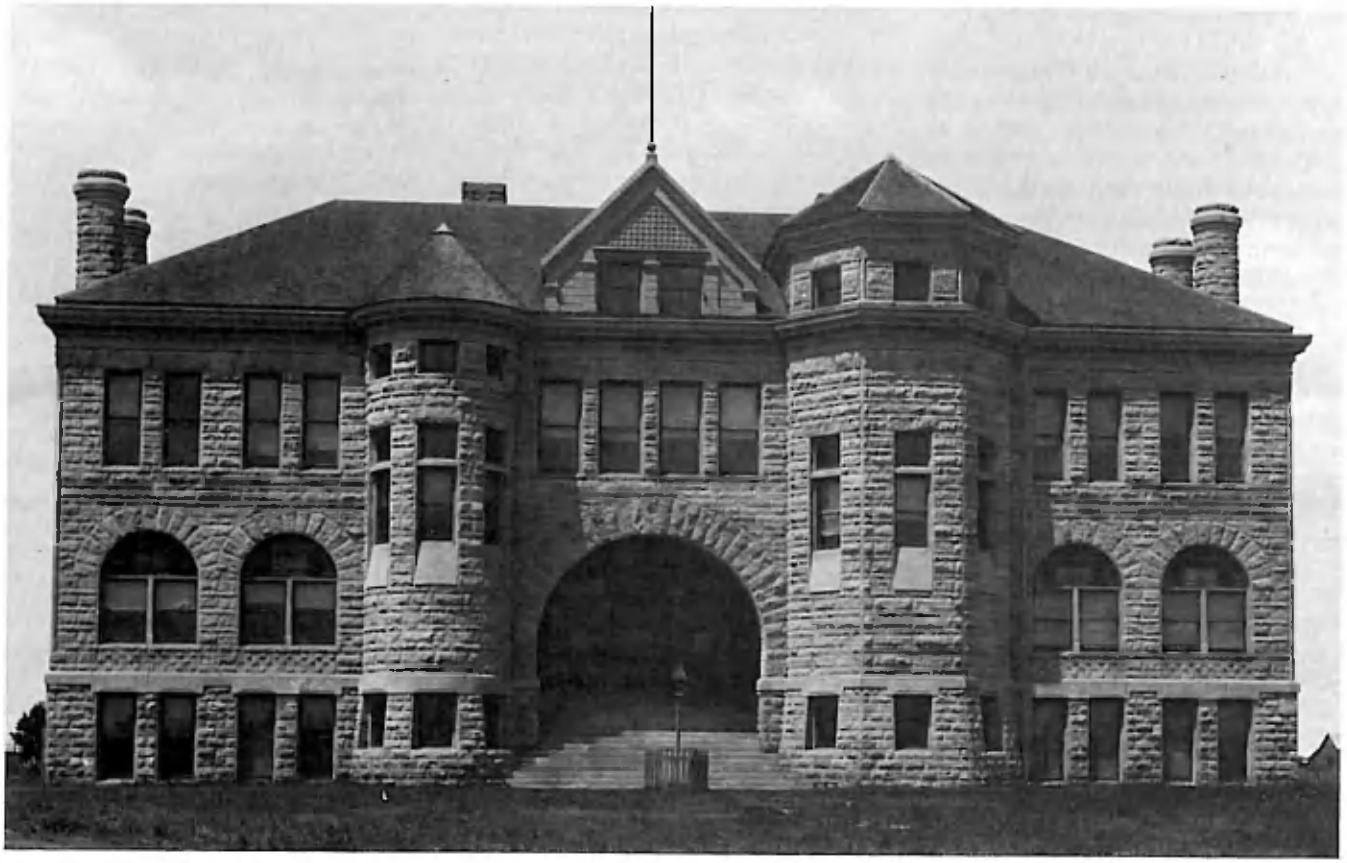
The building is a fine example of many of Proudfoot and Bird's Richardsonian characteristics: a large arched entranceway with a monumental staircase flanked by two towers, circular chimneys extending to the roofline on the east and west facades, rows of rectangular and arched windows paired on stone sills, and an exterior surface made up of random blocks of rough-hewn limestone ("random ashlar") "laid in uniform horizontal courses, which alternate vertically between wide and narrow."[16]

The history of the union between Proudfoot and Bird's design talents and the founders of Bethel College reveals much about the philosophy of both parties. Due to a deeply felt need to expand facilities at its Halstead Seminary, the Halstead College Association, in association with the Western District Conference of the General Conference Mennonite Church, began to consider a permanent expansion, specifically a college. On May 23, 1887, the Bethel College Corporation Charter was signed and filed with the State Secretary of the State of Kansas, all agreeing that such a move would lend confidence to the endeavor,[17] even though questions of funding and possible locations remained unanswered.

At the same time, however, the Newton School Committee was looking to enrich its town's growing future by securing an educational institution. Having lost a bid for Southwestern College to the city of Winfield, the Committee began to consider Bethel College. That the city would make such an offer was agreed upon April 13, 1887, and the Bethel College Corporation received a bid of 120 acres of land (then valued at $85,000) and $15,000 in cash to begin construction immediately. After much intense debate, the Corporation accepted on May 5, giving the city of Newton the college it wanted and providing the opportunity for the ambitious dream of Bethel College.

In an effort to determine an appropriate style for the college building, the directors of the Bethel College Corporation "opened correspondence with several architects and visited the colleges of Topeka, Wichita, Winfield, [L]in[d]sborg and Emporia. . . ."[18] Plans were originally accepted from the Varney Brothers of Newton, but they were rejected due to design and contract problems.[19]

In search of new architects, it is not surprising that the plans of a prominent Wichita firm would be considered, as "Proudfoot and Bird evidently travelled to other towns in Kansas in search of additional architect's commissions."[20] On October 20, 1887, "the board approved plans submitted by Mr. Proudfoot."[21] Although few Newton homes or businesses at the time revealed an interest in Romanesque design, Bethel College had given itself over to Proudfoot and Bird's Richardsonian talents.[22] The plan of the building is very similar to Proudfoot and Bird's



Administration Building, Bethel College

McCormick School in Wichita, the design of which may have a loose inspirational tie to H. H. Richardson's Sever Hall at Harvard University.[23]

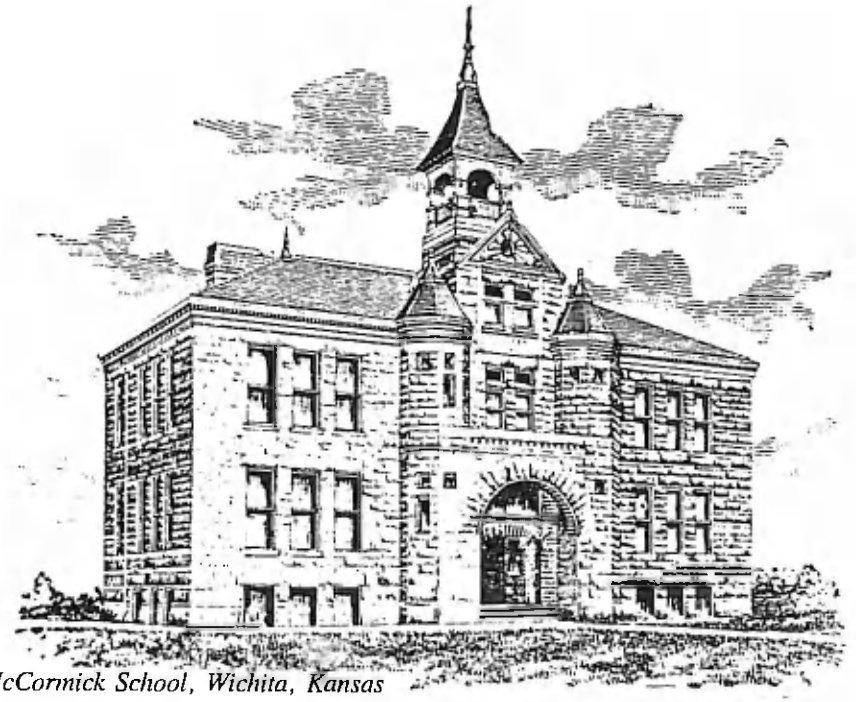
Construction began in December, 1887, and the basement and the first story walls were built up enough that the cornerstone could be laid in a grand ceremony on October 12, 1888. Optimism for the college's future was high. The *Newton Kansan* prediction that the college would be opened in the winter of 1888 reflects accurately the optimistic notions the Newton community had about adding an institution of higher learning to its "metropolis": "Next winter the Newton non-sectarian college will be completed—and then, all ye . . . come to Newton and get a finished education."[24]

Like their neighbors in Wichita, Newtonians failed to see the rapidly approaching agricultural depression and the imminent deflation of speculation-based real estate values that destroyed many boom towns in the late 1880s. Unfortunately, Bethel College did not escape this boom-and-bust cycle either. *The Newton Weekly Republican* offered this retrospection after the college's opening in 1893:

> The massive foundation was put in and the first story was put on when the collapse of the boom came. Many who had subscribed were unable to pay. The real estate that had been donated depreciated in value, and the question began to look very serious as to whether the college would be built or not. The big white walls of the main building stood upon Mount Hebron for many moons, until people began to think that it was nothing but a costly monument to the over-ambitious desires of the Mennonites.[25]

The Board of Directors of the Bethel College Corporation had refused from the beginning to let their project go into debt. As a consequence, the building stood without a roof for almost two years after the boom ended. During this time, critics and skeptics of the College branded the unfinished structure with the unfortunate title *"ein Denkmal echt Mennonitischer Dummheit* (a monument to real Mennonite stupidity)."[26]

After sufficient funds were gathered in the East among Mennonite congregations, construction was resumed in 1891. Several changes, however, were made in the structure to meet the budgetary constraints. According to Peter J. Wedel, in 1889, "One story was cut off, the spire was abandoned, and the number of main entrances was



McCormick School, Wichita, Kansas

reduced from two to one."[27] Proudfoot and Bird enhanced many of their buildings' appearances with impressive clock towers. Although the Administration Building's central arch helps to open up the structure, the lack of a tower or spire restrains the building to its heavy, box-like character.

During this time (1888-1890), the Administration Building's architects were preparing to leave the disappointing situation in Wichita for a more promising situation in Salt Lake City, Utah. Several letters, exchanged between Proudfoot and Bird and the directors of Bethel College, reveal the nature of the architects' business practices and give some information about their departure from Kansas.[28] For example, a letter from Bethel College Secretary (i.e., Business Manager), David Goerz to Proudfoot and Bird in Wichita, dated April 17, 1891, provides some idea of how the firm collected its fees:

> I have looked up your Contract and find, that it reads as follows: 2½ per cent of the actual cost of the College Building to be paid as follows: The first 50% or one half *the commission due*, when the foundation is completed; — the second 50% or ½ *the commission due* when walls are up and joists are on, less the cost of foundation.[29]

Goerz later added that more than the proper amount had already been paid, further evidence that the Corporation's intent to stay out of debt was of prime importance. The contract mentioned also shows that Proudfoot and Bird were confident enough of their work to require payment as work was completed rather than a lump sum. The terms of the contract were stated concisely and reflect clearly a professional firm.

A second letter, dated July 23, 1891, seems to be a reply to the correspondence cited previously. In the letter, the building delays are noted, and there is a sense that the architects, who were going deeper in debt at this time, are anxious to receive funds:

> It [statement of account] also shows that we have been paid in advance of our contract if it be viewed from a technical standpoint but you will remember when the contract was made it was the intention as well as the expectation to complete the building with one, or *two* years at most
>
> In view of the fact that the extra time consumed in building and the erection of the building in parts makes the preparation of plans, and superintendence more expensive to us we ask that you send us a check for balance of 2½ per cent of the work already completed viz $28.92, and that our contract may be changed so we may draw 1% when the contracts are let and the balance when work is completed.[30]

Unfortunately, the letter is signed "Proudfoot & Bird," thus making it impossible to know which architect was the author. Further evidence that the two architects insisted on the highest possible quality is given in the postscript: "Was at Newton today. Will commence on the plans next Monday. Please let us hear from you if any changes are to be made. P & B."[31] It

SCHEDULE OF CHARGES
ADOPTED BY THE
American Institute of Architects,
The Western Association of Architects,
AND BY THE
Kansas State Association of Architects.

For Full Professional Services, (including supervision) Five per Cent. upon the cost of the work.

In case of the abandonment of the work the charge for partial services is as follows:

Preliminary Studies - - - 1 per cent.
Preliminary Studies General Drawings and Specifications, - - - 2½ per cent.
Preliminary Studies, General Drawings Specifications and Details. - - 3½ per cent.

PROUDFOOT & BIRD,
Architects and Superintendents,
OFFICE:
ROOMS 23 & 24 FECHHEIMER BUILDING,
COR. MARKET AND DOUGLAS.

SUPERVISION OF WORK.

The supervision or superintendence of an Architect (as distinguished from the continuous personal superintendence which may be secured by the employment of a Clerk of the Works) means such inspection by the Architect, or his Deputy of a building or other work in process of erection, completion or alteration as he finds necessary to ascertain whether it is being executed in conformity with his designs and specifications, or directions and to enable him to decide when the successive installments or payments provided for in the contract or agreement are due or payable. He is to determine in constructive emergencies to order necessary changes and to define the true intent and meaning of the drawings and specifications, and he has authority to stop the progress of the work and order its removal when not in accordance with them.

Wichita, Kan. April 23 1890

CITY HALL.

PROUDFOOT & BIRD.

ARCHITECTS AND SUPERINTENDENTS.

OFFICE:
ROOMS 23 AND 24, FECHHEIMER BUILDING.
COR. MARKET AND DOUGLAS.

Wichita, Kans. Sept 23 1890

Even before the Wichita City Hall was completed (1892), Proudfoot and Bird used it on their company letterhead (above). The Board of Directors at Bethel waited until their building was completed before making the change (below).

THE BETHEL COLLEGE,

OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA,

AT NEWTON, KANSAS.

(Incorporated under the General Laws of the State of Kansas, May 23rd 1887.)

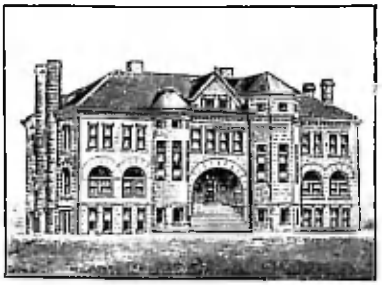
J. J. KREHBIEL, President, Newton, Kas.
DAVID GOERZ, Secretary, Halstead, Kas.
B. WARKENTIN, Treasurer, Newton, Kas.

DIRECTORS:
J. R. TOEWS, McLain, Kas. — A. B. SCHELLY, Milford Square, Pa.
H. H. EWERT, Halstead, Kas. — P. P. STEINER, Pandora, Ohio.
S. F. SPRUNGER, Berne, Ind. — G. P. LEDIG, Summerfield, Ill.

Secretary's Office: HALSTEAD, KAS., April 17th 1891

Mr. Proudfoot & Bird

Form 88. A—6—20—94—5 C.



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B. WARKENTIN, Treasurer, Newton, Kas. — S. F. SPRUNGER, Berne, Ind. — CHR. SCHOWALTER, Donnellson, Ia.

Newton, Kas., Dec 7. 1894

would seem that Proudfoot and Bird's on-site inspections made the flexibility of their plans a possibility in order to suit the customer's needs.

When the two architects left for Salt Lake City in late 1891, the designs for the building were turned over to Wichita architect Elbert Dumont, a former business competitor of Proudfoot and Bird's. A postcard signed by W. T. Proudfoot and dated August 14, 1891, announces that he "Will be in Salt Lake City next two weeks."[32] The short message only implies a visit to Utah, probably to establish business contacts or to meet with Henry Monheim. Proudfoot most likely returned to Wichita before settling in Salt Lake City permanently toward the end of 1891.

A letter, dated December 26, 1891, from Proudfoot and Bird in Salt Lake City, Utah, to Bernhard Warkentin, Treasurer of Bethel College, reveals some aspects of the transition, as the college was left without its architects. Interestingly enough, the letter already carries a finely printed letterhead: "Monheim, Bird & Proudfoot, Architects."[33] Either their move was anticipated by Monheim, or they arrived some time before December 26. At the very least, the time of Proudfoot and Bird's departure to Salt Lake City can be narrowed to some time between July 23 and December 26, 1891. The body of the letter shows a very respectable concern on the part of Proudfoot and Bird to make Bethel College's change to Elbert Dumont's supervision a comfortable process:

> In reply to your favor of the 21st. will say that we do not consider ourselves released from any of the conditions of the contract with Bethel College, but we have confidence in Mr. Dumonts ability to satisfactorily carry on the work.
>
> If you are not satisfied with the plans when he returns please send them to us for an examination.[34]

Dumont seems to have been an equally courteous and professional substitute (despite his spelling errors!) as evidenced by this letter to David Goerz, dated August 18, 1893:

> I was at the College yesterday. Was in Newton the afternoon that you met was adjusting some insburance and could not see you. Whoever did t[h]at pointing will have to do some of it over the jambs are not properly pointed, neither did he point the angles and some imperfections around windows. I will try and get up soon.[35]

The letter dashed the hopes for opening the college by September 1, 1893. However, the college would celebrate its opening a month and two days after the above letter was written, September 20, 1893.

The opening of the college was, of course, celebrated by all parties. For Proudfoot and Bird, the Administration Building represented a unique balance of simplicity and style not often seen in their other works. For the citizens of Newton, the building was a modern design that helped to quench their cosmopolitan thirst. For Mennonites, the structure stood for the strength of their faith and the exciting prospect of a new educational experiment, and it celebrated their freedom of spirit in a new homeland.

It is clear, therefore, that the Bethel College Administration Building is more than a "castle on the plain" or a "monument in stone." Such assessments far too often throw an architectural work from the solid ground of meaning into a sea of cliché. It would be fallacious to think that those who watched the idea of Bethel College, and its main building, grow, cared nothing for appearance. Those who nurtured the vision of Mennonite higher education must also have developed an idea of what type of building would house that dream. No matter how noble the vision or dream, the college building would be the first physical, visual sign by which the institution would be judged.

One of the greatest obstacles the Bethel College Corporation had to overcome was the indifference that its Mennonite history had heretofore shown towards higher education. The roots of this attitude lay in the European history of the Mennonites. According to Peter J. Wedel, Mennonites had not treated post-secondary education with high regard prior to their arrival in America due to: ". . . (1) economic and religious restrictions, (2) unfair treatment by governments and neighbors, (3) a generally unfriendly, even hostile attitude wherever they found themselves, (4) frequent migrations."[36] C. Henry Smith added that the occupations of Mennonites had always been of the uneducated type (e.g. farmers), and that in Europe only their leaders were well educated.[37] Smith also noted the inherent, anti-intellectual prejudice built into Protestant theology (i.e., that knowledge beyond that of the Bible was not necessary).[38]

Whatever the reasons, Mennonites now looked forward to a future devoid of oppression and migration, meaning they could concentrate on making higher education a possibility for their children. Mennonites had, in a general sense, always provided for the elementary education of their children—academic, moral, and religious. But even this was no longer satisfactory. Peter J. Wedel, a student in the 1880s, noted in his history of Bethel College:

> . . . [I]nterest in higher education was on the increase at this time in the state. Higher education was going forward with rapid strides, and the movement included Mennonite congregations and Mennonite youth in its sweep. The question of meeting the rising demand for higher education among Mennonite youth was too important to be treated lightly.[39]

Indicative of this was the failure of Bethel's predecessors, the Emmethal School and the seminary at Halstead, because of a lack of accommodations and classroom space.

The Board of Directors of the Bethel College Corporation were free "to give concrete expression to these aims and purposes."[40] The desire for higher education and the need for adequate space would be met with the Bethel College Administration Building. In Kansas, the Mennonites began to feel that they had found a safe homeland; and, with respect to higher education, it was here that they would build their Bethel, their House of God. Not every step of the way had been this certain. The sixteen-year journey from conception of the idea to the end of construction was led by men who, though often shaken, were not daunted by financial and time constraints. The Administration Building's strong geometric forms and heavy frame placed firmly in the landscape speak of the determination of those who built it and reflect a long-term view towards posterity that would have pleased H. H. Richardson.

The Bethel College building should also be looked at as a statement that responded to the mounting expectations of several parties. The responsibilities that the college was forced to assume for itself in light of these expectations must also be considered.

The Newton community obviously expected much from the young institution. Like the city of Wichita, Newton experienced a great boom in population growth and real estate values in the sec-

ond half of the 1880s. With the usual desire for a cultured metropolis came the inclination to attract educational institutions to the city:

> During the years of prosperity that Kansas enjoyed a few years ago there had arisen quite a rivalry between Kansas cities to secure the location of colleges. Those towns, especially those possessing superior advantages on account of their favorable location or railroad connections would offer great inducements for the erection of colleges. This is perhaps in accordance with a general custom in vogue in this country of giving large bounties to secure public institutions or business enterprises.[41]

Holding the opinion that "[e]ducational institutions are among the most important factors of civilization", Newton's leaders encouraged citizens to buy stock in the Bethel College Corporation.[42] The Board of Directors must have felt some sense of indebtedness for the kindness that Newton had shown the college. There were few options but to feel obligated to provide the town with a respectable institution and a building of high quality. How could the board have countered the *Kansan*'s opinion that all should "look to the opening of Bethel College as an event distinctively and positively helpful to all the natural, social and moral interests of this city, county and state."[43]

In addition to these expectations, the proposed Bethel College also was responsible to the General Conference Mennonite Church of North America. The college was dependent on the financial support of Mennonite congregations in the West and East, and therefore, necessarily had to "sell" the idea to the General Conference Mennonite Church. This is not to say, however, that the college was not the result of a Mennonite vision of higher education among Mennonites. Indeed, it was, and the Board of Directors were well aware that they had no precedent to follow or build on. Additionally, the fact that this would be the only institution of higher learning for Mennonites in all of North America required a courageous response.

To express the need for a Mennonite institution of higher learning, *The First Annual Report of the Board of Directors of Bethel College* noted:

> . . . Bethel College is an urgent necessity for the Mennonites of North America. . . . We call to mind particularly the fact, that a considerable number of our young men attend the institutions of other denominations. . . . We are confident that those of our people that look upon higher education as superfluous, and think it only an exceptional case among Mennonites when a young man or a young lady seeks a higher education, would be surprised at the large number of students seeking at other schools that education, which to acquire in their own institutions they had not the opportunity.[44]

To give Mennonite youth a Mennonite education, it was argued, would most likely give Mennonite students an added incentive to maintain their allegiance with that denomination. The *Report* also contended that the college would bring students together from different churches within the denomination, and would, therefore, "tend to strengthen the bond of sympathy among the various churches. . . ."[45] All of these justifications rested on the idea that well-educated persons would give the most back to the Mennonite churches.

The Administration Building does not state these ideas in any definite way. However, remembering that the structure would be the first visual symbol of these intentions and responsibilities, it behooved those who chose its design to select something which would exhibit a commitment to the citizens of Newton, to build a "first-class" institution. To the Mennonite congregations of North America, the building had to exhibit the founders' sincerity and sense of determination to provide for Mennonite students a permanent place to study. The orderly massing and well-defined horizontal and vertical rhythms, typical of Richardsonian Romanesque architecture, were perfect elements to express the thoroughly-reasoned purposes and goals of Bethel College.

At the same time, the structure has many unusual elements, too, the most noticeable of which are the asymmetrical towers flanking the entranceway. This design element is acceptable in a Richardsonian sense, but is most unlike the identical towers that consistently surround Proudfoot and Bird's arched entryways. Therefore, it is appropriate to reiterate that the Richardsonian style was a completely modern approach in the 1880s. The irregular towers, then, serve as evidence of the progressive aspects of the Bethel College venture. Cultural and religious readjustments were marked and significant for Mennonites in their first twelve years in Kansas. Wedel substantiates that the recognition of the need for higher education was part of the acclimatization of the Mennonite ethos to the new American surroundings:

> Men who could look beneath the surface and see the cultural trends were not slow to recognize that Mennonite youth was beginning to find itself—that an awakening intellectual life needed opportunities for growth and development.[46]

The very idea of a Mennonite institution of higher education was open-minded. In addition to this, courses would be taught partially in English, women and men would be educated together, and students of all denominations could be admitted. To be certain,

only a progressive and optimistic Board of Directors could have chosen this somewhat dramatic and unquestionably modern design-style for its main building.

How the Bethel College Administration Building then fits into the schema of Mennonite architecture is a difficult query. The major difficulty, of course, is that "[n]owhere . . . has any characteristic or distinctive architectural style developed which was created by Mennonites."[47] The only characteristic that operates consistently throughout Mennonite architecture is an emphasis on simplicity. This attribute is exemplified by the lack of exterior decoration on the Bethel Administration Building. Within the context of Proudfoot and Bird's usual emphasis on minimal but ornate details, the lack of surface decoration on the Bethel building is quite remarkable. The carved faces of the Wichita City Hall or the ornate masonry of Garfield University are noticeably absent on the Administration Building's walls. In this way, the exterior surfaces exhibit an historical Mennonite preference. Therefore, the Bethel College Administration Building is exceptional among Proudfoot and Bird's works, and the aesthetic demands of the Board of Directors were obviously considered by the two architects.

Simple yet progressive, ordered yet lively—these are the almost paradoxical qualities of the Administration Building at Bethel College. In any case, one need only look at the purpose behind the building's construction to understand its outward meaning. After years of uncertainty, of successful and failed experiments, the Mennonites of Kansas and elsewhere were ready to commit themselves to the vision of Bethel College with a large, permanent structure. The Corporation and its supporters were willing to step forward with a relative sense of security and build a concrete expression of their vision. In true Richardsonian style, the building's heavy, massive qualities are noticeable first. At the cornerstone-laying ceremony on October 12, 1888, Reverend S. F. Sprunger, president of the Western Conference, dedicated the college with a sermon based on I Corinthians 3:11: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid which is Jesus Christ." The notion of the wise man building his house upon a rock is an important one. Wedel said of Sprunger's sermon: "He stressed the importance of a spiritual as well as a material foundation in such an enterprise. A Christian institution must build for eternity, not for time only."[48] Thus, the Administration Building expresses the faith of its founders and it witnesses to the permanence and strength of Christ's message which the members of the Bethel College Corporation felt had carried them this far.

With the Bethel College Administration Building, Proudfoot and Bird expressed the essence of Richardson's conception of architecture: that "a library could be as monumental as a city hall. . . ."[49] Today, the building still stands, triumphant and strong, proclaiming the permanence of the Corporation's vision. It is a monument to the determination of its founders, and to the validity of the faith and vision that raised it up.

ENDNOTES

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[6]Richard J. Cawthon, "The Influence of H. H. Richardson on the Architecture of Kansas, 1885-1910," paper presented at the Missouri Valley History Conference, Omaha, Neb., 8 March 1985, p. 3.

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[19]Wedel, p. 54.

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[22]Rachel Waltner, *Brick and Mortar: A History of Newton, Kansas* (North Newton, Kan.: Mennonite Library & Archives and the City of Newton, 1984).

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[29] David Goerz to Proudfoot and Bird, 17 April 1891, Bethel College Archives, Business Office Records, David Goerz files, Mennonite Library & Archives, North Newton, Kansas.

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Speeches delivered at the dedication of Mantz Library, October 5, 1986

Of Scholars and Disciples

by Robert S. Kreider

A century ago when David Goerz and his colleagues stood on a knoll in the prairie and envisioned in this place a college, they were drawn to biblical images in naming this child of promise: Bethel College—*Bethel*, "the House of God"; *Kidron* Creek, the little stream in the grassland, recalling another Kidron which Jesus and His disciples crossed after the last supper on their way to Gethsemane. Among the Hebrew people names were given and changed reverently, for names were carriers of sacred values. Throughout Scripture we observe the motif of naming: "What is thy name?" "I will declare thy name." "A good name is rather to be chosen . . . ." "Called by a new name . . . ."

Today in the biblical tradition, we recognize with gratitude that the name given this new library symbolizes values basic to this college. In 1498, almost four centuries before Bethel came to be, in the thriving Swiss town of Zurich a child, Felix, was born to an unwed mother, Anna. The father, Johann Mantz, who paid four gulden annually to the Bishop at Constance to keep a mistress, was a priest at the Great Church (*Grossmünster*). In naming their son the parents drew on a thousand-year-old legend of a brother and sister, Felix and Regula, who came as missionaries to pagan Helvetia and were martyred in that place for their faith.

The boy Felix Mantz grew up in a Gothic house on New City Street, a crooked, cobblestoned street in the shadow of the Great Church where his father served as chief canon. Daily the young Felix observed the bustle of this town at the crossroads of Europe. Merchants, mercenary soldiers, and monks followed the roads south over alpine passes to the Renaissance Italy of Michelangelo and Machiavelli and to the unsavory papal court of Leo X and Cesare Borgia. North down the Rhine lay the printing towns of Basel, Strasbourg, and Mainz; and beyond, the annual book fair at Frankfurt; and in distant Wittenberg, an eloquent, irrepressible Augustinian monk—Martin Luther. West lay the powerful France of Francis I and the rising English kingdom of Henry VIII; and beyond, the ocean sea, the lands of Columbus and Cabot. East down the Danube were the Hapsburg lands of Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor; in far off Prague the shattered, humbled church reform movement of John Hus; and to the southeast a militant, expansive Islamic power penetrating closer to the heart of Europe. Felix Mantz arrived in a medieval world dying and a modern world emerging.

Born only fifty years after the invention of interchangeable type and the printing press, Felix Mantz was heir to a revolution in learning. The printed book democratized knowledge. Young Felix, competent in four languages—Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and his native German—certainly had access through his father to the flood of new books being published. He must have used Erasmus' 1516 edition of the Latin-Greek New Testament and Reuchlin's 1506 *Hebrew Grammar and Dictionary*. One can see the young Felix a few blocks from his house, standing, watching at the door of the new printing establishment of Christopher Froschauer, recently arrived from Bavaria. Young Mantz may have studied for two years at the University of Paris, heir to the great university traditions of venerable Padua and Bologna.

Surely he was present in the Great Church on that first Sunday of January

1519 when the thirty-five year old preacher Ulrich Zwingli, newly arrived from Einsiedeln, mounted the pulpit, opened the Greek New Testament to the Gospel of Matthew, chapter one, verse one, and began to preach verse by verse, continuing Sunday after Sunday through the four Gospels. Acts, the letters of Paul. We can see the young Mantz standing in the packed nave of the Great Church listening intently to this persuasive peasant preacher talking the language of the people, preaching with humor, earthy imagery, and passion of his love of the newly-discovered Christ. His biblical commentary could move to angry criticism of the Swiss mercenary system and then turn to moral issues of monastery, tavern, and marketplace. One of Felix's educated acquaintances exclaimed that on first hearing Zwingli preach on the tenth chapter of John he had the sensation of "being lifted up by his hair." Where in all Europe could the Reformation experience have been more electrifying?

This humanist preacher, Zwingli, soon saw promise in the young Felix Mantz and drew him, the patrician Conrad Grebel, and others, into an inner circle to study Plato in the original Greek, the New Testament, and perhaps the latest writings of Erasmus of Rotterdam. Erasmus, as a friend expressed it, taught them "to know Christ. To imitate Him, to honor Him, and to love Him." Zwingli shared with his protegés his dream of founding in Zurich a university, "A School of Prophets." Mantz would teach Hebrew; Grebel, Greek; and Zwingli, theology. In their circle they dreamed of a church purged of idolatries, a church embracing a New Testament simplicity in worship, a church liberated from state funding, and a city abolishing the mercenary system with its "slaughter for pay." They listened admiringly to their mentor's bold off-the-record declaration: "If the Council does not follow the Word, it will be brushed aside by the irresistible tide of truth."

The cautious town council had no intention of being swept aside by an "irresistible tide." The rhetoric of Zwingli was tolerable, but prudent councilmen wanted to postpone fundamental Reformation changes. They played for time with public disputations. In these public debates Zwingli argued for change, but Grebel and Mantz and others pled for


NOVVM TESTAMEN

TVM, AD GRAECAM VERITATEM, AC VETV/

ſtiſſimorum ſimul & emendatiſſimorum exemplarium Latinorum fidem, tum ad Orthodoxorum interpre tationem, ac citationē denuo diligentiſſime recognitum, ab ERASMO ROTERO/ DAMO, ſacræ Theologiæ pro/ feſſore.

Ε ΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ ΚΑΤΑ ΜΑΤΘΑΙΟΝ.

EVANGELIVM SECVN/ DVM MATTHAEVM.

IBER generatio/ nis Ieſu Chriſti filij Da/ uid, filij Abra/ hā. Ab/ raham genuit Iſaac. Iſaac autem genuit Ia cob. Iacob aũt genuit Iudam & fra/ tres eius. Iudas autē genuit Phares & Zarā ẽ Thamar. Phares autē ge nuit Eſrom. Eſrom aũt genuit Ará. Aram autem genuit Aminadab. Aminadab autem genuit Naaſſon. Naaſſon autē genuit Salmon. Sal/ mon autē genuit Booz, ẽ Rachab. Booz autem genuit Obed, ẽ Ruth. Obed aũt genuit Ieſſe. Ieſſe aũt ge/ nuit

IO. FROB. TYPIS EX/ CVDEBAT. ΜΗΜΗΣΕΤΑΙ ΤΙΣ ΒΑΣΣΟΝ Η ΜΙΜΗΣΕ ΤΑΙ.

Title page from the Mennonite Library and Archives' copy of the 1522 Froben edition of Erasmus' Greek and Latin New Testament

more radical answers. The Great Council balked, declaring, "Not now." Zwingli, the pragmatist, yielded, "Very well, we shall defer to milords." The young radicals exploded, "But issues of faith are not for the state to decide." The breach between the mentor and his students widened. Mantz and Grebel spoke to Zwingli again and again, but he was deaf to their entreaties.

Felix and his mother Anna opened their home for meetings for Bible study. To their home came students, bakers, a pastor, a tailor, a goldsmith, and a bookseller. They read the writings of Andreas Karlstadt, Thomas Müntzer, and Martin Luther, and found in these German reformers kindred spirits. They pressed Müntzer to declare for a believers' church, warning him against any easy, cheap grace. They called for the militant Müntzer "to completely give up killing." Felix Mantz traveled to Basel to arrange with a printer to publish a number of Karlstadt's pamphlets. Meanwhile, Mantz wrote the first systematic biblical defense of believers' baptism, addressed to the Zurich city council. Hearing of all this insubordination, Zwingli was infuriated. The Great Council, called into session on Saturday, January 21, 1525, banned Bible study meetings and ordered a halt to all public discussion of issues of baptism.

That night in the Mantz home on New City Street, sixteen met to pray and to ponder. The impulsive George with the Blue Coat asked Conrad to baptize him. One after another all were baptized on "confession of their faith, in the union with God of a good conscience" pledging themselves "to serve God in a holy Christian life with all godliness." Here in Anna Mantz's house a gathered church broke decisively with a state church system which dated back 1200 years to the Emperor Constantine.

Felix Mantz lived another two years, through four imprisonments and two jail escapes. Whenever he was out of prison Mantz took to the road again to share the good news of Jesus, preaching repentance and inviting all to a new life in the community of Christ. He baptized and broke bread with the converts. Mantz journeyed southeast to the mountain valleys of Graubunden and later to the villages beyond St. Gall, north to Schaffhausen, and west to Basel. Villagers near Basel remember him reading to them the words of a hymn, "I sing with exultation." This Hebrew scholar from the city had a simple, winsome way of sharing the Gospel. He found it natural to meet with common folk in gatherings in upland fields and forests. Once, after escaping from a Zurich prison, Felix and his companions said to each other, perhaps in jest, but maybe with a touch of yearning: "Let's go to the red Indians across the ocean."

In 1526 Conrad Grebel died of the plague. The once humane, tolerant Zurich turned vindictive. The Council threatened death by drowning to anyone who baptized adults. "Anabaptists" (re-baptizers) they called them. Just before Christmas 1526 Felix Mantz was seized in a secret meeting near Grüningen and brought to Zurich. On Saturday, January 5, 1527, the twenty-eight year old Felix was condemned to death by drowning, his books and property ordered confiscated. That day the constables took him from prison to a fisher's hut in the middle of the Limmat River, bound his hands and feet. Priests offered him release if only he would recant. From the shore his mother and brothers called to him, "Felix, keep the faith." Those on the bank of the gently flowing Limmat could hear Felix singing in Latin, *"In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum."* ("Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.") The constables plunged his head beneath the water; there was silence. Felix was buried in the cemetery of St. Jacobs Church, the first Anabaptist to die a martyr in Protestant lands. The Strasbourg reformers, Capito and Bucer, were shocked by Zwingli's hand in the execution.

More could be told of this gifted young man whose name we honor in this new hospitable setting. Libraries are built to help us to bring to remembrance the story of Felix Mantz and a thousand other stories of our collective memory. It seems eminently appropriate that this new library be named Mantz Library to symbolize values cherished by the people who have established and sustained this college.

1. In Felix Mantz was one who was at home in the world of books. He disciplined himself to gain competency in the languages of Athens, Jerusalem, and Rome. He shared the humanists' quest to return to the sources: *Sola Scriptura, Restitutio Christianum.*

2. In Felix Mantz was one who embraced the revolutionary new technology of printing. He and his Anabaptist colleagues kept an eye on books coming from the publishers and instinctively thought of the printing press when new ideas were calling for dissemination.

3. In Felix Mantz was an integration of faith and learning, word and deed, scholarly probing and evangelical communicating, holy obedience and liberation in the truth, scholar and disciple. All this found unity in Christ.

4. In Felix Mantz is a profile of courage: the scholar-disciple speaking truth to power. He of illegitimate birth and dubious social status was empowered by the Gospel to seek out councilmen and magistrates and to speak to them "as one having authority."

5. In Felix Mantz and his mother Anna is an image of the blessed community. Here was the proto-congregation: a setting for Bible study and prayer and then on that fateful Saturday night in January 1525, the gathered church. Within sound of the bells of the Great Church, the territorial church, here in Anna's home was born the believer's church. Faith and learning find their integration in community.

6. Felix Mantz, the university-bred scholar, had a gift to be simple. In him was no pedantry, no theological complexities. Simple folk could understand him. "And the common people heard him gladly." Of him his friend Conrad said: Felix "is the simplest, yet nearest one to God . . . and yet with God and his truth, he puts human wisdom to shame."

7. Felix Mantz shared in a *Kairos* moment in history, a time of decision, a breakthrough of the spirit, an awakening of new perspectives. Colleges gather books in hospitable surroundings as in this place and pray that at some moment in the student's growth there will be breakthroughs of insight, illuminations of understanding, quickenings of the scholarly spirit.

And so "we sing with exultation" as this home of books and the new technologies of learning is named The Mantz Library.

Seeking After Knowledge in the Age of Information: Thoughts on the role of the Academic Library

by Dale R. Schrag

The occasion of the dedication of a new library building at Bethel College is obviously a time for joyous celebration. We have so very much to celebrate. We celebrate those librarians of the past who laid the foundation for the quality of collection and the tradition of exceptional use that has characterized the Bethel College libraries. One thinks, for example, of Leona Krehbiel, who served as librarian for almost forty years, who received her graduate education at what was then undeniably the finest graduate library school in the country (i.e., the University of Chicago), and immediately set about building a library tradition with standards of excellence which reflected the quality of

Leona Krehbiel, Bethel's Librarian from 1932 to 1971

her education. One thinks of Cornelius Krahn, who devoted his life to collecting and preserving the bibliographic heritage of the Mennonites, who unceasingly scoured attics and bookstores from California to Karaganda, and whose efforts resulted in one of the finest collections of Anabaptistica and Mennonitica in the world. Or of his partner in that effort, John F. Schmidt, who saw the need for systematic collection and maintenance of the archival records of Mennonite institutions, thereby greatly enhancing the richness of the Mennonite Library. In a very real sense, these individuals laid the foundation for the building we celebrate today.

We celebrate, too, those who—more recently—gave of their time, experience, and wisdom to make the case for this new building, those who helped define Bethel's programmatic needs for library facilities and would not rest until those plans were realized. We celebrate those who raised the money so those plans *could be* realized, and finally we celebrate those who believed enough in Bethel College and the importance of libraries to invest in her second century by giving so generously in this Centennial Fund Drive that this building stands before us debt-free.

Little wonder, then, that this dedication is a time for celebration. And yet, the occasion of the dedication of a new library is also a time for thoughtful reflection, perhaps even for doubt. Two million dollars, after all, is a not insignificant amount of money—the more so in these times of undeniable economic uncertainty. Was this, in fact, the proper way to invest that money? Do traditional academic libraries have a future? Some would answer that question with a resounding "No!" F. Wilfred Lancaster, professor at the University of Illinois Graduate School of Library and Information Science, has suggested that within the next twenty years, society will undergo such drastic technological changes that libraries will be both "disembodied" and "bypassed" by technology. "I see little future for the library," says Lancaster. This is, after all, the "age of information," the age of technology, the age of a computer in every home. We have the technology (if not yet the resources) to reduce the contents of every book and journal in that library to an almost-endless series of machine-readable bits which could then be stored in a massive computer. Add to that a microcomputer in every dormitory room, and PRESTO, you have a rather remarkable information system. Should we perhaps have invested our two million dollars in such a system rather than in so much brick and mortar?

Before answering that question, it may be useful to contemplate briefly the purpose of higher education. Consider the words of Paul Oskar Kristeller, perhaps the greatest contemporary student of Renaissance humanism, as he considers the importance of the past in a 1965 essay entitled "the Unity of Truth":

> I often hear responsible, or rather irresponsible, educators say that the knowledge of the past, or even our present knowledge, should be adapted to the needs and interests of our time, and especially of our younger generation. We should rather stand by our conviction that some, if not all, of this knowledge is intrinsically true and valid and that the younger generation will have to absorb it before it can make any significant contribution of its own. In the long run, it is not the past that is measured by us, but we ourselves will be measured by it and judged by it since we have to prove to the future whether we have lived up to the standards of the past.

Kristeller's powerful—perhaps even provocative—statement is noteworthy on several counts. First of all, it is absolutely clear that for Kristeller, the purpose of higher education is not to dispense information; it is, rather, to expand and extend knowledge. The two terms are obviously related, since infor-

mation clearly functions as the raw material for the growth of knowledge, but they are not synonymous. In fact, Daniel Boorstin, the present Librarian of Congress, suggests that their relationship is sometimes antithetical:

> While knowledge is orderly and cumulative, information is random and miscellaneous. We are flooded by messages from the instant-everywhere in excruciating profusion. In our ironic twentieth-century version of Gresham's law, information tends to drive knowledge out of circulation. The oldest, the established, the cumulative, is displaced by the most recent, the most problematic.

How does this happen? Or, more to the point for our discussion, is the electronic library more likely to reinforce or counteract this "ironic twentieth-century version of Gresham's Law"? I would argue that the former is the more likely result. Consider the fact that the electronic library reduces all of its information to the lowest common denominator—the binary bit. Whether the work in question is a classic text of Immanuel Kant or the latest pulp from Danielle Steel, it will appear on the screen in precisely the same format—as a series of green or amber blips. The differentiation of reputation of publisher, quality of graphic design, type, and binding will be replaced by the staggering sameness of an endless series of blips. It is not a pretty thought. Moreover, one strongly suspects that as machine-storage costs continue to drop, the tendency will be to dump more and more "information" into the system irrespective of its quality. And at that point, Boorstin's dismal scenario becomes all too true. Therefore, while the electronic library may be an excitingly efficient means of transmitting information, I submit that it fails pitifully to measure up to the traditional library as a system for imparting knowledge, and knowledge, as Kristeller notes, is our *raison d'être*. Indeed, the traditional library stands as a much more powerful symbol of knowledge than does the computer.

The library symbolizes, in the first instance, the fact that knowledge exists, that there are things worth knowing, and, perhaps, that this knowledge does not come without a struggle. This would appear to be a self-evident truth, but I am not at all certain that it is. This is the "now decade," the "me generation," the age of instant gratification and instant analysis. It has been suggested that the primary task of every college professor is to teach her students intellectual patience. Thanks, at least in part, to commercial television, we have come to expect quick answers for every problem, and our tendency—increasingly—is to dismiss complex problems as insolvable, to dismiss complex texts as unintelligible. Against this tide, the library stands like an anchor, rooted in—and displaying—the wisdom of the past. One can physically see the numerous editions of works that have stood the test of time, whether it be a 1562 Dutch edition of Menno Simons' book of fundamentals of the faith or a 1985 Cambridge edition of the Philosophical Writings of René Descartes.

But the library symbolizes more than the stability and existence of knowledge, it also demonstrates the growth of knowledge. To return to Kristeller:

> Human civilization is a cumulative process, and any part of it is more easily and more quickly destroyed than rebuilt. No single generation can hope to build or rebuild it from the bottom, and hence we should gratefully accept and appreciate the building materials which past periods no less creative than ours have left to us. It is an inheritance each generation is called upon to hand to its successor. It cannot help neglecting and destroying a part of this heritage, but it should always try to preserve what is worth preserving and to add something that is better in the place of what has been destroyed.

New books are added to the collection constantly, as scholars seek to synthesize in new ways the knowledge of the past and discover new knowledge in the present. And those books are being added on subjects from A to Z (or, in the case of the Dewey Decimal System, from 000-999). Knowledge is interconnected, and any or all of it may be relevant to the issue at hand. We should note here that the underlying assumption in this atmosphere of the expansion of knowledge is that freedom of inquiry is an essential requirement. Some individuals—and colleges—may chafe under this yoke of freedom. Some, in fact, reject it by circumscribing very narrowly the authorized areas and avenues of inquiry in their sectarian institutions. But it is our conviction, as it was the conviction of the sixteenth-century Christian humanists like Desiderius Erasmus, Felix Mantz, and Conrad Grebel, that all truth is God's truth. The world is not so neatly divided into sacred and secular. We must examine all of life and all of learning and seek truth—God's truth—therein.

This attitude of open, but critical, inquiry must also extend to issues of technology. Despite my negative comments about the "electronic library," I would be the last to deny the utility—even the necessity of computers. The Bethel College Library currently houses three such machines (a fourth will be added next week), two of them connected to bibliographic data bases hundreds of miles away. We anticipate an increase in computerization in the future, and you will note on your tour that every electrical outlet in the building is accompanied by a receptacle designed to accommodate future telephone or computer connections. Similarly, the new building houses a television studio laboratory, indicating an openness to new methods of communicating the knowledge that is discovered. But we must always view technology—as we must view all of life—with a critical eye, lest we become slaves to machines due to what John Lachs of Vanderbilt University terms "our abject readiness to suit our ends to feasibility." Technology makes so very much feasible; thoughtful women and men must decide whether the *feasible* ends are in fact *suitable* ends.

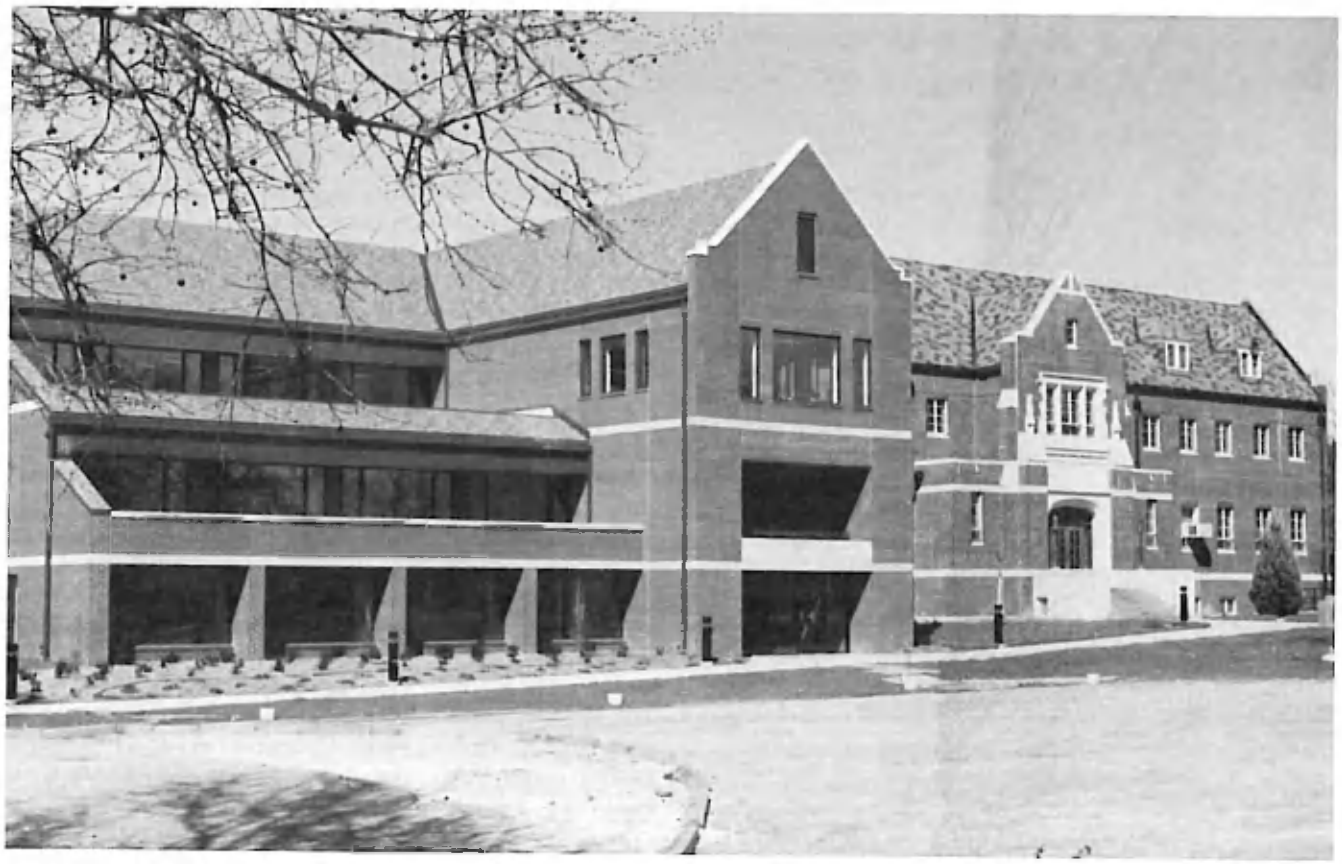
Finally, perhaps the most telling case against the totally electronic library is not based on the undifferentiated nature of its contents nor on the traditional library's superiority as symbol of the existence, expansion, and interconnectedness of knowledge. It is based, rather, on the fact that a commitment to knowledge in the best sense, a commitment to truth, requires a community of knowers, or at least a community of seekers of knowledge. I need not remind you that we live in an age with strong tendencies in precisely the opposite direction—tendencies toward nihilism and narcissism, relativism and rootlessness, all of which combine to feed a rampant, atomistic individualism. The drug culture, the cult phenomenon, the rise of the religious right, the mindless embrace of militarism, all point, it seems to me, to individualism run amuck. Dare we allow the library, the proverbial "heart of the college," to contribute to that movement toward atomization and alienation? I suggest that we must move in precisely the opposite direction. Instead of spending so much time making it unnecessary for people to come to the library, we ought

in. For although research is partly a private activity, it is only partly private. Scholarly research is also a social activity. Paul Lacey of Earlham College suggests that we must conceive of the library not

> as an information retrieval system primarily but as a social system, a teaching-learning milieu in which retrievel of information is only part of the goal. Browsing, conversation, exchange of ideas, sharing and confirming values, supporting one another in the common enterprise of study, reflection, and publishing one's findings—these are extremely important to what . . . any member of the scholarly community does. Take them away and we *will* be alienated from our work and our colleagues.

This, then, is why we reject the totally electronic library; this is why we can celebrate today our investment in brick and mortar; this is why we devote space to lounges and lobbies and hallways and display cases and counter-high shelves and artwork; this is why we commit ourselves to large windows despite legitimate concerns about energy efficiency and preservation of materials. As inheritors of the Anabaptist movement of the sixteenth century, we are—or seek to be—a community of scholars, a community of servants. Kristeller reminds us that "we have to prove to the future whether we have lived up to the standards of the past." We will live up to those standards—if at all—only in community. For us, then, Mantz Library must be more than an information retrieval system. It must be, in the words of Justin Winsor, distinguished historian and the first president of the American Library Association, the "grand rendezvous of the college," that place where the wisdom of human civilization is collected, preserved, and made available for maximum use; that place where you are always welcome to come, bringing your best intellect, bringing the best instruction and inspiration from classroom, dorm room, office, church, or living room; that place where you can interact "under cheerful conditions," in a new and attractive facility, not only with each other, but with the best minds and thoughts of human civilization. For in *that* "grand rendezvous," we will all be enriched by that sacred synthesis which is the process of education.

Mantz Library, Bethel College



The Mennonite Library and Archives: a Brief History

by David A. Haury

How has the General Conference Mennonite Church preserved its heritage during its century and a quarter of existence? Mennonites have traditionally had a strong historical consciousness, dating back to the telling and recording of stories of persecution and martyrdom in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. However, the first systematic effort of the General Conference to collect and preserve its historical records began on September 5, 1911, just over a half century after the formation of the denomination. Twenty individuals formed the Mennonite Historical Association of North America at the 1911 triennial conference in Bluffton, Ohio.

The new association planned to meet every three years in conjunction with the General Conference, and members paid one dollar dues for five years or ten dollars for a life membership. The new organization stated its goals broadly: "It shall be the purpose of this association to collect and have in custody historical material pertaining to Mennonites." By 1920 the association had 1250 documents accessioned and classified. Heinrich R. Voth, a pastor and former General Conference missionary, served as the first president and personally labelled many of the items. Hundreds of his identification forms may still be found attached to items in the collections of the Mennonite Library and Archives. Heinrich P. Krehbiel, who served as the association's secretary, stored most of the documents in his vault at the Herald Publishing Company. In 1920 the association reported discussions with Bethel College President John E. Hartzler about using rooms in the newly-planned Science Hall (completed in 1924) for the materials of the Mennonite Historical Association. This is the first hint of the engagement which nearly a half century later would marry the historical efforts of conference and college.

Cornelius Krahn "came to personify the historical library for three decades."

Bethel College initiated its collection of Anabaptist and Mennonite historical materials with the support of its first president, Cornelius H. Wedel, a noted scholar of Mennonite history. However, the nature of and responsibility for this collection were not clearly defined during the early years of the college, and the natural history collection in the college museum housed the documents. In 1927 the college moved the museum from the Administration Building to the basement of the new Science Hall. During the next decade the college accessioned over 2000 additional documents and books, and, when the college relocated the museum on the third floor of the Science Hall in 1935, the historical library and archives expanded and during the 1936-37 academic year received independent status under the leadership of Professor of German and Bible, Abraham Warkentin. Although the evolution of the institution was gradual, the Bethel College Historical Library may reasonably celebrate its fiftieth anniversary in 1987.

Nevertheless, a movement to combine the preservation efforts of the Mennonite Historical Association and Bethel College in the late 1930s was the true watershed in the effort of the General Conference to collect and preserve historical materials. In 1938

the triennial session of the General Conference in Saskatoon approved a motion of the Mennonite Historical Association to create a standing committee in charge of the conference's historical interests and to proceed with the creation of a Mennonite Historical Institute. The first members of the Historical Committee were J.R. Thierstein, H.P. Krehbiel, H.A. Fast, and A. Warkentin. The association donated all of its materials to the committee and ceased to exist. Meanwhile, in 1939 the committee made arrangements to house and display all of its materials, consisting of over 500 books and 30,000 letters, in the basement of the Bethel College Science Hall, using the same facilities as the Bethel College Historical Library and Archives. The oak book shelves and display cases which the conference moved to the college on this occasion are still used in the reading room of the Mennonite Library and Archives.

The new historical committee met eleven times during the next triennium, and beginning in January, 1940, received $25 bimonthly from General Conference funds. In 1941 the committee reported, "This is a missionary project, carrying the testimony of our forefathers to future generations, which is worthy of our full support." The many volunteers assisting the historical committee carefully labelled items belonging to the conference as property of the "General Conference of the Mennonite Church of North America Historical Library," and college materials received separate identifications. Some materials of the historical committee remained in the H.P. Krehbiel vault. Following World War II when the conference founded Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Chicago, Abraham Warkentin drew on this collection in creating the seminary library. Warkentin, as chair of the historical committee and director of the Bethel College Historical Library, was instrumental in fostering cooperation between college and conference.

The efforts of the historical committee expanded beyond the collection of books and documents during the 1950s. The committee arranged to microfilm 20,000 pages of books and documents from the Mennonite Historical Library of Amsterdam. The committee also initiated its Mennonite Historical Series in 1949 with the publication of *From the Steppes to the Prairies*, helped to finance and publicize the publication of

John F. Schmidt, a man with a "remarkable memory of sources"

Anabaptist source materials in Germany, and, of course, became heavily involved in the *Mennonite Encyclopedia* project. Funds from the historical committee went to the seminary and Bluffton and Bethel colleges to purchase rare Mennonite books. Most important, the committee actively solicited historical materials from congregations and individuals for deposit in the three libraries. The budget of the committee in the late 1950s was roughly $2,000 per year. Occasionally some conference officials expressed concern that the collecting activities of the historical committee had expanded beyond the needs of the conference and its congregations, but the anti-historical bias of conference leaders became more apparent in the 1960s.

In 1953 Bethel College completed its new library building, and the Mennonite Historical Library, comprising the collections of both the college and conference, occupied most of the basement. Through the tireless efforts of Cornelius Krahn, the collections had grown very rapidly since his arrival at Bethel College in the fall of 1944. Twenty-six hundred items were available in 1945, but this number had grown to 7,560 by 1953. Periodical subscriptions more than doubled during this period from 70 to 150. Krahn added numerous especially valuable books during his Fulbright year in the Netherlands, 1953-54, and during another sabbatical ten years later. A new Recordak microfilm reader in 1947 allowed access to the increasing number of documents on film. (Today this is still the library's only reader for over 1000 rolls of microfilm).

John F. Schmidt joined the library's staff in 1947 and served as archivist until his retirement in 1983. Schmidt laid the foundation and oversaw the organization of archival and manuscript materials according to generally accepted professional standards. Thousands of researchers relied upon Schmidt's remarkable memory of sources to find appropriate documents for their topics.

It was natural during this rapid period of expansion in the 1950s and 1960s that the collections of the conference and college became indistinguishable as the library added materials rapidly using funding from both sources. Private donors did not distinguish between the two historical institutions under one roof and administration. Krahn, through his careful assistance for visiting scholars, dozens of articles and public presentations, editing of *Mennonite Life* magazine, and active collecting of materials, came to personify the historical library for three decades.

Despite the progress in collecting and preserving in the 1950s, the peculiar relationship of the General Conference and Bethel College in the Mennonite Historical Library left many questions unresolved. In 1960 the conference historical committee began a more explicit discussion of the need for a General Conference Archives. Many records of the conference were housed in the central offices, which were just entering their third decade of existence at 722 Main Street in Newton. This massive volume of records was largely in disarray, and the support of two institutions preserving conference history within a few miles of each other seemed illogical. On June 13, 1960, Cornelius J. Dyck presented a concise report outlining objectives, administrative and financial arrangements, and possible locations for a conference archives. However, it was not a foregone conclusion that the conference would locate its archives at Bethel College, and Bluffton, Elkhart, and Bethel continued their joint designation as official "Mennonite Research Centers." Yet it was clear that the records in the central offices required larger and more secure facilities and that the records could not be divided into three locations. An archives committee of Willard Claassen, William Friesen, and Menno Schrag investigated the possibilities.

An expanded archives committee met on May 1, 1964, with representations of Bethel College and the Board of Education and Publication present. The committee designated Bethel College as the initial location for the archives, although concern existed that sufficient space was not available. The standards for inclusion of materials in the archives received detailed attention, as well as the financial and space needs for the facility. A year later the committee discussed the possibility of joint administration of a facility by the conference and college. ". . . [I]f the General Conference archives are combined with the historical library at Bethel College, who owns these?" "Should there be a general director of the library and archives?" The archives committee agreed to draw up a memorandum of understanding between the college and conference for the operation of the archives. This document, creating the Mennonite Library and Archives (MLA), received approval of the two partners in 1966, and the MLA operated under this document with only a few minor changes until the mid-1980s. The college and conference agreed to share financial support of the new institution equally, and a separate board of control with three representatives from each partner was responsible for the overall administration of the MLA. Ironically, most of the documents creating the new partnership refer to the institution as the Mennonite Historical Library and Archives (MHLA), and the MLA has operated under an unofficial designation throughout its existence.

The 1966 union of the historical efforts of Bethel College and the General Conference after nearly thirty years of intensive cooperation coincided with the death of the historical committee. In the 1960s the budget of the committee remained roughly unchanged from a decade earlier and the basic activities of the committee also were similar. The historical committee prepared plans to restructure within the parameters of the new commission structure under the Commission on Education, but instead was abolished during the transition. In 1970 the administrative responsibility for the Mennonite Library and Archives shifted from COE to the General Board, and a few years later it moved to its current location in the Division of Administration. In 1975 the Commission on Education briefly revived its historical interests with the creation of the "Heritage Committee," a committee with goals and projects very similar to those of the old historical committee. The new committee, like the historical committee, had a budget of around $2000, and some additional funding in the early 1980s went to support the Mennonite Experience in America project, the inter-Mennonite, four-volume study of Mennonites in America. However, during the early 1980s when COE faced intensive pressures on its budget, the heritage committee met the same fate as the historical committee. Although the portfolio of a COE staff member officially includes the historical concerns of the General Conference, the conference has no committees or executive secretary comparable to those promoting and coordinating the historical interests of the Mennonite Church or Mennonite Brethren.

For just over fifty years the Mennonite Library and Archives has served as the primary force collecting, promoting, and preserving the heritage of the General Conference Mennonite Church. Additional centers at Bluffton, Freeman, Lansdale, Waterloo, Winnipeg, and elsewhere have valuable but smaller collections with more regional focuses. The Mennonite Church has major historical collections at Lancaster, Goshen, and Harrisonburg, and the Mennonite Brethren research centers are at Fresno, Hillsboro, and Winnipeg. Relations between the conference and college in operating the MLA have been cordial although financial pressures have produced some strains. Conference officials have occasionally asked whether the services and work of the MLA are worth the price, and they often assess the MLA purely as a repository for conference records rather than as the institution which assumed the broad collecting and promotional roles of the historical and heritage committees. In the late 1970s the conference renegotiated its relationship to the MLA reducing its support from 50 to 45%, and considered the option of a complete withdrawal of financial assistance during one especially bad budget year. Revisions to the 1966 memorandum of understanding between the institutions and a thorough review of MLA operations and functions have smoothed relations between the partners and affirmed the broad role of the MLA in the mid-1980s.

Cornelius Krahn directed the MLA until his retirement in 1972, and after two interim years under William Keeney and James C. Juhnke, Robert S. Kreider assumed the directorship for the next decade. Under Kreider's leadership the primary focus of MLA activities shifted from the acquisition of new materials to the processing, cataloging, and promotion of the collections. However, during the late 1970s the MLA received significant funding from Bethel College's development drive to catch up on the acquisition primarily of recently published materials. The MLA also received major assistance in the form of grants for processing materials from the Schowalter Foundation and National Endowment for the Humanities, and during the last ten years nearly a third of MLA support has come from outside the college and conference budgets. David A. Haury replaced John F. Schmidt as archivist in 1983 and became director of the MLA following Kreider's retire-

ment in 1984.

The collections of the MLA now include nearly 20,000 books, over 1500 periodical titles including 400 current periodical subscriptions, 40-50,000 photographs, and more than 1000 maps, 1000 rolls of microfilm, 500 paintings and works of art, 1000 oral history interviews, and nearly one mile of shelves with archival and manuscript holdings. The MLA has sponsored numerous lectures and publications in recent years, and, of course, has continued to assist congregations and groups with a variety of celebrations and anniversaries. The college has transformed the popular folk festivals sponsored by the MLA twenty years ago into the massive fall festivals of the 1970s and 1980s. *Mennonite Life* recently celebrated its fortieth anniversary as an illustrated quarterly journal (published by the MLA) with articles on Mennonite faith, culture, and history.

The MLA and its staff have provided the General Conference with a variety of other services. Cornelius Krahn delivered illustrated lectures on Mennonite history throughout the conference during five decades. He represented the conference in the *Mennonite Encyclopedia* project. More recently, Robert Kreider has chaired the Mennonite Experience in America project and also headed the heritage committee during its brief existence. David A. Haury has presented papers on the MLA and its resources to regional and national archival associations as well as to a variety of church related groups. Krahn, Kreider, and Haury have counseled numerous authors writing on Mennonite history topics, ranging from mission and congregational histories to studies of nonresistance and theological topics. While the MLA staff is not linked to the central office structure of the General Conference, the services provided by the MLA are directly related to conference goals and needs. This is especially true as the conference increases its cooperation with other Mennonite denominations and the MLA works closely with other Mennonite research centers and related historical committees.

By the early 1970s the MLA began bursting at the seams, and the MLA transferred materials to the Science Hall, Memorial Hall, and library attic in the late 1970s when the college postponed plans to build an addition to the college library. On October 5, 1987, Bethel College dedicated a new library addition, and the MLA moved to the main floor of the 1953 library, doubling the overall size of the MLA. The MLA also retained half of the basement for archival and manuscript storage. While other Mennonite libraries may have larger collections in certain areas, the MLA is now the world's largest Mennonite research center in terms of overall space and collection size. The MLA records in the neighborhood of 2000 patron visits each year, and several hundred more individuals correspond with the library annually for information.

Much progress has occurred in the just over seventy-five years since the Mennonite Historical Association began collecting documents and in the fifty years since Bethel College and General Conference informally combined efforts in the Mennonite Historical Library in a small room in the basement of the Bethel College Science Hall. Although some administrative and financial problems remain, the partnership agreement of the college and conference over the past twenty years has resolved most differences and has set common goals.

Yet some questions remain about the ability of the General Conference to preserve and promote its heritage. Does the MLA or COE staff adequately represent the General Conference in cooperative projects or conversations with the Mennonite Church and Mennonite Brethren historical committees? Do we need a more consistent and formal approach to historical concerns with more explicit conference approval? Can the MLA or COE coordinate the efforts among the various General Conference libraries in the United States and Canada? Should the General Conference assume a more active interest in promoting its heritage through the revival of a historical or heritage committee? These and related issues should be raised in the context of a denomination and a people who continue to have a very strong interest in their identity and heritage. The issues cannot be examined purely from the perspective of scholars, church administrators, or one geographical area, and a more general discussion is invited.

The Mennonite Brethren and the Denominational Model of the Church: An Adjustment to the Pressures of North American Society

by Richard Kyle

I

The sociological models of church and sect have been utilized as instruments to elucidate certain developments in Mennonite history, particulary as they relate to the church's involvement in society. Nevertheless, in North America the predominant form of religious organization is the denominational-type, a model that shares features with both the church and the sect. During the last half of the twentieth century, most of the major Mennonite groups have adopted the characteristics of a religious denomination. Still, this development has not received extensive scholarly attention, perhaps because the rise of denominationalism has been viewed as an aspect of the general acculturation of American Mennonitism. To partially correct this situation, the objective of this article will be to utilize the vehicle of the denominational model as a framework to understand some of the developments that have transpired in one Mennonite group in North America, the Mennonite Brethren.

History contains few religious bodies that correspond purely with the classical social types of church, sect, and denomination. Nearly all Christian groups have manifested a variety of these sociological distinctives throughout their existence, and the Mennonite Brethren are no exception to this trend. Sociologists have difficulties in applying ecclesiastical typologies to historical situations. Moreover, they cannot agree on the validity of the so-called sect cycle, i.e., sects conform to the world and become denominations.[1] Therefore, historians must exercise caution in the usage of any of these church models and work from the evidence that each historical situation presents. Nonetheless, as the book *Denominationalism* indicates, Christian groups manifesting sectarian, church, and denominational characteristics have indeed existed in the past, and thus these typologies can be legitimate tools for an historical inquiry.[2] Therefore, as Calvin Redekop suggests, any usage of these sociological types must be operational, i.e., the sect and denomination will be defined by what they do and not by some theoretical standards.[3] Consequently, this study will seldom speak of the Mennonite Brethren as a definite ecclesiastical model. Rather, the focus will be on the shift from sectarian to denominational characteristics and the implications of this change for the Mennonite Brethren Church.

Until modern times, conditions only permitted the church and sect-types to exist. The concept of the church as a denomination arose in seventeenth-century England, and it can be regarded as novel because it has few parallels in church history. Though the denominational model originated in England, it has flourished in North America and must be regarded more as an American institution by now. In fact, as Sidney Mead states, denominationalism is "the shape of religion in America." Certain environmental conditions are necessary for denominationalism to exist, and it is inconceivable without the two following developments: one, the rise of religious toleration; and two, the separation of church and state or religious disestablishment. Denominationalism is the typical form of religious organization in the pluralistic industrial society.[4]

What then is the denomination? This question can be answered from several vantage points. H. Richard Niebuhr regards the denomination as a halfway point between the sect and the church. After the first generation, sect groups lose their purity and evolve into denominations, which represent the victory of the world over the church and of the secularization of Christianity.[5] Winthrop Hudson takes a theological approach to denominationalism, which he regards as the opposite of sectarianism. A sect claims the authority of Christ for itself only. By definition a sect is exclusive and separate. The word *denomination*, on the other hand, can be regarded as a more inclusive term—an ecumenical term. It implies that the group referred to is but one member, called or denominated by a particular name, of a larger group—the church—to which most denominations belong. The basic contention of the denominational theory of the church is that the true church must not be identified solely with any single ecclesiastical structure. Denominationalism admits no claim to an exclusive possession of saving truth. Yet it does not speak of relative truth, only of relativity in the apprehension of truth.[6]

Perhaps the denominational model best can be described by briefly comparing it with the church and sect types. A church is a religious group that accepts and identifies with the social environment in which it exists, largely adopting the values of the secular order. Also, the church is highly institutionalized with a hierarchical organization and was, in its European setting, usually coextensive with a particular geographic area. Society and the church often shared the same boundaries.[7] A denomination is also a religious group that accepts and identifies with the social environment in which it exists, including the values of the secular society, though perhaps not as fully as does the church. Furthermore, the denomination is not coextensive with a geographic area.

Rather, the denomination is a voluntaristic organization existing primarily in a pluralistic society.[8] Conversely, a sect is a religious group that rejects the social environment in which it exists, adopting a stance of rigid separation from the secular society and its values. Also, the sect is usually a small, decentralized religious organization with a voluntary membership. Moreover, the sect is schismatic, having a prior tie with another religious organization from which it breaks off.[9]

Before proceding further, the denomination must be contrasted with the established sect. Niebuhr's sect cycle, that sects conform to the world and become denominations, is seriously questioned. Nonetheless, sect groups do find it difficult to maintain their original asceticism, and often become less separated from society.[10] Perhaps what J. Milton Yinger calls an *established sect* is a partial solution to this problem. An established sect, he contends, is a religious group that shares many traits with the church and denominational-types, but still remains separate from the world and tends to dominate a large part of the life of its members. The small sect groups are by their very nature unstable and thus disintegrate. For the sake of survival, some groups institutionalize and develop formal structures. Nevertheless, separationist elements still remain and a full transition to a church or denominational-type may not occur.[11] The line between an established sect and a denomination that maintains sectarian elements is often difficult to discern, and probably hinges on the issues of separation and a narrowness of spirit.

II

What ecclesiastical characteristics have the Mennonite Brethren demonstrated in North America? What do these traits indicate about Mennonite Brethren congregational life? Clarence Hiebert writes that Niebuhr's sect cycle, by which a sect loses its purity and becomes a denomination, fits Mennonite Brethren history well.[12] Such a statement can be regarded as true if only the broad trends are examined, for the Mennonite Brethren have never been either a 100 percent sect or entirely a denomination.

Mennonite Brethren often take pride in being a sect type. Anabaptist theology is most compatible with the sect model, and the Mennonite Brethren points of origin, in both the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, largely reflect sectarian characteristics.[13] In neither case, however, did these sectarian features remain unchanged. Social, economic, and political realities have forced subsequent modifications. In both Russia and in North America the Mennonite story has been paradoxical: On one hand, it has been a history of resistance to worldly encroachments; but on the other, it has reflected compromise with the world both from within the culture and from without. In regard to ecclesiastical typologies, two broad trends emerge. In Russia, prior to the Mennonite Brethren secession of 1860, the Mennonite religion adjusted to the world from within its ranks and, in respect to general characteristics, moved from a sect to an established church.[14] After the break, the Mennonite Brethren resembled a sect group but shortly developed into what best can be called an *established sect*. In North America, the early Mennonite Brethren manifested sectarian traits but with institutionalization became an established sect. Nevertheless, by about the mid-twentieth century the fellowship had come to terms with the world from without, and had largely adopted the traits of a denomination. It is, however, a conservative denomination that still harbors sectarian features.[15]

Denominational characteristics certainly have not developed uniformly in all Mennonite Brethren communities, nor have they proceeded at the same rate in the United States and Canada. Until about 1960, the pace toward denominationalism, it would seem, moved at a slower rate in Canada for several reasons. First, the *Kanädier*, those Mennonites arriving in Canada prior to the 1920s, not only came from a lower socio-economic group in Russia, but they left homogeneous and isolated communities, which had little intercourse with the wider Russian society. Furthermore, those Mennonites largely recreated in Canada autonomous "reserves" similar to those in Russia. Thus the Mennonite Brethren in Canada, though few in number before the 1920s, by means of the *Kanädier* influence, contained a culturally conservative segment. The Mennonite Brethren who migrated to the United States were only slightly more progressive than the *Kanädier*. In the United States, however, the Mennonite Brethren failed to establish their autonomous communities, and thus became acculturated sooner. Second, the late dates of the many migrations to Canada helped to maintain the German language barrier there several decades longer than in the United States. The *Russländer*, at least those who had migrated to Canada during the 1920s, were certainly more progressive than the *Kanädier*, but their relatively recent arrival delayed the switch to English and thus retarded the development of denominational traits. Third, the original immigration of the 1920s had been reinforced by continued waves of immigrants, all of which have strengthened normal ethnic group resistance to acculturation. Fourth, the strong emphasis that the Canadian Mennonite Brethren have placed on Bible school education has tended to retard denominationalism by reinforcing sectarian distinctives. Fifth, the Canadian Mennonite Brethren did not feel the impact of fundamentalism and dispensationalism to the extent that their counterparts in the United States did. These two movements increased the contacts that the United States Brethren had with other evangelicals, and in this way fostered denominationalism at an earlier date. Sixth, the Canadian Mennonite Brethren have fifty years less exposure to the forces of acculturation than have their counterparts in the United States. Finally, the Canadian Mennonite Brethren have at once retained their identity while at the same time participating in provincial and national affairs. This situation has developed for several reasons: There are more Mennonite Brethren in Canada than there are in the United States, particularly in relationship to the total populations of both countries; the Canadian Brethren are politically sophisticated; and the Canadian national setting has nurtured the existence of an ethno-religious pluralism.[16] All of this information is not to imply that the Canadian Mennonite Brethren Church does not presently demonstrate a predominance of denominational traits. Rather, it is to suggest that such a development came slightly later in Canada than in the United States.

III

It now remains to briefly demonstrate that the Mennonite Brethren have operationally moved from a religious body exhibiting a preponderance of sectarian traits, to one in which denominational characteristics are dominant. Certain key criteria distinguishing a sect from a denomination include the voluntary principle, ecclesiastical separation, relationships with other religious bodies, the institutionalization process, and the type of ministry that a religious body maintains.

A key criterion in differentiating a sect from the church-type is the mode of entry. While you are born into a church, you enter a sect by voluntary choice. Denominationalism is also based on the voluntary principle, but its standards of membership are not so rigorous as those of the sect.[17] In the United States and Canada a so-called "voluntaristic society" exists largely as a result of two factors: the disestablishment of the church and cultural pluralism. In such a society can the criterion of voluntarism be used to differentiate sect from denomination, or Mennonites from Presbyterians, or Protestants from Catholics? On the surface, all groups require a voluntary choice. In North America, voluntarism has two adversaries. One enemy, often associated with Catholicism and mainline Protestantism, is nominal church membership, i.e., when religious bodies do not require standards such as a spiritual experience and commitment to the beliefs and lifestyle of the group, or its criteria for entrance are broad enough to encompass most people. Another opponent of voluntarism in a pluralistic society is coercion by a sectarian subculture or the family, especially after the first generation. People voluntarily choose to join a sect and a denomination, but these people have children whom they pressure to join the group. To some extent all religious bodies exert pressure on the second and third generations. Nevertheless, compulsion is greater in a closed ethnic community, where to repudiate the groups' religious tenets is often tantamount to rejecting family and culture.[18]

Are the characteristics of a sect or a denomination reflected in the admission practices of Mennonite Brethren congregations in North America? Mennonite Brethren have strongly espoused that the new birth is a prerequisite for church membership at all times in their history. Moreover, they reject coercion in matters of religion.[19] The early Brethren in Russia broke with the Mennonite Church established by law in order to reestablish the voluntary principle. Church membership was to be based not on birth, but rebirth. Nevertheless, the isolation experience in Russia tended to produce something resembling a kinship church. Subtle social pressure at times undermines voluntarism, especially among the second and third generation Mennonite Brethren in closed ethnic communities.[20] When the Mennonite Brethren came to North America, they did not shake their cultural isolation until at least the post World War II era, and even then some communities still maintained it in varying degrees. They continued to live, particularly in the earlier years, in self-imposed cultural seclusion from the larger society.[21]

This ethnic culture and its side effects have helped create both sect and church-type characteristics in the admission practices of some Mennonite Brethren congregations. On one hand, the reluctance to accept nonethnic Mennonites as bona fide Mennonites has tended to produce a narrow sectarian spirit in some circles. On the other hand, in helping to make birth in a Mennonite family an unofficial but important factor in church membership, ethnicity has contributed to the development of some church-type traits. To be sure, one must confess a conversion experience to join a Mennonite Brethren church. Nevertheless, prior to 1972, three-fourths of the congregational members came from a Mennonite Brethren family, which usually meant they were ethnic Mennonites, and married within the denomination. Since 1972, however, Mennonite Brethren congregations have witnessed a surge of diversity, with the principal growth coming from outside the denomination.[22] This increase in cultural diversity has been a two-edged sword for the practice of voluntarism in the Mennonite Brethren Church. The influx of non-ethnic Mennonites, who have little social pressure to join a Mennonite Brethren congregation, has helped to promote a more genuine voluntarism, an unfolding that is necessary for a religious body with a theology so deeply rooted in the believer's church tradition. Yet these new members often do not have a deep commitment to traditional Mennonite Brethren values. In Mennonite Brethren communities, where ethnicity is not of paramount importance, the current practice of voluntarism has probably taken on traits similar to those found in the churches of mainstream American evangelicalism: a conversion experience is required, but a rigorous commitment to the beliefs and lifestyle of the group is not.[23]

Another criterion by which to measure ecclesiastical typologies is nonconformity and separation from the world, including the political establishment. Church-types make minimal ethical demands on their constituents, thus allowing them to become heavily involved in the world, namely the secular and political arenas. Sect groups, on the other hand, withdraw from the world and demand ethical purity from their members. On these accounts, a denomination tends to be more like an established church.[24]

The Mennonite Brethren definitely represent a separatist type of Christianity. Separation, to be sure, has meant different things at different times; but beginning with Anabaptist dualism, then on to the forced ghettoized experiences in Prussia and Russia, the Mennonites have had no choice but to be separated from the world. The North American scene, however, represents a totally new experience for the Mennonite Brethren. They now have more of a choice. Anabaptist theology and ethics impose some restrictions; psychologically, it takes several generations to move from being "the persecuted ones" to "the accepted ones." Mennonite culture and tradition still impose some restraints. Otherwise, the Mennonite Brethren can choose to withdraw or become involved in the larger North American society.

On this matter, Mennonite Brethren theology has been relatively static. It has taught nonconformity, separation, and a rigorous ethic since its Anabaptist origins, and it teaches such now.[25] What has undergone change is the concept and practice of nonconformity, separation, and ethical purity. Nonconformity to the early Anabaptists meant the rejection of worldly practices and the establishment of a pure ethic in the

believing community. Beginning in Prussia, and especially in Russia, separation from the world primarily came to mean cultural isolation from the larger society and the preservation of ethnic homogeneity. Not until the secession of the Brethren in 1860 did separation necessarily entail ethical purity or a break from the world within the Mennonite colonies.[26] Cultural seclusion, however, was still the primary means of separation from the outer world and the Mennonite Brethren came to North America with the intention of reestablishing, in some way, their isolationist communities. To be sure, this situation could not be duplicated in the United States and though attempted in Canada, it only lasted until about 1920.[27]

The North American scene, indeed, presented the Mennonite Brethren immigrants with a new situation, a new agenda from that which they faced in Russia. The late nineteenth-century North American countries were political democracies, culturally pluralistic, and religiously diverse. At first the Mennonites had to adapt to the permissiveness of the frontier and a host of other matters. Then as the twentieth century progressed, industrialism, urbanization, and secularization forced adjustments on the Mennonite Brethren concepts of separation, nonconformity, and ethics.[28] In North America the Mennonites faced a challenge to their autonomy and power of self control, which was as severe as the more obvious threats of Russianization from which they fled. Consequently, an important motive for Mennonite Brethren separation was that of self preservation, especially the maintenance of religious values and cultural identity.

While exceptions to this generalization can be found, the history of Mennonite Brethren nonconformity during their century in North America shows two patterns: the progressive acceptance of cultural traits from the larger society on one hand, and resistance to this acculturation on the other. The Mennonite Brethren are becoming more adjusted to North American culture and de-Germanized as the generations pass, especially in the United States. Many factors contribute to this development, but the positive image that the Mennonite Brethren had toward America and Canada, the gradual language change from German to English, and the urbanization trend, must rank high.[29]

As a general statement, it would seem that an isolationist mind-set and a tendency toward ethical legalism largely held sway in Mennonite Brethren circles until the mid-twentieth century in the United States and perhaps a decade longer in Canada. Thereafter, when industrialization, urbanization, secularism, materialism, higher education, and the use of English became the norm, the old sectarian cultural standards began to crumble. With the end of the geographic and cultural isolation, the old Anabaptist dualism with its distinction between the two worlds became seriously weakened. The Mennonite Brethren, for the most part, have not successfully replaced their sectarian separation, based largely on culture, with an equally rigorous one grounded on Scripture.[30] For example, church discipline has been relaxed. Furthermore, the current statement of faith upholds nonresistance, but only slightly over half the constituency agree with that position.[31] Moreover, the traditional position of noninvolvement in the political arena has been modified to one of "selective participation," with most Mennonite Brethren voting, others holding local offices, and even some participating on higher levels, e.g., the state, provincial and national governments.[32] These trends notwithstanding, the Mennonite Brethren, despite some recent erosion in respect to piety, maintain a stance on moral issues that is still more rigorous than that of the mainline Protestant churches.[33] The present Mennonite Brethren ethic does not uphold the rigorous ideal of its early sectarian past, but it is certainly comparable with that of most conservative evangelical denominations in North America.

Cooperation between religious groups is an important way to measure the move toward denominationalism. An established church does not need to cooperate because it has a legal or perhaps *de facto* monopoly on religion in a given area. A sect is too exclusive to maintain interchurch relations, and it, too, can have a corner on religion within a cultural group, if not within a geographic area. A denomination, on the other hand, claims neither a monopoly nor exclusive truth. Therefore, necessity forces it to work with other religious bodies.[34] Historically, the Mennonite Brethren have been a bit ambivalent in this regard. On one hand, of the major Mennonite groups, the Brethren have maintained the closest relationships with non-Mennonite religious bodies. This trend, however, has not been without its tensions. While their emphasis on the new birth and their susceptibility to outside influences have drawn the Mennonite Brethren toward other evangelical Christians, their focus on nonresistance, culture, language and ethnic identity has erected a sectarian barrier. On the other hand, their record of inter-Mennonite cooperation has been, perhaps, the weakest of the major Mennonite bodies. These contradictions, seemingly have been largely determined by a series of historical circumstances beginning with the 1860 secession, especially the tensions associated with this break and the impact of non-Mennonite religious influences. The Mennonite Brethren in Canada, however, have developed their inter-Mennonite associations and activities more fully than their counterparts in the United States partly because of a different historical experience. The Brethren who migrated to the United States still retained many scars stemming from the 1860 split. Most of the Mennonite Brethren went to Canada after 1920. By then the inter-Mennonite hostilities largely had been healed, and the friendly relationships that already existed in Russia carried over into Canada.[35]

The Mennonite Brethren developed cordial relationships with some outside religious groups in Russia. Late nineteenth-century America, with all of its enthusiastic revivals and religious pluralism, only served to widen the trend that had begun in Russia. On the frontier, their revivalism and fervor did not seem so out of place. They encountered Baptists, Seventh Day Adventists, Lutherans, and other Mennonites, plus a wide array of religious movements including millennialists, universalists, and revivalists.[36] As the twentieth century progressed, the list comprised many other groups including dispensationalists, fundamentalists, perfectionists, charismatics, and evangelicals. The greatest overall outside impact on the Mennonite Brethren experience in North America, particularly in the United States, came from the Baptists, dispensationalists, fundamentalists, and its more moderate outgrowth, contemporary evangelicalism.[37]

During their more than one hundred years in North America, the Mennonite Brethren have entered into cordial and working relationships with various

Mennonite and non-Mennonite groups, largely for the execution of their Christian mission. The Mennonite Brethren have cooperated with other religious bodies on many levels, e.g., local, regional, national, continental, and even international. This collaboration has touched on many areas including education, medical care, evangelism, ministerial meetings, Bible conferences, mental health, peace efforts, missions, health insurance, and disaster relief. These cooperative activities in North America began as early as 1886, but prior to the period of the language change (ca. 1940-1960), these interchurch efforts were largely limited to other German-speaking Mennonite groups. Even after the transition to English, inter-Mennonite associations continued to increase with the general institutional development of the Mennonite Brethren Church, with the Mennonite Central Committee being the most important organization for cooperation.[38]

Mennonite Brethren cooperation with non-Mennonites, that is, conservative evangelical groups, has been substantial, particularly in the United States. Though some associations with non-Mennonite bodies existed on the local level before the language transition, the breakthrough in cooperative relations came in the 1940s. The Evangelical Foreign Missions Association was born in 1943 and the Mennonite Brethren immediately affiliated with this organization, and have been active in it ever since. In 1945, one year after the founding of the National Association of Evangelicals, the United States Mennonite Brethren Conference joined this conservative organization. Since 1960, the Mennonite Brethren in Canada have tried to relate more meaningfully to other evangelical groups, and presently the Canadian Conference is officially affiliated with the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.[39]

In perhaps no other area have the Mennonite Brethren shed their sectarianism as they have in the realm of interchurch relationships. Indeed, the Mennonite Brethren now maintain a conservative denominational stance in this regard. Nevertheless, sectarianism in respect to inter-church cooperation is not entirely dead. Rather, these associations largely have been confined to relationships with other evangelical bodies. Furthermore, the current search for Mennonite Brethren identity—cultural, theological, and historical—which began in the 1960s, contains a strong sectarian bent. Mennonite Brethren have much in common with other evangelical groups, but they have distinctives that can erect a barrier of separation.

Institutionalization is a yardstick by which to measure a religious group's movement toward denominationalism. In Mennonite Brethren circles this trend includes organizing conference structures, committee activity, developing conference administrative centers, publishing periodicals, evangelism, propagation of doctrine, establishing educational institutions, promoting missions, erecting historical centers, and appointing boards that supervise and control programs. The centerpiece for much of this institutionalization has been the general conference structure. The Mennonite Brethren in Russia convened a conference in 1872. Five years after the first migration to North America, the first duly constituted Mennonite Brethren Conference met in 1879. In the century since then, the Mennonite Brethren have constructed conference organizations and institutions comparable to other churches with a congregational polity. In fact, the Mennonite Brethren Conference today is more highly organized than are many larger Baptist denominations with a similar church polity. Indeed, the propensity for institutionalization has been a major factor in the development of denominational characteristics in the Mennonite Brethren Church.[40]

Another related barometer by which to measure the movement toward denominationalism is the type of ministry that a religious body maintains. While the church-type supports an ecclesiastical hierarchy distinct from the laity, a sect often has an unpaid lay ministry. The denomination, however, normally maintains a nonhierarchical professional ministry that tends to reduce lay participation.[41] The early Brethren in Russia returned to an emphasis on the priesthood of all believers, which regarded the ministry as the function of all Christians. The pattern of the ministry that they developed and transmitted to North America can be described as an unsalaried multiple lay ministry. They preserved intact this obviously sectarian system until changes began in the 1930s in the United States and several decades later in Canada.

The years after the late 1930s witnessed a shift to the North American denominational pattern—that of a single theologically trained and paid minister. The general acceptance of North American culture since 1874 precipitated such an alteration. More specifically, the change to the pastoral system in the United States was accelerated by the transition from German to English in worship services and by the general rise of the educational level among church members. These factors increased the demand for well-trained men who could communicate in English, thus forcing ministers to be trained outside the fellowship, where they brought new ideas in respect to church polity. A similar development in the pastoral system occurred in Canada. Here the process, however, has been slowed down and modified by the later immigrations and language change, by the emphasis on Bible school training, and by the abundance of qualified leaders among the *Russländer*.[42]

IV

Most religious bodies have accommodated their congregational life to the cultural pressures of North American society, and the Mennonite Brethren are no exception to this general pattern. The denominational structure of the church rests on the twin pillars of religious disestablishment and pluralism. These two developments would have been welcomed by many of the sixteenth-century Anabaptists. Unfortunately religious disestablishment and pluralism were ideas whose time had not yet arrived. Therefore, subsequent generations of Mennonites, in an attempt to preserve their religious values and cultural identity, created a unitary society and a *de facto* religious establishment—two developments that are not conducive to the Anabaptist concept of the church. When the Mennonite Brethren arrived in North America, they had to adapt not only to religious pluralism and disestablishment but to a host of other factors including secularization, industrialization, and urbanization. Such an adjustment did not arrive overnight, nor did it come smoothly. Therefore, as the Mennonite Brethren became institutionalized, they manifested the features of an established sect and have still retained many sectarian traits. Nevertheless, by the latter part

of the twentieth century, according to most criteria, the Mennonite Brethren Church in North America has become a conservative denomination.[43]

Such a shift, from sectarian to denominational characteristics, reveals some of the significant changes that several generations of Mennonite Brethren have undergone in slightly over a century in North America and offers a new perspective for the tensions that have beset the fellowship. For example, the development of a measure of cultural pluralism within Mennonite Brethren circles has had a two-fold result: While this pluralism has strengthened the application of voluntarism, i.e., the believer's church concept, it also has helped to break down the practice of separation. The move from isolation to a moderate level of involvement in society can have its benefits, but often the price is a less rigorous ethic. On a similar note, influences from and cordial relationships with non-Mennonite religious groups in the wider evangelical community has been a two-edged sword. On one hand, this development has enriched the fellowship with new ideas and has reduced the narrow spirit so often associated with sect groups. Conversely, these outside influences have seriously eroded Mennonite Brethren theological identity and ethics. These changes and tensions, however, have not been divorced from similar developments in the larger North American Mennonite community. Though North American Mennonitism has not been the object of this study, most of the major Mennonite groups have experienced similar cultural pressures and have, in varying degrees, made the transition from religious bodies manifesting sectarian traits to groups evidencing a preponderance of denominational characteristics.[44]

ENDNOTES

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[33]Kauffman, *Four Centuries Later*, pp. 125, 126.

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Book Reviews

Christian Peacemaking and International Conflict: A Realist Pacifist Perspective by Duane K. Friesen. Herald Press, 1986.

The Significance of the Book

There is no doubt in my mind that Duane Friesen's book is a major landmark in the development of Mennonite thought about war and peace. Indeed, it is a significant work in the larger context of Christian thought generally about these matters. But I wish to focus in this Mennonite context on the reasons for its landmark status in our tradition.

First, it is the most sophisticated Mennonite effort yet to integrate Christian theological and ethical perspectives with learnings from the social sciences. It is both broadly and deeply interdisciplinary. It ranges across a host of pertinent disciplines—and it probes them deeply. It is neither narrow nor shallow. It avoids the rather typical Mennonite mistake of thinking that once one has spelled out the biblical or anabaptist view on an ethical subject the task of the ethicist is done. Friesen knows that one needs to understand empirical reality as well as normative teaching in order to come to a rightly-formed ethical judgment. If there was a time when Mennonites saw themselves as too unsophisticated to engage the best minds of their age on equal terms, Friesen's work demonstrates that this no longer needs to be the case.

Second, and much more important for an attempt to locate the book's significance in the evolution of Mennonite thought, it articulates and pushes forward a number of trends which have been emerging in recent years. It is the best window to the thought world of the dominant group of Mennonite thinkers (at least General Conference and Mennonite Church) which we have to date. In this sense it can be seen, to some degree at least, as parallel to Guy Hershberger's *War, Peace, and Nonresistance* of the 1940s which both articulated an emerging consensus among dominant Mennonite thinkers on these same general themes and which helped to forge that consensus.

The Perspective

I cannot hope to summarize the contents of the book. Rather, I will seek to identify what strike me as some of the key components of Friesen's "realist pacifist perspective." In doing so I believe some of the reasons for my calling this book a landmark will become clear, particularly as one thinks of this perspective in relation to the viewpoint which Hershberger articulated in the 1940s.

1. Implicit in the subtitle of the book is the assumption that one can be a pacifist and a realist at the same time—that in fact these go together quite naturally if one correctly understands both pacifism and international reality. Friesen does not harmonize pacifism and realism by saying that one is appropriate for the church and the other for the state, to caricature a "dualist" perspective. He is no "dualist." Rather, he insists that his pacifist convictions do not disqualify him from speaking to the major issues of international relations. He refuses to accept "irrelevance" as the price of "faithfulness" as Reinhold Niebuhr demanded that pacifists must do and as some Mennonites seemingly did. He speaks to what the *state* should do. He is ready and willing to enter the debate on policy and make his case on the grounds of the

practical, realistic viability of his perspectives, neither appealing to revelation (in making the public policy case) nor to moralism. He insists that it is his perspective which is truly realistic, that the so-called "realists" have misconceived international reality because their presuppositions lead them to see conflict of interest as the central reality of international politics. While there is surely conflict there, Friesen stresses that a high degree of cooperation characterizes much of international life already and that nations have more common interests than conflicts as they face the challenges of our age. It is their failure to recognize these realities which is at the heart of the unrealism of the "realists"—and at the heart of many global problems.

2. As the above implies, Friesen is not content with the slogan "Christian ethics are for Christians," at least if this is taken to mean that the central focus of Christian ethical thought should be on how Christians should live together within the new community of the church. Indeed, the church is very much in the background of this book. The focus is rather on how Christians should seek to transform the world—not mainly through converting people or through being "a light set on a hill," but by shaping the perspectives which serve as the basis for national policy decisions. Friesen is not mainly concerned with the "people of God," but with the world. It is the world which he seeks to transform.

3. Friesen's focus is more on the resurrection than on the cross, at least in comparison to much previous Mennonite ethical thought. Mennonites have often stressed the cross. This has meant, in part, that we have tended to stress the view that the world will reject us and the ways of God. Any meaningful change taking place in the wider world is highly unlikely. In contrast, Friesen accents the view that because the God we know in Jesus is the Lord of the universe, transformation is possible. Integral to the vision of the Christian peacemaker is "the unshakable conviction that ultimate reality is just and good in a universal sense . . . ." (p. 228) Such a conviction gives hope to being about the work of transformation.

4. The central overarching category for Friesen is *peacemaking*, not "nonresistance." This means becoming involved in the structures and conflicts of the world and seeking to be a transforming presence. Justice is the goal such a presence is aimed at achieving, as it is the proper goal of social institutions. Friesen seeks to keep justice and peace together by arguing that while justice is the peacemaker's goal, nonviolence is the means. But again, nonviolence does not mean nonresistance. He is ready to use "power," sometimes including "pressure," "coercion," and "physical force", to bring about justice, though he rejects "violence" (see pp. 143-157 for the major discussion of his usage of these terms).

Questions

Although much more could be said by way of general appreciation of the book and by way of characterizing it, let me close by raising some questions. They fall into three groups: questions about definitions and concepts, about analysis of international relations, and about theology and ethics. I will not develop arguments around these questions, nor do I intend to be saying by raising these questions that I think Friesen is wrong on all these points. They are simply items which I think warrant further thought, clarification, or modification.

1. Definitional and conceptual questions.

a. One of the most interesting parts of the book for me is the attempt to understand more clearly what we mean by violence, coercion, etc. But I am not persuaded that defining violence so that it means basically "that which violates" someone will get us very far. That means, as Friesen rightly points out, that some kinds of persuasion are violent and some kinds of physical force are not. I don't have any basic problem with that, but I am not clear how we know what "violates" someone. If it does not mean giving them the freedom to choose their own course (noncoercion in that sense), it means that we must in some way put ourselves in the place of choosing for them what is good for them—and for others—and then forcing them to do it. What gives us the right to do that—for other sane adults? I welcome Friesen's effort to untangle the conceptual mess around these terms and find his work helpful—but still quite problematic.

b. On a much more minor point, I don't see how one can be morally committed to the view that it is simply wrong for our nation to possess nuclear weapons and at the same time to say that one is not committed to unilateralism. If it is inherently wrong, don't we need to stop possessing such weapons even if the other side does not? And if we say that we are not committed to unilateralism in what sense can we say that it is "wrong" for our nation to possess nuclear weapons—if the other side has them and wants to keep them? Does the argument assume that if "we" were serious about arms control we could negotiate agreements which would rid the world of nuclear weapons? That's the only way I can see out of what appears to me to be a logical bind. (See especially pp. 221-222.)

2. Analytical questions. The basic issues here in a sense all revolve around debates in the international relations literature. It is surely true that "realism" (as a school of thought) has been far too fully accepted as a general model for international politics, both in the general population and among Mennonites. A distorted view of reality has indeed resulted, as Friesen argues. Nevertheless, I wonder if in an attempt to correct this fault the author has not interpreted international politics too fully in terms of an "interdependence" model. It strikes me that both models are rather accurate descriptions of different parts of the international system and that problems arise, analytically, when one tries to do more with a paradigm than it can manage. Even the best advocates of the "interdependence" model don't claim it is descriptive of all international politics. Friesen's tendency, in my judgment, to underestimate "realism" leads to questions about several judgments or implications in the book, questions which can perhaps be answered, but which need to be argued more fully.

a. Is interdependence good—in terms of the goals of justice and peace? (pp. 33ff.)

b. Is Western Europe typical of international politics, or is it capable of being duplicated? What factors caused developments there? Are they present elsewhere, or can they be generated? (pp. 34ff.)

c. Are there available negotiable solutions to all international conflicts, whether "unrealistic" or "realistic"? (pp. 177ff.) Surely there are such solutions more often than they are found,

but the discussion here and elsewhere seems to assume a higher degree of commonality of interest and rationality than I think it is "realistic" to assume.

d. Although Friesen rejects "world government," he wants "an international system so revised as to prohibit nation-states from employing organized violence against each other . . . ." (pp. 199-200) How could there be any body capable of doing that without it being, defacto, a world government? Also, is there any evidence that multilateral disarmament negotiations are more successful than bilateral ones? (pp. 200-201)

3. Theological and ethical questions.

a. Does the perspective here take seriously enough the reality and pervasiveness of sin, in individuals as well as structures? What about "the fall"? Closely related, is a pessimistic attitude toward the possibilities of social transformation along lines outlined in the book really idolatry, a failure to see God's power? Can transformation really take place outside the context of a voluntary community committed to the values and perspectives which the author outlines? Can one really try to do Christian ethics for the whole society? Should not the church be more at the center of the Christian ethicist's concern? These are some questions which arise from a more traditional Mennonite perspective.

b. What does the incorporation of justice as a central category for social ethics imply for our peace position? If we are to seek justice nonviolently, and if justice is the goal of social institutions, what happens to our nonviolence when justice seems better served by violence? Or do we believe that both will always go together? Doesn't the pursuit of justice lead us to the temptation to abandon our pacifism?

c. Coincidentally, I have just read some materials on the Kansas Institute of International Relations which was hosted at Bethel in the late '30s. It was the main pre-war institutional effort among Mennonites to apply our peace convictions to international politics and was one place where the more liberal, optimistic, activist pacifism of the '20s and '30s touched Mennonites. The Institute always was somewhat controversial among Mennonites, and the view which it represented was largely eliminated during and after the war. Among Mennonites this rejection took the form of rejecting "pacifism" in favor of "nonresistance." There are surely some important similarities between the view symbolized in the Institute and that presented by Friesen, although there are no doubt important differences as well. It would be good to explore both the similarities and the differences rather fully—and then to evaluate self-consciously as a people whether the direction Friesen is pointing is the direction we wish to go since it represents, in part at least, a direction we refused to go (mistakenly?) earlier. Put directly, are there pitfalls along Friesen's road which might be as dangerous as those he seeks to avoid by leading us away from a withdrawn, isolated pacifism? And are there other roads, or some changes in Friesen's road, which would enable us to more faithfully live out our peacemaking call?

Having raised some of the many questions which would be worth exploring, let me conclude with an observation and a note of appreciation.

The observation: It is appropriate symbolically that this book comes from Bethel. As noted above, it was at Bethel that the most visible institutional effort among U.S. Mennonites before the war to apply Mennonite peace convictions to international problems was made. And Bethel's current peace studies program orients itself more "outwardly" than the other U.S. Mennonite programs I am aware of. Bethel is a leader in this area among Mennonites.

The appreciation: However one evaluates the substantive positions developed in Friesen's book, one must be grateful for the enormous contribution to our thought which he has made. No future work in the field can fail to deal with it, whether by building on it or by modifying or rejecting parts of it. It is a book to be reckoned with.

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Peace In Our Time?: Some Biblical Groundwork by David Atkinson (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986, 221 pages).

Along with the escalating arms buildup of the 1980's has come the publishing of a number of books intended to help Christians formulate their positions on questions of war and peace.

One of these books is David Atkinson's *Peace in Our Time?: Some Biblical Groundwork*. Aimed primarily at the college student, the British writer Atkinson begins the book by outlining the dilemmas facing those who wish to respond to the peacemaking call while seriously taking into account the aggression present in the world.

In a clear and readable style, Atkinson moves through four topical areas that he believes necessary for an adequate resource for young people. First, he briefly surveys the Old and New Testament references to war. In the second part he provides an overview of the Christian church's response to war throughout history. Then, in what Atkinson considers the primary task of the book, he lays out a theological foundation by examining such topics as the nature of God's justice, the role of the state, and the duties of the Christian citizen. The fourth topic focuses on ethical responses, particularly on the issue of nuclear deterrence.

Atkinson is correct in his speculation that his book does not break any new ground on these various subjects. However, the book does succeed—given its medium length—in covering the diverse considerations that challenge Christians on questions of war and peace. Furthermore the treatment is done in a sincere manner avoiding patronizing descriptions of those responses he does not entirely agree with, such as those taken by Anabaptists.

In Atkinson's rejection of the Christian pacifist response, he basically believes, given his perception of human nature, that the Christian's responsibility to restrain wrongdoing, order, and God's justice cannot occur without resorting to lethal force. Thus, Atkinson's response to his own title is, no, there won't be peace in our time.

But Atkinson's honest attempt to help the Christian student does not let the discussion end at that point. He provides an interesting critique of the current nuclear deterrence policies and finds them morally insufficient, failing to follow just war criteria, and succeeding only in creating an evermore dangerous world. And so, rejecting nuclear deterrence, but not ready to wholeheartedly embrace a non-violent

stance, there is an uneasy adoption of conventional military force in selective cases as the means for Christians and the state to carry out God's justice.

Parenthetically, Atkinson does include a short discussion on alternatives to nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, like most current discussions of possible responses to the aggression of nations, there is no mention of the concept of civilian-based defense based on the power of non-violent sanctions.

For the Christian student interested in the peace church perspective, Atkinson's book is not the place to begin. It is, though, a book that raises the difficult issues posed by war that all Christians, including pacifists, need to struggle with if we hope to avoid the harvest of what this decade's arms build-up has sown.

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Three Mennonite Poets: Jean Janzen, U.S.A.; Yorifumi Yaguchi, Japan; David Waltner-Toews, Canada. Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 1986. Pp. 122. Hardcover $13.95; paper $8.95.

Awareness of serious Mennonite poets should be considerably enhanced by this attractive volume. The poems of Janzen, Yaguchi, and Waltner-Toews will be accessible to a broad audience; most are short and lyrical; all are vivid and interesting.

Jean Janzen's best poems of Mennonite heritage from her *Words for the Silence* (1984) are included here, although I miss the beautiful paper and symbolic illustrations of that volume. The most moving of these poems gives words for the silence of the speaker's grandmother in Russia, who hanged herself in the barn after her husband's death, leaving nine young children. Janzen's 17 new poems are warmer in expressing the love of a daughter, mother, sister, and wife. Yet they also speak of the inadequacy of words; raising children in "a world gone red" with love and violence,

> I wrap my voice
> around them, but the syllables
> are like a wire fence,
> and not one word prevents
> the sun or the fire.

Giving her grown-up children their freedom, she "curbs the appetite": "I smile, / I wave, I swallow my words. / I eat the spaces between us."

A Mennonite upbringing taught self-restraint. Yet these poems reach for unity with the heavy blooming of earth and the airy freedom of eternity: "I loosen my grip / on the cup, set it down, / turn up my palms, / and they bloom like crocuses." The speaker's mother advises against laughter and "quilts with a very / sharp needle, making tiny close / stitches around / the flying geese." Yet her hands are becoming translucent; she may one day float away, "loose and free." Mennonite music, though sung in severely enclosed places, likewise has "melodies escaping / the ones with wings flapping softly upward." The tone is wistful, but the lines themselves are restrained.

Yorifumi Yaguchi is a literature professor and Mennonite lay pastor in Japan. His two previous collections of poetry in English were printed privately (*A Shadow*, late 1960's) or in the Philippines (*How to Eat Loaches*, 1984), so this selection of 30 poems is particularly welcome. Only a few of Yaguchi's many war-related poems are included. His pacifism, however, gives energy to his group of grotesque poems about the inner beasts of lust and violence that even Christians harbor. In "After My Prolonged Prayer," a horrible pig-like beast leaps from the speaker, an incarnation of his real desire. In another poem blood-stained rats jump out of his mouth: "And when I shut my jaws, / I bit into a swollen one, which dangles from my teeth." Even children are possessed: a painful devilfish is growing in the belly of the speaker's small son, "its legs of / barbed wires" merging with the flesh, "its eyes / spitting darkness . . . staring straight into my eyes."

Close to these poems one might arrange a humorous grotesque about the ladies in fine clothes carrying within them "lunchboxes" of excrement. Also there are a few of Yaguchi's many mirror poems in which the speaker shares his identity with a hunted deer, a fish within a rock, or some other animal. Other poems portray the inner self as a wooded landscape peopled with lonely or hostile children. All of these poems make their impact primarily through their haunting symbols, rather than through sound and rhythm. Still, a few haiku-like poems about a natural scene or about words unite fine craftsmanship of sound and silence with the striking images.

The imagery of David Waltner-Toews brings the reader back to a cheerful domestic world. Indeed, most of the poems were first published as *Good Housekeeping* (1983). In these warm and sometimes whimsical poems, love is associated with grocery shopping, a clothes closet, piecrust, pants, and beans. It is unfortunate that the editors scattered "Legs," "Friday Night" and the other love poems randomly (as they did to many other natural groupings in their book). They did, however, keep together the touching poems on the death of Waltner-Toews' father, including "Christmas 1979," in which the father returns and comfortably joins the family circle. In contrast, a humorous group is the "Hanschen" monologues, satirizing an old-fashioned Mennonite mother, her boy who has gone modern in the city, his own son's faddish return to "simple life," and their reactions to each other. A more penetrating satire is on "Eric Reimer, from . . . ," who erases his successive identities. Waltner-Toews' humor is refreshing, but it occasionally degenerates into smart-aleck remarks.

The youngest of the three poets, Waltner-Toews has published three volumes, and he promises in his "Homestead" ("built of strong green words") that he is waiting beside the fire, with "cords of unused words / stacked up around me. / I've left enough unsaid / to keep us warm / all winter." All three poets speak consciously of words and silences in some of their best poems. Yaguchi knows that in pinning words onto paper there is loss: "gradually their wings stopped convulsing / and they were changed into gravestones." But in the interplay of words and silences, something is reborn in the imagination of the readers. My hope is that many Mennonites and others will be refreshed and challenged by the poems in this book and that it can be followed by other collections—including, for example, Patrick Friesen, Keith Ratzlaff, Jeff Gundy, Eric Rensberger, and Barbara Eash Shisler. There is enough good work by Mennonite poets to keep us warm for more than one winter.

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