MENNONITE LIFE

MARCH 1988

In this Issue

Inter-personal and inter-group conflict is found in the beginnings of humankind. Stories and reflections on the art of resolving conflicts are found in the literature of all ages and peoples. This issue of *Mennonite Life* opens windows to conflict resolution in the Mennonite transcultural experience.

Ron Kraybill and David Brubaker, Director and Associate Director of the Mennonite Conciliation Service of the Mennonite Central Committee, Akron, PA, review ten years of expanding awareness and competency in conflict mediation.

Levi Keidel, Clearbrook, BC, and longtime missionary, writer and educator in Zaire, describes a fascinating community encounter with a Zaire diviner. This study calls for a leap of understanding for a western-conditioned observer. This is followed with a short study of the conflict resolution dimensions of a celebrative Christian event among the Zulus of South Africa.

John Paul Lederach, a doctoral candidate in conflict management at the University of Colorado, draws from his field studies in Central America to tell of how the student of conflict can also be an agent of conflict.

The studies of conflict resolution in contemporary China suggest analogies with patterns outlined by Jesus in Matthew 18.

The study from Kabul, Afghanistan, yields insight into an awkward, painful instrusion of enthusiastic Christians seeking to build an impressive western-style church in a traditional Muslim capital city. Rachel Waltner Goossen edited a student paper originally written by Dan Friesen, 1986 graduate of Bethel College.

The final study is the only cross-cultural conflict drawn from an American setting: Chicago. Delton Franz recounts the story of Woodlawn Mennonite Church where he pastored in the fifties and sixties, this on the eve of an eruption of violence in Chicago's inner city.

The proverbs of conflict and peacemaking from other cultures suggest that imbedded in all cultures is a profound folk wisdom. John Paul Lederach contributed many of those from Central American oral tradition.

Robert Kreider

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Front and Back Cover

Crowd scenes from Nyanga village, Zaire.

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A Resource for Dealing with Conflict— the Mennonite Conciliation Service

by Ron Kraybill and David Brubaker

The Mennonite Conciliation Service has developed through three stages: 1) inspiration and implementation, 1975-1979; 2) clarification and expansion, 1980-1984; and 3) regionalization, affiliation, and internationalization, 1985- .

I. Inspiration and Implementation, 1975-1979

The Idea

In 1975 Bethel College held a workshop on Peacemaking and Conflict Resolution. In the course of the workshop, "Tom Lehman suggested that MCC ought to develop a 'Mennonite Conciliation Service' that would operate somewhat as MDS, only to anticipate and work with conflicts and crises either before they occur or to prevent them from becoming violent, rather than just coming along afterward to aid the victims." Several months earlier Robert Kreider had written a memorandum to Urbane Peachey sketching possibilities for the MCC Peace Section providing services in community conflict resolution.

At a June 16-17, 1975 meeting of MCC U.S. Ministries, Anna Juhnke presented a proposal for a Mennonite Conciliation Service. The proposal noted that, "Peace Section has done a fairly good job of conceptualizing peace and developing a moral conscience against participating in the evils of conflict and war. It has not done too well in preparing persons to prevent the consequences of conflict when it turns toward violence." The proposal, based on a William Keeney/Anna Juhnke memo of June 10, suggested a "team approach" which would include some persons as advocates, some as mediators, and perhaps some as researchers. It also observed that "Mennonites have normally considered conflict avoidance rather than regulation as the mode of dealing with conflict situations."

The Keeney Proposal

At the June 1975 meeting, the U.S. Ministries Board passed a motion which said, "the Department sees a significant role in this ministry but recommends that the Peace Section take the initiative in studying this proposal." Following this, the Peace Section commissioned William Keeney to develop an expanded proposal for a Mennonite Conciliation Service. The Keeney proposal, which was presented at the November 19, 1976 meeting of the International Peace Section, included the following elements:

> 1) Envisioning intervention in social conflict situations and noting, "It is possible that dealing with other conflicts may prepare us for working with our own conflicts."
>
> 2) Apparently anticipating criticisms that an MCS would not have an evangelistic ministry, the proposal stated: "To offer a conciliation service which would reduce violence and destruction is a valid ministry even if it does not offer opportunity in every instance, or even most, to provide a full Christian ministry of redemption."
>
> 3) And regarding the structure of such an entity, "Local networks of persons should be encouraged to organize and to respond to needs as they arise . . . . A national office (or perhaps two national offices, one in the U.S. and Canada) would be established to assist the networks." The Keeney proposal suggested that the U.S. national office might be located in Washington, D.C.

At the November 19, 1976 meeting, International Peace Section received the Keeney proposal and passed a motion which included two essential ingredients: 1) That the Section cooperate with the (U.S.) Peace Section in hiring a special assistant during the summer of 1977 to further develop the proposal, and 2) That the Section help organize and support a proposed consultation regarding a "Mennonite Conciliation Service," to be held in April, 1978.

The 1977 Summer Project

MCC Peace Section appointed Ron Kraybill, then a student at Harvard Divinity School, as a special summer assistant to help develop services to local churches and conference agencies who want to become involved in conflict resolution. In an April 22, 1977 MCC News Release explaining the summer project, Peace Section director Urbane Peachey stated: "Mennonites have a comprehensive peace theology but they have usually given only limited attention to using social and psychological skills for understanding and working in conflict situations."

Over the course of two months, Kraybill interviewed several dozen Mennonite and other church and community leaders and activists and discussed with them the proposed "Mennonite Conciliation Service." Many of those interviewed questioned the initial focus on intervention in social conflicts. Elmer Ediger commented, "A conciliation service is pretty blamed audacious in light of the track record of Mennonites in handling our own conflicts." Lupe de Leon observed, "Top priority should be to clean up our own house. It doesn't mean much to speak of justice and reconciliation among other people when things aren't straight among Christian brothers."

Ron Kraybill came away with a greater awareness of the abysmal failure of Mennonite institutions in dealing with the issues of urban life.

Following the summer internship,

Ron prepared a report for the MCC Peace Section on the Mennonite Conciliation Service proposal. The report differentiated between conflicts caused by injustice and conflicts resulting from fundamental disagreements or incompatibility. Ron's report suggested that the Peace Section assembly planned for the spring of 1978 be an "interpretive event."

The Kansas City Consultation

From April 6 to 8, 1978, the MCC Peace Section sponsored an Assembly on Conflict Intervention and Conciliation, at Park College in Kansas City, MO. James Laue, John Adams, and John Howard Yoder were the main speakers. The "Proceedings" from the consultation included the following comments:

> We . . . feel that the most authentic involvement will be at the local or regional level . . . . We believe priority should be given to situations where Mennonites already possess some credibility and have longer-term reasons to be involved.
>
> Let the local congregations see this as their ministry to their neighborhoods in addition to themselves. Akron would provide educational resources, not a clearinghouse with addresses and strategic people. (John Howard Yoder)

In August 1978 the MCC Peace Section approved a draft of "Activities for Director of Mennonite Conciliation Service," and a year later Ron Kraybill was employed as full-time director. Although the initial impetus for an MCS had been carried by MCC Peace Section (international), MCS was actually lodged under U.S. Peace Section, which had been created in 1975. Since early discussion had involved Canadians as well as Americans, there was anticipation that a Canadian MCS would emerge as well.

First Efforts

In October of 1979, Ron Kraybill attempted to serve as a peacemaker between two factions of a Mohawk Indian tribe that were feuding in New York State. In an MCC News Service article which reflected on the event, Ron concluded, "It seemed clear that the time was not yet ripe for negotiation . . . . Sometimes the weaker party needs support in sustaining their complaints if a conflict is to be resolved."

In a December 14, 1979 news release, Kraybill reported that MCS activities would focus in two areas:

> 1) Provide resources for dealing with conflict among Mennonites, particularly congregational conflicts and personal or business disputes that would otherwise go to court.
>
> 2) Conflict ministries to surrounding communities, in such difficult areas as racial tensions, housing disputes, environmental conflicts or where buildings or land are occupied by demonstrators.

II. Clarification and Expansion, 1980-1984

By 1980, Ron Kraybill was centering his efforts in equipping others to mediate in community and congregational disputes. In a November 1980, report he wrote: "I see my role as that of an occasional 'intervenor' in intergroup disputes, but much more as a story-teller, a catalyst, a seed-planter, a consultant."

That same year, community mediation centers were initiated in Lancaster, PA, and Harrisonburg, VA. Ron wrote, "Here again the role of MCS has and likely will continue to be that of a facilitator, consultant and trainer. Local Mennonites and others handle the responsibility of locating funding and other resources."

Also in 1980, Kraybill wrote and published *Repairing the Breach*, and, jointly with the Christian Legal Society, *Mediation: A Reader.*

Kraybill's commitment to the spiritual essence of conciliation work was reflected in an interview with Gerald Schlabach, published in a January 15, 1982 MCC News Release: "I really do believe in the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit working through the mediation process . . . . I credit that to the presence of God's Spirit working through the gifts of the mediator."

In May of 1982 the first of a series of "Occasional Newsletters" was prepared by MCS. Over the years, the newsletter matured into the MCS *Conciliation Quarterly,* which is now published four times a year in a typeset, two-color format.

Training and equipping others as peacemakers consumed an increasing amount of Kraybill's time. From January 1982 to April 1983 he trained more than 200 people in eight different communities in "Mediation Training Seminars." In addition, calls for assistance and training began to come from non-MCC constituent churches. In a December 4, 1984 memo Ron wrote, "Of the sixteen requests for seminars in October and November, seven came from non-MCC groups."

Increasing demands on Ron as an intervenor, trainer, and writer led to calls for additional staff support in the MCS office. A November 1983 MCC News Release noted that MCC U.S. Peace Section had agreed to expand the MCS program "by placing one or two additional part-time MCS staff to work with local church and community groups in several regions." Charlotte Stichter served on the central office staff from

Ron Kraybill, Director of Mennonite Conciliation Service, directs a seminar in conciliation skills at Salunga, PA, October 1983.

February to September, 1985. Dave Brubaker arrived in June 1986 to serve a two-year term as Associate Director.

III. Regionalization, Affiliation, and Internationalization, 1985-

MCS Chapters

With requests for mediation and training growing steadily, the Akron staff sought out and trained regional resource persons. Ron Claassen in Fresno, California, was the first of these part-time trainers in 1982. A year later Dennis Koehn in Goshen, Indiana, began a similar role. By 1988 there were MCS chapters actively offering mediation and seminars in Akron, Pennsylvania; Goshen, Indiana; Newton, Kansas; New Orleans, Louisiana; Souderton, Pennsylvania; Central Ohio; Harrisonburg, Virginia; and Chicago.

As regional chapters emerged, the role of the Akron office changed. Delivery of mediation and training shifted to the regional chapters and Akron devoted an increasing portion of time and resources to supporting the network, developing written and audio visual resources, and exploring new areas of involvement. In 1987 a gathering at Wheaton College of all the network trainers took place for the first time and quarterly reporting procedures were instituted. In 1988 the Akron office began to standardize training materials and centrally coordinate and promote seminars and services offered by the regional chapters.

Affiliation

The "field of dispute resolution," as publications commonly described it, had changed drastically by 1985. Where a few dozen agencies existed a decade earlier, now more than 300 agencies dotted the country. Each month new centers opened. MCS was still young and small with a central office budget under $40,000, but in a field of newcomers, an agency with ten years of history and a national network looked like a grandparent!

This led to interesting involvements. In 1985 MCS was asked to participate in the formation of a Farm Mediation Task Force which assisted in the establishment of programs in several states for mediating between farmers and creditors. In 1986 Ron Kraybill was appointed to a term on the six-person Steering Committee of the National Conference on Peacemaking and Conflict Resolution, the largest association of practitioners in the field. MCS was requested to participate in 1986 in the formation of the Interfaith Conciliation Service, and was often cited by planners as an example of what religious groups could be doing in response to social conflicts. In 1987 MCS played a significant role in forming a state-wide Pennsylvania Council of Mediators and Kraybill was asked to provide the keynote address at the first conference. Also in 1987 the US State Department invited MCS participation in a gathering of thirty persons to reflect on the role of "track three diplomacy" or mediation by non-governmental agencies.

International Work

MCS is a department of MCC U.S. Peace Section. Thus, from the beginning the mandate for MCS has been domestic U.S. concerns. But the work of MCS increasingly drew attention of individauls concerned about conflicts overseas.

In 1983 and 1984, the Council on International Ministries (CIM) requested that Kraybill meet with them to discuss ways to improve handling of conflicts that arise in overseas missions settings. CIM members passed a resolution supporting further work in this area in December 1985, although little has developed since then.

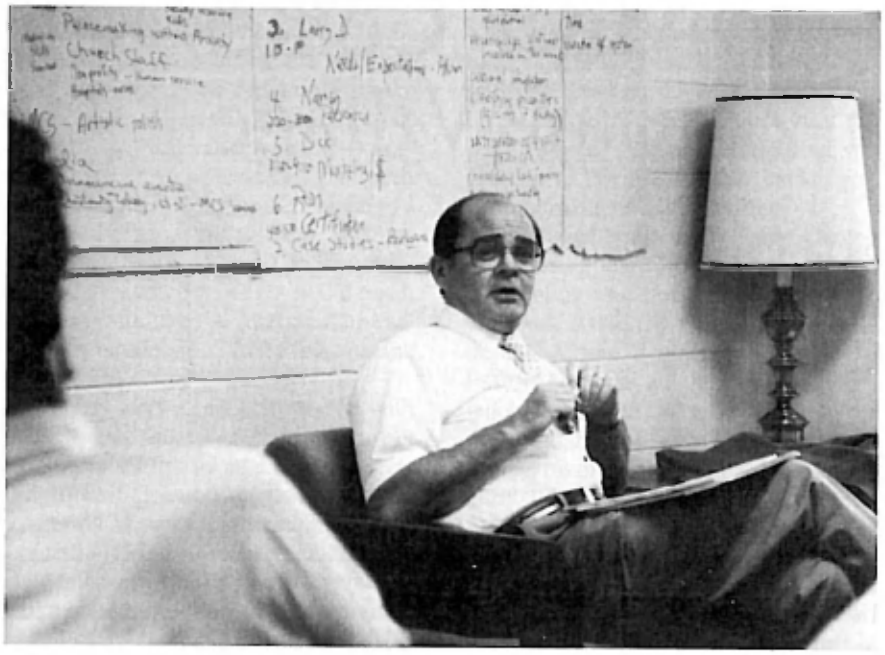
In the spring of 1985 Kraybill led seminars in Ireland and England at the invitation of peace groups there. The Irish seminars led to the formation of Conflict Management Services, a coalition of religious and community groups in Belfast and Dublin formed to provide mediation and training services in family, personal, and neighborhood conflicts. In 1987 the group asked for the assistance of a trainer for an extended period of time. Barry Hart, an MCS trainer from Harrisonburg, Virginia, agreed to go for five months and earned high praise for his work as an itinerating trainer in the North and South. The English seminars led to an invitation to Howard Zehr of MCC's Criminal Justic program. In 1987 Zehr spent half a year in England lecturing about the Victim Offender Reconciliation Program.

In fall 1985, Kraybill and Hart conducted a series of seminars in Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands. Interest in follow-up activities was strong and several rounds of correspondence have taken place to discuss this. To date nothing further has materialized. All these overseas seminars were formally sponsored by the international Peace Section of MCC.

In 1985 MCS trainer John Paul Lederach travelled through Central America for several weeks conducting seminars for pastors, lay leaders, and community workers. Response was enthusiastic. Upon his return he prepared a Spanish-language manual on conflict management, which MCC printed. In 1986 John Paul and his wife Wendy returned to Central America for an eighteen-month special assignment to train mediators and to write. Based in Costa Rica, Lederach conducted seminars in nine countries. In two countries local groups emerged to continue similar efforts, and in three others plans are under-way for continuing groups.

Participants in the first round of seminars in 1985 included several Moravian Miskitos, leaders of a group of indigenous people who suffered maltreatment during early excesses of the Sandinista revolution. From this acquaintance developed an active role for Lederach in negotiating the resettlement of the Miskitos onto their homeland on Nicaragua's east coast. From August 1987, through February of 1988, Lederach worked almost full-time shuttling between the rival parties in San Jose and Managua. This involvement took on ominous and politically volatile overtone when threats were made in November and December of 1987 by individauls known to have CIA involvements. A plot to kidnap the Lederachs' three-year-old daughter and then a $50,000 price on Lederach's life were reported to John Paul by several persons who themselves had previous CIA associations. As of this writing the first round of negotiations has been successfully completed and a second round is awaited.

Jim Laue, professor at George Mason University and director of the Conflict Clinic, Inc., serves as resource leader at "Consultation on Dispute Resolution in Higher Education," sponsored by the Mennonite Conciliation Service, June 1987.



IV. Conclusions

The year 1989 will mark the tenth anniversary of MCS. Although MCS has always tried to focus on the future, this is an appropriate time to consider its past. The growth and development of MCS as described above appears, in most ways, to be typical of new organizations. There have also been important differences, however.

One unique aspect has been the connection with an internationally active organization, the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). MCC provided the institutional base (including funding) which allowed MCS to expand quickly, both in the U.S. and, more recently, internationally. Freed of the day-to-day worries of fund-raising and office management, MCS has maximized its modest budget ($50,000 in 1988) to provide services.

A second unique factor in the success of MCS has been the existing credibility of Mennonites in peacemaking. With a five-hundred-year-old tradition of non-violent lifestyles and a widely-known non-violent theology, Mennonites seem to have an assumed credibility in the field of dispute resolution.

During 1988 the MCS central office will see a complete turnover of staff, as both Ron Kraybill and Dave Brubaker move on to other responsibilities. But the MCS network is well established and increasingly active. For this reason, and with the factors noted above, we are confident that the next ten years will be even more productive.

ENDNOTES

This article has drawn information from the following documents:

[1] "Activities for Director of Mennonite Conciliation Service," a rough draft of the original job description for the MCS director, prepared by Urbane Peachey in August 1978.

[2] "Statement of Assumptions, Purpose and Mission of Mennonite Conciliation Services (MCS)," prepared by an MCS working group at a January 1982 meeting at Fresno Pacific College.

[3] "MCS Options: Expand, Contract or Maintain Current Status?" a thought paper prepared by Ron Kraybill in August 1982.

[4] "Mennonite Conciliation Service in Canada," a memo from Dave Worth re. MCS options in Canada.

[5] "Discussion of MCS Future—Overseas and Structural Questions," minutes of a January 1985 meeting of Reg Toews, Wilmer Heisey, Edgar Stoesz, Barbara Willems, Ron Kraybill and John Stoner.

[6] "Expected MCS Trends," a rough draft of a February 1986 paper by Ron Kraybill.

[7] "Relationships to Leadership," a May 1986 paper by Ron Kraybill regarding structural placement of MCS chapters.

[8] "Philosophy of Training and Certification," a rough draft of a proposal for certification of MCS trainers, circulated in June 1986.

A Diviner Comes to a Zairian Village

by Levi Keidel

Nyanga, typical of the hundreds of mission stations that dot the rural areas of Central Africa, was the setting for the most intense spirit-power encounter I witnessed during my twenty-five years of ministry in Zaire. The station was established in 1923 by missionaries of the Congo Inland Mission on the west edge of the village of Chief Nyanga. Its development was shaped by Rev. Frank Enns, or "Sha'Yone," who invested forty years of his life there. Educational, economic and medical benefits caused people from outlying areas to relocate just west of the mission station in what came to be known as "the believers' village." Today the original village and the believers' village, with the mission compound sandwiched between, comprise a population of about two thousand.

Life at Nyanga Station has always revolved around the church. An imposing cross-shaped stone edifice at the center of the compound seats about six hundred and is comfortably filled on Sunday mornings. The most devoted disciple of Frank Enns was Mazemba, a leader in the Nyanga Church for longer than most can remember. Today, in his eighties and still active, Mazemba fills the role of local patriarch.

On the morning of June 29, 1980, I joined a few leaders clustered in the sanctuary waiting for the service to begin. Patriarch Mazemba related a dream from the night before:

> Sha'Yone stood before me with two guests from America whom I did not know. He asked me, 'About how many genuine Christians do you have here at Nyanga?' I turned to ask some of our church leaders standing near me to get an answer. Suddenly the visitors disappeared. What does the dream mean?

The answer was not long in coming. It would emerge from events surrounding Nyanga's Chief Kasonga.

Mennonite Church, Nyanga, Zaire.

In every way, Kasonga was a big man. His six-foot-plus stature was built upon a heavy frame. As a youth he had professed faith in Christ, was baptized and graduated from mission schools. For some years he served dependably alongside Frank Enns and others working with the Nyanga educational system. Then he took a second wife, began pursuing commercial interests, and, while still attending church regularly, built a financial empire. Moreover, he was the government-designated civil magistrate over the population at Nyanga. Traditionally, all chiefs are believed to possess fetishes whereby they can wield malevolent power against any who obstruct them. As the "big chief," the forty-seven-year-old Kasonga was admired for his successes and feared because of his power.

Notwithstanding, one matter rendered Magistrate Kasonga impotent. For years his younger and favorite wife Kasha had been plagued with epileptic-like seizures. Word reached Nyanga that an itinerant Catholic-trained diviner named Manesa had arrived at a village fifty miles away. Since Manesa could determine who was hexed and the name of the witch doing the hexing, Kasonga went with Kasha to find out who was bewitching her. Manesa reportedly told him that he could help only after the ghosts of witchcraft victims were cleansed from Kasonga's house. Accordingly, Kasonga and Kasha brought Manesa to Nyanga late Sunday afternoon, July 6, a week after Patriarch Mazemba related his dream.

I was living at the station as a "senior" missionary, the only one assigned to work full time with the church. Diviner Manesa's arrival immediately produced a ferment of ques-

tions in the minds of those of us concerned with church life. Two young American women, short term teachers in the high school, lived in a missionary residence nearby. One of them came to see me on Monday morning after breakfast. During the night a powerful presence of evil in her room had disrupted her sleep and terrified her. She requested prayer.

A large open living room window facing south permitted me a full view of the compound's central area. Soon I noticed an unbroken stream of chattering people hastening westward toward the believers' village. The number grew to a horde. Among the crowd were persons with various afflictions. A subdued roar of voices began drifting to me from Kasonga's yard half a mile away.

Friends began dropping by to see me. Their reports filled in the picture. Persons who suspected they were hexed stood in a long single file. Diviner Manesa, wearing blue sunglasses, looked at the front and back of each person's head and pointed out those persons who were bewitched. Manesa told the hexed persons to get a chicken. When they returned, Manesa shaved their heads. He burned the hair and rubbed or "baptized" the victims' heads with the hair ash. Then he cooked the chicken. Manesa "blessed" its liver or heart and fed it to the victims who then collapsed into a convulsing trance and uttered the name of the witches tormenting them.

Magistrate Kasonga's police were dispatched to arrest the accused witches. Manesa ordered them to surrender their instruments of voodoo, and the police locked them inside a tight stick-fence corral made for the purpose. Witches who voluntarily came to surrender their paraphernalia were not incarcerated. If they had not brought everything, Manesa sent them back home to bring the rest. Those resisting him could expect the curse of death.

Diviner Manesa threw the fetishes onto a growing heap in a specially-designated room in Kasonga's house. Then his secretary recorded the names of both the hexed and the hexers. Suddenly people found themselves liberated from what they believed to be supernatural powers that had terrorized them. They lauded Manesa as a hero.

About noon a human wave moved east across the station from the believers' village to Nyanga village. "They are going to chop down the witches' hotel tree where witches imprison the spirits of their victims until they want to kill them," said an informant. Sometime later the procession returned, heading toward Magistrate Kasonga's yard in the believers' village. In front of it was a group of about twelve men, purportedly witches caught as the result of felling the tree. A loudspeaker carried on someone's head blared the news.

Friends who stopped in shared with me not only what was happening, but also their efforts to attach meaning to these events. A church elder was distressed. "How can any church leader Manesa chooses to accuse of witchcraft ever become established in the Lord's work again?" he asked. A young pastor came from a distant village where Manesa had visited previously. He said:

> Manesa locked the witches into the Catholic chapel; his police beat them with rods; they were denied food and water for almost a week to extort their confessions. Some died from beating; others died from lack of water. When they were finally released, some were so disoriented that they wandered into the high grass, got lost, and died. Catholic authorities sent a commission to investigate the affair; then they renounced Manesa's work.

As darkness fell, two troubled young people came to see me. "Where was the Church when all these things happened today?" they asked. "Why are our leaders silent? Are they afraid of Diviner Manesa's power? Jesus promises us that if we give ourselves to Him in truth, we have nothing to fear."

Tuesday morning dawned. At breakfast time, the second American teacher came to see me. During the night she had been awakened by a choking sensation which threatened to cut off her breathing. Terrified, she called on the name of Jesus for help and was ultimately delivered. Deeply shaken, she sought my counsel and prayers. I contemplated the potential scope of this growing spiritual conflict and began a twenty-eight hour fast.

Lusambu, the man hired to do our laundry and yard work, arrived. "Last night people slept on the ground inside Magistrate Kasonga's fence, packed like animals in a pen," he said. "Kasonga saw me and asked why you have not come to observe the things happening at his house."

"I have no business to transact with him," I replied. I knew Kasonga would interpret my refusal to appear as disrespectful. However, I did not want my public appearance there to enhance the prestige of Diviner Manesa and suggest endorsement of his activities.

Christians with their heads shaved began to appear. Rumors generated a momentum that bordered on hysteria. One person told me, "When Kasha was de-hexed, she declared the name of Pastor Ngonga as the one who bewitched her. They went to his house last night and cut down a witchcraft tree he was growing in his yard." Another said, "Evangelist Mandala was exposed as having hexed a distant relative. He surrendered his pouch of voodoo medicine to Manesa." Still another informed me, "During the night all the church leaders secretly visited Diviner Manesa and surrendered the fetishes with which they have been protecting themselves." Mounting pandemonium generated the conclusion that "*Everybody* is guilty!"

A growing number of persons came for counsel. I listened and urged restraint, "As Christians, we must curb the spread of defamatory gossip and insist on separating fiction from fact." Inwardly I, too, sought for theological insight. If Manesa was serving God, why were his methods so different from those used by Jesus? If Manesa was serving Satan, how could he be destroying witchcraft, a prime instrument Satan uses against the Church?

A trusted schoolteacher came to see me: "I spied on Manesa last night. He went to the graveyard, knelt, and prayed for a long time. He gets power from our ancestral spirits." A Zairian medical doctor asserted:

> It is spiritism, pure and simple. People like this man can pull grass from a roof, throw it onto the ground, and change it into a snake. This kind of power is real. The person who eats the liver and falls into convulsion is no longer in charge of his faculties. He cannot possibly utter a name with a motive of revenge. What he utters is truth. The Church's crisis did not begin with the arrival of Manesa. It began when its pastors and elders started playing with witchcraft. One day Jesus' disciples reported to Him that someone was casting out demons in His name. Jesus told them to let the man do his thing. We cannot condemn Manesa for exposing sin. That part of his work I affirm.

Kikunga, a young pastor with a level head and a good education, was super-

intendent of Nyanga District, head pastor on Nyanga Station, and a relative of Kasonga's. Like me, he refused to publicly identify himself with the Manesa events. He confided:

> You westerners don't understand matters of spirit power. Sorcery is rooted deeply in our culture. In the era of Sha'Yone our leaders were not convinced that witchcraft was wrong. Christianity, coming from the outside, was simply layered on top of it. Even today it is a powerful force at the base of things. The church has no responsibility to Manesa. He came to resolve the family problem of Magistrate Kasonga. In my mind we should remain quiet and allow this thing to pass. Then we can undertake the task of teaching people.

Old Patriarch Mazemba, still contemplating his dream, said, "Everybody is pushing me to go to Manesa and allow him to test me. They say that if I don't he will hex me. It's all nonsense. I am hiding no sin. Why should I go mix myself with Manesa?" Others could not withstand the pressure. One respected layman, displaying a freshly shaven head, said, "I don't believe in what Manesa is doing. I wanted to have nothing to do with him. But my non-Christian relatives kept pestering me to have Manesa test me to prove to everyone that I have clean hands. So to please them, I went."

This was the dry season. Shortly after midnight, early Wednesday morning, I was awakened by a brief but powerful windstorm. It was the kind of buffeting wind which often precedes a burst of rain; strange for this time of year.

By this time I was drawn into the struggles of my fellow believers caught in the throes of these strange happenings. Some I sought out at their homes. I found evangelist Mandala seated forlornly on a worn folding chair in his yard. His wife and daughter sat on the bare ground to one side raving their protests against Manesa. He told me:

> I'm in great trouble. I wasn't going to see Manesa. Then I heard my name called on the public address system. Two of Kasonga's policemen came and took me to the man. They wanted me to sit down on the chair where confessions are made. I refused. Manesa said, 'Give me your power.' I said, 'I have no power except the Bible.' We kept arguing. Finally I said, 'I'm going home. I want you and Magistrate Kasonga to come, make an inspection of my house, and take from it all the witchcraft medicine you can find.'

Mandala pulled a plastic-wrapped pouch of gray powder from his coat pocket and continued:

> When I gave myself to Jesus years ago He saved me, and I've never needed anything since. I have this powder which I eat for my high blood pressure. The doctor said I should not eat store salt, so I eat this. Is this what people are saying is voodoo medicine by which I curse people?"
>
> Magistrate Kasonga is harassing us. You know why? Politics. When he lost the last election to become a deputy he said he would get even with everyone who voted for his opponent. Kasonga named us off this morning. Then he said, 'You are the ones who are obstructors. We'll pursue you until you are humbled.' Recently he replaced village council members who were church leaders with his own people. All of this is part of his plan to emerge as ruler over the church as well as the village and thus control everybody. He is using Manesa to destroy the reputations of all who oppose him.

And so who was Manesa? Among the people of Nyanga confusion reigned. Church leaders were powerless to offer direction. Customarily in times of spiritual crisis, leadership was given by the church council, which was composed of most of the church leaders on Nyanga Station. However, church members had long accused the council of a double standard, claiming it dealt with sinful acts of ordinary parishioners but refused to deal with sinful conduct in the lives of council members. Now Diviner Manesa was finally exposing the sin. Already word was out: "If any one of those accused leaders is allowed to take part in the worship service Sunday morning, we are walking out." This caught the council on the horns of a dilemma. If it said that the accusations of Manesa were false, members would not believe them. On the other hand, if the council agreed that accusations against the leaders were true, it would endorse the use of occult powers to expose sin.

Confusion was compounded by the absence of a theological interpretation of what was happening. There was tacit agreement among more knowledgeable leaders that Manesa's powers had their source in the occult, and a few called him "the master sorcerer." According to scripture, Satan is a deceiver. But Jesus also taught that Satan does not fight Satan. How then could we explain that Manesa was using satanic powers to defeat the forces of Satan?

Wednesday afternoon I saw a man pushing a bicycle loaded with a large battered suitcase toward Kasonga's yard. Later I learned that he was Kindamba, chief of a riverside village eighteen miles away. His sorcery powers were notorious. Kindamba testified:

> When I heard of the fame of Manesa, I wanted to test his power. Last night I decided to demonstrate my own power by creating a rainstorm to announce my arrival. About midnight I was coming on my airplane when suddenly I met terrible resistance. Like a wall, the winds of storm would not let me pass. Then, by some means which I cannot explain, I found myself standing in front of Manesa. He disabled my airplane and ordered me to return home on foot and bring all my witchcraft medicines. Seeing his power, I obeyed."

Kindamba dumped the contents of his suitcase onto the growing heap in Kasonga's house while I recalled the disturbance that had awakened me the previous night.

Diviner Manesa began winding down his activities on Wednesday afternoon. According to his secretary's list, 448 witches had been exposed, among them three pastors and three elders from our local church. Manesa gave orders to prepare for a midnight witch-fetish burning ceremony. Arraigned witches were put to work. About a mile up a long grade west of the believers' village they cleared tall dry elephant grass from a space about the size of a football field. In its center they used green poles to construct a four-foot square shell. Inside the shell they stacked firewood around a dry grass "wick." When finished, the column stood about forty feet high. Around it they built a sturdy stick fence, creating a closed arena at its base.

About 5:30 p.m. head pastor Kikunga came with an official invitation from Kasonga and Manesa for the two of us to attend the midnight ceremony. They had asked him to preach. He sought counsel on what to do. I shared with him my growing conviction that Satan, apparently using his power to aid the Church, had a longer-range plan to harm it. "Everyone sees you as the spiritual leader here," I said. "It seems important to me that you make the kind of choice now that will cause people to hold you in greater respect after all this has passed." He decided to preach a brief evangelistic sermon and to leave immediately thereafter. I assured him

of my prayers but felt misgivings about his decision.

At about four o'clock Thursday morning I was awakened by a low rolling hubbub like breakers on a distant beach. The ceremony had ended and people were dispersing. Lusambu brought me a report when he came to work.

By midnight thousands of people had packed like blades of grass to see the spectacle. Police brought the four hundred identified as witches, stripped off their shirts and blouses, and locked them inside the arena at the base of the column. A young pastor, not Kikunga, had preached a sermon. Someone lit the dry grass wick. Flames moved quickly to the top and then descended through the slow burning material, dropping glowing fragments on the bare backs below. Police brought the surrendered fetishes from Kasonga's house and threw them one by one into the flames. The fetishes hissed, popped, exploded and burned, scattering sparks and causing the witches to recoil backwards toward the fence. Police and withces' vengeful victims poked and flailed them with sticks, driving them forward again. Lusambu described the scene:

> They beat one pastor without mercy. He fell onto the ground. They threw dirt on him. One old man had lung problems. He began choking as if dying. They pulled him out and left him to lay on the side. This went on for hours. Preacher, it brings tears to my eyes to talk about it. It was a picture of the Final Judgment. It was Hell.

When the column had finished burning, the witches were released, presumably forever cured of any further troublemaking. Then Manesa spoke. He had been invited to Nyanga as a guest and now he had finished his work. People were urged to pick up ashes or charcoal of the burned witchcraft paraphernalia, take them home, and to keep them in a bottle of water as a reminder of the evil of witchcraft and to ward off any subsequent curse. Meanwhile, he was leaving his own authority with Magistrate Kasonga; others coming later could surrender their fetishes to him. Manesa wished them peace, saying he held a grudge against no one and he would return at some future date to evaluate. The crowd pressed its way toward the column site to gather burnt fragments and then dispersed.

Thus Kasonga emerged as the most powerful figure at Nyanga. Fetishes were in nearly every home and people trusted the name of Manesa. Head pastor Kikunga and I shared the conviction that the time had come to confront Kasonga. Because of his family ties to Kasonga, Kikunga asked me to do it.

I found Kasonga at home. He welcomed me. I affirmed the esteem accorded him by everyone at Nyanga and reminded him of the enormous responsibility that attended such esteem. I pointed out that he had rejected witchcraft but had accepted the power of Manesa. While people felt Manesa had liberated them from the power of witches, they were now placing their faith in fetishes he had created. I challenged Kasonga to set an example for everyone by renouncing all forms of idolatry, including the power of Manesa, to proclaim faith in God alone, and to demonstrate such a change of heart by beginning a new walk with Christ. Gently, Kasonga disagreed with me. In his opinion, he had rendered the church a great service by bringing Manesa. He did not see that his role gave him any reason to repent.

One week after Manesa's departure, the church council sat in long deliberation until it reached a consensus. It concluded: Old Patriarch Mazemba's dream was a message from God that a time of severe testing was coming which would identify the true Christians. Manesa had utilized superior powers of sorcery. Notwithstanding, he was used of God to discipline us. His disclosure that six of our leaders were guilty must be accepted as it was supported by longstanding evidence or rumors. These six men were excommunicated until they would repent. Meanwhile, the council concluded, to turn thoughts away from reciprocal accusations, all must recognize their sins and repent. As part of the healing process, the council would undertake a vigorous program of teaching. Public meetings would be held twice a week with Patriarch Mazemba as the principal evangelist. The primary subjects would be the relationship of the Christian to sorcery, idolatry and the powers of darkness.

Over succeeding months people began surrendering their Manesa fetishes. Four of the church leaders made confessions; the other two affirmed vehemently their innocence. Kasonga began suffering from an abdominal ailment.

November 24 was a national holiday commemorating the beginning of President Mobutu's reign. The Nyanga political officials made plans for local festivities in consultation with Kasonga. He sat in the front row of an observation booth constructed for dignitaries and special guests. Kasonga and Manesa had stripped witches of their power but now witches had been given charge of the day's program. In full costume and encircled by a crowd representing most of Nyanga's population, they demonstrated how they decide who is to provide the next ritual victim; how they select a child whose flesh is suitably tender; how they slay and ritually eat him. Onlooking children were terrified. Parents were appalled. Kasonga, who had taken pride in ridding Nyanga of witches, now appeared to be reinstating them. Shortly after the celebration, concerned family members took the ailing chief to a distant mission hospital.

Two months after the November festivities, on January 24, 1981, a missionary brought me news immediately following a daily inter-station radio broadcast. Kasonga had died. Africans would get the news on the regular broadcast fifteen minutes hence. Through my open living room window I observed people quietly following their ordered daily pursuits. I waited for the impact. Suddenly a young woman alone in the street, hands clasped over her head, began the death wail. The news spread like lightning. Hundreds of high school students burst from their classrooms into the streets. In moments, the community was plunged into mourning.

Head pastor Kikunga came to plan with me how to handle the crowds when the mission plane returned with the body. When the plane arrived, strong men helped lift out the corpse. Upon seeing it they were incapacitated with grief. The next day crowds again jammed Kasonga's yard, this time for his funeral. Upon the request of Kikunga, I preached the sermon.

Why did the Magistrate Kasonga die? Doctors blamed inoperable cancer. Some Africans blamed Kasonga and a few others for never really coming clean with Manesa. Head pastor Kikunga viewed the situation more positively: "Kasonga leaves a hole

nobody can fill," he mused. "He was more generous than many of our upstanding church members. He gave me a large contribution for the church just before he went to the hospital."

Kasonga's wife, Kasha, who had been at his bedside, was at peace. "He knew they were coming soon to take him for the operation," she told me. "He prayed, 'Lord, here I am. In spite of all my failures, please forgive me and accept me as your child.' Then he sang 'Living for Jesus.' While he was on the operating table, he died."

Over a year later Manesa returned. This time, feelings toward him were less confused and more polarized. His supporters put pressure on everyone to undergo examination to prove publicly that they were not witches. In compliance, people went; among them were a few church elders. The church, however, was not going to be overwhelmed by the event.

One morning a cross was affixed above the main entryway into the church. Reportedly, Manesa had put it there, and anyone passing beneath it not having first gone to him would suffer his curse. Two elders mustered courage and removed it. They took it into the church and laid it on the pulpit, showing that any power it might have had was brought into submission to Jesus. Nothing happened to them.

At three o'clock one morning a woman appeared outside Patriarch Mazemba's door, crying for him to remove his hex from her. He ignored her. She wandered around the village in hysterics, proclaiming his refusal. People pressured him to go and be tested by Manesa. He resisted them. Nothing happened to Mazemba.

After Manesa left, the church council took a stronger stand against his methods. It declared that submission to Manesa's powers was unacceptable conduct for a Christian. It called for the wayward church elders and for all believers whose heads were shaved to repent publicly. During a late night session the one remaining excommunicated pastor confessed to wrongdoing and was reinstated. By these means, the council disassociated itself from any further apparent endorsement of Manesa's powers and strengthened its credibility among believers.

Head pastor Kikunga emphasized divine purpose as the most significant aspect of Manesa's intervention in the community. He confided:

> In the past, missionaries taught us very little about these matters. And so we still are in the struggle of learning. We deserved chastisement. God was wise in His choice of a person to discipline us. Manesa was an unknown outsider who had no scores to settle. If one among us had made those revelations we would have had war and bloodshed. However, people must see that the purpose of God's judgment is not to sow enmity, but to bring us repentance. It is not to give us occasion to rejoice over the stumbling of an adversary, but to weep with him as a brother. If we act wisely now, this whole affair will serve to make us grow.

Women of Nyanga village, Zaire.

Zulus Celebrate Christmas

by Robert Kreider, based on a lecture by Axel-Ivar Berglund

At a Christmas party to which I had been invited by a friend, I was struck by the many visitors who, sitting in a large room, accused each other of a host of trivial and petty actions. The accusations seemed quite out of place at a Christmas celebration. I was accompanied by another white who, irritated by what he considered a waste of time and inability to keep to the time set, suggested that we leave this unpleasant atmosphere. I was on the verge of agreeing with him.

The celebration had started at noon but not, as we thought, with eating. There were important matters to be dealt with before eating was possible. I was to learn that the accusations fitted in perfectly with what in Zululand is understood by communion in eating. Excited by the plenteous flow of "the food of men," people indeed spoke out. The beer, which brought about a talkative mood, had its place in that Christmas celebration in that it excited people "to speak out their anger," and people who were not embarrassed by talking to a missionary about beer claimed that the excitement "is the heat of the shades, encouraging men to talk." The talking in this setting was not only a desire to argue and to share different views, it was confession.

Practically everybody talked. They spoke when they felt the need to do so, sometimes several men speaking out quite excitedly at the same time. The visitors accused each other of the small and insignificant gifts they had received from each other. One accused another of having occupied the best seat in the taxi that carried them from Durban to their homes, without paying more than those who sat less comfortably. A third accused another of having been dishonest at card games in the city. Another had taken a bottle of spirits that was not his. There was no end to the matters that were ventilated. My friend and I were struck by the willingness of the accused to accept the accusations. Seldom had I heard the idiom *ngiyaxolisa* (I beg pardon) used as frequently as on this occasion.

What at first appeared to us a tumult of bad and unfriendly relationships among the visitors proved to be an occasion of utmost importance in the lives of the people gathered—an opportunity to confess any envy, suspicion, jealousy, slander, hatred, anger. Amazing, again, was the very abrupt change in atmosphere when our hosts, after three hours, presented the holiday meal. From being drowsy and unpleasant to each other, visitors became happy and exalted in spirit. With enthusiasm everyone shared in eating the food. I concluded that "This is communion in Zululand!"

At a similar occasion I attended four years later, the host commented: "Everybody must speak. Only if everybody speaks out what is in his heart will it be a nice party. But if there is one who does not speak, then people say, 'No, but this person is not speaking. Why does he close it (envy, anger, suspicion, etc.) inside?' Then they do not feel at ease because of the one that is quiet, wondering what kind of man he is that has nothing to speak out."

Accusations and confessions of the type described above take place prior to birth in order to make delivery easy, and at puberty rites, marriages and deaths. Before a burial, people gather in the hut of the widow or widower and accuse each other in low and grieved tones of various causes of anger. At marriages, relatives of the bride and groom insult and threaten each other and conduct mock battles that sometimes become heated, while others sit around and discuss family quarrels and personal grievances they hold against each other. "If they do not do this thing, then eating is difficult," commented a man who observed a group of women at a marriage arguing and accusing each other excitedly.

Group decision-making, Burkina Faso, 1987.

Historical Investigation as Conflict: The Case of the License Plate

by John Paul Lederach

Many people may consider the life and work of a historian or sociologist to be rather mundane and boring. The following revamped excerpt from my research journal suggests the contrary. It recounts the events of a single morning of conflict experienced by a historian (Jim Hershberger) and a sociologist (myself) both of us Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) volunteers working in Central America. The setting for this unexpected but fascinating conflict was a Nicaraguan refugee camp located in Tilaran, Costa Rica, on the morning of May 25, 1987.

For nearly two years the camp, which houses more than 2000 refugees, has been host to a Mennonite congregation that had fled the fighting in the Southern part of Nicaragua. Jim Hershberger, MCC country representative in Nicaragua, was writing the history of these Mennonites from El Rama, before, during and following the armed conflicts between the Sandinista army and the *"Contra"* that forced people to flee the area in 1983. The events of that morning also provide a unique view into the phenomenology of conflict, of how "things," like fights, riots and wars, make their appearance in the social world. This is a story of how social meaning emerges and "reality" gets negotiated, both keys in the social construction of conflict.

The story begins the night before we left when Jim and I were discussing how we would get to the camp. The MCC car from Costa Rica would be occupied in the morning, but Jim had driven the jeep down from Nicaragua. I mentioned, somewhat in passing, that the Nicaraguan license plate on their jeep would probably catch some attention in the camp. Very briefly we discussed whether we should take the other car, but since that seemed to involve several complications we opted to take the jeep. Such are the decisions that make history.

May 26, 1987 San Jose, Costa Rica

Yesterday we were up at 4:30 and headed for the camp, some three hours away. By 8:00 we arrived. On the way we again discussed strategy. Jim wanted to talk with the two pastors, "Carlos" and "Javier," and if possible, with several other Mennonite refugees. We decided it would work best if we could get those two out of the camp and into a little quieter place, like the main square in Tilaran or perhaps a local restaurant. We did not mention the jeep and its license plates.

At the gates we were met by the guards. I went into the guard house and presented the letter we had from the government, giving us permission to enter the camp for four hours. I spoke with the guards about our interest in looking up the pastors and taking them out and then returning to spend a little time in the camp with the others. They said that was not a problem as long as the pastors had permission to leave. They took down the passport numbers, jotted several details including the license plate number, and then gave me the letter back. They signaled Jim to drive the jeep in past the gate. There, just inside, they searched the insides of the jeep to make sure we were not bringing anything illegal into the camp. Jim asked them if we should park it near the entrance. "No," they replied with a wave, "take it on in." Nothing was said about the plates.

We proceeded past the first set of barracks and the school ground. People were curious to see new faces and vehicles like they always are. I seemed to note a few faces looking at the plates but nothing unusual. On the way we passed several of the refugees I knew and we shook hands and greeted each other. Javier and Carlos live in the barracks at the end of the camp, where the administrative offices are. In former visits we always parked our car there and did so on this occasion. This is also where the majority of the living barracks are located and there were a lot of people milling around.

We parked and walked past a line of refugees about forty deep waiting to get into the adminstrative offices which would open at nine. We eventually found Carlos and about six other Mennonites, many of them from the elders council. Javier had apparently left the camp to run an errand in town. After greetings and proper questions, I introduced Jim. I told them he had just come from Nicaragua, that he had been with some of their families, that he had letters and wanted to talk with them. At that point Carlos suggested we find a "little place to talk." Knowing that Javier was in town I asked if it would be difficult to get permission for them to leave. Carlos looked at his watch and hedged a bit, indicating that it would take time. So about five of us headed for the children's playground and the shade trees.

Upon arrival Jim got out some of the letters and small talk emerged around families and recent events. Carlos was visibly excited about the arrival of a letter from his sister which had a photo in it of her children. Soon Jim started his introductory talk about why he had come. Among other things he mentioned he was doing a study, a thesis on the history of the Mennonite church in Rama, that it would be in Spanish. It would be used by Mennonites in Nicaragua, as well as those here, to

preserve their story. He mentioned that he had spoken with others in their families and churches who had decided to stay in Nicaragua and that he hoped to talk with them here to get their story to complete the history.

They all shook their heads in agreement and then Carlos asked if he should just tell his story. Jim said that would be fine, although he also had some questions he was asking everyone. The conversation started around the history of how Carlos had originally arrived at the farm in Jobo near Rama taking him back to when his family first moved. Carlos' brother joined us about halfway through this conversation and, as is always the case, others drifted in and out. The conversation continued around questions of how they got their farm in Rama, how big it was, how many cattle and pigs. Then the discussion turned toward their war and exodus experience.

About this time a young man joined us. He went around the circle shaking hands and sat down. I assumed he was Mennonite, although I had not seen him before. Looking back, I did not hear the tell-tale greeting of "God bless you brother." He listened for a few moments. The talk drifted in and out of recalling events, places, and people. We talked about the *Contra*, the long walk out, the fighting. Carlos was doing most of the talking, since it was still his story. After a few minutes, the boy got up and motioned to Javier who had joined us on his way back from town. They went over to a tree and talked, then came back and sat down. Suddenly, out of the blue, the boy broke in and started to ask Jim questions. "Who are you? What is your name? How long ago did you come from Nicaragua? What is your nationality?" He was very direct, and not especially polite. It was disconcerting. Jim offered him his passport if he wanted to see it. He said not. Then Jim asked him if he was Mennonite. He said no. Jim asked again if he was with the Mennonite church here at the camp. This time he said yes. His manner and questions surprised me. I had been in on many meetings with these Mennonites and knew their style. They rarely interrupted each other, especially if one of the elders or pastors were talking. They never were very direct in their questions and had never asked me any of those kind of questions. Still, I did not think much of it because the other Mennos did not say anything. Jim told me later that Carlos had said, "It's nothing, he is not one of us." A short time later the boy got up and left.

The interview continued. Jim had a sheet of questions that he was following and was jotting down notes as he went. A few minutes later, we were interrupted by "José" an administrator at the camp. He asked who was in charge. I stood up and walked over with him a few feet away. He said, with a note of urgency and getting a little red in the face, that there was a problem with the jeep. "People are really upset and we have a problem back there," he motioned back toward the jeep and the barracks. "We need to get it out. Could one of you come and get it?" I turned to get Jim and noticed that the others had been watching. So I said the car was causing a problem. We all got up and started walking toward the road. I asked José if it would be possible to get permission for Carlos and Javier to leave with us to continue talking. He said yes but they would have to go to the offices. As we reached the road, the Chief of Security came and asked for the owner of the jeep. We explained quickly who we were and that it was ours. He said only one person should go, that there were a lot of people who were very upset and angry. None of the Nicaraguans should go with us. They should not be seen with whoever picks up the car. We started out and he again suggested that only Jim go. So they went ahead, José, the Chief, and Jim. On the hill I could see the car, surrounded by people. I would estimate more than 200 were standing on the embankment behind the car. I turned and talked with the people who had stayed. One of them said they had come by the car earlier and that people were saying it was a Sandinista infiltration. He had heard another suggest they should burn it.

Soon Jim arrived and I got in. We spoke briefly with the pastors and they decided to ask for permission to meet us outside. José had told us to wait at the front gate for them. We said goodbye to several people, then we went on to the front gate. I turned in the letter of permission and said that the plates had caused a problem. The guard just laughed and said, "there is a lot of suspicion here." I said we were waiting for the pastors to come out and join us and he nodded and asked us to wait outside. We parked along the road and began to wait. Jim went back to shut a door and noticed that something had been written on the jeep, *"Fuera pirecuaco. Pirecuaco* is a derogative term used by the *Contra* and exiles to talk about the Sandinistas. It is of Mosquito origin and is roughly translated into English as "mad dog."

Outside we were nervous, we began to realize the danger of crowd mentality and how they must have seen the situation. The new license plates from Nicaragua say *"Nicaragua libre"* (Nicaragua free). The yearly revision tag says "Sandinista Police" on it. Jim said nobody had done anything when he got the jeep, except for a few derogatory calls. Minute after minute passed and we waited. People came and went into the camp, some were watching very closely our plates and car. Then the pastors finally came. They were visibly worried. "It is a real problem in the camp," they reported. People were upset. "They think we have been infiltrated," Carlos said. One person even shouted at him to get out of the camp. They had come with a request. The pastors wanted us to come back in and explain to the people who we were and what we were doing so that the "population" inside would not think it was anything bad. However, they did not want us to just go in. They were going back to José and ask him to accompany us in. They asked us to wait a few more minutes for them.

Their comments did little to alleviate our fears. It sounded more and more like riot crowd mentality. We were not relishing the thought of going in there and hoped that José would veto the idea. At the same time we were most concerned about what would happen to the Mennonites, if they now were perceived as collaborators with suspicious people. As we sat and waited, one of the church members stopped by the car on his way back into the camp. He listened to our story and then reported that inside the camp there were many who had left the Sandinista army, as high as captains, and others who were former commandos for ARDE (the Southern front led by Eden Pastora). Suspicion was always high. Suddenly the young boy's visit began to make sense. Carlos had said that he was telling everyone that Jim was asking lots of questions and taking notes. The questions were about the war, the *Contra,* naming people and

dates. Our case was looking increasingly worse.

About thirty minutes later, the guard came out to the jeep. He politely said that our four hours were up. He had been asked to tell us to leave. Being parked here in front and talking with refugees still counted as time. People were coming all the time looking with suspicion; it would be better if we left. We agreed. We spoke briefly with one of the Mennonites who was nearby writing letters to send with Jim. We asked him to tell the pastors we would go into town and eat. If they could get the permission, they should come join us and we would talk more about what to do. We left and ate lunch. Nobody came. We decided to leave for San José. Slowly we circled the main square and ran into José. We apologized for any problems we had caused. He said no it wasn't that big a deal, that these people get "ideas put in their head." It would pass. "If you came next week in a different car," he said, "nobody would even know you." He seemed mostly worried about whether they had damaged the car. We mentioned our concern that the Mennonites might be in trouble with the others. He responded that he would talk to "the population" about the case. We drove back by the camp, slowly, thinking that maybe they would be waiting. Nobody was there. So we returned home.

Conflict and the Construction of Meaning

In this example we can see how meaning emerges and is related to behavior in conflict. From our standpoint we were innocently researching the history of the Mennonite Church in Rama. The questions about the land, people and war were an attempt to understand their experience and what had happened. Suddenly however, that definition of the situation was transformed and we entered into a different, yet still socially constructed reality. W. I. Thomas once wrote that "situations defined as real are real in their consequences." That is always the case in conflict and this example permits us to look at how a situation gets defined.

First and foremost is the context: refugee camp filled with hurt, and often embittered people who have experienced war firsthand, many of whom fought against the current government in Managua. They have experienced the delicate intricacies of a not-so-secret guerrilla war, exacerbated even further by the current policy of Low Intensity Warfare in which refugees become political targets, goals and fodder. In that context, everyone is suspect, even friends and family. You never know who might be with whom or what their motives are. The sociology of ignorance, the manipulation and art of misinformation, is a constant: trust nobody; assume lies, not truth, as the bottom line in social exchange; hide what you can; disguise what cannot be hidden; look for clues to know who is who; and assume that nothing is as it initially appears, that nobody is necessarily who they purport to be. In sum: assume the worst. A mistake may cost you your life.

Second, in this context meaning emerges through cues and clues related to people, through their presentation of self and their paraphernalia like dress, equipment, cars. Notice the cues that emerge. A jeep with Nicaraguan license plates appears. A quick look up close and there is a sticker that says "Sandinista Police." These are signs of the enemy. Someone goes down to see who they are. They find them sitting around asking questions about people, places, dates and the war. They are taking notes. They have notebooks, they seem educated, they know about Nicaraguan geography. Quick questions about who they are raises suspicion. They seem hesitant to give clear information. They are *gringos*. That throws a little wrench in the works. But in this war you never know what the *gringo* may be doing. After all Eden Pastora just said this week that the CIA planned his assassination, and here these folks are talking about ARDE.

These clues translate into person-descriptions. In Central American folk-terms we *ubicar*, or "locate" who these people are. In a sociologist's terms, we form an "ideal-type" of who these people are and identify their characteristics, in order to predict their probable behavior, their motives, and their goals. Such an exercise, carried out unconsciously, instantaneously and constantly by all of us, prepares us to respond adequately and appropriately to the myriad of social interactions we all engage in daily. Normally, we pay very little attention to this process. In conflict we are more conscious of it because the situation and the people we deal with appear "problematic" and an appropriate response is not always evident. In the case of war this process has a special twist given the immediate and hazardous consequences of miscalculating. In the above example we can almost visualize the process by which Jim and I were classified: suspicious, educated, *gringos* (but who knows what that means), connected with Nicaragua, collaborators with the Sandinistas, and in the end, potential enemies. In a war of this nature the word potential is dropped. There is no place for temporary suspension of meaning. Meaning must be immediate. Action must be immediate. Survival depends on it.

Now we can add a third element: talk. The construction of social reality is inextricably tied to intersubjectively shared knowledge. Put simply, people begin to talk about what they see, how they see it, what it means. "Social reality" is more than "my" perception and knowledge. Some "thing-social" becomes real only when it is shared with and by others. Thus, the definition of any social situation is always a process of negotiation. Again we can visualize this process through its components. The jeep, the license plates, the police sticker, are connected to these *gringos* and their manner, their questions, their talk, their purpose, their motives which, through our talk, we locate and frame in our accumulated knowledge about these kinds of things, people and purposes. Behavior then emerges as a logical and natural response to the definition and the interpretation of the situation: "We have been infiltrated by the enemy. They are in our house. We are not safe. We must respond. Burn the car. Do something to them. Identify the collaborators."

Correspondingly, Carlos and Javier are now in a tight situation. They have been identified as collaborators with the enemy. Their response is also immediate: "The definition is set. We have to change it. Come, explain who you are and why you are here. Give them the correct interpretation of the events, people, places, things involved. If you succeed we will not be seen as anything other than pastors talking with missionaries about our churches. If you do not, we are collaborators with the enemy."

Conflict is always an inherent process

of constructing reality. Most of the time we assume and take for granted that we share a single reality with others. That is not true. We simultaneously live in multiple realities. We accomplish this rather amazing feat because, for all practical purposes, we assume we share with others a common definition of a situation sufficient to make sense of people and events. There are times, however, when our realities and our definitions clash. When suddenly we come to realize that what we assumed and took for granted was not shared by others. That is conflict defined in a purely phenomenological view. We are suddenly suspended in a meaningless world, and we have to begin the mind boggling task of discovering common meaning. It is the task of establishing what Alfred Schutz calls a common "subuniverse of discourse." It brings to mind his essay on Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. Throughout the Cervantes novel, these two adventurers are attempting to convince each other of the realness of their different experiences. In the end Quixote whispers to Sancho, "If you want me to believe what you saw in the sky, I wish you to accept my account of what I saw in the cave of Montesinos. I say no more." To make our experiences real, Schutz suggests, we must get others to bestow an "accent of reality" on our experiences, and vice versa.

Yesterday we moved from one reality to another, from one subuniverse to another. Making that radical shift in a matter of minutes was like being hit in the face with a bat. Everything changed. Every event, every person, every interaction was transformed and had to be viewed, understood, considered under a new accent of reality. We moved from the world of Mennonites and churches, of brothers and sisters, to that of war, suspicion, secrecy, the CIA, the Sandinistas and the Contra. We occupied the same space and time yet were worlds apart. Through something as simple as a license plate we entered the other world. One is reminded of Dorothy's insightful comment: "This ain't Kansas anymore, Toto." It is like looking at the picture of the old lady at a slightly different angle so that she becomes a young lady. Once you see one, it becomes hard to see the other. You either look at it in one way or the other. It seems virtually impossible to look at both at the same time. Such is the challenge of constructive conflict management.

Such also is the life and effect of war. Its contemporary authors, especially those working out the strategy of Low Intensity Warfare, describe this war as a "battle for the six inches between the ears of the peasant." They, too, are engaged in reality construction. Their activity is based on the sociology of ignorance. Those who have experienced this reality know that nothing can be taken for granted. To enter and successfully live in this subuniverse, you need suspicion, fear, and paranoia. Then "things" normal become problematic and you "see" them in a different light. Such is the life of many Central Americans: simple *campesinos* living simultaneously in multiple realities in which little or nothing can be taken for granted.

NOTES

* We will be eternally grateful if you would refrain from asking us the inevitable and pressing question, "Didn't you know better?" It will save us the embarrassment of engaging in a variety of face-saving tactics to present an otherwise obvious answer.

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The Chinese Resolve Conflicts

by Robert Kreider

For the past thousands of years mediation has been the primary way the Chinese have settled disputes. Confucianism, the pervasive political philosophy of pre-Marxist China, emphasized the virtues of compromise, yielding, and hesitancy of going to court. Following the Communist revolution of 1949, Chinese leaders have continued to use mediation but have stressed confrontation rather than compromise and passivity. Contemporary leaders have urged that the mediator make absolute judgments of right and wrong. In China mediators are commended when they are able to settle disputes and also when they propagandize in behalf of national policies.

Following are four examples of how a local political leader intervenes in a dispute and counsels the belligerents to accept the "right" solution:

a. *Aunty Wu*

If mediation isn't successful once, it is carried out a second and a third time, with the aim of continuing right up until the question is decided. Once, while Model Mediation Committee member Aunty Wu was walking along the street, she heard a child being beaten and scolded in a house. She went immediately to the neighboring houses of the people, inquired, and learned that it was Li Kuang-i's wife, Li P'ing, scolding and beating the child of Li's former wife. She also learned that Li P'ing often mistreated the child this way. After Aunty Wu understood, she went to Li's house to carry out education and urge the woman to stop. At the time, Li P'ing agreed, but afterwards she still didn't reform. With the help of neighbors, Aunty Wu went repeatedly to the house to educate and advise, and to criticize the woman's treatment of the child. Finally, these efforts caused Li P'ing to repent and to thoroughly correct her error, and now she treats the child well. Everyone says Aunty Wu is certainly good at handling these matters, but she says, "If I didn't depend on everyone, nothing could be solved."

—*Kuang-ming Daily*, Oct. 14, 1955

b. *Li Erh-ma*

One day, Li Erh-ma, chairwoman of a mediation committee in Nanking, was at home when another mediation committee member came running to tell her that three fights had occurred within the last two days in the home of Wang Ying and that she did not understand the cause of the trouble. The next day, after breakfast, Mrs. Li went to the Wang family's neighbors. She learned from them that Wang and his wife were living with Wang's mother and younger sister, that Wang's wife wanted her sister-in-law to do more around the house, and that Wang's mother and sister resented the wife's demands. Mrs. Li then went next door to the Wang house, where she found only Wang's mother, who was taking care of Wang's little children. Wang's mother admitted that she did not get along with her daughter-in-law. Mrs. Li said: "You and I are alike. I've been a mother-in-law too and in the past I, too, had a little of the old ideology, and always felt differently about my daughter and daughter-in-law. Now society is different, our whole ideology has changed a little, and we must treat daughter and daughter-in-law alike." Just then the daughter-in-law came home, and while Mrs. Li helped her prepare vegetables, she congratulated her on having a mother-in-law who helped, too. "They only come to eat and scold all day, and don't do anything," replied the wife. Mrs. Li explained that children were parents' responsibilities, and that younger and older generations owed each other respect. Later, Mr. Wang came home, and Mrs. Li helped the family hold a "family unity and reconciliation meeting" in which each member of the family discussed his or her errors.

Days later, Mrs. Li was still concerned about the Wang family, and she became even more concerned when she met Mr. Wang on the street, asked him how all the Wangs were getting along, and received only a very hesitant reply that things were all right. She returned to the Wang house and helped the Wangs talk together until there were no more differing opinions. Ten days later, she visited again, and the Wangs said: "Li Erh-ma is so concerned about unity and reconciliation in our house! This is really extraordinary devotion. From now on, we won't fight."

—*Tsingtao Daily*, May 20, 1956

c. *A Former Landlord*

When the Communist army came through in 1948 I tried to escape, but the village was surrounded and there was no way out. At first, my land was not confiscated, but I knew there was no way I could keep it if the Communists won. The villagers organized a "speaking-bitterness" meeting in which I was put on a platform and all who had rented land from me came and spoke their minds.

Those meetings were very difficult. Sometimes I was alone and the people shouted at me all the things they thought I had done wrong; sometimes they had several of us at the meeting and the crowd would be larger. Anyone who had any grievance against us could

come and denounce us. The people were sometimes very angry. I didn't understand any of it at first; I didn't know that they had held special grievances against me. They added up all the money they thought I owed them, so they said that the land I owned was really theirs now, for they had worked it for years for too little. They said I was a rich landlord and that I hadn't done any work. I don't think I was as rich as they thought I was because I had plenty of economic troubles too.

When the village committee began to settle how my land would be divided up, there were arguments among the peasants, but they got it settled. All my land was taken from me—all except a small piece which they said was my share. It was very poor land, the poorest, but I was allowed to build a small house on it and that is where my family and I lived. The first few years were very hard. No one would speak to us and we could hardly earn enough from the land to keep going. We were always shunned. I had to attend political-instruction meetings twice a week.

When the commune came in they had some meetings to decide which of the former landlords should be allowed in. Since I had cooperated in the fields and because they felt I was beginning to understand what they were trying to do, they allowed me to join. They accept me now. I do my share of work.

I was very bitter at first, because I couldn't understand what I had done wrong. But I think I understand it now. I suppose it was a necessary thing. Some of us have suffered, but things before were very bad for most people. There are some things to be grateful for. My grandchildren go to school. They learn to read and write. I was a landlord but I never learned to read and write.

—Based on an Interview

d. *Mr. Li and Mr. Wu of the China Travel Service*

Mr. Wu and I work on the staff of the China Travel Service, which was established to host and educate our friends from abroad. If I had a conflict with Mr. Wu, we handled it in this way:

Let's say that Mr. Wu disagreed with a policy and urged that China Travel Service should not only host and educate foreign visitors but should expand greatly to increase income and thus improve the country's dollar reserves. I would confront him directly that these were capitalist ideas and that he was a "capitalist roader." I would try to convince him from the teachings of Marx, Lenin and Mao that he was wrong.

If Mr. Wu did not rid himself of these capitalist ideas, I would make a poster repeating my arguments and would tack it to the office bulletin board. The manager of the office and I would talk to Mr. Wu and explain again from the writings of our politcal leaders that he was wrong. He might put up some posters with his set of arguments.

If Mr. Wu persisted in his capitalist thinking, I would make more posters and add more arguments. Then the office manager would call a meeting of the whole office staff. We all would tell him that he was wrong and explain why he should renounce his false views.

You ask what happens if Mr. Wu still persisted in his wrong views. Well, something would be done. The process doesn't often go that far.

—Based on an Interview

Demolishing a Church Building in Afghanistan

by Rachel Waltner Goossen based on a paper by Dan Friesen

In 1959 President Dwight D. Eisenhower visited the King of Afghanistan and asked the monarch to permit the building of a Protestant church in Kabul, the capital of this Muslim country. The king agreed orally to the request. Then began a series of problems.

Since the days of Alexander the Great, Afghanistan, astride east-west trade routes, has been overrun by conquering armies. Among these were the Islamic invaders who conquered the Afghan tribes and converted them by the sword. Today this country of fourteen million is divided between two groups of the Islamic faith: eighty percent Sunni Muslim and twenty percent Shi'a Muslim. During the nineteenth century Afghanistan was a buffer state between two great powers: Britain in India and the Russian empire to the north.

Following the establishment of an independent Afghanistan in 1914, the country was ruled by a series of monarchs. As administrators of a poor country, the Afghan kings skillfully pitted the major powers of China, the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. against each other to obtain assistance in agriculture, health and economic development. The monarchy was friendly to foreigners living in the country if they did not interfere in the political system or proselytize—that is, convert Muslims to Christianity. The law forbidding an Afghan to change religion called for punishment by death and was strictly enforced. Local religious leaders, the mullahs, resisted, however, the presence of Christians, opposed modernization and had much influence in government affairs. Afghanistan remained a conservative Islamic state with women required by law to cover their faces in public. After World War II more than thirty new Mosques were built in Kabul.

Into this Muslim society came hundreds of foreigners from many countries as teachers, medical personnel, agriculturalists, Peace Corps volunteers, U.S. Agency for International Development staff and business executives. Mission boards sent workers under an umbrella organization, the International Afghan Mission, the acronym being "the great I AM." Many served with the NOOR Eye Institute, which was both a hospital and a medical training center. All who came to Kabul knew that proselytizing was forbidden.

In the 1950s Christy Wilson, Jr., and his wife Betty arrived to teach at the University of Kabul. Christy Wilson became the chaplain for Protestant foreigners who had formed the Community Christian Church of Kabul. This fellowship, together with an Anglican and a Catholic church, was permitted to continue on the condition that only foreigners could attend. As the size of the Christian community in Kabul grew, Christy Wilson and others had a vision that his fellowship could become an official Christian church in the center of an Islamic society.

In 1959, on the eve of President Eisenhower's visit to Kabul, Wilson wrote to the President's pastor asking him to request that the President call on the King to discuss the building of a Protestant church building. Wilson and others argued that a new mosque had just been built in Washington for Muslim diplomats and, in order to reciprocate, Kabul needed a church for diplomats and other foreigners of Christian faith. The King consented.

Over a period of seven years funds totalling $250,000 were raised in many countries. Included in the cost was $75,000 for the purchase of a ninety-nine year lease to the property. Although the King had granted permission and later gave written authorization, the documents lacked one key signature. Construction proceeded with much of the materials for the building coming from outside the country. Various problems slowed the building process. A Canadian builder came to carry out the plans of the architect, but after discovering conflicts of purpose in the congregation, he returned home. During the building process Christy Wilson, Jr. also left Kabul.

In May, 1970, the new building was dedicated. It was an imposing steel structure with a sky-blue roof that towered to a conspicuous height above other Kabul buildings. The government, offended by the highly visible building, asked that the roof be lowered. The congregation stalled, explaining that a change would be costly. Meanwhile, a large cross that had been installed on the front of the church was ordered taken down because it was offensive to Muslims. A school for the blind, begun by Betty Wilson and located next to the church, also caused offense because of alleged proselytizing activities. Some Afghans risked arrest and punishment by coming to the new church but they ceased attending after the Afghan government issued specific orders.

One autumn morning in 1972, two years after the opening of the new building, several truckloads of Muslim soldiers arrived and began to demolish the eight-foot wall surrounding the church. Soon afterwards, the demolition crew halted its work because it lacked official orders. Negotiations followed. In February of 1973 another

military crew arrived and demolished the wall. Twenty members of the church quickly organized into a human wall and interposed themselves between the building and the soldiers. The demolition stopped.

Meeting followed meeting. Church members made many visits to government officials. Some commented, "We thought the King was our friend." They learned that the prime minister, whom they had bypassed in the negotiations, was hostile to the church building project. The Community Christian Church appealed to foreign embassies for support. U.S. officials declared neutrality on the issue because of the American tenet of separation of church and state. As the negotiations and waiting game with the government continued, it became clear that many in the Community Christian Church had not supported the building project.

On June 13, 1973, the government issued official orders to demolish the building. Army crews leveled it and excavated eight feet under the floor in search of an "underground church." They found a baptismal pit under the pulpit. Under the marble flooring they found the central heating system with its complicated network of wires which suggested to them the possibility of a secret radio station.

On the evening of July 17, 1973, after the last load of rubble had been hauled away, the government was overthrown in a military coup and the monarchy was replaced with a republic. The King went abroad and the Prime Minister was imprisoned.

After the coup the Community Christian Church met in a simple, multipurpose meeting room in a nearby building. In reflecting on the experience, members of the congregation voiced a number of criticisms:

- "By calling for help from the leader of a superpower, Wilson brought undue pressure on the monarch."
- "It is not our job to see who can hoist the flag the highest. The church would most likely still be here and be a much greater force if the building had never been constructed."
- "The building should have been inconspicious, blending in with the architecture of Kabul."
- "I resigned from the church board because of the emphasis on spending money and time on the large sanctuary."
- "Conflict within the membership came to a head when minutes of a quarterly meeting were . . . distorted to reflect the wishes of two people rather than the prayerfully reached conclusion of the membership which was cautious about the size and style of the building."
- "Other members of the international community, never too keen on the church building in the first place, were wagging their heads and saying 'serves them right for doing all that proselytizing.' "

Those who were members of the congregation in Kabul still ponder the lessons to be learned from the building of the Protestant church with the sky-blue roof that towered high above the mosques of Kabul.

Planting a Church in a Changing City

by Delton Franz as interviewed by Robert Kreider

For "one bright and shining hour" there was in Chicago a congregational Camelot, the interracial Woodlawn Mennonite Church, an innovative model of how Mennonites might plant congregations in the inner city. This congregation grew out of the community of one hundred students and faculty of Mennonite Biblical Seminary, which was established in 1945. The Seminary acquired nine or ten fine old residences in the 4600 block of Woodlawn Avenue as an inner-city campus. Graduate students at universities in the Chicago area also found residence in this seminary community. In 1951 a congregation emerged out of a Sunday school and neighborhood program. When the Seminary moved to Elkhart, Indiana, in 1958, the congregation remained, as well as graduate students and their families living in a cluster of former Seminary housing.

The 1950s and the early 1960s saw awakening idealistic concern for urban recovery and civil rights. In 1954 the Supreme Court ordered the integration of public schools. Martin Luther King, Jr. and others electrified the conscience of America through such events as the Montgomery bus strike, the march on Selma and similar demonstrations of nonviolent social change. Many people said, "The cities are where the action is."

In 1956 Delton Franz, who had come from rural Kansas to study at the seminary, accepted an invitation to serve as student pastor of the Woodlawn Mennonite Church. Two years later he became its full-time pastor. In 1958 seminary students and faculty departed for a location in Indiana, leaving an infant congregation in Chicago. Delton and his wife Marian and the nucleus of

Kenwood New Church (soon to be Woodlawn Mennonite Church) in 1951.

the congregation stayed and in effect enrolled in a crash course in the urban church. Their Oaklawn-Kenwood neighborhood on Chicago's South Side had changed from all white to mostly black.

Oaklawn and Kenwood, from 35th to 51st streets and from the lakeshore on the east to Cottage Grove Avenue on the west, was once an elegant neighborhood where well-to-do and famous Chicagoans lived: the Shedds, Swifts, Adlers and Rosenwalds. A few blocks to the south was the University of Chicago. In the 1920s Irish immigrant stockyard workers moved into inexpensive single-family dwellings and apartment houses. During the 1930s and 1940s the neighborhood became a checkerboard of old residences of the wealthy and dwellings of blue-collar workers. From 1945 to 1960 the neighborhood experienced sweeping changes. Real estate agents who had kept blacks out of the area before 1945 opened the territory to blacks. Oaklawn, which had been seventy-eight percent white in 1940, became ninety-eight percent black by 1960. North Kenwood shifted from eighty-five percent white in 1950 to eighty-five percent black in 1960.

The following narrative is based on an interview with Delton Franz, who after twenty years reflects on his experiences with the young congregation in a rapidly-changing inner city.

* * * * *

We began the first Fresh Air program for inner city children in Chicago. Mennonites in rural communities hosted children in the summer for one or two weeks. This was an impressive experience for the kids and their parents, an extra special demonstration of caring.

After the Seminary left we had our first adult membership class. Most who attended were black adults with some previous church experience. This eight week course was significant as a point of entry for a different race, a different culture, a different church. Blacks were coming into this new Anabaptist-Mennonite congregation. We couldn't have had an authentic interracial congregation without this core group experience. We met for one and a half hours one night a week in the church library. Whites and blacks learned to know each other as we shared our pilgrimages and developed trust and friendship. Participants were almost always sorry when the eight weeks were over.

The church council decided to integrate the housing left from the Seminary. A white island in a black neighborhood would have conveyed a "mission compound" mentality. Voluntary service workers, Mennonite graduate students, and blacks from the congregation moved in.

Blacks began to show up when the Seminary left. Within weeks more and more blacks came. We saw our mission as interracial. More whites came from other parts of the city, most of them students who stayed for a year or two. Beginning in 1959 we set aside one week each year for a congregational retreat at Camp Friedenswald, a beautiful setting in Michigan. Such an experience was not available in the inner city. During those years, our congregation sent both black and white delegates to the annual district conference and to the triennial General Conference sessions.

The congregation was not only interracial but also intercultural. People from Mississippi, Alabama, and small Mennonite communities in Indiana, Nebraska and Minnesota came together. The black portion of the congregation, which constituted seventy to eighty percent, was diverse. Grandma Hicks, in her eighties, had grown up picking cotton and was illiterate. Every day she sat outside on the street corner talking to children. People from the Old South as well as those who had always lived in Chicago were part of the congregation. Often it was more difficult to develop trust among the blacks than between blacks and whites. The congregation included Mennonite Ph.D. students at the University of Chicago and former sharecroppers, black case workers employed by the Department of Social Welfare and welfare recipients.

The eleven years we spent at Woodlawn was a benchmark experience for us. I was originally from Buhler, Kansas, and had grown up in the cocoon of a friendly community. But in Chicago we were baptized into another way of life. We began to ask a whole new set of theological questions we wouldn't have thought of asking in seminary. Yet some aspects of seminary helped to prepare us for this urban setting. During my research for a paper, I learned more through sociological analysis about the 1,800 people per square block in our area, twice as many as lived in my hometown of Buhler. Forty percent lived on welfare; infant mortality and crime rates were high.

Our children started school at Shakespeare Elementary where there were only six whites among 2,600 students. The six included two Neufeld and two Franz children. They were objects of curiosity. Black children wanted to run their fingers through our children's blond hair.

The contributions of Vincent Harding in those first years enriched our congregational life. Elmer Neufeld stumbled onto him during lunch one day at the University of Chicago where both were graduate students. Elmer found out who Vincent was: black, Seventh Day Adventist, history student; Vincent found out who the Anabaptists/Mennonites were. When he joined us as associate pastor in 1958 our congregation became one of the few in Chicago to have an interracial pastoral team. He had been ordained in the black wing of the Seventh Day Adventist Church. Once we heard him preach in a storefront church with a potbelly wood stove. Five children and five adults were present and he treated them seriously.

Vincent was with us from 1958 to 1960. His mother had grown up in Barbados and then moved to New York City. Vincent received his bachelor's degree from City College of New York, where tuition was free, and his M.A. from the Columbia School of Journalism.

In the fall of 1958 Ed Riddick, Elmer Neufeld, and Vincent and I made a ten-day fact-finding trip to the deep South. None of us—two blacks and two whites—had ever visited the South. The civil rights movement was gaining momentum and tensions were high. We spent one and a half hours with Martin Luther King, Jr. in his bedroom where he was recovering from a stabbing in New York on the occasion of the introduction of his new book, *Stride Toward Freedom*. We saw poverty and racial discrimination in Alabama, Mississippi and Georgia. In Little Rock we visited Daisy Bates who had led the school integration effort at Little Rock High School where President Eisenhower had sent U.S. troops to keep the peace.

Those were the last years of Jim Crow. In southern Illinois on our first day a waitress served us coffee in china cups but served Vincent with a "Dixie" paper cup. Vincent asked, "Do you have to do this—serve blacks with paper cups?" She said the management required her to do it. She began to cry.

In Montgomery we stayed in the home of a black dentist who had been chairman of the bus boycott. His wife asked us to enter their house through the back door so that we would not be seen. She wanted to make sure that the house would not be bombed.

We stopped in a restaurant in Jackson, Mississippi, in a black neighborhood. The black employees said they could not serve us, by order of the white management. The only way we could eat there was if we came in the back door from the alley and ate our eggs, bacon and grits in the kitchen.

Back in Chicago the civil rights movement was in full swing. We participated in a nonviolence workshop led by Jesse Jackson and marched with Martin Luther King in the Gage Park area, a segregated white neighborhood. Our leaders told us that if we could not resist the impulse to punch back we should drop out. We were absolutely forbidden to retaliate. We marched for four hours on a Sunday afternoon, walking two abreast. Housing was the issue. Blacks wanted to move into an area of Chicago where housing had been denied them. Police lined the center of the street. White residents on the other side screamed insults and threw bottles. They hit two nuns.

Residents broke up curbs with sledge hammers and hurled the broken fragments. Persons wearing Red Cross arm bands assisted the injured. We kept walking. Under this fo ·r-hour barrage of flying missiles, I could only begin to understand what it meant to be shell-shocked. This was my first experience with nonviolence in the midst of violence.

I became involved in Jesse Jackson's Operation Breadbasket which later became Operation Push. Some two hundred inner city pastors cooperated to upgrade the job status of black employees in a whole range of businesses in black neighborhoods: mercantile companies like Jewell Tea and dairies like Bowman Milk. We followed this procedure:

1. We requested the firm to upgrade the job opportunities for blacks for more than janitorial positions, for example, to accept blacks as truck drivers and supervisors.
2. If the company refused, we requested a meeting with the Board of Directors. In six cases I served as a member of an interracial negotiating team.
3. If the firm was unwilling to meet and sign a written agreement, we called a meeting with two hundred clergy. Each pledged to announce from the pulpit the next Sunday a call for a boycott of the firm's products.
4. Almost inevitably this led to meetings with the Board of Directors. If large numbers stopped buying Bowman Milk and it had to be thrown away, this sent a message to the management.
5. If this produced no results, we considered picketing the firm.

This interracial nonviolent way of dealing with economic injustice was a new experience for both blacks and whites in our congregation.

On one trip east I spent a day and a half in Washington, D.C., at the Church of the Savior, visiting the School of Christian Living and the Potter's House, one of the first church-sponsored coffeehouses. The room was tastefully furnished with small tables lit by candles. Someone introduced me to Gordon Cosby. He called to my attention an artfully printed card on each table with a quotation from George McLeod of the Iona Community of Scotland. The quotation would have significant meaning for our Chicago congregation in the years to come. It capsulized the vision of the Christian community in the marketplace:

> We will serve you, we will be with you in the way in which you naturally gather. We are not afraid of you. You can come and ask your questions. You can come and vent your hostilities. You can come and see those strange people called Christians in the market place—not in our places of worship, but in your own natural habitat. We will be with you . . . . We will serve you, we will love you, we will pray for you and if by chance you ask the reason for the hope which is within us, we will talk to you, but the talking will come at that end of the scale. We will just be there where you can find us. We will live a little chunk of our life where you can watch what is going on . . . whether we know anything about the mercy of God, whether or not there is a quality of being which is different from what you have found elsewhere. You come, and observe, and test us. We will not protect ourselves.

At the next meeting of our church council I shared the idea of starting our own coffeehouse. A property was available with a liquor store on one side and a run-down five-story apartment house on the other. Two doors south was a Walgreen drugstore and a corner bus stop. The available property had been a Chinese hand laundry where the laundryman was found dead after a few days. The Potter's House vision was compelling. Could we do more to be the church in the marketplace? What could we do for those who did not come into the church?

The church council embraced the coffeehouse idea. We put a temporary hold on the lease for a week. We had several meetings including a congregational meeting. We chose the name "The Quiet Place." We hoped that coffee, doughnuts and reading materials would encourage conversation. Voluntary Service workers and members of the congregation signed up for half-day stints. They talked with and listened to all who came and went.

From this "presence" in the marketplace emerged Bible study/sharing groups of persons who never darkened the door of the church. One such group met on the fifth floor of the tenement house next door. We got close to people whose lives were messed up. I had at least five funerals for persons in these Bible study groups; for persons who died of drugs and gunshot wounds. We had no clear precedent on how to be the church in the city. It was a time of experimenting, learning and risking. No less than six times our volunteers were held up at gunpoint for the modest sums in the old laundryman's cash register.

After eight years the Mission Board encouraged us to take a sabbatical. In the fall of 1964 we enrolled at Union Theological Seminary. I learned to know George Weber, Archie Hargraves and Don Benedict, important persons in the post World War II urban church movement. They started the Inner City Parish Ministry of the East Harlem Protestant Parish with four locations, two in storefronts and two in old established churches. During that year in New York, we spent our Sundays learning from the pioneering work of the Church of the Resurrection (at East Harlem Protestant Parish).

From the East Harlem experience we gained exposure to new ideas about being the church in the inner city. Upon returning to Chicago, we adapted the strong points of East Harlem. On Wednesday nights small groups from our congregation and neighborhood came together in their apartment buildings for animated discussions, using the East Harlem Lectionary and applying the weekly Old and New Testament readings and illustrations to life in the inner city. We used some of the same texts with children in the education program.

Our sermons were also based on the texts from the Lectionary, which congregational members had discussed the previous Wednesday evening in their scattered meeting places. We sometimes phoned groups to inquire what they had talked about and incorporated these comments into the sermon. People felt they had a part in the service. Children sometimes put on small dramas based on the text. Julius Belser, a senior in seminary when we were freshmen, worked in the West Side Christian Parish begun by Archie Hargraves. It was important for us to compare notes from time to time with other inner city congregations to sustain our courage.

During our last three years at Woodlawn we formed a new Kenwood-Oaklawn Community Organization (KOCO). Jesse Jackson, who was

studying at Chicago Theological Seminary, was deeply involved. We met twice a month at Woodlawn Mennonite Church with Jesse and other leaders of KOCO. We made trips to city hall to tackle the "system's" questions of housing, jobs and human rights.

During these years the city's most powerful youth gang, the Blackstone Rangers, emerged. They were brutal. They mugged the elderly and "shook down" children for lunch money on the Shakespeare School ground across the alley from the church. Some members of our congregation, including blacks, began to move out to escape the terrorism of the Blackstone Rangers.

In 1965, when we returned from the New York sabbatical, I was increasingly uncomfortable with an only-white pastorate. Black pride was beginning to speak. Solitary white pastoral leadership didn't seem right. We had had a positive experience with Vincent Harding from 1958 to 1960. We checked around for a black person with seminary experience. The congregation agreed to call Curtis Burrell, a young black seminary graduate, as the associate pastor. He joined us in the summer of 1966. We alternated preaching. Soon he began to focus his energies on the young black militants, the Blackstone Rangers, also known as the Black P. (Power) Nation. He said, "My thing is to work with the hard core." I never tried to discourage him. I thought that someone should work with the Blackstone Rangers but I knew it was not my role.

Curtis and Lois Burrell overlapped with us for two years. We terminated on July 1, 1968, the year Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy were assassinated, to accept an invitation to establish an office for the Peace Section of the Mennonite Central Committee in Washington, D.C.

Later the Woodlawn Mennonite Church was firebombed and eventually the congregation came to an end. But that is another story.

Margaret Harder and Joyce Goertzen of Mt. Lake, Minnesota, with their charges at Woodlawn in the summer of 1964.

Proverbs of Conflict and Peacemaking from Other Cultures

Spanish

Greater is the fight than its cause.

Talking of the bull is one thing, fighting it is another.

He who angers doesn't negotiate.

He who is judge between two friends, one friend he will lose, and two sometimes.

He who separates, at times comes out the worse.

Understand first, speak last.

He listens poorly, responds poorly.

Better salad than nothing.

Better to lose a little than to lose it all.

He who shuffles doesn't deal.

The good listener needs few words.

Better to be the wolf than the lamb.

I dance to the songs they play.

Water that you do not have to drink, let it flow by.

It is better not to stir the rice, even though it sticks.

Better to walk with a limp, than not at all.

Four eyes see more than two.

One hand washes the other and together they wash the face.

Haitian

An animal that is cornered will bite.

Shame is heavier than a sack of salt.

When you spit into the air above, it falls back on the tip of your nose.

The hand goes out, the hand comes in—making friends remains.

A stumble makes you advance farther along the road.

African

When spider webs unite, they can tie up a lion.

The oil lamp, though small, lights up the whole house.

It is better to sleep with an empty stomach than with a troubled heart.

Say to them who hate you, Allah is more powerful than they. (Hausa)

You who condemn on hearsay evidence alone, your sins increase. (Hausa)

It is man who counts:
I call upon gold, it answers not;
I call upon drapery, it answers not;
It is man who counts. (Twi)

Take not the fish from your neighbor's net, Lest a bone stick in your throat. (Nkundo)

A roaring lion kills no game. (Nkundo)

There is no medicine for hate. (Nkundo)

Where the drum is pierced is the place to mend it. (Nkundo)

When elephants fight, the grass gets torn up. (Phende)

One wrist bracelet never jangles. (Phende)

Proverbs from Other Cultures

The ox is slow, but the earth is patient. (Southeast Asia)

It takes two to make a fight. (Unknown)

A fool throws a stone into the sea and a hundred wise men cannot pull it out. (Cypriot Greek)

To disarm a Greek you have only to embrace him. (Cypriot)

Giving forgiveness is the privilege of the victim. (Philippines)

The one who would give light must endure burning. (Philippines)

When old words die out on the tongue, new melodies break forth from the heart. (India)

Problem solving in Burkino Faso.

Book Reviews

Peter G. Epp. *Agatchen.* Translated by Peter Pauls. Winnipeg: Hyperion Press, 1986. Pp. 258. ($14.95 paperback)

Only a very few Russian Mennonite works of fiction were published in Russia before the Revolution. Some writers, however, continued writing about colony life after they emigrated to the United States. For this novel one of those writers, Peter G. Epp, chose as his protagonist a tiny 80-year-old grandmother, Agatchen Neufeld, to reflect on four generations of life within the satisfying confines of the Mennonite colonies.

The narrator moves with equanimity through the gamut of human experience, whether it is sickness or health, birth or death, marriage or widowhood. She bears five children to her first husband, remarries at his death, and marries again. Chapter by chapter we are given a straightforward account of the lives of her children, brothers, and sisters as she sees them through her Mennonite-tinted glasses and her attachment to strong family relationships on the familiar land.

Leo Tolstoy writes in *The Death of Ivan Ilych* that Ivan's life had been "most simple and commonplace—and most horrifying." For Agatchen life is likewise simple and commonplace—and therefore most satisfying. She would like it to stay that way. Her life is overshadowed, however, when she and her children have to come to terms with industrialism, including the cream separator, the threshing machine, the factory, and consumerism. She worries her way through as one of her children deals with overpopulation in the colony and moves away. She watches as children and grandchildren are confronted with other cultures and adjust to them in ways not always to her liking.

Of significance in this novel is what is emphasized and deemphasized. The reader receives an excellent portrait of Russian Mennonite culture and customs prior to World War I. Large world events, however, are important only if they affect Agatchen or her family personally. The large migration of 1874 is given attention only because family members leave.

She does not dwell on the Revolution and its horrors at length because these experiences were "too incomprehensible" to her. Conscientious objection to war is a side issue. She expresses strong trust in God, but church life is not at the center of her being. Her advice to her family, always given in copious doses, is a broad mixture of common sense and religious platitudes. At times she seems somewhat overbearing in her acknowledgement of her ability to deal with life, particularly its crises. Her world is not filled with brilliant color or splendor but emerges in neutral shades. She finds beauty, however, in well-formed characters, carefully-crafted articles needed for comfortable living, and faithful tending of the land.

Although some readers may have difficulty calling this a novel because it seems to be mostly a series of essays, it belongs to that genre. A major theme evolves dealing with time, change, and progress. I was reminded of some of Thomas Hardy's works in which he frequently creates characters, drawn small, against broad cosmic action. Person after person moves on and off his stage, ending life in futility. Similarly, Agatchen introduces character after character to show how the vicissitudes of life affected them. Yet she admits to always being in love with life.

Katie Funk Wiebe
Tabor College
Hillsboro, Kansas

Rodney J. Sawatsky. *Authority and Identity: The Dynamics of the General Conference Mennonite Church.* North Newton, Kansas: Bethel College, 1987. Pp. 123.

This modest volume is the first to be published in the Cornelius H. Wedel Historical Series. Wedel was the first president of Bethel College, from 1893 to 1910. The series is being launched in the centennial year of Bethel College's charter, 1987.

Rodney Sawatsky is academic dean at Conrad Grebel College on the University of Waterloo campus in Ontario. He has done considerable research on the influence of evangelicalism on American Mennonites. This volume is the content of his Menno Simons Lectures at Bethel College in October of 1985.

It is appropriate that this first volume in the Wedel Series is about the origins and history of the General Conference Mennonite Church, which preceded the founding of North America's first Mennonite college by 27 years. Sawatsky places this beginning in a context.

> The General Conference Mennonite church is rooted in *reaction* against the (Old) Mennonite Church, in *response* to the evangelical spirit of ante-bellum America, in *recognition* of the variety of immigrant Mennonite cultures in America, and in *parallel* to the revitalization which produced the Mennonite Brethren Church in Russia. (p. 6)

These words are carefully chosen. Each phrase has a context that is elaborated elsewhere in the text. I anticipated that these phrases might be the outline for the book. Unfortunately that was not the case. But reading the rest of the volume proved to be a rewarding task.

This book is essential reading for anyone and everyone who stands at an intersection in Mennonite church life. It is especially relevant for those General Conference leaders working in inter-Mennonite settings such as the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, dual conference congregations, and area conferences involved in inter-conference cooperation and integration (like Ontario and Illinois).

The book should also be given to every new Mennonite pastor coming into a General Conference congregation from the "outside." The author dares to affirm the General Conference as both liberal and evangelical.

> This combination of being simultaneously liberal in style and evangelical in content . . . continues to confuse many who want to divide everyone neatly into two camps . . . . [The General Conference's] genius has been to embrace considerable freedom and pluralism in an essentially evangelical church. (p. 59)

Although the book is long on description and very short on prescription (the last three pages of the text!), the author does point ahead implicitly in the quotation above. On the very next page he suggests that the General Conference may now need to drop its anti-confessional stance, without losing sight of its commitment to freedom and pluralism.

Pluralism is the key word here. It is a word that we will be using more frequently as the General Conference continues to find its way into the mainstream of North American religious life. After all, it is the genius of the General Conference Mennonite Church to respond to the challenge of shaping an identity within modernity (p. 101). We can carry this heritage with us even as we enter a post-General Conference era (see p. 79).

This book is important enough for wider circulation within North American Mennonitism. The next printing could benefit from several typographical corrections and some biographical information about the author. A more North American perspective could be achieved by changing the references from "district" to "area" conferences.

Darrell Fast
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Leonard Doell. *The Bergthaler Mennonite Church of Saskatchewan 1892-1975*. Winnipeg: CMBC Publications, 1987. Pp. 120.

This is volume two of the Bergthal Historical Series, following *The Bergthal Colony* by William Schroeder. Doell gives us a short, factual account of a small, conservative Mennonite group. The Saskatchewan Bergthalers are put into the perspective of the longer history of the various Bergthal groups, in which Doell makes landlessness the central theme. These Bergthaler have to be carefully delineated; they are not the same as the Manitoba Bergthaler but relate more closely to the Sommerfelder, Chortitzer, and Old Colony groups.

The Saskatchewan Bergthaler are placed near the conservative end of the spectrum when faced with the common Canadian Mennonite problems of the past century: dress regulation, social customs, technology, nonresistance, voting, schools. This group stood fast, for example, on the question of teaching English in their schools in World War I. A thirteen year old Mennonite boy had to serve as a translator in negotiations with government officials because his elders did not speak the langauge.

Restless migration continues to be an important Bergthaler theme, with groups going to South America from the 1920s through the 1960s. No mention is made of the recent migrations in the reverse direction.

The most important unanswered question here is one of identity or group boundaries. The Saskatchewan Bergthaler seem to have had trouble getting organized as a congregation and came to include Mennonites from diverse origins. They maintained cordial relations with the Old Colonists and the General Conference Mennonites and lost members to both groups throughout their history. Revivalism and the Brunks make their archetypical appearance. What is it that separates the Saskatchewan Bergthaler from these other groups? The straightforward factual account given here leaves the reader wanting a deeper knowledge of this group.

The maps scattered through the book are useful and well done. They deserve to be widely imitated in other Mennonite historical works. The lack of an index is the book's only structural flaw.

John Thiesen
Newton, Kansas

Stephen Scott. *Why Do They Dress That Way?* People's Place Booklet No. 7. Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 1986. Pp. 160.

Everything you ever wanted to know about plain clothing, but were afraid to ask! Scott provides an articulate explanation and defense of the practice of plain dress among Mennonite and Brethren groups.

His message is summarized in his first chapter title: "Dress is a Language." This language communicates that 1) "plain clothing intentionally separates," 2) "plain clothing purposely identifies," and 3) "compliance [with plain clothing traditions] indicates commitment" to the plain group.

Scott discusses the religious reasons for plain clothing while avoiding simple-minded Biblical prooftexting, outlines the rather murky history of plain dress, reviews the groups of the "faithful few" who practice plain dress, and tells the story of his own "path to plainness" in a restrained, dignified way. Many technical details of plain clothing are also presented.

The history of plain clothing and its role in the Anabaptist and Mennonite stream of Christianity are the least satisfying part of the book. Here the author does seem to resort to prooftexting, citing various sources to demonstrate plain practices by the Anabaptists and Mennonites of the past, as well as the first century church. However, many of his references are only suggestive rather than conclusive. Part of the problem may be one of definitions. Is simple, modest clothing the same as "plain" clothing? Scott avoids definitional problems by discussing the groups that most of his readers would agree are "plain people."

Scott is a member of the Costume Society of America and displays a wide knowledge of costume history. His useful bibliography includes works on costume history in addition to those on the plain people. The author speaks clearly for the many among the plain people who "are not well versed in the scriptural and moral reasons for wearing plain clothes."

John Thiesen
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