MENNONITE LIFE

MARCH 1992

In this Issue

In 1992 we are marking the 500th anniversary of the momentous voyage of the Genoese mariner, Christopher Columbus, in search of the wealth of the East. A hundred years ago a few American Mennonites went to Chicago to attend the Columbian World's Exposition. In 1892-3 Mennonites belonged to a separated German-speaking subculture which was generally suspicious of the worldliness and triumphalism which was celebrated by events such as the Chicago fair. Today, a century later, an attitude of suspicion about Columbus and the European invasion of America has worked its way into the heart of American culture.

In this issue Levi Miller and Lawrence Hart reflect upon the encounter of Europeans and Native Americans. Miller is the director of the Archives of the Mennonite Church at Goshen, Indiana. He is the author of an historical novel, *Ben's Wayne* (Good Books, 1989), and has done much writing and lecturing on Mennonite history. Lawrence Hart is a Mennonite Cheyenne Peace Chief from Clinton, Oklahoma. For three decades Hart has brought together in his own person and ministry the peaceable insights of the Anabaptist vision and of Cheyenne tradition. A recent fruit of Hart's creative cultural integration is an eighteen-minute video, "You Chiefs are Peacemakers," produced by Mennonite Central Committee and available from MCC regional offices.

Al Reimer, author of the article in this issue on the woman's voice in Mennonite literature, retired from the University of Winnipeg in 1990 as Professor Emeritus of English. Reimer is the author of *My Harp is Turned to Mourning*, a highly acclaimed novel on the experience of Mennonites in Russia. The article in this issue was first presented as a lecture in the October 1991 Menno Simons Lectureship on the general topic, "Mennonite Literary Voices Past and Present."

Raylene Hinz Penner teaches in the English department at Bethel College. Her poems in this issue might be read together with the poems of the three Mennonite poets featured in the December issue of *Mennonite Life:* Jean Janzen, Keith Ratzlaff and Elmer Suderman.

James Amstutz currently serves with his wife in Mennonite Central Committee at Akron, Pennsylvania, as program coordinator of the Mennonite Voluntary Service Unit. From 1980 to 1984 he was director of draft counselling and peace education for the United States Peace Section of MCC. In that position he was able to observe first hand the ongoing drama of the Mennonite dialogue with the government regarding military conscription and alternative service.

James C. Juhnke

MENNONITE
LIFE

March 1992 Vol. 47 No. 1

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James C. Juhnke

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Missionaries Rodolphe and Marie Petter with small Cheyenne congregation in Petters' tent-cabin at Fonda, ca. 1895.

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Unidentified native American.

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Pp. 5 and 7, Rutgers University Press, *The Life of Admiral Christopher Columbus by His Son, Ferdinand*, trans. and annot. by Benjamin Keen (1959); p. 9 (bottom), University of Oklahoma Press, *Historical Atlas of Oklahoma*, 2nd ed. (1976); p. 20, John S. Oyer and Robert S. Kreider, *Mirror of the Martyrs* (1990); all others Mennonite Library and Archives.

MENNONITE LIFE (ISSN 0025-9365) is an illustrated quarterly magazine published in March, June, September, and December by Bethel College, 300 East 27th, North Newton, Kansas 67117. Second Class postage paid at North Newton, Kansas 67117. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to MENNONITE LIFE, Bethel College, 300 East 27th, North Newton, Kansas 67117.

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

Indexed with abstracts in *Religion Index One: Periodicals*, American Theological Library Association, Chicago, Illinois; *Historical Abstracts* and *America: History and Life*, ABC-Clio, Santa Barbara, California; and available online through BRS (Bibliographic Retrieval Services), Latham, New York, and DIALOG, Palo Alto, California.

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1492 and the European Mennonite Immigrants

by Levi Miller

On the night of March 21, 1526, some Anabaptists were imprisoned in the New Tower on the city wall of Zurich. On that Wednesday evening, two weeks after they had been sentenced to life imprisonment as heretics, one of the prisoners discovered a shutter of a window was partly open. Conrad Grebel, Felix Mantz, and Georg Blaurock, along with some other prisoners, let each other down the tower with a rope, crossed the moat, and at the drawbridge gate discovered that the watchman was a brother to one of the escapees. Freedom. But where should they go tomorrow?

One of them joked: "Let's go to the red Indians across the ocean!"[1]

The escapees did not make it to the "red Indians across the ocean" for refuge, and two of the three Anabaptists named above were recaptured and executed. Felix Mantz was drowned and Georg Blaurock was burned at the stake. The incident, however, of these Anabaptists within 34 years of the famous 1492 voyage, does give one a basic view of the Americas. It was a place of refuge from persecution and religious intolerance.

Cristobal Colón

We'll begin the European story with Cristobal Colón, whom North Americans have claimed as Christopher Columbus. He was born in the city state of Genoa, as near as can be determined, in 1451. At an early age he cast his lot with the sailors. At age 25 he was in Portugal where new trade routes were being sought to India. In Portugal he seemed to develop the bold plan of sailing west to arrive at the East. However, he could not get the backing of John II, the king.

In 1484, Columbus was in Spain looking for royal backing for his voyage. For the next eight years, he made friends with some influential Franciscan friars and members of the royal court. He was what today would be called a lobbyist with a remarkable ability to place himself into the circles of the great and the powerful. During those eight years he also fell in love with Beatriz Enriquez de Arena of Cordoba. He never married her, but she gave him a son Ferdinand. Ferdinand is important because he would later help make his father famous; he became his father's devoted biographer.

In 1492, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella acceded to Columbus' sailing propositions. At the same time, two other important and ominous events happened in Spain. Islamic Granada fell in January of that year. This ended 800 years of Islamic life on the Iberian Peninsula. The keys of the Alhambra, the magnificent fourteenth century water-flowing citadel of the Moors, were given to Isabella and Ferdinand. The Moors would have to convert to Christianity, face death, or leave the country.

During this same year, the Court also expelled the Jews from Spain or demanded that they convert to Christianity. Unlike the legend, Isabella did not have to hock the royal jewels to fund Columbus' voyage. There is evidence, however, that what the Spanish treasury gained by confiscating Jewish properties may have gone into financing these voyages.[2] In 1492 all of Spain was united as a Christian nation in the service of the pope of Rome, This was a tragic time for people in Spain who were members of another religion or had a different understanding of Christianity. These were the days of the Inquisition.

Most historians acknowledge that Columbus was a great sailor. "By a simple look at the night sky, he would know the route to follow or what weather to expect; he took the helm, and when the storm was over, he would hoist the sails while others were asleep," said Michelle de Cuneo who sailed with him.[3] He was wrong in his plans to reach the Indies and China. He would certainly have sailed to his death and oblivion had he not accidently come to the Americas, which during his life he never knew to exist.

Still, his mistake had a remarkable impact on subsequent history. He crossed the uncharted Atlantic Ocean. For the Europeans, he found new lands and people, and he returned to tell others about it. He opened the way for intercontinental travel. Although one can hardly credit Columbus with furthering religious tolerance, ironically, people who were imprisoned in towers for having minority religious beliefs and practices could dream of a place where they could go to live in peace. The world would never be the same.

Christopher Columbus and the Native Americans

But there was a tragic underside to this voyage. For the native peoples who lived in the Americas in 1492, the arrival of the three ships in the Caribbean Islands was an invasion. The Tainos had lived in the Bahamas for over 500 years, had a functional land use of agriculture growing *yuca* (manioc), sweet potatoes, and various squashes and beans. In government, they lived in small villages of 10-15 families, each with its own *cacique* or chief.

Columbus in his journal noted that he

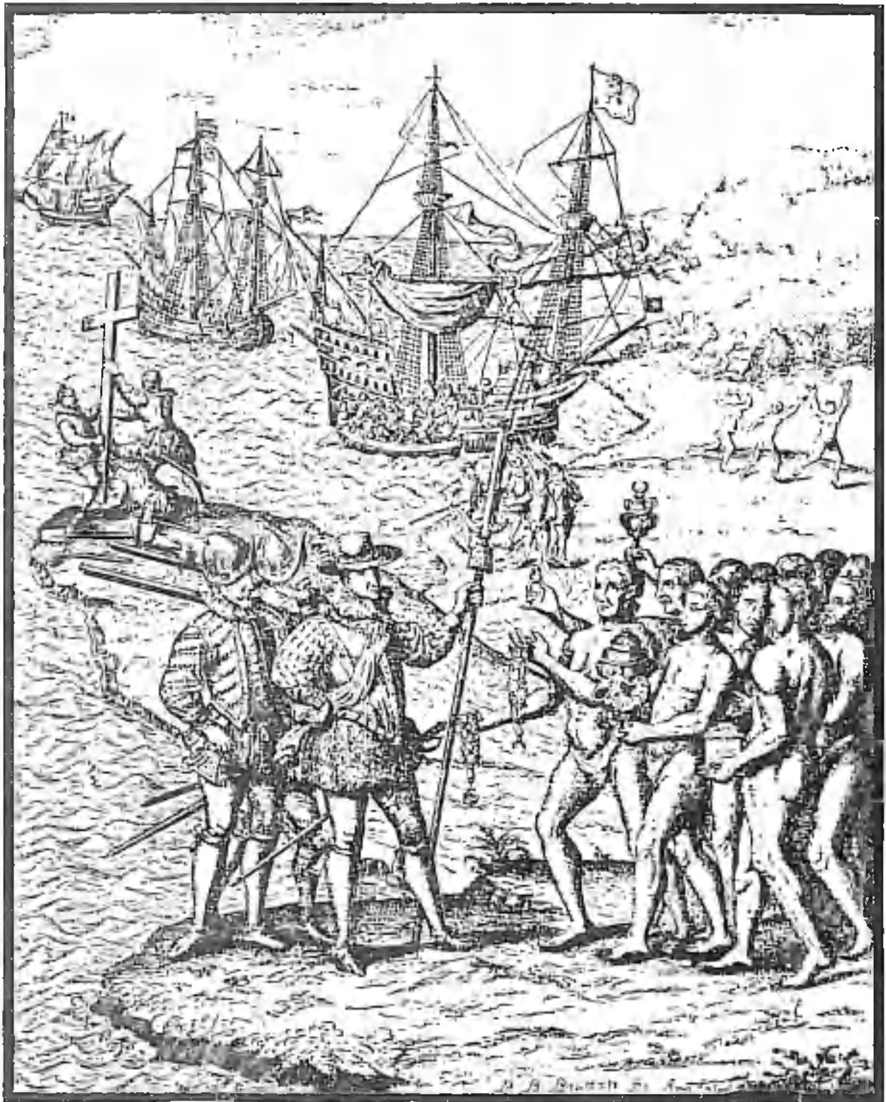
reached a "terrestrial paradise," and the generosity, openness, friendliness and warmth of these native people was noted by all the early Europeans. After several months among them, Columbus wrote in his journal: "I believe there is no better people nor better country. They love their neighbors as themselves, and they have the sweetest talk in the world and are gentle and always laughing."[4] We can allow for some exaggeration, in that Columbus was trying to convince the Spanish court that these people could easily be conquered and converted to Christianity. In fact, whatever the merits and problems of the various indigenous civilizations here in the Americas, Columbus saw little of value, other than a child-like innocence. Here were a people of no clothes, no arms, no possessions, no iron and no "Christianity."

For these people Columbus soon became a disaster, a curse. On the island of what is now the Dominican Republic and Haiti, he ruled as a tyrant for three years. He goaded the native Tainos to fight. Thousands were raped, killed and tortured, and the Taino villages were burned. A few he captured to send back to Spain as trophies, a practice one might note, which was not without precedent among the people of Europe or among the people of pre-Columbian America.

Bartoleme de Las Casas, a Franciscan missionary who accompanied several of the voyages, saw the evil of these invasions and the practices of his coreligionists. He lamented: "If we Christians had acted as we should have [as Christians]." Instead, Columbus set up a tribute system to get gold by which every Taino, age 14 and older, had to provide a thimble of gold every three months or be "punished" as his son Ferdinand said. Las Casas noted that the punishment was to have the hands cut off and to be left to bleed to death. Las Casas wrote a pamphlet to protest the way the native people were treated. His witness stood as a tribute to some of the Spanish Christian missionaries.[5]

Perhaps as damaging as these cruelties were the diseases which the Europeans brought without intending to kill: measles, influenza, typhus, pneumonia, tuberculosis, diphtheria and pleurisy. In the Caribbean region alone, an estimated eight million people were reduced to 28,000 in just over 20 years.[6] This must be seen as a form of genocide.

We can admire Christopher Columbus the sailor and still lament the tragedy which his voyages brought to the people of the Americas. Here we have focused on the Caribbean region, but a similar story could be told of Mexico and the South and North American mainlands.



Columbus at Espanola

Columbus' legacy has changed throughout history. In the United States his stature rose as Americans thought of themselves apart from the British and needed a hero. In 1692, 200 years after his first voyage, there was virtually no record of commemorations in Boston or New York. But by 1792, he was next to Washington in the American constellation of heroes. King's College in New York was called Columbia, and the national capitol was named District of Columbia. The latter was done, some said, to appease those who wanted to name the entire country Columbia. By the time of the nineteenth century he was the very icon of romantic exploration, as Washington Irving said, "a man of great and inventive genius."

Mennonites and the Columbian Legacy

In the nineteenth century we pick up with the Columbian legacy and the Mennonites. For the 400th anniversary of the "discovery of America," there was the Columbian Exhibition in Chicago in 1893. It was a massive event of art, science, culture, and commerce. This was America coming of age; the West was won; the Union had been saved. America was poised for the 20th century, the American century, or what some liberal Christians said would be the Christian century. They even began a magazine by that name.

Ada May Landes from Bucks County in eastern Pennsylvania went to the

World's Fair and wrote back to her family that the main building covered 40 acres. "Just think of it," she explained, "as large as your farm!" Even a few Mennonite ministers such as John Funk and John S. Coffman attended a Sunday school convention, took in a World's Peace Conference and listened to the preaching of Dwight L. Moody.[7]

But the Mennonite conferences and papers repeatedly told their members to stay away from attending these events. When the Ohio Amish Mennonite Conference met in Smithville in June of 1893, the question of attending the World's Fair in Chicago came up. "We advise our brethren and sisters to avoid such worldly expositions."[8] The *Herald of Truth*, the Mennonite monthly paper, regularly called it the "world's fair," as in the sinners' fair—stay away. The triumphalism and worldliness which surrounded this event was not compatible with the Mennonite spirit.

But that is not the only word to be said of this event. At my grandfather's funeral, an Amish minister, Abe J. Hochstetler, gave a meditation in which he said: "Sometimes I have wondered why Columbus discovered America in 1492." Then he paused.

"Yes," he said. "Columbus discovered America because God knew that there were persecuted people in Europe who needed a place to worship and live in freedom."[9] Here are the tones of the Anabaptist yearnings to join the "red men across the ocean," a place of refuge and toleration. Our ancestors were persecuted in Switzerland, Germany and Holland. Thousands died and they could not own land. Pennsylvania, William Penn's colony of religious tolerance, we believed, became the pattern for this new nation, a place where we could live, worship and practice our faith.

This tone of gratefulness continues in the popular literature of today such as in a recent article on the French Huguenot LeFevre family. In the early 1700s in France, one member of the family—Isaac—escaped persecution by joining William Penn's colony along Pequea Creek in what is now Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. The rest of his family were killed.[10] What a tragic irony of the landless and persecuted becoming a part of the persecution of others.

Mennonites, Amish and the Native Americans

If a basic Mennonite response to the Americas was gratefulness, what then was the Mennonite legacy of our encounter with the Native Americans who lived here? What follows will be a sampling of the Swiss Mennonites and Amish who came here in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and then traveled west. The model for the Mennonites was William Penn's attempt to create a peaceable kingdom in which the land was bought from the Indians and in which the relations were peaceful, if not always just.

But even the Quaker Penn's ideals ran into trouble with the rough and tumble search for more land and the competing claims that ensued. What is now York County in Pennsylvania is an example. The Penn family promised the Indians that the western shore of the Susquehanna River would always remain their hunting ground. As late as 1729, the Pennsylvania authorities chased European squatters out of the area and burned the settlers' cabins.

In the meantime, Maryland claimed this same land and was moving in its own English colonists. In order to avoid conflict, some Lancaster County Mennonites moved to Virginia for more land. Now even the Quaker promises turned hollow. By 1736 Thomas Penn confirmed land titles west of the Susquehanna, and one-fourth of the new settlers were Mennonites. They moved onto what had been Indian lands only a decade earlier.[11]

If the Mennonites and Amish were grateful to be able to practice their religion, they were no less eager to get land. For an agricultural people, the two were consciously and instinctively mixed and which was the stronger could hardly be determined. Up until the twentieth century, Mennonites and Amish traveled westward across the Americas with the rest of the European population. Usually they waited until the Indian resistance to European people's encroachment had ended, but scarcely a day later.[12]

When bloodshed occurred, the Mennonites deplored the violence and loss of life. In 1876, after the battle of Little Big Horn River where George Custer's 265 troops and an untold number of Sioux and Cheyenne people were killed, John Funk used almost two columns of his paper, *Herald of Truth*, to lament the futility of this battle. The United States had pursued a fighting policy for nearly two centuries with the Indians, "and its results are more slaughter." Instead, he said, "Let the peace policy be pursued as long, and we are sure there will be better results, a thousand fold."[13]

Certainly, this was the hope. In the Holmes County community in Ohio, a favorite oral story is of the early Amish Mennonite settlers who would not lock their doors at night. On cold winter evenings, it was not unusual for the Indians to come in and lie by the fireplace during the night.

But tragedies did occur. Near Luray, Virginia, a marker notes the death of "John Roads (Mennonist) and his wife and six children" in August 1761. They were killed by a white-led Indian party during the French and Indian War. It is considered the worst massacre the Mennonites suffered.[14]

Perhaps an even more common story is of the family of Jacob Hochstetler (1704-1776). In the 1740s in Berks County near Harrisburg some Hochstetlers had moved and taken up farming. But by the 1750s the French and the British colonists collided on the control of the West, what is now Ohio. The French made an alliance with the Delaware and the Shawnees in an effort to drive the British and German colonists back across the Susquehanna River.

Whereas in 1740 the farmsteads in Berks County had been fairly safe, by the 1750s they were in a war zone. One night a Delaware party attacked the Hochstetler home. The family went into the basement, and the two young sons, Christian and Joseph, wanted to take up guns to defend the family. The father, with a non-resistant Christian belief, would not let them take up arms to defend themselves.

Toward morning, the house was set ablaze, and the family tried to escape. The mother and two young children were killed and the father and two sons captured. The father seemed to keep a strong attachment to his own people and escaped six years later. The two sons, Christian and Joseph, were adopted into Native American families and not returned until 1765 when the war was over. Eleven years had passed, and the two Hochstetler boys were returned as members of another people.

At this time the Shawnee Chief gave a speech to Colonel Bouquet on the return of the captives become sons:

"Fathers, we have brought your flesh and blood to you: they have all been united to us by adoption; and though we now deliver them, we will always look upon them as our relations, whenever the Great Spirit is pleased that we visit them. We have taken as much care of them as if they were our own flesh and blood. They are now become unacquainted with your customs and manners: therefore, we request you will use them tenderly and kindly, which will induce them to live contentedly with you."

It is a tragic war story of an aggrieved people, the Native Americans, the killing of a mother and two young children; an honorable return of two sons who had joined the Shawnee; and an image of God's redemption of the world through Christ, the son. The Mennonites eventually turned the story into a morality tale of non-resistance where Jacob took his stand in telling his sons, "It would never be right to take the life of another even to save one's own. We will not shoot the Indians."[15]

Conclusion

For the European Mennonite and Amish immigrants, 1492 has meant land, peace and gratitude. They could own land. Given their European background, they thought this was a legitimate form of having it. But they arrived at a time when the land was being taken from the Native Peoples. If the Mennonites refrained from the lethal violence of their Catholic and Protestant neighbors, neither did they have among them a Bartolemé de las Casas who raised a voice of protest to the injustice. Peace came from the freedoms of a greater separation of church and state in the American and Canadian political system. After two centuries of persecution in Europe, they were grateful.

Most of the Mennonites tried to have good relationships with the Native Americans with little evidence of hostility or contempt. But the real source of the anger of the Native Americans was not about personal relationships; it was about losing their land. Recent stories of the coming of the European Mennonites to the Americas have tried to give greater acknowledgement to the legitimate rights of the Native Americans to the land. This recognition has meant not only gratefulness but also confession.[16]

ENDNOTES

[1]John L. Ruth, *Conrad Grebel, Son of Zurich* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1975), 137; Christian Neff, "Georg Blaurock," *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, 357. The incident is based on the statements of Wilhelm Exell and Fridli Ab-Iberg to the Zurich council, April 4, 1526 in Leland Harder, *The Sources of Swiss Anabaptism* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1985), 451.

[2]Kirkpatrick Sale, *The Conquest of Paradise* (New York: Knopf, 1990), 63. A large volume of books and articles have been released on Columbus with the approach of the Quincentennial, 1492-1992. What follows are the main ones referred to in this paper. John Noble Wilford, "Discovering Columbus," *The New York Times Magazine*, August 11, 1991; *Encounters*, quarterly published on the Quincentennial by The Latin American Institute of The University of New Mexico; "UNMC Meets: Discusses Columbus 1992," *United Native Ministries Newsletter*, Mennonite Board of Missions, Fall/Winter, 1990; *Magazine of History*, Spring, 1991, special issue on The Columbian Quincentenary; Garry Wills, "Goodbye, Columbus," *The New York Review of Books*, November 22, 1990; Mark Falcoff, "Columbus Go Home," *The American Spectator*, October, 1991; "Future Mission In Latin America and the Caribbean after 500 years of Christianization," papers from the Spring Meeting of Council of International [Mennonite] Ministries, May 28-30, 1991, Salunga, Pa.

[3]Wilford, 49.

[4]December 25, 1492, journal entry in Sale, 200.

[5]Bartolemé de Las Casas, *Historia de las Indias* (1550); his small pamphlet of protest was called *Brevísima relación de la destrución de las Indias.*

[6]Sale, 159-161.

[7]James C. Juhnke, *Vision, Doctrine, War* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1989), 23.

[8]*Herald of Truth*, June 15, 1893, 188.

[9]These quotations are based on recall of the funeral of Levi L. Schlabach at Pleasant View Conservative Mennonite Church, November 14, 1979.

[10]Mary E. LeFever, "The Hidden French Bible," *Christian Living*, June, 1991, 20-22.

[11]Richard MacMaster, *Land, Piety, Peoplehood* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1985), 116-120.

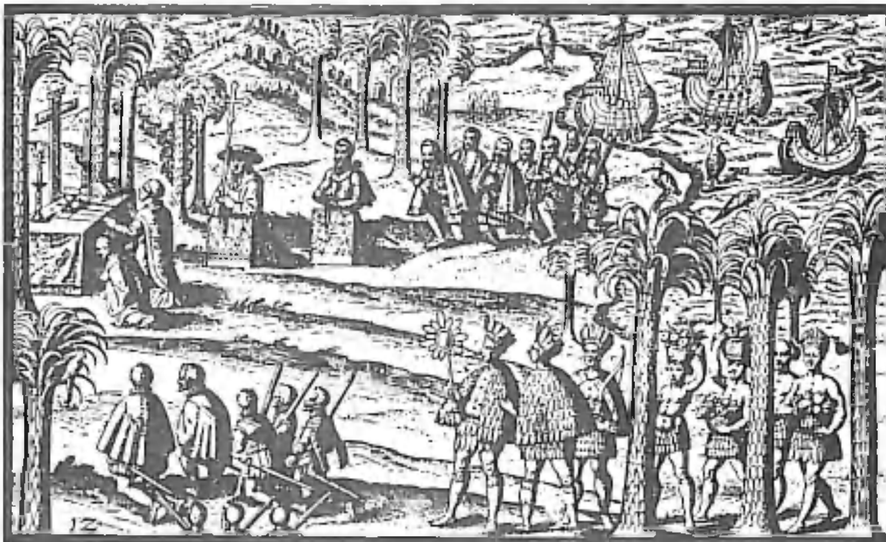
[12]MacMaster, 118.

[13]*Herald of Truth*, 1876, 141.

[14]MacMaster, 118-119.

[15]The original story is taken from Harvey Hostetler, *Descendents of Jacob Hochstetler* (Elgin: Brethren Publishing House, 1912), 26-45; the story as a non-resistance teaching appears in Elizabeth Hershberger Bauman, "Jacob Decides," *Coals of Fire* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1954), 41-45.

[16]The MeetingHouse permanent exhibit in Harleysville, Pennsylvania, begins with the Lenape, the original people who were later called the Delaware Indians. E. Reginald Good, *Frontier Community to Urban Congregation* (Kitchener: First Mennonite Church, 1988) devotes a chapter to the Mennonite purchase of 60,000 acres in 1803 from agents who acted in bad faith with the Six Nations Indians—Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, Senecas and Tuscaroras.



Mass on shore

KAIROS: The Quincentennial Moment

by Lawrence Hart

I want to thank you for the invitation to be your speaker this morning. I am most happy to be here and I hope what I share with you will meet your expectations. My assignment is to focus on 1992.

The year 1992 will hold for all of us a quincentennial. An event took place 500 years ago which we will either celebrate or commemorate. For Cheyenne people, as well as the Arapaho, it will also mean a centennial. On April 19, 1892, the Cheyenne-Arapaho Land Run took place.

Ninety-nine years ago when the Cheyenne and Arapaho reservation was broken up for individual ownership through allotted lands, names of Indian people were translated. Their translated names were recorded on Deeds. These land Deeds were for ownership of 160 acres of land. There is a beautiful gem of history associated with this story. Not many Cheyenne people knew English. Non-Indian people who knew some Cheyenne and who could interpret were enlisted to help in translating names. I recently ordered the recorded names of all the Cheyenne and Arapaho Allottees from the Fort Worth Regional Archives—a part of the National Archives which serves as a depository of historical records for the state of Oklahoma, among other states in a region. All of those names are unusual, in English. But in Cheyenne or Arapaho, they sound beautiful.

Officials who came to translate the Indian names were likely a part of the Jerome Commission, which had been created to implement the Dawes Act, commonly known as the General Allotment Act, which would divide the lands into severalty. Local interpretors were enlisted to help in the translation of names. One name was difficult to translate. It was of a woman who lived near what is now Clinton. She was named after a certain plant. No one in that party charged to translate her name knew the English name of the plant. She was ultimately given the name "Red Wheat."

Now, red wheat was not known to us. Red wheat was never a part of our culture. This name is associated with the Germanic peoples, many of the Mennonite faith, who had come to this country and were responsible for the introduction of red wheat. Among that group of interpretors attempting to interpret the name was one certain Cheyenne woman, in all probability a Mennonite, likely from the Darlington School staff.

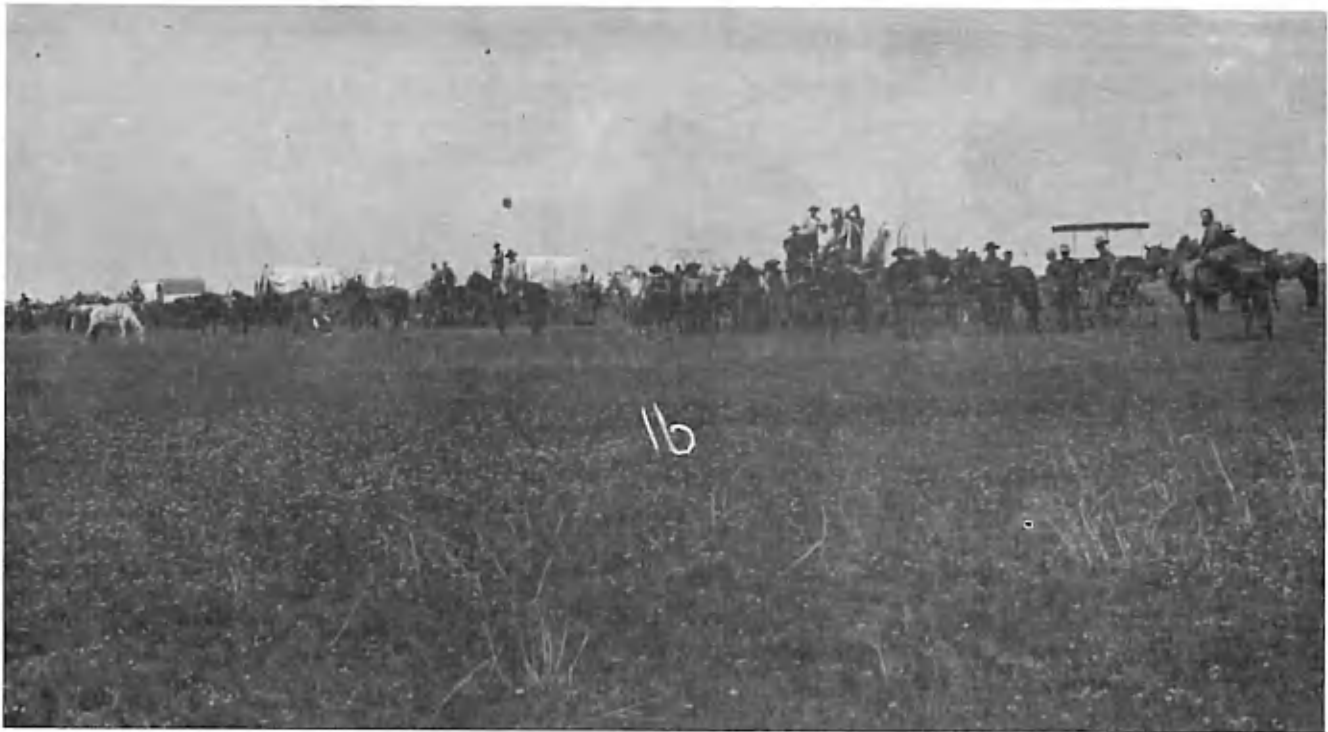
The name "Red Wheat" has become highly symbolic. It symbolizes the meeting of two cultures—through an act of God. People of the Cheyenne tribe and people of the General Conference Mennonite Churches have had a long, close association over many years.

Many of you know that I come from a tribe of Native Americans who are called Cheyenne. We are of the Algonquin language stock. The Cheyenne tribe was the second tribe the General Conference Mennonite Church worked with well over a century ago. The newly created Board of Missions first came to the Arapaho and the first convert, as we already know from a recent centennial, was Maggie Leonard. We also know other important historical facts out of that experience. We know that the first President of Bethel College served among both the Arapaho and Cheyenne.

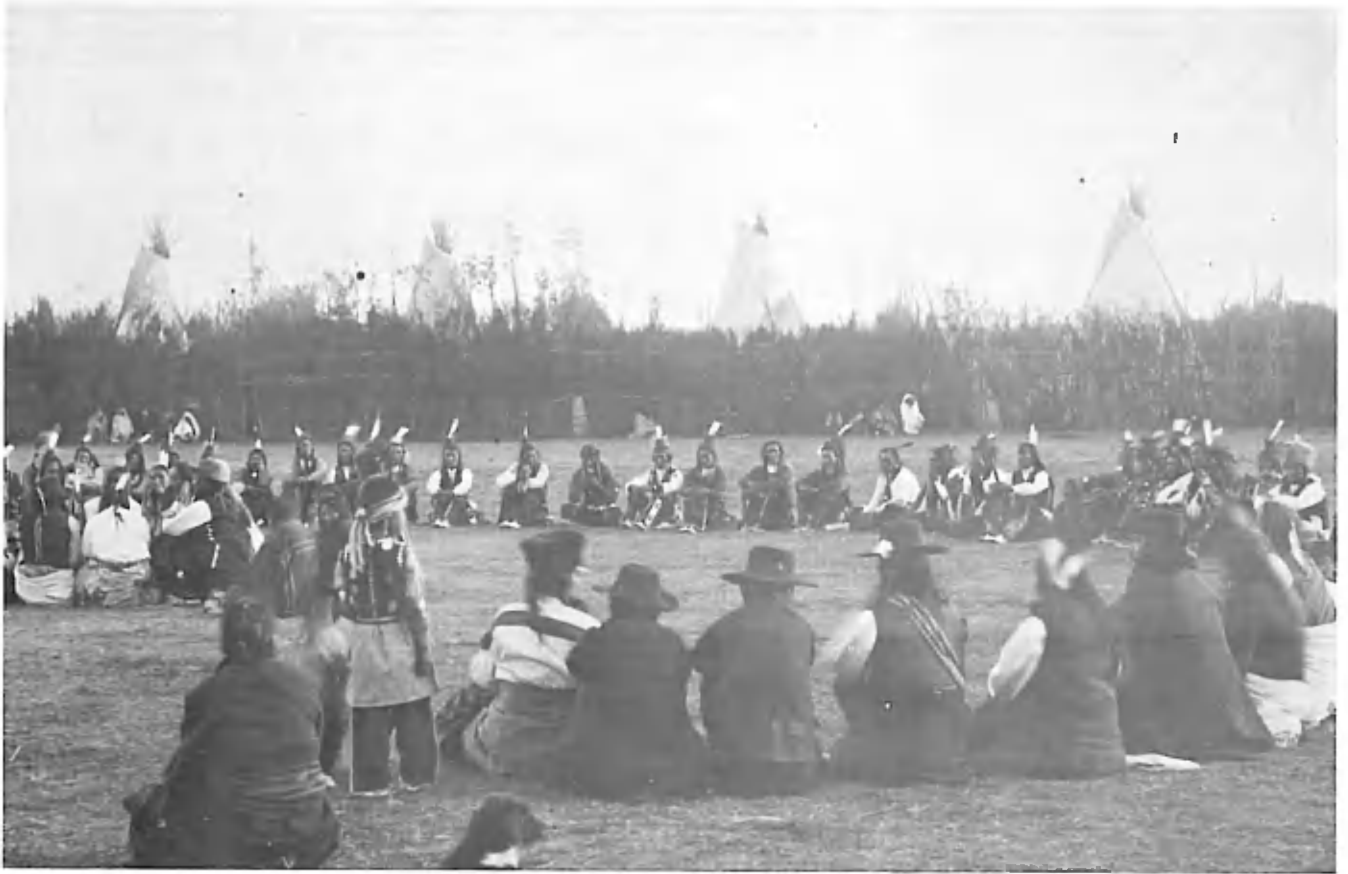
The Mennonites and the Cheyenne, both those in Oklahoma and the Northern Cheyenne in Montana, have had a long history together. For this reason, I again say, I am happy to be here to attempt a focus on 1992.

There is a very interesting phenomenon that occurs among the various tribes of Native Americans in Oklahoma. There are 39 federally recognized Indian tribes in Oklahoma and according to the 1990 Census, we have the highest Indian population of any state in the Union. When Oklahoma (the Land of the Red Man, in the Choctaw language) was set apart for these tribes, they were settled over different periods of time. Today there is a distinction, legally and otherwise, between those in the east, which was Oklahoma Territory, and those in the west, which was Indian Territory. The major tribes which were first settled primarily in the east side of what is now Oklahoma were called "The Five Civilized Tribes." Those in the west and north-central are known commonly as "Plains Indians," although some of us are actually Algonquin, having migrated from the northeast of this continent. There are some feelings between the tribes in the east and the west.

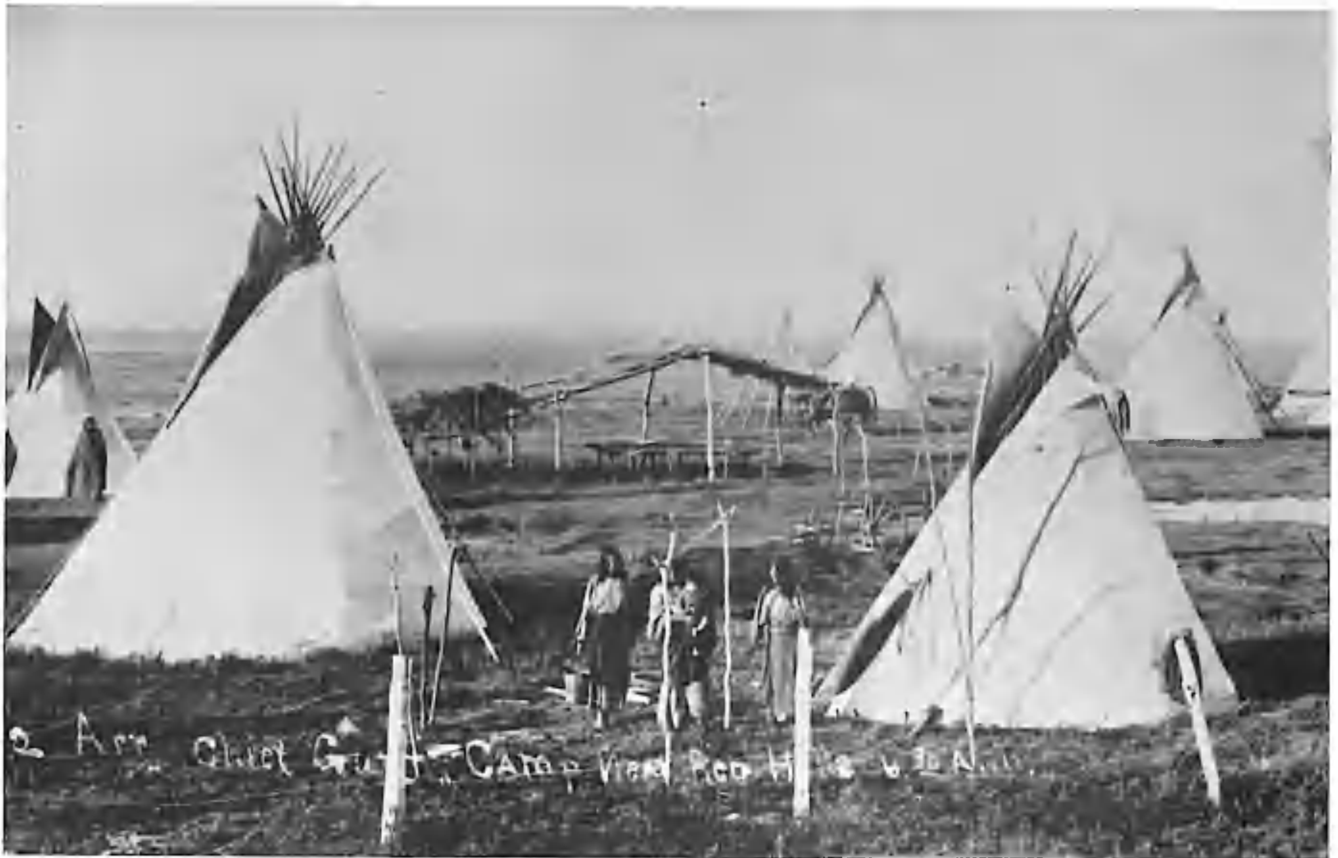
For those on the west side, historically there have been some feelings and expressions of condescension toward the Cheyenne. Not long ago I had a conversation with one Mr. Art Hill, a Cheyenne who now lives in Omaha. We discussed the times we were young and how we were told not to pay attention to those of other tribes who would call us names. We heard words like uncivilized, primitive, backward, blanket Indians, to mention names that I can repeat. While other tribal groups, through missionary influences, governmental policy and general education sought to become as assimilated and acculturated as soon as possible, the Cheyenne resisted and so we were looked down upon by others who had skin just like us.



(above) Waiting for the opening of the "Unassigned Lands" in 1889. (below) "Land openings" from Historical Atlas of Oklahoma, *second edition, by John W. Morris, Charles R. Goins, and Edwin C. McReynolds. Copyright © 1965, 1976 by the University of Oklahoma Press.*



The contrast of cultures


2 Arr Chief
Camp

Cheyenne Sun Dancers posing for the camera

Although we can and do fault the early missionaries for errors we can see in hindsight, I marvel. I marvel about the English-Cheyenne dictionary developed by Rodolphe Petter. I marvel about many others who learned to speak and converse in our language and introduced Cheyenne into the worship services, so that we could sing in Cheyenne, read Scripture in Cheyenne, and pray and testify in our own language. While others quickly became like white Christians, we as Christians maintained cultural distinctiveness.

We as Native Americans now live in a time when it is vogue to be as traditional as possible. Today, the Cheyenne in Oklahoma are the most traditional of all the other 38 tribes. We are the ones who have most retained our language. Not long ago I was asked to lead in a devotional. I thought it would be good if everyone in that room from many tribes could say "God" in their language. I was shocked when many couldn't. They didn't know. They never learned, or it was never taught! We are one tribe that has maintained our sacred ceremonies: the Sun Dance, which is actually A Renewal of the Earth Ceremony; and our sacred bundle of Four Arrows, given by our culture hero, Sweet Medicine, are still maintained. We as Cheyenne people have been discovered! We are native, as traditional as one can be in this day and age. And we have responded to this discovery.

Congress has acted to establish a National Museum of the American Indian, and the first Director is H. Richard West, a Cheyenne. The National Congress of American Indians (the oldest and largest Indian national organization) has joined together with the Native American Rights Fund (a legal organization), and the Association of American Indian Affairs (out of New York City) to make a united effort to amend the American Indian Religious Freedom Act in response to recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions. These three groups have hired Dr. Henrietta Mann, a Cheyenne woman, to spearhead this effort. There is a national effort to develop a coalition of Indian organizations to counter 1992 and the chosen Executive Director is Suzzane Harjo, a Cheyenne.

In Oklahoma there was recently a search for an Executive Director of the Oklahoma Indian Affairs Commission. Tribal leaders from the east side turned to the west and openly sought out a young Cheyenne.

Nathan Hart, a Cheyenne and a German, a product of Bethel College, is now the Executive Director of the Oklahoma Indian Affairs Commission.

There is a State Senator from Wewoka and his senatorial district is on the east side of the state. He is a Seminole Indian. The Seminoles are one of the Five Civilized Tribes. This State Senator will formally announce on Tuesday, November 12, that he is a candidate for the U.S. Senate. He conducted a statewide search for an identifiable Indian who is well educated and who happens to be a lawyer, to join his staff. He found the qualities he sought in a Cheyenne woman, another product of Bethel College. Connie Hart will fill that position.

Recently the National Indian Education Association held its 23rd annual conference and selected among many honorees an "Indian Student of the Year" from a nationwide pool of students. For the third time in six years, a Cheyenne was selected! Incidentally, they also selected an "Elder of the Year" and he is Ted Risingsun, a Northern Cheyenne, who also studied at Bethel.

It has taken me several minutes to make a point. For many years we as Cheyenne were the brunt of cultural snobbery, the objects of cultural imperialism. Then we were discovered!

There is currently a movement that arose out of a World Council of Churches meeting in Seoul, Korea this past year. This movement has gained impetus under the auspices of the National Council of Churches. Those associated with *Kairos* have issued a call in the context of the quincentenary, the anniversary of Columbus' voyage to the Americas. The Call reads in part:

> "We believe we are living in what the New Testament writers call a *kairos*, a time when the Spirit of God shatters religious complicity with injustice. . . . A *kairos* has come to this place, now called North America, now called United States, but a place more ancient with history and peoples: shores, mountains, plains, deserts, and forests long ago named sacred. . . . This is the time and place for resistance and hopeful action. We are called to join Native Americans, African Americans, and so many others who have for 500 years refused to cooperate with oppression. Here and now we must say a clear NO.
>
> It is the time and place for repentance and conversion. The church ecumenically has been complicit in . . . and an active participant in violence and injustice, often mistaking cultural imperialism for evangelization. . . . We are now called by our love for the church to confront it with its own good news. Building on

the spirit of 500 years of resistance we also say a clear YES to new priorities and new ways of being the church as we prepare to enter the 21st century."

Those who participate in this movement are asked to seek to discern the signs of the times *(kairos)* in the context of the quincentenery and in the context of other vital issues of faith and life which compel us to speak.

A *kairos*, according to the 1992/ KAIROS USA'S CALL "is a moment of truth, a time for decision, a crisis of judgment and grace; it is a God-given opportunity for conversion and hope."

Discerning the signs of the times, or *kairos*, is central to authentic faith as the following New Testament passages make clear:

> He also said to the crowds, "When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, 'It is going to rain'; and so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, 'There will be scorching heat'; and it happens. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present **kairos?**" Luke 12:54-56.

> And when he drew near and saw the city he wept over it, saying "Would that even today you knew the things that make for peace! But now they are hid from your eyes . . . because you did not know the **kairos** of your visitation. Luke 19:41,42 44b.

> Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of the **kairos,** because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what is the will of the Lord. Ephesians 5:15-17.

How do we discern 1992? How will we respond to the 500th year of time, *kairos*, in 1992?

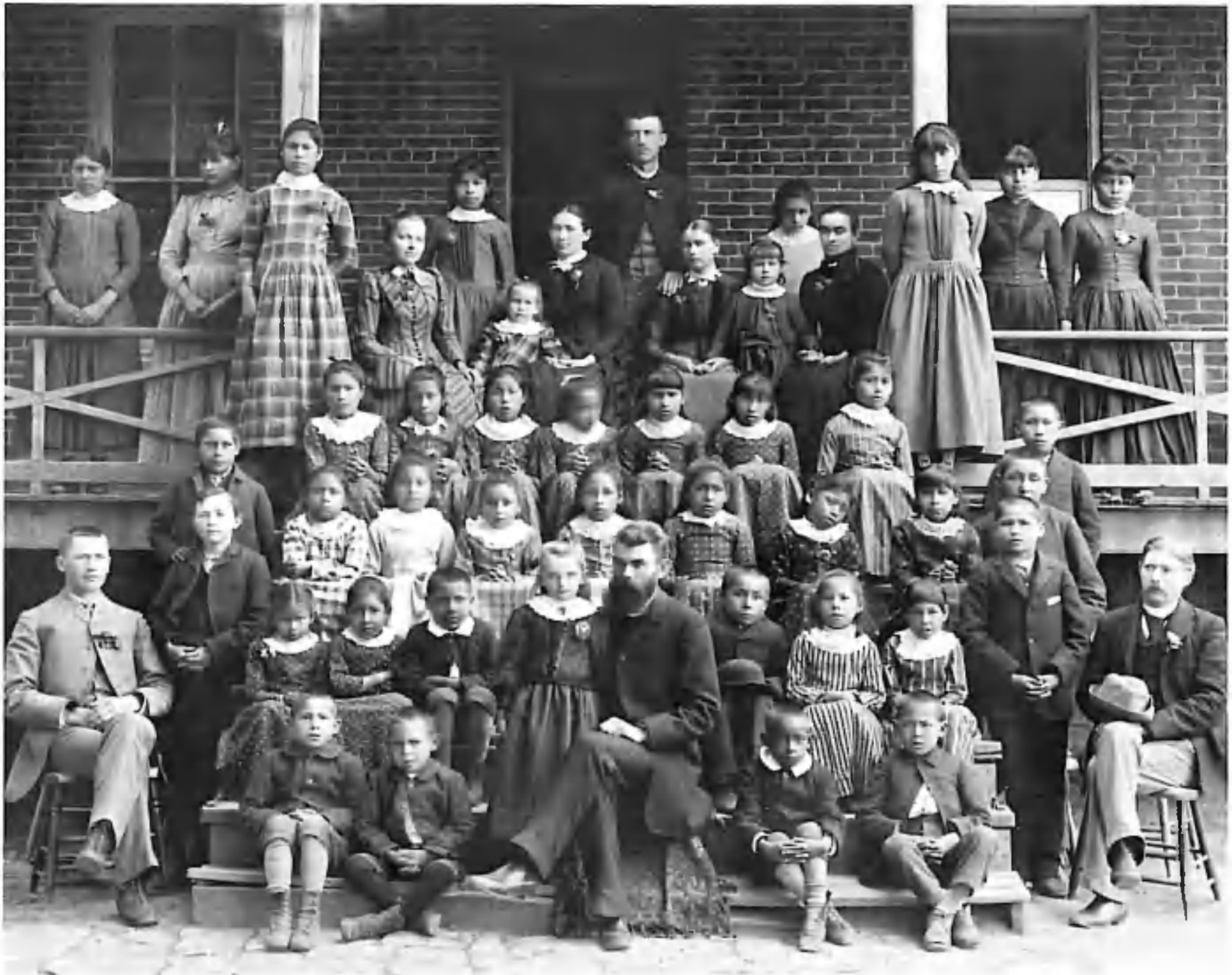
I have but one small suggestion to offer. I would suggest that we use this time, this *kairos*, as a "time for discovery."

Jack Weatherford, a Professor of Anthropology at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota, concludes in his book *Indian Givers* with these words:

> The history and culture of America remains a mystery, still *terra incognita* after five hundred years.

> Columbus arrived in the New World in 1492, but America has yet to be discovered.

In his book, Jack Weatherford tells us of wealth. Gold and silver from the Americas was the source of major economic and trade expansion in Europe and eventually led to the industrial revolution. Of food, Dr. Weatherford says that some 60% of the food eaten in the world today is of American



Staff and students of the Mennonite Mission School at Darlington, ca. 1890-91.

origin. The potato changed Europe's agricultural economy and the nature of society. Modern corporations and businesses were built on the companies that established the first settlements and built plantations. These ancestors of modern corporations and commercial enterprises of today would not have survived or flourished had it not been for the labor and lives of the Indians. The federal system of government we have in our country derives not from Europe but from Indian tribal organizations, such as the Iroquois Confederacy. In medicines the Indians provided quinine, the first effective treatment for malaria. They offered a sophisticated pharmacy that contributed much to modern medicine in the form of aspirin-related tree bark extracts, laxatives, painkillers, antibacterial medicines, and much, much more.

Sharon O'Brien is an Associate Professor in the Department of Government and International Studies, University of Notre Dame. In her book *American Indian Tribal Governments*, she writes:

> "Despite their debts to Indian culture, Europeans' treatment of Indians was generally hostile and always self-serving. The pattern varied from virtual extermination by the Spanish to hostile dismissal by the English to grudging respect by the French. European civilization was based on individualism, hierarchy, and materialism, and Europeans considered their way vastly superior to Indian cultures. Reared in societies that emphasized acquistion through competition and control, Europeans were simply unable to appreciate or even understand cultures that deemphasized those values."

If 1992 is indeed a *kairos*, let us use it as a time for discovery. We can accomplish a discovery if we lay aside any form of cultural imperialism.

> I charge you in the presence of God and of Jesus Christ who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing in his kingdom: preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching. For the **kairos** is coming when people will not endure sound teaching. . . . As for you, always be steady, endure suffering, do the work of the evangelist, fulfill your ministry. 2 Timothy 4:1-3a, 5.

Another Mennonite Poet:

Raylene Hinz-Penner

I think it must take many years for a poet to find a voice and a program. When I began to write poems a few years back, I was sure that I did not want to sound like a Mennonite or a Midwesterner. I thought I would find a voice that was somehow transcendant if I suppressed "provincial" voices. Now I'm not so sure.

When Leonard Neufeldt of Purdue University, whose most recent book of poems, *Raspberrying*, about growing up in Yarrow, British Columbia, visited our creative writing class at Bethel, he talked about originality, arrogance and voice. He admitted that it could be true that he found his most authentic voice in poetry when he gave his own voice over to the voices of his past.

I'm still looking for a poetic program. I know I like the discoveries I make in poems. I like William Stafford's argument that it isn't so much that writers are people who have something to say as they are people who have discovered a process that will bring about new things they would not have thought of if they had not started to say them. Perhaps, in just that way, the poet relinquishes control of the "program."

While I was writing poems which grew out of my reading of Joseph Campbell's mythology, I watched as my poems turned slowly from mythic figures like Persephone to Biblical figures like Sarah with whom I had battled all my life. In church, I scribble my bulletins with ideas for poems. Is it because I don't listen well to sermons or that being in church puts me in touch again with who I am, reminding me of poems that need to be written? Worship services provide writers who go there both meditative moments and stimulation; no wonder one is tempted to scribble the bulletin!

Perhaps the poet's search for original voice is a kind of arrogance. The danger, I guess, in this obsession is that these "original" poems can turn out to be nothing more than craft-tricks, language gymnastics, introverted self-absorption. Maybe a Mennonite poet gains voice (or inherits it!) in her/his argument with the past.

Raylene

Our Story

Eve was cheerleader golden
in my childhood picture book,
chin tipped heavenward to reach
into the yellow shaft of light.
Her long hair fell in waves
too set, I thought, for a gardener,
and she was unclothed, but not pictured
beneath her pink shoulders.
I thought she was my mother.

Now I see that Sarah
introduced womanhood:
an old brown woman with shorn
glance cast down, etched hard
in the text under "envy."
She has at least a speaking part
though not a life.

"Bar-ren Sar-rah". . .
It echoes as if the sounds
were arranged, as if
she had chosen them.
Bring her forward
centuries from between
the camel's humps;
she'll still not lose the shame.
Her husband calls her "sister"
to protect himself from strangers,
whores her to the Pharoah for some camels.
No progeny; no rights.

She chose, finally, to give him Hagar,
not guessing her own anger at the easy
conception in a darker, younger woman
whose surly, sulking superiority
flooded her swollen pool of rage.
Despair had worn her grace quite thin.
She was tired, perhaps,
of the indignity, the gnawing nothing,
and just tired,
longing to forget this motherhood . . .
. . . which came then, late,
and ended her story,
as it always has.

Raylene Hinz-Penner

Kennedy's Election

I wasn't clear that we were in danger
as we drove the thirty miles to my aunt and uncle's
new house in the rocky soil of the Oklahoma Panhandle
where they had lived before in a sod house with snakes
in their bedroom walls (my aunt found one curled in a shoebox),
but now they were in this new blonde brick with white carpet.

I didn't even feel much fear when they started
the prayer meeting, though their voices were low,
almost whispered, but when we prayed on our knees,
when my dad uncoiled his long legs, rose up
and turned round to kneel, pressed his elbows deep
into the nubbled rough of the couch and bent his head
onto his clasped hands, I listened.

They prayed about Kennedy's election, about if it was end-times,
Armageddon, then take us Lord, and then politics,
about a takeover, and help us to be strong to resist.
I can't remember whether I thought then that Catholics
cut babies out of women's stomachs—I don't know
if I knew that then. I knew that I shouldn't worship
Mary, though I thought her neck very beautiful.

Later, in high school, I wanted to go out with a Catholic
boy who was new at school, with a crew cut, and I think
he was a good enough basketball player my father almost
thought of letting me, but they didn't.
I protested, talking ecumenicalism, or provincialism, or
some youth group term I knew by then but they just shook
their heads at what Dad had heard about his family
in town, divorced and remarried, I think.

It was the closest I came to sneaking out, lying
there night after night staring at the window screen,
loosely hinged, low to the ground, though it was stupid,
my sister asleep there beside me in our bed,
my parents connected through the closet,
but I loved the mean in me that thought it,
loved thinking I really might, and I held
the thought through many a summer night.

So Camelot was for us a vigil.
And Dad's Republican sentiments split wide open
when Kennedy was shot.
Dad's uncle called us then because they had
a new T.V. (a few people in our church had them,
but they didn't watch on church nights—
unless it was a free Sunday)
and we sat around their dining room table
watching quietly the veiled family.

I loved the calm sad voice of the announcer,
the way he talked on T.V. as if their family
could hear him, with respect, which we felt too,
especially my dad, who was younger then than Kennedy
and had come to like him, I think,
for sure his speeches.
I tried all day to think how
you would spell the word *caisson*.

It's thirty years now since Kennedy's election,
and I think about how my great-grandparents left
Russia to come here, and I wonder how it started
for them, maybe a prayer meeting, and how different
it turned out for us, and where we would have gone,
who might have known to go, oh, say, to Australia maybe.
Today, well, now my father's gone, and we would need
a sign, and it has been so long since anybody prayed like that.

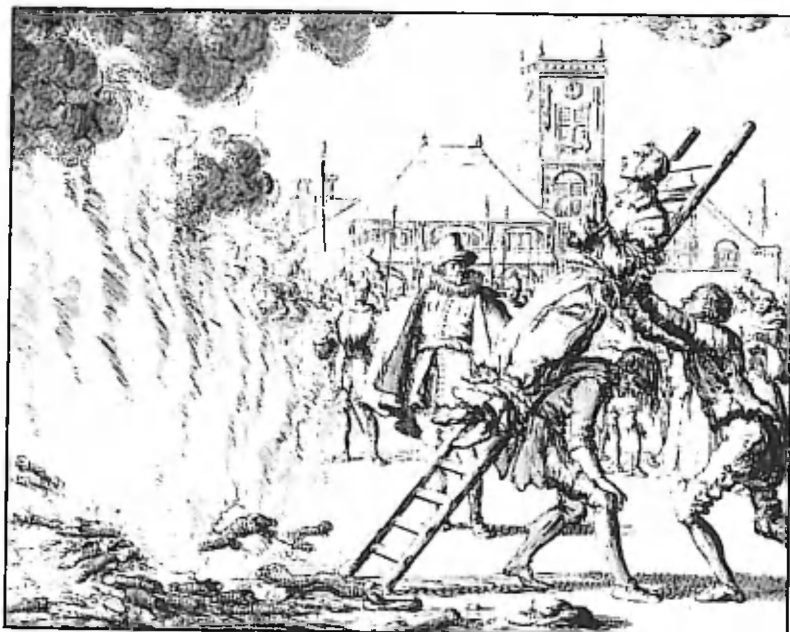
Raylene Hinz-Penner

Where Was/Is the Woman's Voice? The Re-Membering of the Mennonite Woman

by Al Reimer

In recent years the Mennonite literary scene has been dramatically enhanced by a growing group of talented women writers. Canadian Mennonite writers like Sandra Birdsell, Di Brandt and Lois Braun already have international reputations, and poets like Sarah Klassen and Audrey Poetker, as well as Jean Janzen in the U.S., are also gaining the wider readerships they deserve. Indeed, without these powerful women's voices, the Mennonite literary phenomenon of recent years could not have happened. Not only are these gifted women writing poems and short stories and novels which embody, like all good literature, our most vital experiences and visions, but even more importantly they are providing an eloquent collective voice for the Mennonite woman traditionally voiceless in public and visible only in private. As Hildi Froese Tiessen has pointed out, the voices of Mennonite women writers are "often projections of the authors' foremothers who suffered an enforced silence throughout the official histories of their people."[1]

Mennonite women historians and critics like Mary Lou Cummings, Katie Funk Wiebe and Elaine Sommers Rich in the U.S. and Marlene Epp, Magdalene Redekop and Carol Penner in Canada have begun to explore and redress the neglected story of women in Mennonite history and culture.[2] While valuable and authentic, these historical accounts and critical evaluations tend to be generalized, statisticized and so carefully reasoned that they come across as muted, lacking in the passion and drama that vividly realized literary voices can provide. To my mind the most radical and persuasive "re-membering" of the Mennonite woman is being done through the literary imagination. That is where the compelling new voice of the Mennonite woman is coming from.



Anneken Hendriks, Amsterdam, 1571

When, if ever in the past, did the Mennonite woman have a public voice and presence? Apparently she did, in the beginning. Before the Mennonite church became fully institutionalized, Anabaptist women had a strong voice and a very visible presence on the bloody stage of martyrdom. Almost a third of the approximately 1,000 martyrs identified by gender in *Martyrs Mirror* were women, and most of them underwent torture and execution as bravely as did most of the men. And even those numbers may not reflect accurately the importance of the public role women played within the Anabaptist movement.[3] While there is no conclusive evidence in *Martyrs Mirror* that any women were part of the formal church leadership (such as preachers and deacons), there is circumstantial evidence that a few, like Elizabeth Dirks and Aeffgen Lystyncx, were church teachers, while a few others like Goetken Gerrits and Vrou Gerrets are known to have written and published hymns.[4] Moreover, the many letters in *Martyrs Mirror* written from prison prove conclusively that Anabaptist women were well schooled in doctrine and in the Bible and eloquent in expressing their fervent faith.

Unfortunately, whatever equality of faith and martyrdom existed between Anabaptist men and women did not carry over into the spheres of marriage, church and community.[5] Once the period of persecution was over and Anabaptist beliefs were codified and institutionalized, the public presence of women was over and they disappeared into their traditional roles as wives and mothers. Marlene Epp has argued that the "underside" of Mennonite history,

i.e., the woman's side, reveals that Mennonite women have managed to acquire a public voice and presence in times of flux and crisis, "but tending to regress somewhat during times of community stability and status quo."[6] A modern example of this would be the courageous initiative with which Mennonite women in the Soviet Union organized clandestine churches in their homes while their men were still missing in the Gulag after World War II. However, when the men returned from exile, they quickly took over these primitive but vital church cells and once again relegated their women to subordinate roles. We note also that in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution the official histories, public memoirs and autobiographical novels were written by Mennonite men, but that some of the most dramatic and moving personal stories were written by women who had kept diaries and had an instinct for story-telling. Among the best of these are Maria Winter-Loewen's three-volume autobiography *Hoehen und Tiefen* (Peaks and Valleys), Susanna Toew's *Trek to Freedom*, Anna Reimer Dyck's *From the Caucasus to Canada*, Anita Priess's *Exiled to Siberia*, and *The Diary of Anna Baerg*. These stories were written by intrepid women who often had to follow their hazardous destinies alone, without the help of men, and became the stronger for it.

In a patriarchal society Mennonite women were expected to confine their activities to the traditional spheres of *Kirche, Kinder und Kueche* (church, children and kitchen) and to fulfill themselves as best they could within the domestic sphere. They were voiceless and invisible in public and isolated from the rest of the world. In Russia very few Mennonite women spoke Russian, and in Canada few rural women learned English before World War II. And yet the real storytellers in Mennonite families were often the mothers, secret readers who nurtured the creative spirit in their children and were frequently the custodians of the oral tradition within the family no matter how voiceless they were outside of it.

Male Mennonite writers frequently deal with the difficulties and complexities of the father-son relationship in a patriarchal society. The rebellious son is typically unable to come to terms with the all-powerful father figure until the father grows old or dies. Since the patriarch/father image represents not only social structures but the very ideology of the church, the son's rebellion is accompanied by feelings of guilt, a sense of betraying his Mennonite heritage. From a woman's perspective the picture is rather different. For one thing the guilt is missing. Instead there is a strong sense of victimhood as expressed by Mennonite women writers. Magdalene Redekop, in a passionate and brilliantly perceptive meditation on her own parents—her church leader father and sensitive, self-sacrificing mother—argues persuasively that the worst sin of a patriarchal society may be that it inspires a form of idolatry whereby the woman is allowed to love her Mennonite husband/father/patriarch only by sacrificing her own identity to him, by becoming his slave and making herself voiceless and invisible in subordination to him.[7] And Redekop pushes her argument to a radical feminist conclusion. "Oddly enough," she writes, "a Mennonite woman may have to become a feminist in order to become a Mennonite, if by this one assumes a radical Protestant stance that opposes idolatry and affirms the free choice of the individual."[8]

As long as Mennonite literature was written mainly by men, the identity and role of the Mennonite woman was not explored in any great depth and of course from a predominantly male point of view. In her article "The Mennonite Woman in Mennonite Fiction," Katie Funk Wiebe tries to answer the question "Who is a Mennonite Woman?" by examining female characters in works of Mennonite fiction. Wiebe finds in them the female archetype of the Great Earth Mother split into the stereotypical female characters of "Eve Before the Fall" and "Eve After the Fall." Eve Before the Fall is "a pure and asexual preserver of Mennonite faith and culture"[9] and can take various specific forms such as "the virtuous girl, the pious mother, or the saintly grandmother."[10] None of these types, of course, ever threatens the domination of the Mennonite man. Eve After the Fall represents the dark side of the Great Earth Mother, "the Mennonite woman's lower nature . . . controlled solely by womb and hands, not head and heart."[11] Less common in Mennonite fiction, according to Wiebe, is a "New Eve" who "rejects her restricted role in the Mennonite community and searches for ways to leave it if she cannot find a place in it, for to stay seems to her to require she become something other than what she is."[12]

It is precisely this rebellious New Eve who is the focus in much of the recent writing by Mennonite women. Unfortunately, Katie Funk Wiebe's article was written before most of the new women writers appeared on the scene with their militant New Eve characters and speakers. And even in the works Wiebe examines she makes no conscious distinction between those written by male authors and those written by women. And yet the three novels by Mennonite women writers which she discusses all make at least attempts to portray their female protagonists as New Eves, that is, as unwilling to conform to the traditional stereotypes of women. If they fail to do so convincingly it is because all three portray rather weak or flawed female characters and not because their authors lack conviction in their feminist approach. So it is primarily male authors who have projected the Mennonite woman in terms of such simple categories as Eve Before the Fall and Eve After the Fall. More recent Mennonite fiction contains far more complex female characters by women authors, as well as by male authors like Rudy Wiebe and Armin Wiebe.[13]

The Mennonite women writers now in full career are anything but stereotypical in their attitudes toward women, but even when they portray traditional Mennonite women they do so with conscious irony or compassionate understanding. What motivates most of these women writers is anger, controlled anger or, as Hildi Froese Tiessen chooses to call it in a perceptive phrase, "ambivalent lament."[14] Anger or ambivalent lament, these writers, like feminist writers generally, write from a new woman's perspective; they write from the margin, from the underground, "speaking the gap," in one feminist critic's phrase, between the official power language of men and the private voices or outright silence of the women. And because they were denied access to public language and self-definition, Mennonite women writers are "re-membering" themselves, articulating their experience as Mennonite women in terms of the physical experience they were privately allowed to have as wives and mothers. The boldest

of them bring to the fore radical forms of expression by dramatizing their relationships with men and even with the church in starkly explicit sexual terms, sexual terms that have always been present by implication in such hallowed metaphors as "Jesus, lover of my soul," "Christ, the bridegroom of the church," as well as in the erotic imagery of the Song of Songs.

The writer in whose work the anger bred of repression and subordination and male tyranny is at its most intense, at its most dramatic and daringly creative, is the Manitoba poet Di Brandt, who arrived on the Mennonite literary scene in 1987 with a remarkable, long-delayed first volume of verse provocatively entitled *Questions i asked my mother*, which was subsequently short-listed for Canada's most prestigious literary honor, the Governor-General's Award for Poetry, and which won several other prizes. She followed this with *Agnes in the Sky* in 1990, an even more mature collection.[15] By her own admission, Brandt's motive for beginning to write poems was her life-long quarrel with her rigidly patriarchal father, a quarrel still unfinished at his death in 1979.

Di Brandt's poems are written in a deliberately low-keyed, plain style in broken lines without punctuation or capitalization, often reminding the reader of a precocious child expressing its hurts and bewilderment and intuitive insights. The sensibility that controls the voice, however, is meticulous, fearless and intense in its self-exposure and probing of intimate human relationships. In the "foreword" to her first volume she writes:

> learning to speak *in public* to write
> love poems for all
> the world to read meant betraying
> once & for all the
> good Mennonite daughter i tried so
> unsuccesfully to
> become[16]

Her impassioned quarrels over religion with her father, ranging from his literal reading of the Bible and her "questioning tone" in everything she said as a girl, to his belief in "submitting quietly to the teachings of the church," are not dramatized vindictively but with compassion, even an undertow of filial love, as in this poem describing her father in old age:

> ruling his shrunken kingdom from a
> wheelchair . . .
> learning gropingly to say the silent
> love words
> of his abdicating[17]

And in another poem she celebrates in sensual imagery her father in his prime: "his teeth when he laughs/ are incredibly white/ the inside of his lips bright red."[18]

What probably shocked Mennonite readers most in Brandt's first volume were her six "missionary position" poems, in which she explored aspects of Mennonite faith, biblical stories and parables entirely in terms of erotic desire and explicit love-making—the Word made flesh with a vengeance. "missionary position (1)" which evokes periodically such a familiar hymn line as "Jesus, lover of my soul,"[19] is one of the most powerful and daring of these poems and I quote it in its entirety:

> let me tell you what it's like
> having God for a father & jesus
> for a lover on this old mother
> earth you who no longer know
> the old story the part about the
> Virgin being of course a myth
> made up by Catholics for an easy
> way out it's not that easy i can
> tell you right off the old man
> in his room demands bloody hard
> work he with his rod & his hard
> crooked staff well jesus he's
> different he's a good enough lay
> it's just that he prefers miracles
> to fishing & sometimes I get tired
> waiting all day for his bit of
> magic though late at night i burn
> with his fire & the old mother
> shudders and quakes under us when
> God's not looking[20]

There are several things to note about this shocking poem. Firstly, it is meant to shock, to wrench the reader violently out of his/her complacent acceptance of certain biblical metaphors without ever considering their physical and sexual implications. As Brandt has said in an interview, "The bride of Christ—it is sexual imagery. But if the father and son imagery was to be taken literally, why was the feminine part just allegorical?"[21] Secondly, the reader should not remain oblivious to the humor, the sense of play in such a poem. To read it *literally* is, of course, to fall right back into the old Mennonite trap of literalism. Finally, in a strictly theological sense the poem actually presents a very conventional view of God as the stern Old Testament law giver and Christ as the New Testament radical whose message is love rather than the law.

In her new book *Agnes in the Sky*, Brandt's anger is still there but the bitterness has receded and more than one poem strikes a mature note of acceptance and reconciliation. As one reviewer has suggested, the "emotional engagement of the book is like a successful exorcism,"[22] with at least some of the poems offering "a moving expression of release from a father's—and a tradition's—violence,"[23] as in the ecstatic affirmation of life in the following lines:

> *yo!* let the rivers flow let the prairie
> grass grow let the wild rice sow its old
> magic in the wind let the God shaped
> papyrus shaped hole in our hearts
> disappear
> the great styrofoam wound in the sky
> weeping be healed[24]

Audrey Poetker is another young Manitoba poet whose first volume—*i sing for my dead in german*—shatters some hoary Mennonite male icons and insists fiercely on the importance and authenticity of the woman's voice. Coming as she does from a less fundamentalist-minded community than Di Brandt, Poetker writes from a more relaxed ethnic stance, without as much suppressed anger, perhaps, but with even more sexual agressiveness, if anything. Poetker is confident and candid about her woman's role within the Mennonite ethos, but confines herself largely to explorations of her own emotional states as a lover and family rebel. She too refuses to accept the domination of fathers and grandfathers with its enforced silence of women. The impossibility of meaningful communication between patriarchal father and rebellious daughter is poignantly dramatized in her ironically entitled "Father's Day Poem":

> half-way up the stairs
> i turn around
> dad's in the living room
> i give him the paper
> thank-you he says
>
> i go upstairs and cry
> into my pillow
> the feathers of grandma's chickens
> choke the sound[25]

She identifies with and tries to speak for her Low German-speaking grandmothers, whom she knows to be victims of the patriarchy. In a poem for her Gramma Poetker mourning her grandfather's death she laments:

gramma gramma
we got screwed

i say it louder and louder
but then knowing the rules
leave tears to mark
the pages

of worn german songs[26]

And when she visits her dying Grandma Wiebe in the hospital, they joke and laugh together but the poet is again forced to end the poem in frustration.

grosmama i say *grosmama*
but can't remember the low german word
for love

The point is that the word love in *Plautdietsch* is not normally used as a verb. The best one can do is say *Etj sie die goot* ("I am you good"), a linguistic aberration that may in itself be another indication of a male-dominated society.

Audrey Poetker's love poems tend to be strident, exhibitionistic and provocative rather than tender and lyrical. The poem "so you say you love me eh" begins, "so let's pretend/ for one minute/ that you're human (no three you say/ most men last one)" and ends with the cryptic lines, "the crux of it all/ is knowing yourself to death/ my love."[27] Tender emotions and a soaring lyricism, however, suffuse the poems she wrote in memory of her grandparents and sister Susie, who were killed in a car accident, as in "touching home," an elegiac evocation of growing up with her sister:

sprinting alongside of you
holding back against
the wind letting you run
strong head high
into the sweet summer . . .
& if you won
it was no sacrifice
but sacrament
in the days when you touching home
& me touching you
meant safe[28]

Another pair of accomplished Mennonite women poets of a rather different kind are Sarah Klassen of Winnipeg and Jean Janzen of Fresno. Both come from a Mennonite Brethren background and both write, in their different ways, from a Christian point of view within the Mennonite community. And yet, given their quiet, mature acceptance of their faith and heritage, both poets have developed richly feminine voices and perspectives as distinctive and candid as those of their more militant sister poets. Both show equally serious concerns with the issues of the Mennonite woman's public presence and search for identity. They also draw on Russian-Mennonite family memories of the holocaust in revolutionary Russia, memories which in a sense form their starting points as poets. By way of contrast, Di Brandt and Audrey Poetker are descended from the older 1870s group of Canadian Mennonites and no longer have those direct Russian memories, which may in part account for their greater sense of ethnic alienation.

In Sarah Klassen's first collection of poems—*Journey to Yalta* (1988)—the Crimean resort of Yalta functions as a *topos*, a place for the imagination, whereby the poet can reflect her Russian Mennonite family past through the prism of her own impressions and emotions during a recent visit to the city. These vividly realized poems form the key section in the book and establish Klassen's voice as essentially elegiac and deceptively restrained, austere rather than mournful, compassionate and demurely open, non-confrontational but energized by a sly irony that frequently has arresting, even devastating implications. Without rejecting the patriarchal social structure, she knows how to undercut its fantasies and pretensions with a few deft images and tone to match, as in the poem "Emigrant":

Grandfather refused to believe
the revolution. It can't last
he said citing God . . .

Order will overcome chaos
he assured the fugitives
shivering in damp corners of the cold
cellar . . .

Eyes shining he reminded them, the
righteous
will inherit the land
their enemies vanish like wind-blown
smoke.

Grandfather may have forgotten
for the moment old Lazarus
who was meek and just, and
never gained an acre of this rich earth.[29]

Again, Sarah Klassen's imaginative identification is with the women in her family, especially her grandmother who was forced to seek a cure for her tuberculosis in Yalta in 1918, while the poet's mother, fifteen that summer, "grew restless/ having lived too long without clapping/ her hands and dancing."[30] The patriarchal sins against women are sharply etched in poems like "Small deaths" where the Grandmother after every child lost in death, "grieving/ searched all conceivable corners/ of her soul/ for evidence of unexamined sins,"[31] and in "August, 1918" where her future mother is described as "Knowing the world/ dangles from proud words of men/ whose names you can never remember."[32] But Klassen can also be humorous in her treatment of the patriarchal imperative. She concludes a poem about her great-grandfather in Russia, who married a much younger second wife, with a wry picture:

She walked quietly beside him, bore him
eight more sons. Millers and strong
farmers
they surround the old man
sitting in honour beside her coffin.[33]

Eschewing the spirited self-dramatization of Di Brandt and Audrey Poetker, Sarah Klassen chooses instead to remain the sensitive, empathetic observer who locates her own identity by providing voices and presences for her foremothers while remaining self-possessed and keenly aware of her own heritage and where she fits into it.

Words For The Silence (1984) is the suggestive title of Jean Janzen's first book of poems. Since then her poems, both old and new, have appeared in several anthologies and in various journals. Like Sarah Klassen, Janzen finds meaning in her Russian Mennonite past by exploring the personalities and destinies of her forebears, both those who escaped the revolutionary horrors and those who were sucked into the Red vortex. She too takes as her *topos* the patriarchy in which the woman's voice remains private or harshly repressed altogether. In the poem "These Words Are For You, Grandmother," a touching tribute to a grandmother who committed suicide in unexplained circumstances, the poet imagines herself as vocal surrogate for a foremother unable to speak for herself:

The photograph tells me that I
have eyes and hands like yours
and a mouth with a heavy lower lip.
Look, I am shaping it for words,
making sounds for you. I am speaking
the syllables you couldn't say.[34]

Jean Janzen's poetic instincts are always for affirmative interaction, for the balm of reconciliation. In "This Moonless Night," she interweaves remembered images from a trip to the Soviet Union with images and scenes from the cruel Russian past in which her ancestors suffered.

These stands of birches are like music
on a page, or music itself, the delicate
branches drooping and swaying among
the straight trunks of paper-white. . . .

I think of the women and children,
the grandfathers, who tried to hide
among them, how they were pushed
from cattle cars onto empty steppes
of Kazakhstan, how some survived on
field mice in their earthen huts.

But the poem ends on a final note of spiritual harmony:

Listen to that music.
Chekhov's Masha walks among the
trees.
We must live, she says. And the new
generation of birches grows whiter,
even in the moonless night.[35]

Much of Janzen's work breathes this kind of gentle hope for humanity and expresses the quiet joy of fulfilled love and acceptance in a modern world that has room for faith and transcendence as well as for pain and suffering. There are moments, she writes in "Sometimes" when "we know/ with a certainty/ that we are not made/ for earth/ a feeling/ that already/ with hair burning/ we rise."[36] She is a poet who knows how to uplift by interweaving elegiac past with celebratory present.

To include the widely acclaimed Sandra Birdsell among Mennonite writers may border on the presumptuous, although her mother was of Russian-Mennonite descent and Birdsell grew up in the partly Mennonite town of Morris in southern Manitoba. Her father, however, was Metis, that is, of mixed French Canadian and Indian blood, and Birdsell claims that she does not think of herself as a Mennonite writer.[37] Growing up in a mixed family in an ethnically diverse community, she must have felt much like the teen-aged girl in one of her short stories who reflects disgustedly: "Being Mennonite was like having acne. It was shameful, dreary. No one invited you out."[38] Nevertheless, her three published volumes of fiction all include Mennonite characters, themes and narrative situations, and her work fits well within accepted parameters of Mennonite writing.

Birdsell's two volumes of short stories, collectively titled *Agassiz Stories*, as well as her novel *The Missing Child* (1989), have as their main setting the town of Agassiz, obviously modelled on her home town of Morris. The central characters in her short stories are members of the Lafreniere family, again modelled on her own Bartlette family. Since almost all her stories have female protagonists, the woman's point of view is all-pervasive in Birdsell's works. Beginning with Mika, the Lafreniere mother, and continuing with her (mostly) rebellious daughters the ethnic atmosphere of the stories tends to be more Mennonite than Metis. But Mika and her daughters Betty, Lureen and Truda feel culturally and ethnically misplaced, separated from their roots, confused and angry over their lack of identity. Trapped within a patriarchal system, low on the social ladder and despised in town as a mixed breed of people, they defiantly seek freedom and independence. As one critic has noted, "Birdsell's characters live on the edges, uncertain of their connection with their parents and grandparents, their siblings, their neighbors, their friends, their society, their religion."[39]

Mika, the mother, is one of the most tortured souls in Birdsell's fiction. Raised to be the subservient Mennonite wife and mother, she yearns for a freer life herself while anxiously trying to protect her sexually precocious daughters from young male predators, not to mention from their own hot blood. In "The Rock Garden" Mika makes a symbolic gesture of rebellion by taking the day off from cooking for her large brood and even from taking care of the babies, and spends her day in the heavy labor of making a rock garden for herself. In another story—"Night Travellers"—she has a brief fling behind her husband's back with an itinerant workman in defiance of her elderly Russian Mennonite father, who spies on her. He appeals to her in private as a concerned father and Christian:

"We're a community," he said. "People united by our belief, like a family. When one member hurts, the whole family suffers."

"A family. I'm not part of a family," Mika said. "I don't belong anywhere."

"How can you say that? The [Mennonite] women welcome you into their homes. They pray for you."

"Oh, they welcome me alright. I'm to be pitied, prayed for. It gives them something to do."[40]

We note here that while the old Mennonite patriarch can act as the voice of conscience, he is powerless to control his daughter's conduct or, indeed, the attitudes of her family, a family "lost" to the Mennonite heritage he represents. When the same Grandfather Thiessen dies in a later story, "The Day My Grandfather Died," granddaughter Lureen, who despises her Mennonite family connections and pretends to be French Canadian to the point of speaking English with a French accent, tries to avoid her hurt and grief by skipping school and spending the afternoon at the home of Claudette, her French Canadian girlfriend. Lureen drinks beer with her friend and watches her dancing lasciviously with a young family workman. In the end she gets sick, and filled with self-loathing breaks down weeping and trying to justify her grief and love for her grandfather to Claudette:

"An old man is an old man, right? It doesn't matter what nationality, they're all the same. He was old and he was mine and he died."[41]

And so in her grief Lureen defiantly finds her woman's voice, a voice that asserts her rebellion but also accepts the humanity that binds her to family and her Mennonite heritage. But that is about as close as a Sandra Birdsell character comes to an open acceptance of Mennonite ethnic identity.

Magdalene Redekop and her sister Elizabeth Falk have recently begun experimenting with a new form of feminist writing, a marvelously subtle "remembering" of the Mennonite woman through a form of double-voiced fiction based on private memories of a shared family background. In the two two-part narratives the sisters have published so far, they develop memories and themes contrapuntally with one sister recalling private images associated with growing up in the Falk family in southern Manitoba, images which the second sister then picks up and weaves into her narrative with additions and variations of her own.[42] The result is a rich narrative fugue that transforms private memories and feelings into unique patterns of shared insight and meaning. At the center of these meditations on the woman's neglected experience within a patriarchal Mennonite family and community is the mother of the Falk family, the matriarchal link whom Magdalene Redekop celebrated in the fine autobiographical essay to which I alluded earlier.[43]

A brief analysis would not do justice to the subtle insights and illuminating use of language in these wonderful fictional recreations by the two sisters, so a short description of their techniques

along with a few illustrations will have to suffice. In her narrative "Moving:1. The House," Elizabeth Falk, trying to survive the painful process of a divorce, begins by reminiscing about all the places she lived in during her unhappy marriage. That leads her to reminiscing about "the big white house" in the country that was the Falk home when the family was growing up. Personal and family memories rise up on wings of association: her grandfather supervising the building of her parents' house, sister Magdalene being conceived in the granary their parents were living in while waiting for the house to be completed, her father's stern injunction the exact, literal truth must be told at all times, her fears that the family home would be broken into because it was never locked at night, the house filled with the laughter of eleven children, and finally the house being sold and moved to another location, its identity completely altered for her as a result. Amidst all her memories Elizabeth Falk is learning how to be her own woman: "I am alone now," she writes. "I am not afraid. My apartment is on the fourth floor and faces east. Every morning the sunrise is different."[44]

Magdalene Redekop, in her answering narrative "Moving:2. The Little Dipper" examines her sister's images and memory associations by holding them up to her own light of memory and adding to them her own related images, making them all render more and more facets of meaning. At first Redekop expresses fear of entering the family home via memory again. She recalls instead the setting of the house, the reassuring sights and sounds and smells she associates with the old farmyard.[45] When she does enter the house in memory she is relieved to find the warm presence of her mother, who "can swell up so big that she fills up the whole house."[46] Redekop also recalls key Low German words and phrases which become leitmotifs for her memory, yielding ever richer meanings as she stops to examine them.

Redekop does not, however, insist on hard-and-fast meaning in her story, the kind demanded by autobiography or social history. At one point she says: "This is fiction. . . . I see that I write fiction because I do not have the answers. All I can do is put things side by side or show how they look when they lie on top of each other."[47] And in her concluding section she confesses,

> . . . I can't make an end unless I admit that this is all made up from beginning to the end. This is not really family history. This is not about one family that is unlike all other families. . . . It is about how I make things up because I need to believe that I was made in the [granary]. It is about how we all need to believe that we began in love and will end in love. We need it so much that we will do almost anything to make it come out that way. Making fiction is like making love.[48]

What is of crucial significance here is the primacy of the imagination and the unique kind of language it utilizes in recovering the woman's identity. Only by revitalizing the woman's experience through the creative imagination can her voice be publically sounded, her body made visible. Otherwise, as Redekop puts it in her earlier essay, the Mennonite woman remains "a body without a mouth."[49] The private, domestic women's stories "urgently demand to be told side by side, lovingly, because only this love prevents the body of the mother being torn apart."[50] That is the true re-membering of the Mennonite woman through the power of the imagination with its "ability to identify with another," as Redekop puts it.[51]

And she repeatedly invokes Low German words and phrases because in her Mennonite tradition "it is the language of domesticity and laughter," and therefore preeminently suited to the woman's voice. A particularly beautiful example is the way the Low German word *leljebleiv* (lavender or pale purple), her mother's favorite color, conjures up an image of an act of love and beauty for Redekop. She remembers that her farmer father always seeded flax in a field that could be seen from her parents' bedroom and surmises now that he did so because he knew how her mother adored the lavender color of flax in bloom. And so this closing memory becomes a metaphor through which the myth of patriarchal power combines with the private myth of the Mennonite woman's love for beauty and color to form a rich mythic collage of love and reconciliation.[52]

In summary, what is impressive about Mennonite women's writing, apart from its honesty and fearlessness, is its unwillingness to accept male literary models per se, its sensitivity in letting literary forms and voices rise spontaneously from the well of creativity without trying to force them into the controlled power myths preferred by male writers. What emerges in the writing of these women is a new kind of Mennonite voice, a voice that does not seek to impose order and coherence on Mennonite experience, to set up a traditional hierarchy of agreed-upon meaning, a set of disciplined, male-oriented myths supposedly defining and expressing the collective experience. Instead, women writers develop more natural, more subversive voices that are not afraid to speak their own vulnerability, their own defenselessness, their powerlessness to provide definitive and dramatic answers to the big questions of human existence. In the end, of course, the stories and poems of women writers *do* take the form of literary myths, but they are more tentative, open-ended and unassuming literary myths, myths that will take readers into the warm intimate embrace of the experience itself, rather than attempting to penetrate and interpret the puzzling, unyielding nature of that experience. Thus, the writing of Mennonite women is bringing a new enriching dimension to the exciting phenomenon of Mennonite writing today, a dimension that for the first time acknowledges the full public identity of women in Mennonite society.

ENDNOTES

[1]Hildi Froese Tiessen, "Mennonite/s Writing in Canada: An Introduction" to *The New Quarterly:* Special Issue: Mennonite/s Writing in Canada, vol. 19, Nos. 1&2 (Spring/Summer, 1990): 12.

[2]See, for example, Carol Penner, "Mennonite Women's History: A Survey," *Journal of Mennonite Studies*, vol.9 (1991): 122-135 for summaries of these and other women's writing on Mennonite women.

[3]According to *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, vol.4, 973, women were often given milder sentences than death, which may in part account for the difference in number between male and female martyrs.

[4]See *ME*, vol.4, 973.

[5]See M. Lucille Marr, "Anabaptist Women of the North: Peers in the Faith, Subordinates in Marriage," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, vol. LXI, no.4 (October, 1987): 352 and passim.

[6]Marlene Epp, "Women in Canadian Mennonite History: 'Uncovering the Underside'," *JMS*, 5 (1987): 104.

[7]Magdalene Redekop, "Through the Mennonite Looking Glass," in *Why I Am A Mennonite*, ed. Harry Loewen (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1988), 243 and passim.

[8]Ibid., 243.

[9]Katie Funk Wiebe, "The Mennonite Woman in Mennonite Fiction," in *Visions and Realities: Essays, Poems and Fiction Dealing with Mennonite Issues*, eds. Harry Loewen and Al Reimer (Winnipeg: Hyperion Press, 1985), 231.

[10]Ibid.
[11]Ibid., 241.
[12]Ibid., 232.
[13]Wiebe might have included in her analysis, for example, Rudy Wiebe's *My Lovely Enemy* (1983), as its four female characters offer a rich diversity of characterization.
[14]Hildi Froese Tiessen, Introduction to *Prairie Fire:* A Special Issue on Canadian Mennonite Writing, vol.11, No.2, 10.
[15]Both volumes were published by Turnstone Press in Winnipeg, a non-Mennonite regional publisher that has published around twenty volumes by Mennonite authors in recent years.
[16]Di Brandt, "foreword," *Questions i asked my mother*.
[17]Ibid., 13.
[18]Ibid., 14.
[19]I am indebted for this and other hints of interpretation in this paper to Victor G. Doerksen's unpublished paper " 'Our Father Which Art in Heaven. . . .': Some Thoughts on the Father Image in Recent Mennonite Poetry."
[20]Ibid., 28.
[21]Di Brandt, *Mennonite Reporter*, June 12, 1989, 9.
[22]Maurice Mierau, *Prairie Fire* Special Issue, 215.
[23]Ibid., 216.
[24]Di Brandt, *Agnes in the Sky*, 25.
[25]Audrey Poetker, *i sing for my dead in german*, 17. She has also written a long powerful narrative poem about the Mennonite heritage in its historical and spiritual aspects which is, as yet, unpublished.
[26]Ibid., 13.
[27]Ibid., 45-46.
[28]Ibid., 65.
[29]Sarah Klassen, *Journey to Yalta*, 30.
[30]Ibid., 39.
[31]Ibid., 2.
[32]Ibid., 10.
[33]Ibid., 29.
[34]Jean Janzen, et al., *Three Mennonite Poets* (Intercourse, Penn.: Good Books, 1986), 10.
[35]Jean Janzen, *Piecework*, 59.
[36]*Three Mennonite Poets*, 29.
[37]Sandra Birdsell, *Prairie Fire* Special Issue, 191.
[38]Sandra Birdsell, *Agassiz Stories*, 131.
[39]Charlene Diehl-Jones, "Sandra Birdsell's *Agassiz Stories:* Speaking the Gap," in *Contemporary Manitoba Writers*, ed. Kenneth James Hughes (Winnipeg: Turnstone Press, 1990), 96.
[40]Sandra Birdsell, *Agassiz Stories*, 82.
[41]Ibid., 141.
[42]Elizabeth Falk and Magdalene Redekop, "Side by Side by," in *Canadian Literature*, no. 127, Winter, 1990, 10-28, and "Moving 1. The House" and "Moving 2. The Little Dipper," in *Prairie Fire* Special Issue, 20-45.
[43]Magdalene Redekop, "Through the Mennonite Looking Glass."
[44]Elizabeth Falk, "Moving 1. The House," in *Prairie Fire* Special Issue, 27.
[45]Magdalene Redekop, "Moving 2. The Little Dipper," in *Prairie Fire* Special Issue, 32-33.
[46]Ibid., 41.
[47]Ibid., 43.
[48]Ibid., 44.
[49]Redekop, "Through the Mennonite Looking Glass," 239.
[50]Magdalene Redekop, "Side by Side by," 18.
[51]Ibid.
[52]Ibid., 45.

Passion Week

Singing "Were You There?" today in the dark chapel,
one tallow candle smoking straight for the vaulted oak
roof, it comes back to me like that first time I saw my
mother's stretch marks, she smiling to remember my ten-
pound, four-ounce birth, and I knowing that I did it, not
remembering when I put my sword into His ribs, though
I know He is dead; I can see His feet suspended above
me, flesh clumps of toes hanging brown toward the
earth, His drooping face without eyes . . . but He sees,
He sees, for I am not invisible, not Invisible Man roam-
ing sewers underground, come to the street in time to
witness an eviction on the sidewalk, a careless, un-
ticketed garage sale which does not sell, all the money
changers lured instead by the woman's baboon-butt blue
eye-lids as she gyrates across the floor, a floor that will
skitter your nerves with electrical force if you touch it, if
you reach for the coins that flatten themselves, trying to
hide their glitter as I am trying to hide here in this dark
service from the smoke-wreathed ceiling, from these
breathing bodies beside me, from my own beating heart.

Raylene Hinz-Penner

Dialogue with Washington: Mennonites and the Test of Faith

James F. S. Amstutz

Introduction

Nineteen-eighty saw the return of registration for a possible military draft in the United States. That sparked a conversation between Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and Selective Service System (SSS) over the possible employment of alternative service workers. The dialogue lasted nearly a decade and provided an interesting case study of church/state issues. The crucial question was whether Mennonite Central Committee qualified as a potential employer if it retained its personnel requirements calling for a Christian faith commitment. MCC, basing its judgment on forty years of dealing with Selective Service, thought yes. Selective Service, citing recent Supreme court cases and a new "fairness and equity" dogma, said no. The debate became known as the "test of faith" story.

In one sense the conflict was nothing more than a squabble over the interpretation of an obscure legal regulation. On the other hand the dialogue with Selective Service was also part of the larger, ongoing drama of how church and state coexist.

Genesis of the "Test of Faith": 1980-1982

Jump-starting SSS out of a four year "deep stand-by" meant that regulatory law and procedures under the 1948 Military Selective Service Act would be developed to readiness levels should Congress call for a draft. Provisions for the classification and processing of conscientious objectors into non-combatant or alternative service were included.

SSS developed a working document called "Concept Paper On Alternative Service," which Edgar Metzler obtained on December 9, 1980. Metzler was serving as interim Director of the Washington office of MCC while Delton Franz was on sabbatical leave. MCC sent copies of the Concept Paper to constituent conferences seeking their comments and counsel on how to respond. This is standard US Peace Section procedure when dealing with the government on issues affecting Mennonites. Peace Section plays a watchdog role by keeping track of developments on particular issues and facilitating discussion on how Mennonites might respond.

On January 16, 1981, MCC US Peace Section and the various Mennonite and Brethren in Christ conference representatives met in Chicago to discuss a cooperative Mennonite response to the alternative service Concept Paper. Donald Eberly, senior policy analyst for alternative service at SSS, came to dialogue with the group.

The first major point of concern raised in Chicago with Eberly was the seed of the "test of faith" controversy. The alternative service Concept Paper failed to recognize church service programs and personnel policies as valid for alternative service work. Existing voluntary service programs and guidelines had been acceptable in the past as alternative service work options for COs. What had changed?

Eberly did not rule out blanket endorsement of church programs but said that if federal funding was involved, guidelines prohibited religious discrimination. He said Selective Service would be willing to negotiate with potential sponsoring groups and that Congress would need to appropriate funds for alternative service.[1]

The basic issue at the Chicago meeting was acceptance of existing Mennonite programs with current personnel requirements as alternative service jobs. Since programs like MCC require a Christian faith commitment from all volunteers, this "test of faith" was a fundamental obstacle for SSS approval. Although Mennonites expressed their concerns directly to Eberly, the Concept Paper had already been submitted to the *Federal Register* for publication. Regulatory law must be submitted to the *Federal Register* for public scrutiny and comment before it can be adopted as policy by a government agency. The Concept Paper appeared in the January 22, 1981 issue, less than a week after the Chicago meeting. Concern about alternative service mounted.

In a three-page response dated March 17, 1981, MCC US Peace Section called the Concept Paper "a reversal rather than a progression of the experience of the conscientious objector community and the government throughout our history."[2] On May 7, James Longacre, chairman of the MCC US Peace Section, testified before the House and Senate Appropriations Sub-committee on HUD-Independent Agencies. These congressional sub-committees have direct fiscal oversight of Selective Service. Edgar Metzler wrote in a constituent newsletter that testifying before Congress:

> is a way of establishing a record of our concerns, particularly on the alternative service paper, which can be the basis of ongoing discussions with Committee members and a base for further discussion with Selective Service as they proceed with modification of the Concept Paper.[3]

Longacre's testimony was the first of a five-part response adopted by the US Peace Section. The remaining steps included a delegation to visit legislators,

continuing staff work in Washington, a second delegation to visit legislators, and a broader consultation among MCC constitutents.[4]

Delton Franz and Edgar Metzler met with SSS Deputy Director James Bond and alternative service staff person Larry Roffee at Selective Service headquarters in June of 1981. They were told that the Reagan White House would appoint a new director, possibly a retired military man, and the alternative service regulations were therefore delayed. The confirmation by the Senate Armed Service Committee of a military officer to direct Selective Service could mean an entirely different view of alternative service, thereby eclipsing planning done by current staff.[5] While regulations were not forthcoming, a revised Concept Paper was. The new version reflected changes on issues of concern to Mennonites. Among them was "the legitimate right of church agencies to screen and maintain standards for applicants to their programs. . . ."[6] For the time being this phrase alleviated major concern over the "test of faith" issue.

Other problem areas remained, such as the increased role of military personnel in alternative service administration, job prioritization that moved civilian work closer to national defense aims, and a ban on overseas service.

A Mennonite delegation to Congress in June, 1981 was postponed because of the Air Traffic Controllers' strike. A delegation of three staff members was sent to Selective Service in October after retired Major General Thomas K. Turnage was confirmed as the new director. They were informed that there may or may not be another Concept Paper and that regulations may be published by early 1982. Another delegation was projected for late Fall.[7] This was a wait-and-see period. There was some anxiety over the constant changes in SSS personnel and the increased militarization of this civilian agency. Did MCC's forty years of dealing with Selective Service on these issues mean anything to the new generation of SSS staff? Did they fully appreciate the deeply held conviction that Mennonite COs expected to serve their two-year requirement of alternative service with their church agencies? Only time would tell.

By June 7, 1982, new alternative service regulations were published in the *Federal Register* with the standard thirty-day comment period. On June 16, representatives of ten Mennonite and Amish groups met in Akron, PA, to discuss problem areas of the regulations. It was an impressive gathering of the MCC constituent bodies. A "Hotline mailing and Action Alert" from US Peace Section was sent to Mennonite constituents concerned about alternative service matters. It urged Mennonites to petition SSS for an extension of the comment period and to voice their concerns about the regulations. MCC routinely sought an extension to the comment period simply to allow more time for constituent bodies to gather and formulate a response.

SSS did in fact extend the comment period an additional thirty days and two delegations were mobilized from MCC. The first visited Congress. It consisted of John E. Toews (Mennonite Brethren), Paul Landis (Mennonite Church), Robert Kreider (General Conference), Delton Franz and Jim Amstutz (MCC staff). The second delegation was sent to SSS to carry concerns drawn from the June 16 inter-Mennonite meeting. They were told by SSS that a "procedures manual" would address many of their concerns. This raised a red flag since procedures are internal documents not subject to public scrutiny.

Major General Thomas K. Turnage, Director of Selective Service

Finally, a National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors (NISBCO) delegation (including James Longacre) met with SSS to review the alternative service regulations line by line. Over 700 comments were sent to SSS concerning these regulations. Clearly the concern among the conscientious objector community was being made known. But would SSS listen and respond favorably? These were questions carried to the halls of Congress.

By September the House Appropriations Sub-committee on HUD-Independent Agencies took action indicating CO concerns were indeed being heard. The committee added language to their Fiscal Year 1983 bill that gave SSS a clear warning. Selective Service was advised to: "consult closely with religious and CO groups regarding planning and implementation of alternative service."[8]

A second version of the proposed alternative service regulations was published in the *Federal Register* on September 30. The thirty-day comment period was extended without much difficulty. Mennonite constituents were again urged to send their comments and James Longacre hand delivered the MCC response as part of a NISBCO delegation in November.

Significant problem areas remained with alternative service proposals but ironically the "test of faith" was not among them. This was part of the confusion when the next layer of the dialogue began to unfold. Some important groundwork was laid during the two years of renewed draft-related activity. Mennonites were keeping close tabs on Selective Service and had established a working credibility with key congressional offices. But was alternative service even possible under proposed guidelines? That was the key question for 1983.

1983: Turning Point

Nineteen-eighty-three was the critical year for the "test of faith" debate with Selective Service. What appeared to be a significant breakthrough in alternative service planning with Selective Service turned sour by year's end. No one anticipated just how serious the resulting conflict was or how long it would last.

"It may, in fact, be necessary to remind each new administration and each new Selective Service Director of the Mennonite presence and perspective."

Selective Service made a conciliatory move in mid-January when a small delegation was invited to review the third version of alternative service regulations. Larry Roffee, the new head of alternative service planning at SSS, phoned John Stoner to personally invite the Mennonites. Roffee even suggested names of persons who might comprise the delegation noting, "All of you have been in before."[9] This was a bold move on the part of SSS. Relations had been difficult given the unacceptable alternative service regulations that evolved from the original Concept Paper. What would this third version look like? Was this invitation a direct result of the mandate given SSS by the Appropriations Sub-committee?

On January 19 John Stoner, Delton Franz, Jim Amstutz (all MCC US Peace Section staff), James Longacre (US Peace Section Chair), Daniel King (Beachy Amish representative) and Bob Hull (General Conference representative) made the trip to Washington. The delegation was ushered into a conference room at SSS headquarters and given thirty minutes to review the proposed regulations. It was clear that SSS had made some significant changes in favor of the CO community. For instance, the eligible employer language section looked similar to the old I-W regulations during the Vietnam war era. In a brief follow-up meeting with Roffee and other SSS staff, it was evident that negotiating an employment agreement with the Mennonites was on the front burner. Roffee commented that an alternative service employer "cannot discriminate on the basis of religion but they can set behavioral and pay standards." This was noted in the written report as a possible "trouble spot for private religious agencies such as MCC."[10]

On balance these new regulations were a major breakthrough. One trouble spot seemed minor compared to the radical change in tone and posture on the part of SSS. As Stoner observed at the end of his report, "It has taken two and a half to three years to get these regulations in such a form that they are more acceptable to the CO community." The meeting ended with both groups sensing a new spirit of cooperation and optimism. Stoner was also careful to point out that the Mennonites are not anxious to "grease the wheels of war" by making their job easier. Roffee said he understood this. Just how important was it to get the Mennonites on board the SSS alternative service program? SSS Director Turnage, in a letter following up the delegation visit, said, "We consider you an important member of our constituency, and appreciate your having made your views known to us."[11] He ended by inviting MCC to make official comments on the new regulations. Why the sudden conciliatory language?

Don Eberly, interviewed for this study in 1989, was asked if SSS had any official or unoffical mandate to get the Mennonites on board with their planning. He said both Rostker and Turnage emphasized fairness and equity in planning for alternative service. "Our doors were open to any group that visited us and it tended to be the Mennonites and Brethren and a few other of the smaller ones." When pressed further on this point Eberly said, "We were certainly aware that historically the Mennonites have been the largest single denomination in alternative service—there's no question about that. But there wasn't any directive to cater to the Mennonites."[12]

The Mennonite response to the third version of the alternative service regulations was generally very positive. The language in both the official MCC response and a sampling of individual Mennonite responses was appreciative and cordial. The General Conference Mennonite Church response written by Bob Hull and Fred Loganbill is indicative of the Mennonite position. The closing paragraph reads:

> Again, we fervently hope there is no need for implementation of an alternative service program because of a military draft or other compulsory program. However, because of the possibility of such we continue to encourage Selective Service to design and plan a truly civilian alternative service program that provides meaningful jobs for all potential conscientious objectors whether from a historic peace church background or not and regardless of a religious, moral or ethical basis for their claim. We will continue to monitor closely your planning. Thank you again for your attention to our concerns and the revisions made to date.[13]

Mennonites were cautious about working out a "special deal" with Selective Service. This was the mode of operation when General Lewis B. Hershey was at the helm of SSS. Personal contacts and arrangements often superseded official policy. The Old Order Amish, in fact, stated at the 1982 inter-Mennonite gathering to discuss alternative service that, "When the time comes, we will work something out for our boys with Selective Service." Andrew Kinsinger of the Old Order had dealt with Hershey before and assumed that the same arrangements could be worked out again.

The majority of the Mennonites, however, felt obliged to speak for the rights of other conscientious objectors. As was the case with the special meeting to preview the regulations, other groups such as NISBCO, were not invited. Eberly noted in retrospect that there was a strong confrontation between Warren Hoover, Executive Director of NISBCO and General Turnage, shortly after Turnage took office at SSS. 1983 was Hoover's last year at NISBCO and Turnage was just beginning. That fallout soured relations between SSS and NISBCO for as long as Turnage was at SSS. Because of that, MCC staff often had access to information at SSS when NISBCO did not. MCC made it a point to share whatever was learned with the larger CO community.

The new regulations were finalized in the *Federal Register* by spring of 1983. Staff were instructed by the Peace Sec-

tion board to proceed cautiously in negotiating an alternative service employment agreement with SSS. Eberly and Roffee had communicated their interest in another meeting to discuss an agreement. Trust levels were building and no one from SSS had ever officially visited MCC. In May, a delegation from SSS was invited to the MCC headquarters in Akron, PA. They accepted.

The historic meeting took place on June 8, 1983. Larry Roffee, Don Eberly and Carol McClure were the SSS representatives. John Stoner, Delton Franz, Jim Amstutz, William T. Snyder (Executive Office), Edgar Stoesz (Overseas), and H. A. Penner (U. S. Program) represented MCC. Bill Snyder's welcoming comment to the SSS staff was: "You must feel like a lion in a den of Daniels!" Indeed, SSS staff did seem out of their element in the midst of Mennonite informality in rural Lancaster County.

The conversation focused on the possibility of MCC becoming an employer for alternative service workers. Both groups shared information and spun out several hypothetical situations to test perceptions and options. No commitment was made to sign an agreement, since MCC would need time to consult with constituents about the role of MCC as an umbrella group for Mennonite sponsored alternative service. Germane to the "test of faith" issue was the SSS response to questions posed by MCC staff. "Can Mennonite youth be guaranteed a position with a Mennonite employer?" SSS responded that any CO can request a particular job and request a particular employer. The employer cannot, however, discriminate on the basis of religion. Eberly said they had discussed this with the Hutterites. The Hutterites could insist any alternative service worker follow the same rules of conduct and discipline followed by the members of the community. While this did not rule out non-Hutterites, it would likely discourage most from choosing that employer. This was precisely the kind of internal procedural agreement that fostered special arrangements with individual groups.

When asked for a clarification about the restrictions placed on alternative service employers if there was no government money involved (the idea of paying alternative service workers had been dropped by this time), Eberly said that it was still a government program. Alternative service was not divorced from the government because transportation, medical care, and some housing would be provided for alternative service workers. If a person found out that he was denied an alternative service job by an employer solely on the basis of his religion, that could be a legal problem both because of historical precedent and because of the screening based on behavioral standards.[14]

What clouded MCC's understanding of the serious nature of Eberly's response was that it constituted a verbal interpretation of the legal regulations. Nothing that specific appeared in the printed copy of the regulations excluding MCC as an employer. But once again in conversation with SSS staff, the "no discrimination based on religion" language surfaced.

The meeting ended on a cordial note. Eberly suggested MCC might even want to write up a draft of an agreement acceptable to their behavioral standards. Stoner said Mennonites do not want to give the appearance of facilitating conscription and that MCC would need time to process this information with constituent groups.

Thus ended six months of constructive dialogue between the two groups. Because SSS had made such a dramatic change in policy early in the year, moving ahead with a contingency plan for alternative service should a draft be implemented seemed logical.

Phone calls, letters and personal visits were relaxed, almost friendly. Like sports competitors, MCC and SSS had been in the arena with each other off and on for nearly three years. They began to understand each other's game plan and had played both home and away. What would signing an alternative service agreement really mean? Would MCC and other Mennonite service groups have enough freedom to operate with integrity? Were Mennonites being too accommodating with "the system"? Pursuing an agreement seemed prudent given the fact that most Mennonite young men, especially among the more conservative groups, were registering with SSS under the assumption that they could perform their two years of alternative service with a church agency. The two sides were very close to such an agreement in June of 1983.

The turning point came in follow-up correspondence to SSS in July. MCC Executive Secretary Reg Toews picked up on the religious discrimination language of the June 8 meeting. His feeling was that despite the Christian faith statement in the application form, MCC would still meet non-discriminatory criteria. MCC had some previous experience with this issue in the 1970s and a copy of the statement that emerged from that incident was sent to SSS.

Eberly wrote back and asked for a copy of the MCC Personnel Information Form (PIF). The PIF includes the statement of Christian faith that each MCC volunteer is expected to affirm. The inclusion of that statement was literally the "test of faith" requirement in question. MCC heard nothing further from Selective Service until September.

On September 7, 1983, SSS Director Turnage sent a letter stating for the record that MCC would *not* qualify as an acceptable employer of alternative service workers. Turnage reiterated the SSS policy against religious discrimination. The 1970s document that MCC sent (which referenced the 1964 Civil Rights Act) was deemed "not germane" to alternative service since SSS was the one compelled to be constitutionally correct. Turnage cited the First and Fifth amendments as mandating their refusal of MCC as an employer.

The reaction in Akron was one of disbelief. MCC had employed alternative service workers during previous wars. Civilian Public Service, PAX, Teachers Abroad Program, and I-W Service were historical precedents. Was forty years of history now being reversed by a new Selective Service administration? The feelings of frustration that had been abated the previous six months suddenly resurfaced. Now it was official. MCC could not be an employer under current guidelines. An invasion of Nicaragua had been predicted for July of 1983. The possibility of a draft seemed very real should a war in Central America break out. What would hundreds of Mennonite COs do if they were denied the option of performing alternative service with their own church VS program?

At the November Peace Section meeting, the board recommended that staff send a small delegation to SSS Headquarters and seek information from legal experts. They also suggested that MCC join with NISBCO if a united effort to seek redress from Congress was mounted. Knowledge of the

"checks and balances" function of Congress was evident here. SSS did not operate in a vacuum and the CO community had laid important groundwork politically in the first years of negotiations with the draft agency.

MCC asked First Amendment specialist William Bently Ball of Harrisburg, PA, to prepare a legal brief on their behalf. Ball is best known for successfully arguing the "Wisconsin versus Yoder" Amish school case before the Supreme Court. The Washington office of the ACLU along with several other attorneys familiar with either draft law or freedom of religion issues were also consulted. MCC was building its case and the dialogue began taking on an "us versus them" tone. No one could quite believe that SSS would have the temerity to deny Mennonites approval as an alternative service employer!

A December meeting was arranged with SSS staff. The meeting was civil and a few points were clarified. But Turnage did not change his basic position. Tensions were high on both sides. It was a cold, wintery day in D.C. The weather had cooled since MCC last met with SSS staff and so had the feelings of cooperation. Turnage was digging in his heels as was SSS staff attorney Henry Williams. Eberly and Roffee had their hands tied in the chain of command structure at SSS. The discussion now was about fundamental church/state issues. SSS introduced the phrase "agency of the government" when describing an alternative service employer. MCC chafed under that label saying that alternative service is a *civilian* alternative to military service. Church organizations such as MCC are not agencies of the government simply because they absorb COs performing alternative service into their program. There was the rub.

SSS said they would welcome a legal brief from William Bently Ball. That would give them something concrete to work with. Bringing in a prominent First Amendment lawyer was playing political hardball. When asked about the reaction at SSS concerning the Ball brief, Eberly in retrospect said that "this was simply a legal explanation of your position."[15] In his opinion going to Capitol Hill was the dividing line between witnessing and being politically involved for the Mennonites.

Ironically, a preliminary response from Ball came the day after the visit with SSS. Ball's perspective was that MCC was on strong legal footing vis-à-vis the "test of faith" issue. More detail would follow once the brief was prepared in full. Now the lines were clearly drawn and the waiting game began. It would be four months until the brief actually arrived from Ball.

Build-Up and Resolution: 1984-1988.

It would take five years to resolve the conflict between MCC and SSS and the situation worsened before it got better. The legal brief from William Bently Ball arrived in Akron just before the US Peace Section gathered for their spring meeting, April 12-14, 1984. Ball refuted the Selective Service position in three main points. He argued that participation in the Alternative Service Program by an employer does not constitute an agency relationship; that assignment of an alternative service worker to MCC does not violate the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment; and that the position of SSS in fact violates the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment.

The US Peace Section board endorsed the Ball brief and authorized that it be sent to SSS for their consideration. Staff were instructed to pursue an administrative remedy to the "test of faith" question including a follow-up consultation with William Ball and a meeting between Ball and SSS if necessary. Congressional interest should be explored if the administrative avenue was unsuccessful. US Peace Section chair, James Longacre, sent a letter with the brief to Turnage on April 16. Turnage acknowledged receipt of the letter on May 1. Nothing was heard from SSS for the next year.

On May 22, 1985 John Stoner sent a letter to Turnage inquiring about an SSS response to the Ball brief. Turnage replied on June 12 with a cryptic, "We are further examining the issue . . ." and "We anticipate completing these studies before the first of the year."[16] Indeed, SSS completed their review and gave a most unusual answer to the Ball brief. On December 27, 1985, a full twenty months from the time the legal brief was sent to SSS, new proposed regulations were published in the *Federal Register*! An amendment to the alternative service subsection on eligible employers stated: "Those who do not require as a condition of the employment of an ASW (a) his commitment to any political or religious belief or doctrine or (b) his membership or nonmembership in a political or religious group."[17]

The "test of faith" ban was now proposed regulatory law! SSS had spoken loud and clear in a rather surreptitious way. Two days after Christmas was an impossible time of year for the wider church to gather information and formulate an adequate response. There had been no warning. No invitation to Washington to review the change. No phone call. No letter. Just an obscure addition to the regulations buried amidst the rush of the holiday season. This intentional political maneuvering put the conscientious objector community and Selective Service System at serious odds. The open door policy of SSS had just been closed in the face of MCC.

On January 14, 1986, John Stoner spirited a letter to Mennonite conferences and individuals outlining new problem areas in the regulations and enclosing a NISBCO Hotline mailing urging that comments be sent to SSS as soon as possible. Stoner's letter of January 16 to Colonel James DeWire, SSS Chief of Staff, petitioned for an extension of the thirty-day comment period and reflected the growing level of anger and frustration with the latest SSS position. On January 23 Stoner wrote to SSS General Counsel Williams, sending a three page comment on the regulations from MCC. Reference was made that the issue "has been in dispute between MCC and SSS for 20 months. . . ." Stoner ended with, "We submit these comments in the hope that some adjustments will be made in order to prevent unnecessary conflict."[18]

On January 24, SSS extended the comment period to February 26. It is noteworthy that Stoner consistently began sending copies of his correspondence with SSS to Congressman Robert Walker, who represented the 16th District (Lancaster County, PA). The administrative remedy suggested by the Peace Section board was clearly going nowhere. Petitioning Congress seemed the only way out. In fact, Chuck Epp, an MCC volunteer working for NISBCO at the time, is credited with spurring the extension of the comment period. He contacted many congressional offices about the content of the regulations and the short comment period and reported

that SSS heard from a half dozen or more congressional offices.[19]

On May 8, 1986, Elmer Neufeld, Chairman of MCC, gave testimony before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on HUD-Independent Agencies. The document was five pages long and Neufeld stated clearly the purpose of the testimony:

> The Mennonite Central Committe has one primary concern regarding Selective Service which brings us here today: we are concerned that a new regulation proposed by Selective Service will bar our participation, along with other religious groups, from any future alternative service program. Our purpose here today is to request your intervention to prevent this from happening. We have tried without success to negotiate the issue with Selective Service officials. . . . We have come to your committee as a last resort.
>
> On behalf of the Mennonite Central Committee, we respectfully request that this subcommittee take necessary steps to ensure that the alternative service system remains as it has been in the past: a relatively autonomous program conducted by a diversity of civilian organizations, including churches, who have freedom to shape their service program within the statutory definition of alternative service. If this is not done, the Selective Service System will perpetrate a serious misuse of public funds in its administration of alternative service. As for us, we will continue to seek redress through legislative and/or judicial channels.[20]

Aaron Martin of Ephrata, PA, and his draft-aged son Tim accompanied Neufeld to the hearing. Tim expressed his desire to perform alternative service with a Mennonite agency as his father had in the early sixties. Representative Lindy Boggs took interest in Tim and their exchange had a significant impact on the committee.

While MCC was seeking help from Congress, SSS published as Final Rule, the "test of faith" regulation in the *Federal Register.* Were they feeling any pressure from Congress? Would this issue end up in the courts? Both sides seemed deeply entrenched. In a May 22 letter to SSS General Counsel Williams, Stoner wrote:

> I write to place on record my deep disappointment that the Selective Service System has been unresponsive to appeals from the religious community to change the prohibition of employer requirement of religious or political beliefs in the Registrant Processing Regulations published May 14, 1986 in the *Federal Register.* This new regulation reverses over 40 years of Selective Service practice. I hope that the Selective Service System is still open to the possibility of reconsidering this regulation.[21]

The most pointed language came in an appeal to Appropriations Sub-committee chairman Boland. Stoner wrote:

> The Mennonite Central Committee is certainly not satisfied with these regulations and we do not believe that the matter is closed. We would hope that your committee would take steps either to withhold funds or to intervene to urge the Selective Service System to rescind these regulations and rewrite them in consultation with those agencies and individuals who will be most affected by them.[22]

Finally, a breakthrough came on July 31 when the House Appropriations Subcommittee on HUD-Independent Agencies approved legislation declaring the SSS "test of faith" regulation amendment "null and void."

> The Committee believes these changes compromise fundamental rights of conscience and impose unjustifiable hardship on males seeking . . . alternative service. The Committee also believes that the Selective Service did not act in good faith either when first publishing these amendments for public comment or in responding to those comments. Therefore, bill language has been included which, upon enactment of this bill, renders null and void the amendments to the Selective Service regulations.[23]

Congress upheld the Sub-committee nullification of the "test of faith" regulation. An MCC news release explained how the needed support was garnered:

> MCC Washington staff expressed appreciation to key staff members of the House Subcommittee on Independent Agencies (e.g. Selective Service) for their part in the effort. When asked what had been the most significant factor in prompting Congressional members of the Sub-committee to reverse SSS regulations, a House Subcommittee staff member replied, "Oh, it was the letters and phone calls that brought the controversy to our attention and definitely, the persuasive testimony presented by the conscientious objector groups at the Sub-committee hearings."[24]

By the end of 1986 the matter seemed to be put to rest. It had been a long and arduous struggle to protect the rights of conscience. It was finally over. Or was it?

On December 17, 1987, SSS, in a seemingly unconscionable move, reintroduced the "test of faith" ban in the *Federal Register*![25] John A. Lapp, MCC's new Executive Secretary, wrote to Samuel K. Lessey, the new SSS Director, on January 5, 1988. He stated in no uncertain terms that "The proposed regulation . . . flies in the face of recent history, defies the congressional action of October 1986 (which nullified this and other regulations) and we believe violates the American tradition of freedom in the practice of religion."[26]

On April 27, John Stoner testified before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on HUD-Independent Agencies and then before the Senate Appropriations Sub-committee on HUD-Independent Agencies on May 9. In his opening remarks he said:

> The functioning of the Selective Service System is the subject of this testimony. The Mennonite Central Committee is requesting the aid of the committee to change regulations proposed by the Selective Service System which would radically alter previous arrangements for the employment of conscientious objectors in alternative service work. The proposed regulation would (1) bar faith-based alternative service work and (2) use military officers in the administration of alternative service. We believe that both of these regulations violate the intent of Congress. We urge the committee to withhold or reduce funding for the Selective Service System until these regulations are changed.[27]

This was the most direct and assertive request for intervention during the entire debate. MCC wanted an end to the conflict and needed the aid of Congress to do so.

Relief came in the form of a letter dated August 18 from SSS Director Lessey to Rep. Lindy Boggs, responding to her July 8 inquiry of why the "test of faith" regulation had been reintroduced. Lessey said "After considerable study and thought, I have elected not to pursue implementation of the proposed regulation."[28] It still took nearly a year for SSS to print the following item in the June 27, 1989 *Federal Register:* "Section 1656.5(a)(iii) is removed and reserved." At last the "test of faith" issue was finally put to rest.[29]

Conclusion

Mennonites employed several modes of communication when talking with

government officials. Letters, phone calls, personal visits and indirect pressure through congressional channels were used. All served their purpose at different stages in the debate. The Akron visit by SSS staff was perhaps indicative of how cordial the relationship had become. But it was short lived. The strident tones of subsequent exchanges showed both sides entrenched in defending the truth of their position. In the end both SSS and MCC moved on to other agenda. Were there any clear winners and losers when all was said and done? What can be learned from this decade of dialogue between church and state?

First, one can observe that *Mennonites demonstrated some experience and skill in Washington.* They knew how the political system worked with its "checks and balances." Direct contact was maintained with an agency of the Executive Branch, Selective Service. Delegations were sent to the Legislative Branch to make visits to particular congressional offices, and testimony was given to congressional oversight committees holding sway over SSS. Finally, serious consideration was given to seeking relief from the Judicial Branch via the Ball brief and the option of pursuing a legal test case. Mennonites knew how to access relevant pressure points.

Second, *Mennonites took a relational approach to the dialogue.* For the most part MCC operated on a genuine first-name basis with Selective Service personnel. An effort was made to be hard on the issues and soft on the people in negotiations. When the debate turned sour, MCC continued to appeal to common sense and historical precedent before seeking redress in Congress. Understanding the other side's perspective while pursuing particular interests was intentional.

Third, *Mennonites have credibility in Washington.* A record of service and commitment precedes current debate. Don Eberly, who left SSS in 1984 to pursue full-time National Service interests, said that "if the Catholics and Methodists and the Presbyterians and everybody had the degree of participation in their volunteer service programs that the Mennonites have . . . we wouldn't have to be talking much about National Service because there would be hundreds of thousands of people."[30] SSS knew of the Mennonite legacy of conscientious objection to military service, as did most members of Congress. When MCC came to Washington with specific concerns, they were heard.

Fourth, *Mennonites sought guidance from constituents before addressing government.* Staff did not act independently of the US Peace Section board or the supporting conferences. Delegations were deliberately inter-Mennonite and spokespersons tried to recognize the diversity within their own ranks. A balance of leading prophetically and responding to constituent directives was sought. Beyond parochial concerns rose a sense of advocacy for the wider conscientious objector community. MCC often had access to SSS information and staff when others did not. There was a conscious effort to share findings and information to protect the rights of conscience to those outside the Anabaptist/ Mennonite family.

Fifth, *Mennonites can be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.* Mennonites made systematic use of Capitol Hill during the test of faith discussion. This was not lobbying in the strict definition of the term, but it was known that

Delton Franz and Barry Lynn testifying at a Selective Service System hearing

letters and phone calls from Mennonite voters made a difference. Delegations knew that part of the problem with Selective Service was attributed to party politics and bureaucratic inefficiency. Persistence was needed to reach a satisfactory resolution. As Mennonites witnessed to their historic, faith-based position of conscientious objection, they did so through available means. They neither stood by passively while SSS implemented unacceptable alternative service plans, nor refused to deal outright with SSS in the business of making plans for a smooth running conscription. It was a compromise position that kept the best interests of the wider church and the personal integrity of those directly involved in some kind of balance.

Sixth, *this story suggests important lessons about the way Mennonites should live in the world and relate to government.* The "test of faith" account illustrates the critical necessity of keeping a Mennonite presence in Washington to play a permanent "watch dog" role. It also explains why Mennonites as a whole, and MCC U.S. Peace Section Washington Office in particular, need to regard government with a consistent attitude of friendly suspicion. It may, in fact, be necessary to remind each new administration and each new Selective Service Director of the Mennonite presence and perspective. In doing so, Mennonites reinforce and strengthen their own peace convictions.

ENDNOTES

[1]Draft Counselor's UPDATE 2:2, MCC.
[2]UPDATE 2:6, MCC.
[3]Ibid.
[4]Ibid.
[5]UPDATE 2:7, MCC.
[6]UPDATE 2:11, MCC.
[7]Ibid.
[8]UPDATE 3:10, MCC.
[9]John Stoner Trip Report 1-25-83, MCC Records.
[10]Ibid.
[11]Turnage to Longacre, 2-16-83, MCC Records.
[12]8-12-89 Interview with the writer at Eberly's home in Washington, D.C.
[13]Loganbill/Hull to Turnage, 3-22-83, MCC Records.
[14]Amstutz Report, 6-8-83, MCC Records.
[15]8-12-89 Interview.
[16]Turnage to Stoner, 6-12-85, MCC Records.
[17]*Federal Register*, Vol. 50, No. 249, 12-27-85, p. 52963.
[18]Stoner to Williams 1-23-86, MCC Records.
[19]Stoner to Mennonite Conferences and Individuals, 2-3-86, MCC Records.
[20]Neufeld Testimony, 5-8-86, MCC Records.
[21]Stoner to Williams, 5-22-86, MCC Records.
[22]Stoner to Boland, 7-18-86, MCC Records.
[23]Franz, MCC News Service, 8-15-86.
[24]Franz, MCC News Service, 10-31-86.
[25]*Federal Register*, Vol. 52, No. 242, 12-17-87 [Section 1656.5 (a)(1)(iii)].
[26]Lapp to Lessey, 1-5-88, MCC Records.
[27]Stoner Testimony, 5-9-88, MCC Records.
[28]Facsimile of the Lessey to Boggs letter included in 11-88 NISBCO mailing.
[29]The regulation is reproduced in *The Reporter For Conscience' Sake*, Vol. XLVI, No. 2, April-June, 1989, page 4.
[30]8-12-89 Interview.

Book Reviews

John K. Sheriff and Alain Epp Weaver, eds., *A Drink from the Stream: Essays by Bethel College Faculty and Staff.* North Newton: Bethel College, 1991. Pp. 241. ($11.95—paperback)

This collection of 22 essays is an excellent sampler of the life of the mind and spirit at a Mennonite liberal arts college, more specifically Bethel College. To read it is indeed to "drink from the stream" of thought and faith its writers have engaged in their lives, in their teaching, and with their students. First conceived as a reading text for courses in writing, the editors rightly saw its potential for a larger audience. The book, or a least selected essays, will appeal to those interested in the excitement of ideas, those interested in the ways in which international and service perspectives have influenced the lives and teaching of Mennonites and others, those desiring a glimpse into the daily work and thought of a college faculty, those interested in teaching, and of course those interested more specifically in Bethel College.

The volume is diverse. It includes 22 essays written by 15 faculty and staff from nine disciplines ranging from history and English to religion and philosophy to biology and physics. But while the essays are deeply informed by these disciplines, they are on the whole not highly academic, and are quite readable. Some are reprinted or rewritten from personal essays or idea essays already published, while the majority are essay versions of public addresses: student convocations and chapels on ecology, liberal arts, biblical authority, literature, and art; a 60s teach-in lecture on the Vietnam War; tributes at a presidential inauguration and a prairie

festival; sermons; papers for conferences or discussions on Mennonites, foreign policy, and abortion; and even anti-war court testimony. The essays emerge from five decades, though all but three were written in the last 20 years and almost half in the last six years.

From the standpoint of ideas, among the most stimulating for me are those by Sheriff, Lemons, Hinz-Penner, and Wiens. Editor John Sheriff's own "Growing up Free Methodist" is a wonderful personal essay—fun to read yet a real study in roots, in coming of age in the era of the sawdust trail Sheriff now sees with a vision alternatively "cynical or nostalgic." He notes wryly that "it is an incontestable fact that evangelism works better at night," but concludes with this still wry but profound affirmation: "I learned in Sunday School at Phelps never to lay anything on top of the Bible; I never do."

Physics professor Don Lemons' "Beyond the Merely Personal" originated as an address at Bethel's 1990 Honors Convocation. This apology for the liberal arts ranges from Albert Einstein to Lucretius to rebel Chinese physicist Fang Lizhi. Lemons suggests that "Fang's studies [in physics] have taken him beyond the merely personal," supplying him with "a spiritual resource for justice." This same resource, Lemons concludes, is available "in all the liberal arts" as "a realm of freedom, a realm so good in itself, so good to ourselves and to all human kind, that it must be among the first of God's creations."

Raylene Hinz-Penner's "Passion and Vulnerability" examines the reading and teaching of literature. She profoundly honors the products of human imagination without canonizing its examples as she ranges from Euripides to Emily Dickinson to Toni Morrison. Also an important essay on teaching, A. Wayne Wiens' "Mutant Career Paths and Biologically-tainted Views" begins as an irreverant account of why he researches and teaches biology ("to take free trips to the tropics in winter") but modulates into a fascinating story of a researcher's joy in following his interests through uncertain paths, and ends with a ringing endorsement of research and teaching in a liberal arts setting.

But aside from these samples of excitement and inquiry (other readers will find their own favorites), there are some distinct but intermingling currents within the "stream." There is a solid sense of history as this group of scholars engage a history of Anabaptist faith, a theology of peace and service, and an emerging international commitment. Dwight R. Platt's four essays, spanning four decades, constitute in themselves a kind of Mennonite "history" as they move from his U.S. District Court testimony of faith against military service to profound reflections on American materialism from a village in India to two fine ceremonial reflections on local and global ecology.

Duane K. Friesen's "The Anabaptist View of the Church" (1991) is the keynote idea essay on this current of Mennonite faith. It is hard-hitting and prophetic—as forceful as anything I've read on the ideal role of Christians as a "transnational" force called to a third way of creative alternatives to nationalism, self-preservation, and "realism." From Costa Rica where I write this review, Friesen's essay resonates as an unambiguous call for Christian education rooted in international perspectives.

Anna Juhnke, in "Mennonites as a People of Service," supplies a solid historical account of the sources, possibilities, realities, and dangers of the Mennonite service ethic. Both Anna and Jim Juhnke write from the benefit of experience in Botswana and China, Flaming and Platt from India, Sprunger from the (former) Soviet Union, Friesen from Germany, and Deckert from MCC assignments in Indonesia and Morocco. The collection also gives a solid sense of a faculty deeply engaged, in both their personal and academic lives, in history: the roots in agriculture, the issues of military conscription, the turmoil of the 60s, the malaise of the "me generation," and global ecology.

Though the book overflowed its original design as a reader for college writing courses, it will still meet that purpose. Its themes and emphases, as noted above, are clearly appropriate for all of our Mennonite colleges. It could well be used in any Christian liberal arts college as a solid alternative to the more "generic" models available from most publishers. It provides useful examples of rhetorical forms for student study and modeling: the personal essay, the topical or thesis essay, the sermon, the historical essay, and the public address. A number of the essays provide good studies in the force of image for interest and persuasion. Most are good models in matching form and content.

The book does have flaws, though some of these are purposeful and others instructive. There is not central unity of theme or style or organization. But the editors are fully honest with this, offering rather a "drink from the stream." A few of the essays seem slightly dated, but even these provide a historical record of important thinking. And some "older" essays are, in fact, prophetic. Witness Keith Sprunger's 1968 assertion: "Remove communism from the universe by some wave of the wand, and revolution and social unrest would still be with us."

More substantial are some flaws in representation. One wonders where in this stream are the disciplines of psychology, music, teacher education, sociology, and physical education, to name some of the gaps. Perhaps more serious are the gender and minority gaps. I count twelve men and three women among the writers, and none that I recognize as minority voices. This is less a flaw in the book than in a broader social and historical reality—and provides an instructive perspective on life in the "streams" of all of our Mennonite (and most other) colleges.

A Drink from the Stream is a valuable book. Its strength is in its vitality and variety rather than in unity, though there emerges a strong unity of purpose in the life of the mind at a Christian liberal arts college. It will interest educators and anyone fascinated by ideas. It will stimulate those interested in living history. It will interest those who wonder what professors at our colleges are up to. It will provide models for student writing and living. In his 1988 address to Bethel students, Wayne Wiens cites the necessity of "becoming convinced that you really can respond with your mind, heart and strength to the BIG questions of your day by working creatively on them." That necessity is admirably modelled in the writers represented in this volume which extends a similar call to the reader.

Wilbur Birky
Professor of English
Goshen College
Director of Goshen's SST Program
in Costa Rica for 1991-92

Cornelius J. Dyck and Dennis Martin, eds., *The Mennonite Encyclopedia.* Volume V. Scottdale: Herald Press, 1990. Pp. 961. ($80.00)

I come to this review with a certain degree of trepidation, if not fear and trembling. Few reference works have commanded so much admiration from scholars of religion as the original *Mennonite Encyclopedia,* edited by Cornelius Krahn, Melvin Gingerich, and Orlando Harms and published in four volumes from 1954 to 1959. The publication of an updated version is an event. For a Quaker whose work has focused on Quaker history to offer any sort of critical judgment seems almost presumptuous. But it would be a rare historian who could resist the temptation of writing about such a work that does so many things so well.

This volume serves a number of functions. It is a supplement to the original work, rather than a replacement. This makes economic sense, although it may prove a bit frustrating for those without access to the original. Thus the entries fall roughly into two categories. There are new entries for subjects like abortion that were not current in the 1950s, and for people who were too young to be included in the original work. There are also entries that update or completely reconceptualize entries in the original work, ranging from new speculations about the origins of Jacob Ammann to impressive essays on subjects that run the gamut from acculturation to World War II.

The most impressive aspect of this work is its breadth and scope. It embraces all aspects of the cultural, intellectual, economic, political, and social lives of the various Mennonite, Amish, Hutterite, and other groups that trace their origins to the Anabaptists of the sixteenth century. Thus there are sophisticated yet accessible essays on such theological subjects as the Atonement, the Holy Spirit, and Sin. More innovative are the essays that consider the impact of modern culture on Mennonite groups. The *Encyclopedia* treats almost every subject imaginable. In some cases these are simply descriptions of the attitudes of various groups on public issues like abortion and political action. Others trace the evolution of Mennonite thinking and reality on subjects like family, marriage, and sexuality. Still others examine Mennonite attitudes on such aspects of life as flowers, poetry, and pottery. There is full coverage of economic affairs (one entry treats Mennonites and credit unions). Indeed, this reviewer was able to think of only one subject—pornography—on which there was neither entry nor cross-reference.

The work is a model of inclusiveness in its ethnic and international scope. As the author of one entry notes (the original *Encyclopedia* is treated as a subject), the 1950s work focused on Europe and North America to the exclusion of Mennonites in the non-Western world. Volume V avoids that fault. Long articles recount the history and present situation of Mennonite groups in Latin America, Africa, and Asia, both on the national and local levels. There are also dozens of biographies of Mennonites from the Third World. Native Americans receive due attention. There are numerous entries on Mennonite work among various tribes, with biographies of Indian leaders. At the same time, however, North American Mennonites will find much about themselves here. Every state and province has an entry with data on the various groups of Mennonite heritage within its bounds, some accompanied by attractive maps. There are no histories of individual congregations, but there are entries on virtually every Mennonite, Amish, and Hutterite community, extensively cross-referenced.

Biographies make up a significant portion of the *Encyclopedia.* Some, like that of Jacob Ammann, simply update entries in the original work. Most, however, are new. The rules for inclusion are at first glance seemingly idiosyncratic, but they work. Living Mennonites are excluded, unless they had reached age eighty by 1984. This rule was not applied to non-Western countries, however, since it would have meant the exclusion of important figures from nations where the faith has relatively recently come. As the editors note, in contrast to the original *Encyclopedia,* where few women subjects other than martyrs were found, the present volume is much more sensitive to the role of women in the lives of the churches.

This is not a dry-as-dust reference tome, however. It is genuinely readable, often stimulating, sometimes provocative. Scattered throughout are interesting reflections from individuals and entertaining vignettes, although all serve to prove a point. Not quite in this category but akin are entries on subjects like quilts that are not only of popular interest but also important for a student of cultures.

I am not in a position to comment on matters of accuracy of detail, but from the point of view of an historian of religion the editorial standards of the volume and the quality of the work of the individual authors are equally impressive. There are bibliographies for every entry—some are articles in themselves. The attitude is not hagiographical. The entry on National Socialism, for example, minces no words in pointing out how German Mennonites compromised the faith to cooperate with Adolph Hitler.

In short, this is a work of which the Mennonite scholarly community has every reason to be proud. This Quaker confesses to the sin of great envy, perhaps redeemed by admiration.

Thomas D. Hamm
Earlham College
Richmond, Indiana

Albert N. Keim, *The CPS Story: An Illustrated History of Civilian Public Service.* Intercourse, PA; Good Books, 1990. Pp. 128. ($11.95).

A half century has passed since the Civilian Public Service (CPS) program opened its first camps for World War II conscientious objectors, those who refused to be a part of the military either as combatants or non-combatants. The first camps utilized former Civilian Conservation Corp facilities in less exposed locations to provide places out of the public eye, and engaged predominantly in reforestation work. Eventually 12,000+ would participate in CPS.

Author Albert N. Keim, himself never a part of the CPS program but exposed to its reality, has captured this time in the history of the church, nation, and military with a fine narrative that includes an orderly account of its development, growth, and ultimate conclusion after World War II ended. The story is documented with a very readable narrative, personal testimony, humor, and many photographs to depict the experiences of the men and women who participated.

This reviewer served 4½ years in CPS—from June, 1941 through November, 1945. To relive this experience by perusing this relatively short and concise book is a moving experience. The account is easily read in one sitting and one experiences the many emotions of the time in history, from the adverse inclination of the Roosevelt administration to support the program to Selective Service System personnel who wanted nothing of the problems posed by the conscientious objectors of World War I.

The story of the dream, the development, and the reality of the program and the people of the historic peace churches who labored long and hard to bring CPS into being—even to taking on financial and administrative responsibility for making it "go" is a story of faith and daring as well as tenacity in the face of tremendous odds. One becomes acquainted with heroes of the faith—Orie O. Miller, Paul Comly French, M. R. Ziegler to mention a few, who saw the program through the critical period of the war years.

The program that grew from the early camps into a widespread and varied work of national importance is documented with photographs, narrative, and humor. Before the program was finished, the COs were scattered over the length and breadth of the nation—as mental hospital attendants and social workers, dairy testers, farm workers, smoke jumpers, and guinea pigs in national health service experiments. Through all this the author has captured well the agony and the ecstasy of five years that changed the course of the church and of the lives of those who were in the program.

The women are not forgotten. Many spouses and COGs (conscientious objector girls) joined the men in service or lived nearby in other employment. Their sacrifices are notable indeed.

The author is to be commended for writing this story, the renewal of the memories of a time that changed the life of the church, promoted new programs still carried on in the witness of the church (Voluntary Service among them), and infused the church with new zeal and leadership. Every church library should have one or more copies at hand. Every participant in the program will want to relive the experiences of those years.

While the larger tome on CPS still awaits writing, this book claims for us the adventure, pathos, pain, tension, faith, and tenacity of a great time that tried the church and nation to extremity. A cover paragraph says it well, "It (the book) captures the young men's work in mental health hospitals, soil conservation, reforestation, and medical experiments. It is an earthy story, full of personal struggle, government red tape, humor and loss—an unusual experiment in church-state relations." I have read it a third time and intend to read it again and again.

Loris A. Habegger
Retired pastor and CPS veteran
North Newton, Kansas

Donald B. Kraybill, *The Upside-Down Kingdom.* Scottdale, PA.: Herald Press, 1990. Pp. 312. ($14.95—paperback)

Twelve years following the first edition of 1978, Kraybill's intriguing volume on discipleship has appeared again to meet the needs of yet another generation. Clearly a most useful, nontechnical interpretation of Christ and the counterculture values which he demonstrated, Herald Press has responded by making a good product even better.

The title, *The Upside-Down Kingdom,* has not been changed. With an economy of words it captures powerfully both the revolutionary character of the Good News and the element of surprise in being found by God. Kraybill says social, religious and economic practices of the dominant culture usually favor the rich, powerful, prestigious. Jesus, on the other hand, favors those who suffer at society's margins and fall between the cracks. The church needs to foster an Upside-Down Kingdom favoring the lost, outcast, and leprous—a kingdom ruled by Jesus, the King who triumphs by losing and serves by dying. The cover graphic illustrates the point with the planet earth showing its southern head—not the usual way of perceiving the world.

Author Tom Sine has contributed a foreword to the new edition. It is brief compared to the one written by John F. Alexander in 1978. Both texts are meaty. Yet the new generation's pace of life may require that today it be succinct and to the point. The text too has been condensed leaving room for suggestions on how to use the book in discussion groups. (p. 274) Moreover, the scriptural and general indexes are supplemented with a superb bibliography for those who wish to keep on reading and growing. While the author has provided notes on each chapter, he believes that there is much more to learn about being a faithful disciple than his own book makes known.

Donald Kraybill is a gifted sociologist and writer at Elizabethtown College (Penn.) who knows how to capture and stimulate the imagination. Despite his modest biblical training he has a fine gift for uncovering new insight in old biblical texts, for making the ancient experiences relevant to the modern situation. The book serves as a wonderful aid in understanding the customs of the culture in which Jesus lived. However, "only as we see what Jesus rejected can we know what he affirmed." (p. 36) Throughout the writing there is evident a passion and a directness which wins both the heart and the head. For Kraybill, Jesus' life and teachings remain normative in modern life.

The first edition won the 1979 National Religious Book Award—a testimony to the merit which people have found in this book. Promoters of the Christian Peace Shelf series see it as "a fresh study of the synoptic Gospels on affluence, war-making, status-seeking, and religious exclusivism."

The book is excellent in most every respect. (Still I wonder why Kraybill made no reference to Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor in *The Brothers Karamazov* when dealing with the 3 temptations of Jesus). The author made observations which deserve careful reflection, like: the reason for the significance of the Cross; why economic values and tax demands are not peripheral to the Kingdom of God; why love is more than reciprocity; and why the way of peace is a mandate and not an appendage to the gospel. Kraybill's vivid imagery has a way of penetrating and arresting the mind. In his words, "Shalom is the core, not the caboose, of God's salvation." (p. 200)

For Kraybill it is quite clear that God has no favorites. "Jesus has shattered the social boxes." (p. 211) Therefore, the church is that universal community which welcomes all, not just "birds of a feather." Followers are called to "treat the poor as if they were us." (p. 141) Inspired by the Spirit, this volume is rich fare for self-examination and will

enable many to internalize the Gospel message into transformed Christian living. The publishers are correct in thinking that this volume deserves to be kept in print "for some time to come." Properly digested it will help all sensitive readers to hear and obey the "upward call of Christ"—"acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus." (Acts 17:7).

Donald D. Kaufman
Newton, Kansas

Leo Driedger and Leland Harder, eds. *Anabaptist-Mennonite Identities in Ferment.* Elkhart: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 1990. Pp. 190. ($10.00—paperback)

There is no metaphor applied to contemporary discussions of Mennonite identity that is likely to compete with the mythical power and appeal evident in the "Anabaptist vision." First used by Harold Bender in 1944 to describe the core beliefs of the 16th-century Anabaptists and their interpretation of Christian discipleship, the phrase nonetheless continues to imply the power of a contemporary mandate, even as it appears to mean different things to different people in different places. To be a visionary is to be uniquely futuristic and, in the context of the Anabaptist Christian, to accept the challenge of ushering in the Kingdom of God in history within the context of a distinctive peoplehood.

But does the social and religious history of Mennonites, as it has extended into the final decade of the twentieth century, reveal a viable and coherent survival of an Anabaptist identity? What social forces in the modern world have impinged on Mennonite traditions and behaviors, and what significance can be attached to an Anabaptist future? This volume of essays grew out of presentations and responses at a symposium held in Elkhart, Indiana, in 1988, by forty Mennonite and Brethren in Christ scholars, as part of a continuing effort to address these issues.

The purpose of the symposium was more narrowly focused on efforts to develop a conceptual design for a second social survey of Mennonites and Brethren in Christ called "Church Member Profile II." A similar survey was completed in 1972, involving the collaboration of five church conferences. This work, *Anabaptists Four Centuries Later,* was authored by J. Howard Kauffman and Leland Harder. The second North American survey has already been completed, and two scholarly volumes similar to the first, comparing 1972 and 1989 trends, are currently in preparation by Driedger, Harder, and Kauffman.

This volume is organized from seven major essays reflecting efforts to integrate Anabaptist theological reconstruction with sociological concepts explaining Mennonite sectarian trends in the face of the forces surrounding rapid social change. This work also suggests variables which might identify a dialectic for the renewal of Anabaptist identity. In absorbing these essays the reader will be impressed by the breadth and depth of Mennonite familiarity with the literature of religious sociology. The reader will also appreciate the vigorous and creative challenges offered by the respondent essays included in this volume. In some instances these essays appear more relevant to the issues than the major presentations. If, on the other hand, the reader hoped to discover a useful paradigm for grasping the complex reality underlying the global questions raised about Anabaptist identity, the reader will surely be disappointed.

The essays found in this volume attempt to accomplish a dialogue between theologians and behavioral scientists. A more fruitful dialogue might have been achieved had the symposium included a wider representation of other disciplines within the behavioral sciences. This is not intended to denigrate sociologists, nor the elegance of scholarship evident in the earlier study, *Anabaptists Four Centuries Later,* but the editorial perspective imposed on these essays appears to illustrate a preference for sociological concepts which are derived almost entirely from equilibrium theories. This perspective tends to place an emphasis on issues of stability, and to understand social change in terms of dualisms and tensions between polarities. However, the question is not only how Mennonites may be similar to or different from a larger American Christian community, but what frameworks may be available to grasp its linear development in defining a mission to the modern world.

The theological essays by Walter Klaasen and C. Norman Kraus review the historical movement of Anabaptism as a radicalization of the "civic church." They also identify a contemporary, parallel movement of mainline churches toward pluralism. This movement is seen as affecting a need to reconstruct theology for our modern times. Kraus attempts to construct a relational taxonomy of religious movements within the Protestant evangelical traditions. He identifies the pervasive influence of fundamentalism on these traditions, and, to varying degrees, on Mennonite groups as well. Kraus also acknowledges a historic liberal movement in the Protestant traditions, which he sees as synonymous with ecumenicalism, as being pluralist by nature and of declining influence throughout the American religious community. This reviewer found Kraus's description of both liberalism and ecumenicalism to be the least plausible of his characterizations.

The two sociological essays constituting Part II of this collection are intended to represent the key "orienting concepts" which link religious identity with social reality. These are Calvin Redekop's paper on sectarianism and Donald Kraybill's discussion of modernity and modernization in the context of the Anabaptist experience. Sectarianism is seen in movement toward denominalization, with Redekop's conclusion that the Mennonite vision can best be conceptualized when it is viewed as a utopian movement. Kraybill views modernity as a complex movement away from tradition and as a social process identified with multiple characteristics of change in the social structure, relations, and orientations of persons living in modern societies. The perspectives of Redekop and Kraybill are serious and well organized presentations that attempt to illustrate the implications of Mennonite movement away from the rural enclave as Mennonites have become more urban and professional in their vocations. The authors bring to their task a broad reference to both a religious and social science literature. This reference attests to the significance of both sectarianism and modernization in this process.

The final three essays in this collection are intended to identify a "dialectic" between the sacred and the secular, commitment and individualism, and

identity and assimilation. This dialectic is understood to be a complex social process of constantly interacting polarities, leading to modified and ever changing forms of the sacred, commitment, and identity which will characterize the Anabaptist community of the future.

In the first of these essays, Peter Hamm defines "the sacred" as a process of "sacralization" in opposition to secularization. He views the history of Christianity within the context of a movement which at times reaches out to absorb those elements of culture which enrich its life and thought and at other times draws away from these elements to recover its own uniqueness. Hamm suggests that contemporary Mennonites are no longer able to maintain boundaries with the world as they were when they lived in the rural ethnic enclave. Consequently, faith and life must be negotiated in a crucible of interaction which finds a quest for direction through selective openness to new experiences. Hamm is careful to formulate his discussion in ways useful for the methodological considerations required of operational research, and in this regard his essay is one of the more helpful presentations.

Stephan Ainlay builds his whole discussion of individualism and communal commitment around Robert Bellah's monumental study of contemporary American society, *Habits of the Heart* (1985). Ainlay's essay emphasizes the pervasive influence of individualism as a social value characteristic of both American culture and Mennonite experience. Americans experience an ambiguity in the relationship between self and society, as the "utilitarian" and "expressive" forms of individualism which characterize the structural realities of urban America replace the historic balance between individual and community interests which existed in the small townships of the past.

Of interest is the excellent critique provided by the respondent, Robert Enns, to both Bellah's thesis and Ainlay's essay. He juxtaposes Mennonites as a "community of memory," against Bellah's description of the segmented "life style enclave." The significance of this contrast is that surveys of consistency in religious beliefs and practices may be more indicative of the latter, rather than the movement of Anabaptist identity from sectarianism to denominationalism. This distinction holds important implications for identifying how Mennonites experience the locus of authority in their lives, and the important role families play in the generational transmission of religious and social values.

In the final essay included in this collection, Leo Driedger examines theories of assimilation which predict that minorities lose their distinctiveness as they accommodate to the forces of the "melting pot" in the great society. Accommodation which addresses issues of identity is seen as a multi-variant process, with the progress of assimilation more likely to occur for some minorities around differing dimensions of identification. The issue is complicated for Mennonites who have become increasingly poly-ethnic, and whose social mobility has taken them to a city environment where the locus of identification with culture and territory has required transfer to ideological, historical, and institutional identification.

The significance of this volume of essays appears less related to its excellent application of a traditional sociology to the realities of social change in the Anabaptist-Mennonite community, than to a question of their relevance to the future of Mennonites and of the great society of which they are a part. We may begin with the excellent critique of these essays offered by Rodney Sawatzky, by asking the simple question, who are Mennonites, and how do people perceive what it means to be a Mennonite? In attempting to answer this question, my hunch is that social surveys of church members in Mennonite and Brethren congregations will only reveal the characteristics of identity which can be grasped by Bellah's formulation of commitment to a community of the "life style enclave." As previous surveys have suggested, this enclave for Mennonites will largely resemble the political, demographic, and religious characteristics of most other mainline groups in the evangelical Protestant traditions. But is there a more important Anabaptist-Mennonite identity alive in the great society—"a community of memory"—that represents a kind of "diaspora" which may include Mennonite congregations of the dying rural enclave, but also extend beyond it?

The essence of identity cannot be grasped by either sociology or theology alone, but becomes meaningful, significant, and strengthened when it is challenged. In what ways is an Anabaptist-Mennonite identity challenged today? It would appear that at least a central feature of Anabaptist identity throughout history was its nonresistant and communal understanding of Christian discipleship and its acceptance of a suffering cross in service to the poor and oppressed of this world. There is some evidence to suggest that during the past two centuries of existence, Mennonites have largely interpreted their nonresistance through a cultural construction of social avoidance. This issue is similarly avoided in this collection of essays, and hence an Anabaptist vision is not "recovered," but awaits "rediscovery" anew.

Anabaptist-Mennonite Identities in Ferment, is available as a publication of *Occasional Papers*, by the Institute of Mennonite Studies, 3003 Benham Avenue, Elkhart, Indiana.

Duane Kroeker
Columbia, Missouri