MENNONITE LIFE

SEPTEMBER 1994

In This Issue

In this issue of *Mennonite Life* we look through windows to the Kansas Mennonite historical experience in family, school and congregation. Each article gives special attention to a particular physical structure—a meeting house, a college auditorium, and an *Altenheim* (Home for the Aged).

John M. Janzen, director of Kauffman Museum from 1983-1992, is a leading interpreter of Mennonite material culture. His article on the adobe sanctuary of the Bethel congregation near Inman in McPherson County, shows us once again how a careful examination and analysis of material artifacts can lead to greater insight and appreciation of our heritage as worshipping communities. The Bethel sanctuary has survived for 114 years, but is in deteriorating condition. Its fate is presently in question. Perhaps this article will contribute to the preservation of the structure.

Janzen is professor of anthropology at the University of Kansas. His main expertise is in Central African studies, including ritual and architecture. Among his Mennonite interests, John serves on the board of the Germantown Mennonite Historical Trust that oversees and interprets the oldest Mennonite sanctuary in North America.

Harry R. Van Dyck's "Bethel College Memoir" celebrates another physical structure in which Mennonites have worshipped—Memorial Hall on the Bethel College campus. After his year as a construction laborer and a student at Bethel in 1940-41, Van Dyck went into Civilian Public Service in 1942. After the war he attended Bluffton College briefly, took two degrees at the University of Nebraska, and a Ph.D. in sociology at Washington State University. In 1983 he retired as professor of sociology from the University of North Texas. He has published a book on his CPS experiences, *Exercise of Conscience: A World War II Objector Remembers* (Prometheus, 1990).

Nancy Schroeder-Warner's essay tells of memories from the Home for the Aged in Goessel, Kansas. Her story reminds us of changes in the way we care for senior citizens, even as it tells of one girl's dawning awareness of the painful inevitability of growing old. Schroeder-Warner is a retired high school English teacher, living in Palo Alto, California. She makes Mennonite history dolls, bakes apple pies, and writes Mennonite dramas. She is presently at work on one drama about Russian Mennonite history, and another about the world of successive telephone central operators in Inman, Kansas.

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Front Cover
Family of Heinrich Neufeld and Agneta Kroeker and their children in front of the Bethel adobe church building, newly adapted as residence. This is the earliest known photograph of the building, taken ca. 1910, by an unknown photographer.

Back Cover
Bird's eye—structural axonometric—drawing of the Bethel sanctuary by Eric Zabilka, University of Kansas Recording Project, 1992, led by Professor Barry Newton of the Department of Architecture and Urban Design, University of Kansas.

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The History and Significance of a Mennonite Prayerhouse:

The 1880 Bethel Adobe Sanctuary of Inman, Kansas

by John M. Janzen

This writing is prompted by the effort to preserve, restore, interpret, or merely document before dismantling, the most substantial and integral, but rapidly deteriorating, of four remaining Mennonite adobe buildings[1] in Central Kansas—the original 1880 Bethel meetinghouse located two and a half miles south of Inman.[2] Individuals in the local community,[3] the director and board of Kauffman Museum in North Newton, Kansas,[4] members of the University of Kansas School of Architecture and Urban Design,[5] and the Kansas State Historical Society's Historic Preservation Office,[6] have all initiated efforts to preserve the building, but thus far in vain. The building, now listed on the Register of Historic Kansas Places, continues to deteriorate, with no active plans at the time of this writing to preserve it.

Research and documentation have established that the 114 year old adobe building is of considerable historical interest and significance. In terms of its uniqueness, we know that it is one of the very few surviving original immigrant meetinghouses built in late 19th century Mennonite communities of the prairies of North America. It is the only adobe built meetinghouse in this group that survives of numerous ones that were built in the near vicinity.

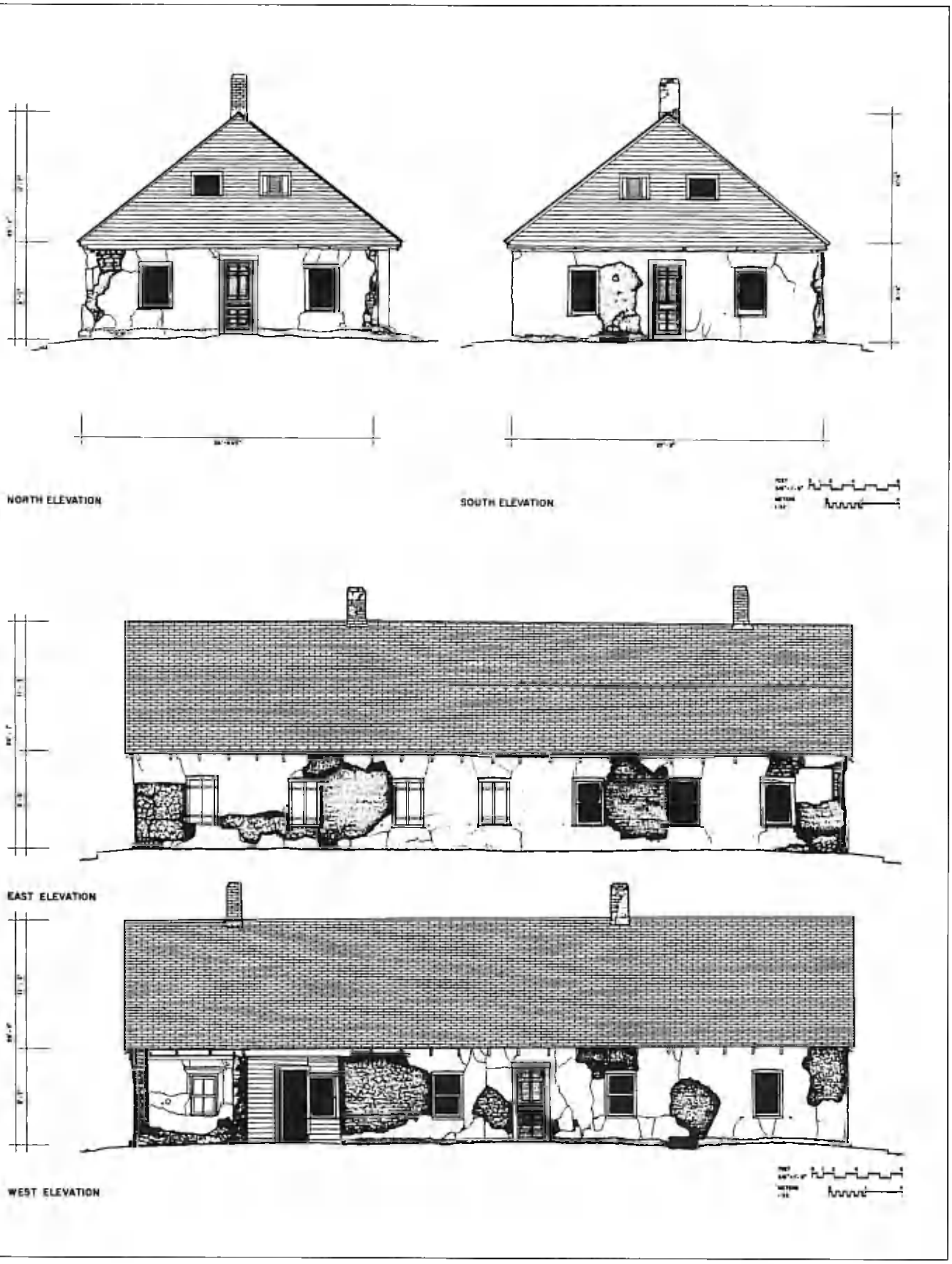
As a vernacular expression of immigrant Mennonite building and congregation formation, the Bethel adobe meetinghouse represents the tradition of Northern European Mennonite building form and function derived from the Netherlands longhouse, transplanted to the Vistula Delta of Poland/Prussia by Mennonite emigrants in the 16th century, and South Russia in the 18th-19th centuries, from where its builders migrated to North America, including Central Kansas. The building was constructed by the Bethel congregation in twelve days from 7-19 May 1880.

In the 20th century the meetinghouse type continued to be built by Mennonite migrants in far-flung sites of the former USSR, and South and Central America. Because these were vernacular buildings, they were adapted to local environmental conditions and building materials, often adobe and wood construction like the Bethel building.[7] The social functions which determined the shape of the building, as reflected in the internal seating arrangement and the ancillary rooms, show an amazing continuity throughout all examples. Thus for the Bethel meetinghouse, as well as the others mentioned, the pattern of seating was face-to-face in a rectangular arrangement of the congregation around the worship leaders who were seated on the long "side." This pattern was common to the Reformed, Mennonite, Quaker, and other Free Church or "dissenting" groups in the 16th to 17th century Netherlands and England,[8] and later among 18th century Vistula Delta and German Mennonites, and their diasporas.[9] The distinctness of this architecture in these groups raises the question of the relationship of architecture to theology and community form. A close look at the Bethel building and the community that built and used it is of help not only in understanding the local congregation and its successive structures of 1880, 1897, 1927, and 1954, but of other neighboring communities—e.g., Hoffnungsau, Zoar, Ebenezer—the Plains Mennonite meetinghouse form, and the larger tradition, represented in its classic antecedent buildings and those that were built in the 19th and 20th centuries in far-flung sites to which Mennonites migrated.

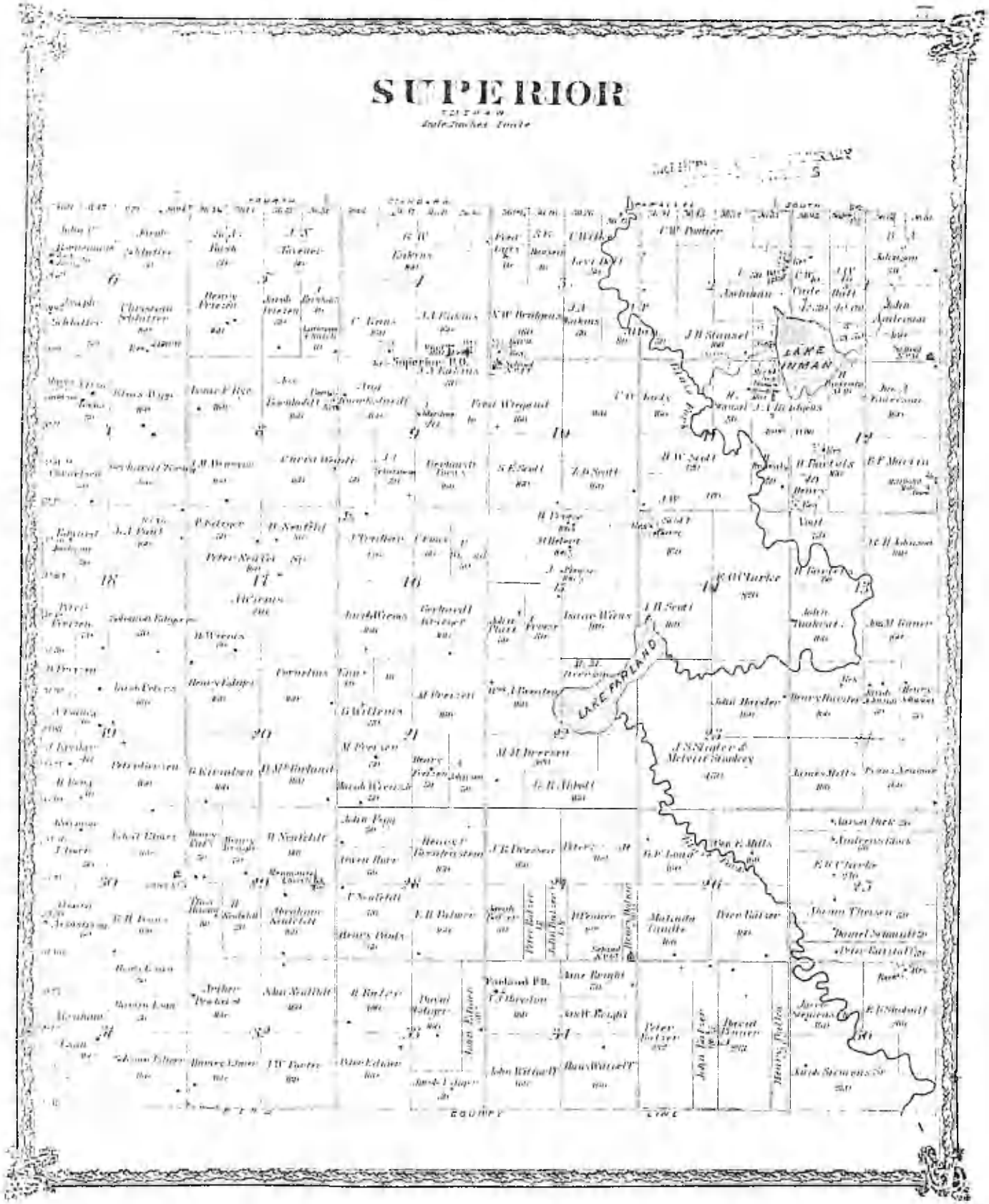
Formation and early history of the Bethel congregation

The Bethel congregation emerged in the early years of life among the 1874 immigrants from Molotschna colony, South Russia. At first most meetings were held in the Immigrant House that stood about five miles south of where Inman is located today. The participants of the Bethel congregation came from nineteen Mennonite villages of the Molotschna Colony, and represented numerous theological persuasions and interests. The congregation joined the Western District Conference of the General Conference Mennonite Church, but within the first decade of its existence as a formal congregation, members left to join, or interacted with, the Mennonite Brethren, the Church of God in Christ Mennonite (Holdeman), the Kleine Gemeinde group that moved to Meade, Kansas, and other General Conference congregations.

Entries in the diary of David Ediger reveal the meetingplaces, times, and occasions in the years before the Bethel congregation had its building.[10] These were years of false starts, getting settled, selecting the right elder. By 1880 the



North and south end elevations drawn by Keri Wilson; East and west side elevations drawn by Steven Harrington, Recording Project, 1992.



Plat map, McPherson County, Superior Township, 1884. The Bethel adobe meetinghouse is designated in section 29 as "Mennonite Church."

Bethel group had a stable organization and a committed elder, although many original members had left to join other congregations. Ediger's diary provides entries pertaining to the physical construction of the building:

1/11/1880: Were at Abr. Neufeldts for congregational business meeting. The church to be built at another place, on Abr. Neufeldts land. Also discussed as to who could pay $6; whoever cannot pay this, pays $4; whoever cannot pay this pays $2. Everyone who has a wagon must get a load of rocks.

4/7/1880: Were in school for congre-

gational business meeting, collected for church building total of $200. Right away elected those who are to get lumber from Atchison [Hutchinson?], elected were Abr. Neufeldt and Heinrich Friesen. Also decided to build 64' long and 28' wide.

5/7/1880: Started to work at the church, put down the foundation; on May 19 finished the roof. On May 23 had services for the first time in the new building.

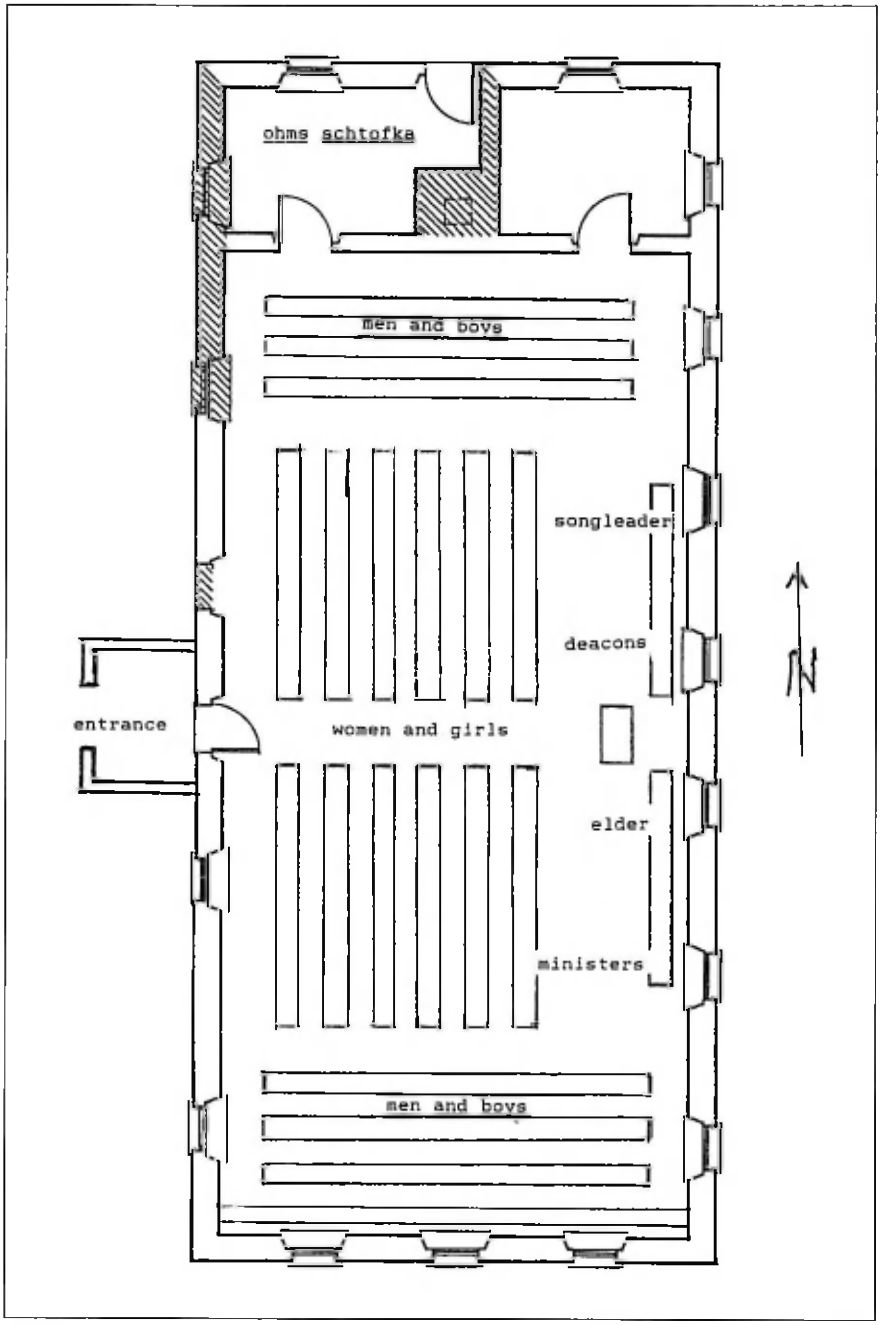
6/7/1880: In our new church. 15 young people received in baptism.

The original structure

The Bethel sanctuary was constructed of three basic materials: limestone for the foundation, hauled in by wagon; sun-dried mud bricks, bonded together with mud masonry; and wood frame floor, window frames (for six-over-six pane sections), and roof structure, including the end gables. The roof was originally done with cedar shingles.

The limestone for the foundation was hauled in from a local source or from the nearest railway by those members of the congregation who had wagons. The limestone foundation consists of three layers of 8" block, set down about 18" beneath the earth's surface. The bottom two are ca. 24" wide, the top row ca. 18" wide, the same width as the adobe wall which rests atop it. The limestone foundation everywhere rose above the ground level, allowing moisture to drain from the earthen walls, thus preserving them remarkably well. In the southwest corner, the limestone foundation becomes a cellar, with steps down from a trapdoor in the floor. Summer 1992 documentation by the University of Kansas architectural survey established that this cellar was an original part of the building.

The mud brick or adobe blocks are 6 x 6 x 12" and are laid in an interlocking pattern to create an 18" thick wall throughout, about 8' high. The mud brick construction was an integral part of Mennonite building tradition, carrying the colloquial Low German designation of *pautze*, a term possibly of Polish or Dutch origin, indicating its historical sources in earlier centuries. The Bethel sanctuary's mud bricks were made locally; oral tradition refers to a pit near the site along a small stream as the source of these blocks. They contain evidence of a wheatstraw bonding. Mortar was earthen mud. An interior mud brick wall is located about 8' from the north end, and extends across the building. Originally the adobe was plastered on the outside with a manure mud that is visible in many places; over this, and inside over the mudbrick, a lime wash was used as the outer coat.



Sketch of original adobe building floorplan, based on Recording Project drawings, 1992.

The construction in mud brick included an original large 5 x 5' hearth-chimney that tapered up to the chimney at the roof line. This was built into the interior wall, roughly at the center of the building, thus providing radiating heat for the two smaller rooms at the north end, and the large interior sanctuary.

Woodframe windows and doorframes were anchored into the mud brick walls with a vertical flange at the center of

Southwest view of the adobe sanctuary building as home of the Frank and Agnes Pauls family in the late 1930s, showing elms planted in 1900 having become full grown. Their son Albert is in foreground.

the frame board. The wall openings at each window and door were tapered on the inside; wooden sills and supports at the top of the window extended the entire depth of the wall. The original windows—seven along the east side, three on the south end, two plus a central door on the north, and probably six plus a door in the middle on the west side—were six over six double hung sash. All windows were shuttered; wrought iron shutter fasteners were anchored into the adobe wall. The interior wood surfaces were painted a light green, the exterior shutters may have been white. The wood in the building is pine or fir. The floor joists are supported in notches in the limestone foundation, but rest on earth except in the cellar where the joists carry the floor. The end rooms are not floored in wood, and were originally simply earthen floor.[11] The ceiling joists are submerged in the mud bricks atop the walls; a horizontal board notched into the bottom of the ceiling joists, and covered with two layers of block, serves the purpose of tying the roof to the walls. Rafters are attached to a plate atop the joists; this too is mudded into the wall. The plate is nailed to the ceiling joists. The end gables are framed in wood and contained two windows on each end, somewhat taller than the present windows. The framing of the gables was covered with 1" vertical sheeting which has since been again covered with horizontal siding.

A wooden stairs ascends to the top floor from the ground floor, through a trap door. The top floor consists of 1" boards laid across the ceiling joists. It is likely that the stairs are not in their original location.

The building as a prayerhouse

Isaac T. Neufeld, in his history of the congregation,[12] describes the inaugural service, 23 May 1880. The sanctuary had a capacity of 350 adults and children, appropriate for the congregation at that time. The pews were benches without backrests. The ministers convened in the *ohms schtofka* (lit., "men's room," leader's meeting room), the northwest room,[13] to discuss matters of concern to the congregation. Elder Heinrich Toews led the procession in single file into the sanctuary. He stopped in front of the pulpit; he faced the congregation and blessed them with the words: "The peace of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us." Then he and the other ministers sat down on the pew to the left of the pulpit. The deacon and song leaders sat in the pew on the right side of the pulpit. The first service opened with singing, led by the songleader, and may have had up to three sermons. Elder Heinrich Toews' sermon was entitled "Not a Church, but a House of Prayer." At the close, the congregation knelt for silent prayer. This was followed by a closing hymn, announcements, and a benediction: "The Lord bless and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and give you peace, at this time here and over there in eternity; and so let us depart in peace."

This account of the opening service in the building suggests the classic Mennonite interior worship space. In Poland and Russia these congregational meetingplaces were called prayerhouses, or *Bethauser*, to set them

apart from the *Kirchen* of the Lutherans and Catholics.[14] The leaders were seated in a row along the side of the building, to the right and left of the pulpit. In more formal arrangements, there may have been a raised chancel rail separating the leadership from the congregation. The congregation, in turn, would have been arranged in a rectangle facing the leaders or chancel. One of several arrangements would have divided the congregation along gender lines: either with women and girls in the center, men on the outside, or divided down the middle along gender lines. The "front" of the Bethel prayerhouse was probably on the east side.[15] Other anecdotal information is available about the use of the building as a meetinghouse. J.H. Ediger notes that engagements were announced on Sunday mornings, and that both men and women went out into the open field or behind buggies to relieve themselves, there being no toilets on the site.[16] Other documentary evidence on the adobe building as a meetinghouse is scant. The congregational book for this period survives, but contains only memberships and vital information on births, baptisms, marriages and deaths.[17] Some sermons survive as well in private collections and may contain further information about the building, but they have not been studied in detail. The second Bethel church building constructed in 1897, as well as the third constructed in 1928, and any documentation in them, were destroyed when these buildings unexpectedly went up in flames in 1927 and 1953, respectively.

The building as a residence

In 1897 the adobe building was given up by the Bethel congregation for a new frame structure a mile north of the site. The new building was of the same design, except that it has a larger two-door gender-divided entrance into the sanctuary, and an *ohms schtofka* built onto the north end of the building.

The southeast quarter of section 29, upon which the adobe building stood, had at that time been owned by Abraham J. Neufeld. His father, Heinrich, owned the northeast quarter. But in 1897, two years prior to the death of Heinrich Neufeld, the east half of the section was divided into three equal 107 acre plots: Abraham retained the central plot, with the building on it, and minors Anna and David Neufeld received the north and the south thirds respectively. These transactions are spelled out in some detail in the Abstract of the section. It is possible, thinks Adolf Neufeld, that Heinrich may have wished to settle his affairs and provide for his children before his death, and that this somehow entailed designating the land and the building to family members according to some prior arrangement whose specifics are lost.

Heinrich Neufeld—nicknamed *kurzbein* ("Shortleg") because of a limp—received or at least moved with his family moved into the adobe house. Heinrich was the nephew of Abraham and son of Johannes. The earliest photograph of the building is of him and his wife Aganeta Kroeker, and their eight children. They presumably installed the interior walls and adapted the building to residential use. Later, he received the NE 1/4 of section 29. The building stands just to the south of the middle of the mile, about 200 yards from the road.

In 1915 Heinrich Regehr bought the 107 acre middle section for his son Henry T. Regehr, who became the second resident of the building, until ca. 1935 when he moved with his family to Meade, KS., and on to California.

In 1935 Frank and Agnes Pauls bought the south half of the middle 107 acre tract of the east half of section 29 (later they would also buy the north half of the tract). They lived in the house until 1980, and were its last occupants. Numerous photographs exist of the building during the Pauls' occupancy. Their son Albert has provided names for the rooms, as they were called during the family's occupancy.

Around this adobe building there grew a full complement of other buildings and features: a barn, a machine shed, and a summer kitchen. A shelterbelt and shade trees were planted and thrived. The site had become a typical Kansas farmstead. In 1980 Eldo and Mary Ann Regehr became owner-farmers of the land, and used the farmstead for livestock and machine storage, with the prospect of continuing it as a viable farm in the future.

Changes to the building

In 1897 the adobe building saw significant interior and some exterior changes to make it a suitable farm home. Walls of woodframe and lathe covered with plaster were set up in the interior, atop the floor, to create six rooms, in addition to the end room created by the internal adobe wall. The hearth-chimney was removed, and the two doors from the sanctuary into the end rooms were plastered over, and a central door put in leading to the exterior north door. The central window at the south end was opened and made into a door. Smaller brick chimneys were installed to accommodate wood or coalburning stoves, the south one mounted on a chimney "shelf" in the "kitchen" over the cellar, the north one rebuilt to arise from the adobe wall just east of the new interior door. At a later date, a segment of the exterior wall was taken out on the west side and a "buggy garage" with track door installed. The wind protected entrance at the west door was removed as well. All of the six over six windows were replaced with single pane double hung sash windows.

Inside and outside, the adobe wall was stuccoed with Portland cement and painted. Much of this has peeled off, revealing the adobe, manure plaster, and lime covering.

The location of the stairs was probably changed, although it is not clear where they were situated originally. The vertical sheeting boards of the gables have been covered with horizontal lap siding. The gable windows have been reduced in size, and replaced. The wood shingles have been covered with asphalt shingles. Steve Friesen's summary study of the building in 1990,[18] and the documentation work by students of Barry Newton's of the University of Kansas School of Architecture in summer 1992[19] offer further documentation of the current status of the building. An

eight foot section of the west adobe wall at the north end has been removed; the northeast corner has fallen away. The roof is however more or less water-tight.

Historical significance

At the community level, the Bethel sanctuary represents the oldest building surviving in the prevailing style of its immigrant founders. Built as the first home of the Bethel congregation, it may have iconic value for a few congregation and community members as such.

A greater measure of its significance lies elsewhere. It is the largest and most integral of the four surviving Central Kansas Mennonite adobe buildings. Its construction reveals the handiwork of immigrants who had built in this style and manner elsewhere and previously; yet this is also a monument to Kansas history in its sturdy enduring construction by people who put roots down in the state.

The building is significant nationally because it is the only remaining 19th century Mennonite immigrant adobe meetinghouse in the Northern European Mennonite longhouse tradition on the Great Plains. Its style can be characterized as Netherlands longhouse, carried on in a vernacular construction of available materials that have been wooden logs, sun-dried mud, or kiln-baked bricks, woodframe, depending on when, where, and with what means it has been constructed. In this case it is a combination of mud bricks, limestone foundation, and woodframe.

Within the larger context of Mennonite history over several centuries and across continents, the Bethel sanctuary represents the style of the first meetinghouses Mennonites built in the eighteenth century.[20] Often after several centuries of meeting in homes, barns, sheds and the out-of-doors, Mennonites of Europe began to construct their own sanctuaries in the 18th century. The prototypes of the present tradition were based on house forms in the Vistula Delta of north Polish Prussia on the Baltic Sea, and on buildings in the Netherlands.[21] The style has continued to be used intermittently at critical times of redefinition in Mennonite communities in new locations.

The Bethel sanctuary may be said to reflect the theology of Anabaptism-Mennonitism in which church is people, and in which the building represents the pure functional needs of meeting spaces within the available vernacular domestic house. This building style is plain and very simple; it derives its aesthetic appeal from the integrity between form, function and cultural ideals; it eclipses all period styles. With affluence and acceptance by the dominant culture, Mennonite sanctuaries within this tradition have often come to resemble Protestant and Catholic sanctuaries, adopting elements of Gothic, Baroque, or Grecian revival. However, the longhouse form of Mennonite sanctuaries was built again in late 19th century frontier settlements in Russia, in frontier settlements in the New World throughout the late 19th and 20th century (i.e., Canada, Mexico, Paraguay, Brazil), as well as in the post-Communist era Mennonite communities in South Urals and Siberian regions of Russia in the 1980s.

In its historical sense, the Bethel sanctuary thus represents the moment of a community's establishment, the point when the basic forms of domestic architecture are called forth to produce a public building to celebrate the community's central identity.

The Bethel sanctuary's significance needs to be seen from the perspective of historic Mennonite meeting or prayer houses. At various eras since the 16th century, and at various places, worship has occurred in homes, and then moved into specially constructed buildings. In the sixteenth century across Europe Anabaptists were forbidden from meeting for worship and so met secretly in caves, on boats, in forests, and wherever they could. Then, when they were legally permitted to meet, they were constrained by official decrees that these buildings must resemble ordinary houses, sheds, warehouses, not churches. In the Netherlands after 1575 their meeting places were tolerated but needed to be hidden, and often were found in remodeled warehouses or other large buildings; in Poland after 1750, and Switzerland after 1800, and in Russia after 1985, their meeting places were required to resemble residences. The Bethel congregation, newly formed in Kansas in 1875, was characteristic of this picture. The congregation met in homes, schools, and the immigrant house provided by the Santa Fe railroad. The first sanctuary resembled a Mennonite longhouse. After twenty years of use as a "prayerhouse," it was easily converted into a residence when a new meeting house was built.

Beyond merely resembling the dwelling of vernacular Mennonite construction, the prayerhouse also accommodated the ideas implicit in Mennonite worship and congregational organization.[22] (1) The face-to-face meeting arrangement was common to traditions of "The Word," including the Reformed, Mennonites, and Quakers, where preaching and the reading of the scripture, in contrast to the mass, were central worship events.[23] This has undoubted theological resonance among Mennonites in the emphasis on a community of believers discerning the word of God together. (2) Mennonites gave the chancel on the long side of the meetingplace a special interpretation that appears to have, in places, diverged from the other traditions of The Word. Instead of one preacher speaking from a raised pulpit, the Mennonite "chancel" was collective, shared by elder, ministers (also called "teachers"), deacons, and songleader, the center and reflection of governance of the Anabaptist-Mennonite congregation. Early records suggest the elder or ministers interpreted the Word without notes, seated at the chancel table, and that there was mutuality in the interpretation of the Scripture.[24] That is, there were multiple sermons, or one sermon followed by commentaries by others. The raised pulpit is a later development among Mennonites, one that sometimes became the source of division. In Europe it reflected the influence of the Reformed Church,[25] and the rising authority of single ministers or elders, as well as the advent of the "canned" sermon read from an old script written generations earlier. In mid-19th century America the pulpit became an issue at the basis of the for-

mation of so-called conservative Old Orders, who insisted on retaining the classic furnishings and forms of worship, including leadership seated at a table, rather than standing at a pulpit.[26] (3) Gender divided seating was universal in earlier centuries; and at the Bethel congregation. Women and girls sat in the center facing the leadership, while the men and boys sat on the ends, facing the women. Where two-story sanctuaries were built in the Netherlands, Prussia, Russia and North America, women sat on the main floor and men in the balcony. Later, genders came to be divided left and right; in the mid-twentieth century, this was replaced by families seated together, or age-group seating.

In Mennonite meetinghouse architectural history, frontier settings have often perpetuated classical forms; affluence has brought accommodation to mainstream Protestant and even Catholic forms, such as the high pulpit and the long, aisled seating arrangement, and period styles in building design. The 1880 Bethel sanctuary is therefore a classic frontier Anabaptist-Mennonite structure expressive of the face-to-face congregation in the believers' church tradition.

ENDNOTES

[1]These are the Adobe House Museum in Hillsboro, the Bethel adobe sanctuary, a private dwelling in the Goessel area, and a private dwelling in the Buhler area.

[2]The legal documentation of the abstract and the deed do not mention the building. The building is however identified on Section 29 of the 1884 McPherson County plat book as "Mennonite Church" and a small drawing, and on the 1903 plat book as a square dot indicating a farm or residence on the land of A.J. Neufeld; the then-new 1897 Bethel prayerhouse is shown on section 21, the site of subsequent buildings of the Bethel congregation.

The 1992 McPherson County Tax Notice gives the legal description of the site as Superior Township, section 29-2104, NE4; CA 1760.5 'S 33'W NEC. Courtesy Eldo Regehr. McPherson County Abstract Company. Abstract of Section 29, Township Twenty-one South, Range Four, West of the

The second Bethel building, constructed 1897. Photographed June 8, 1913, by Frank Toews, at the ordination of H. T. and Anna Neufeld for mission work to the Montana Cheyenne. Floor plan is nearly identical to original building, with the exception of enlarged entrance and extended elder's room. Construction is of wood frame.

Sixth Principal Meridian.

[3]I wish to thank especially Eldo and MaryAnn Regehr and Adolf Neufeld for their participation in this work, the Inman Community Improvement Association for its interest in the adobe sanctuary, and all the individuals who contributed to the documentation project in 1992.

[4]As then director of Kauffman Museum, I initiated with board support a proposal to relocate and preserve the Bethel adobe sanctuary to the Museum grounds. This proposal was submitted, together with Professor Dan Rockhill of the University of Kansas, to the Kansas Historic Preservation Office in February 1992.

[5]Dan Rockhill, professor in the School of Architecture and Urban Design at the University of Kansas, is a contractor who has undertaken numerous restoration projects for the Kansas Historical Society. Barry Newton, also professor in the KU School of Architecture and Urban Design, writes and teaches in the area of theory of architecture, classical architecture and its modern applications. He supervised the documentation of the Bethel adobe sanctuary in summer 1992 by students Eric Zabilka, Keri Winslow, Steven Harrington, Kurt Brunner, David Haase-Divine, and Edward Schmitz, resulting in many photographs, nine working drawings and six final drawings. These have been deposited with the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

[6]The KHPO helped prepare the proposal that was submitted to the Kansas Historic Sites Board of Review for nomination to the Register of Historic Sites and for funds from the Heritage Trust Fund to partially support the restoration of the building at Kauffman Museum. The Board of Review recognized the historic importance of the adobe sanctuary and recommended an *in situ* preservation, suggesting that they were reluctant to invest public funds in an unprecedented move of a large and deteriorated earthen structure. Letter from Ramon Powers, State Historic Preservation Officer to John M. Janzen, 17 May 1993.

[7]For example, in Menno Colony, Paraguayan Chaco, the Osterwick meetinghouse of 1931, in adobe, wood, and metal roof construction, resembles almost exactly the Bethel structure. The 1980s meetinghouses of the Orenburg Mennonite settlements in the South Urals of Russia also closely resemble the Bethel structure. This observation is based on visits by the author to the South Urals in 1991 and to Paraguay in 1993.

[8] J.J. Schier, "De architectuur van doopsgezinde kerken," *Doopsgezinde Bijdragen*, nieuwe reeks 3 (1977), pp. 71-100. C.A. van Swigchem, T. Brouser, W. van Os, *Een huis voor het Woord: Het protestantse kerkinterieur in Nederland tot 1900* (Zeist: Staatsuitgeverij, 's-Gravenhage, 1984).

[9]Historical research on Mennonite meetinghouse architecture still needs to explore the very similar forms used by the Pennsylvania German and the Central Plains groups in the likely exchange of ideas among Dutch, Krefeld, North German, Palatinate, and Vistula Delta congregations as they built their first meetinghouses (early 17th to mid-18th centuries), and transported their forms to their migratory destinations.

[10]David Ediger, *Notebook: Nikolaidorf, S. Russia; Inman, KS.* (1873-1897). MS., translation by S. L. Loewen. Original with George Ediger, Buhler, KS.

[11]J.H. Ediger, "Walking Tour of Bethel Adobe Building." McPherson County Centennial Tour. November 1, 1970. Bethel College: Mennonite Library and Archives. 5 pp. typescript.

[12]Isaac T. Neufeld, *Century of Faith: The History of the Bethel Mennonite Church, Inman, Kansas.* (Newton, KS: Mennonite Press, 1987). Neufeld has worked from a variety of papers, including those of 1880 elder Heinrich Toews, which are in possession of Adolf Neufeld, Inman.

[13]That this was the leadership's meeting room is mentioned by J.H. Ediger, p. 4.

[14] Edmund Kizik, Polish historian of Mennonites in Gdansk and the Vistula Delta, spoke to us during visits in 1989 and 1993 of the 18th century buildings of Heubuden, Fuerstenwerder, Orlofferfelde, Rosenort, etc., as *bethaus* (house of prayer); in the South Urals Mennonite region or Orenburg, Russia, visited by the author in June 1991, the universal reference to houses of worship was also *bethaeuser*. Kirche, or church, is reserved, as it must have been by Elder Toews, for the congregation or larger church, not the building. However, J.H. Ediger in his diary uses the term "church" in the widespread current usage meaning congregation and its building.

[15]Although there is no direct documentary or eyewitness evidence for this arrangement in the adobe meetinghouse, the arrangement described here may be inferred from Abe Neufeld's account to me of the arrangement in the second (1897) Bethel meetinghouse which he remembers from his boyhood (Personal communication, 2 February 1993).

[16]Ediger.

[17]Mennonite Library and Archives, microfilm and in the congregation.

[18]Friesen, Steve. *1880 Bethel Church Restoration Project: Options and Observations.* 1990. Report submitted to Kauffman Museum, June 1990. 20 photos, 2 drawings.

[19]Historic American Building Survey. Bethel Sanctuary. University of Kansas Recording Project, summer, 1992.

[20]The Dutch Mennonites had begun to build and meet in "hidden churches" in the late 16th and early 17th century. Their interior arrangement established the classic Mennonite form as seen in the Bethel sanctuary. See J.J. Schiere.

[21]The history of Northern European Mennonite residences and their relationship to the prayerhouse is spelled out more fully in Reinhild and John Janzen, *Mennonite Furniture: A Migrant Tradition (1766-1910).* Intercourse, Pa: Good Books, 1991. pp. 57-72.

[22]N. van der Zijpp and C. Krahn, "Architecture," *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, vol. I, pp. 146-155. (Scottdale: Mennonite Publishing House, 1955).

[23]van Swigchem, et. al.; F. A. J. Vermeulen, *Handboek tot de Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Bouwkunst.* 'S-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1928.

[24]Harold Bender, "Worship," *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, vol. IV, 984-988.

[25]Vermeulen.

[26] Beulah Hostetler, "The Formation of the Old Orders," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, 66, 1 (Jan. 1992), 5-25.

A Bethel College Memoir

by Harry R. Van Dyck

A Bethel College representative, Harry Martens, was in Henderson, Nebraska, in late summer 1940 recruiting students for a special project. This project had a dual purpose: to employ young men to work, as a group, on Memorial Hall during a special phase of its construction, and to offer them a chance to begin their college careers. The Great Depression was still on. Colleges were as desperate to recruit students as students were desperate for financial means to enroll. Having been out of high school two years, I was indeed anxious to get started in college. My sister, Freda Huebert (a graduate of Bethel College), offered additional financial support, so I volunteered for the project.

We were to work full-time as bricklayers' helpers during the fall quarter, and were to take one three-hour college course at night. During the second and third quarters, we could take twelve hours of class work, while working part-time at other Memorial Hall construction jobs. About a dozen men from Mennonite communities in Kansas and Nebraska had been recruited. Roland and Elwin Friesen, two friends of mine from Henderson, were among these.

As the fall term began, we seemed to be academic hybrids—students technically, but day laborers in practical terms. While other students strolled about campus in clean, sporty clothes (no faded jeans or scruffy tennis shoes then), we wore dusty, sweaty denims. While they bantered and waved cheerily to one another between classes, we made sardonic comments as we carried heavy planks or pushed wheelbarrows. Students often stood nearby to view the construction site. We felt self-conscious.

The work was hard, but it engendered camaraderie. It also produced prodigious appetites. After registering complaints of insufficient amounts of food in the dining hall, we were placed at a special table next to the kitchen and given extra helpings. At the outset, we received the standard Bethel College wage for student labor, twenty-one cents an hour. But our work was more strenuous than ordinary college jobs, and we considered this unfair. Several recruits soon left the project in discouragement. After we protested to Harry Martens and the administration, our wages were raised to twenty-five cents an hour. We did not receive cash, only credit at the college business office.

Numerous other students worked for the college on a part-time basis. According to the 1940-41 *Bethel College Bulletin*, "more than one hundred seventy-five students" (out of about four hundred and fifty) were "earning a portion of their expenses while attending school." Their names together with their college jobs were honorably listed in the catalog.

The *Bulletin* further asserted that "giving employment to students" was "not to be considered only as a means to an end." It was also regarded as "a method whereby a student may actually received technical education" while working, and "gain desirable employable habits." Harry Martens, who headed up the work program, was pictured in the *Bulletin* and listed with the quaint title, Dean of Labor.

This was not an auspicious way to begin a college career. Our status as marginal students was reinforced by the fact that we lived in Pullman Court, an unorthodox, makeshift dormitory. Pullman Court consisted of four railway passenger, or Pullman, cars, that had been converted into living quarters. Located in the northeast corner of the campus, adjacent to the college farm, these cars were connected to form a U. The partially enclosed space inside this U formed a "court" area, hence the name Pullman Court.

The narrow confines of the cars precluded having separate rooms or compartments. Sleeping cots were lined along both sides of the cars. There were no closets. Suitcases under the cots served as storage space. One Pullman car, furnished with wooden chairs and tables, served as our study area. My bunk was the "first" in the unit, as you entered through the study "room" and proceeded through the bathroom to the sleeping area. Only a thin wall and a swinging door separated me from boisterous talk and late night card-playing sessions there. All traffic to and from the bathroom, and in and out of the "dormitory," had to file past my bed. A thin pane of glass, inches from my body, was all that separated me from the winter winds and snow.

In 1940, as today, the Administration Building stood in its beauty and grandeur at the center of the Bethel campus. This stone structure contained administration offices, classrooms, college library, chapel, and post office. Pipe organ music drifted down to the library on the first floor while students were

Memorial Hall under construction

rehearsing their organ lessons in the chapel on the second floor. The library stacks, in the dimly lit basement, were used mainly by advanced students, I judged, and by steady-going couples, who studied and visited there. After morning chapel, at which seats were alphabetically assigned and attendance was compulsory, students squeezed into the narrow post office in the basement to look for mail from home—and, in my case, for a package of laundered shirts from my mother.

Science Hall, a relatively new brick structure, was the other major classroom building. Alumni Hall (the "old gymnasium"), an ancient red brick building located where the Student Center parking lot is now, housed Kauffman Museum, which had just been relocated to the Bethel campus from Freeman, South Dakota. Carnegie Hall (without subsequent additions) was the only other brick structure.

Music Hall, a two-story wooden structure, was behind the Administration Building and near the canal; Dining Hall was located where Mantz Library now stands. College Inn, a tiny structure no larger than an average living room, stood just to the west of the dining hall. This was the college hangout where students spent their nickels and dimes for soft drinks and hamburgers—if they could find a seat at the counter.

White House and Goessel Hall, three-story wooden structures—if you included the attic rooms—were the two main dormitories for men. White House was located across the street from Memorial Hall next to the Kauffman Museum, and Goessel Hall was on the west side of Main Street. A few male students also lived in two small frame houses: Western Home, situated next to the Memorial Hall building site, and The Pines, next to Pullman Court and the farm. Female students lived in Carnegie Hall and several larger frame houses: Leisy Home, Welty Home, Kliewer Home, and Goerz Hall. The *College Bulletin* specified that "all students not living at home are required to room in the dormitories." Students were also "required to board at college dining hall unless specially excused and other arrangements are approved in writing." Rooms rented for $12 to $20 per quarter, and board was $40.

Construction of Memorial Hall, which was begun in 1939 and completed in 1942, had stalled at ground level, with only the foundation and basement masonry completed. It stood as a prominent symbol of Bethel's poverty, as well as of its hopes for the future. It was intended as a combination gymnasium and auditorium, two sorely needed facilities.

Bethel's basketball games were played in the Newton High School gymnasium. Physical education classes were scattered about. The bowling course I enrolled for in the spring quarter, for example, was conducted in a small bowling establishment in downtown Newton. The class of about fifteen students was transported to the one- or

two-lane bowling alley by college bus, and returned to campus within one class period. This allowed time for each class member to roll only a few balls each week. Coach Otto Unruh was the P.E. instructor. His easy-going attitude and blustery manner helped to minimize our frustration—and to keep us from taking the course too seriously.

Unruh was the lone athletic coach at Bethel. He coached football, basketball, and track without any assistant. (There were no women's varsity sports.) Coach Unruh was something of a legend in his own time. His good nature and humor were endearing. He was said to have been a star basketball player at Kansas University, and I heard it said that he had once made a winning basket from a sitting position on the floor.

Coach Unruh also served as Dean of Men, and he taught the introductory economics course I enrolled in during the spring quarter. Traits which probably endeared Coach Unruh to athletes on the field or court did not enhance his effectiveness in the classroom, unfortunately. I came to the class with a keen interest in economics, and some strong New Deal, even socialistic, attitudes. But for me the course was a washout. My recollection is of twelve weeks of rambling, disorganized discussion of current events and the price of wheat, along with corny jokes and inane banter between Coach Unruh and the athletes who took the course.

By late fall, brick and masonry work on Memorial Hall had almost reached the top of the structure. One day, the contractor told his bricklayers, "You guys are going to have to tear down that north wall and do it over." The men were momentarily incredulous, but they broke into laughter when their boss continued, "Prexy wants a screen door put in on the ground floor."

"Prexy" was Dr. Ed. G. Kaufman, president of Bethel College, and he monitored the progress of construction with minute care. We were always on the lookout for him to appear on the construction site, so we could give one another warning to avoid being caught loafing or engaging in horseplay or profanity.

There was little doubt that Dr. Kaufman ran the college. His appearance and demeanor commanded attention and respect, if not awe or fear. A stockily-built man, he exuded stability and strength. I remember him as a gray man, with thin gray hair, gray complexion, wearing a gray suit. His steely eyes (also gray, I presume) looked pointedly at you along his thin nose, with a slight squint—as if he were sighting down the barrel of a gun. His jaw was firmly set, his voice chesty and gruff. President Kaufman was tough, and I think he looked for toughness in others. At first, this obscured for me the kindness and benevolence in his soul.

One Saturday afternoon, Dr. Kaufman came to Pullman Court. He had with him a visitor, a benefactor and possible contributor to the college. When these two men entered the bathroom area, the air was blue with tobacco smoke. Smoking was not permitted anywhere on campus, but a considerable number of male students did smoke in obscure places under conditions of stealth and apprehension. The Pullman Court bathroom was one such place.

Dr. Kaufman showed his guest around the facility, casually and with complete aplomb. (I'm not sure whether he tried to impress his guest with the administration's ingenuity in providing student housing, or with the college's dire need for better housing.) Just before leaving, the president paused in the bathroom area, sniffed the air, and said to his guest, "I guess we will have to have a talk with the boys." We never heard a word about the incident, from him or anyone else.

In future years, I would have opportunities to read some of Dr. Kaufman's articles, to hear him speak, and to meet him on a somewhat more personal basis, while I was in a Civilian Public Service camp in Florida and he visited there. As a student, I especially admired him for his leading the college through some very difficult times. Later, I came to appreciate his intellectual and personal qualities as well.

"Acts and the Early Church" was a night course, taught by Professor Amos Kreider, and our Memorial Hall gang was enrolled in it. I welcomed this opportunity for an organized study of the New Testament. My mental images of this class, my very first college course, are mainly of Dr. Kreider, his balding head, his benevolent attitude, and his sonorous baritone voice. Behind me sat a bright female upperclassman, who impressed me with her comments made in a clear, confident tone. She had a memorable name: O. Ruth Sisk.

One other experience drew me away from the grime and toil of the work project, and brought me closer to being a regular student. I auditioned to sing in the A Capella Choir before Professor Walter Hohmann, the choir director, and I was accepted. Arrangements were made for me to attend choir rehearsals—in my work clothes.

My respect for Professor Hohmann was based in no small part on Hohmann's austere personal appear-

Memorial Hall work crew

Jerry Stucky working in the college print shop ca. 1940

ance. His thick crop of curly black hair, combed upward on all sides, stood high above his head, and was complimented by his dark eyes and black, neatly trimmed mustache. This stern countenance bespoke his professional sophistication and competence. But underneath, he was a marshmallow, a most gentle and cheerful man.

Dale Bachman, Virgil Flickinger, Elwin Friesen, Homer Kaufman, Johnny Martens (Harry's brother), Richard Nachtigall, Adolf Neufeld, and I were members of the original work crew who stuck with the project through the first quarter. We developed a gang mentality, and Memorial Hall construction site was our turf. Here we toiled, displayed our manhood—and engaged in minor delinquencies. Here Johnny nailed someone's boots to the floor, and Elwin "accidentally" tossed tiles down from the top of the stack so that you could not catch them, and they would crash and disintegrate. Someone picked rotten tomatoes from the patch of nearby Western Home and threw them into Smoky's mortar-mixing box.

We pushed wheelbarrows loaded with tiles, bricks, or mortar from ground level up a series of ramps and platforms leading to the bricklayers' work area. When the "mud" on a bricklayer's mortarboard had hardened in the sun, we had to "temper" it by mixing in a dash of water. Slim (I will call him) was the grouchiest of the bricklayers. "Temp this mud," he would bellow, "I can't lay bricks with this stuff." When the mortar was too thin, there was little that we or the bricklayers could do. Then Shorty, the slowest but best-natured of the bricklayers, might yell, "Hey, tell Smoky to keep them cows off the pasture." Smoky, the mortar mixer, was not intimidated. A frail, leathery man of about 70, he simply squirted another mouthful of tobacco juice into his trough and kept at his slow place.

In the early weeks, we needed only to push our wheelbarrows up one ramp to where the men were working. As the work progressed, we eventually had to transport the materials along ramps that zig-zagged to the top of the walls and apexes of the building. Pushing and controlling the wheelbarrows required ever more strength and endurance. This became dangerous business. When someone lost control of a loaded wheelbarrow near the top, the contents crashed down to the ramps or landings below. At that time, the work served as a basis for youthful braggadocio and comparison of strength; now, I wonder what accident insurance policy may have been in place.

By the second quarter, I led a more normal college life. I had interesting courses from Professors E. L. Harshbarger (political science), P. E. Schellenberg (psychology), and Thelma Richard (English). I still worked twenty hours a week, but the work was no longer enjoyable. Our gang had splintered due to irregular working hours. Winter had arrived, the weather was cold and wet, and Memorial Hall was still only a drafty shell.

During Thanksgiving break the campus suddenly became an empty, lonely place. Elwin Friesen and I were among a handful of students who did not go home for vacation. This gave us an opportunity to get in a few extra hours of work—at the college dairy. We rose at a predawn hour to help with the morning milking, and we repeated this dirty, smelly chore in the early evening. Rain had made the dairy yard a sea of knee-deep mud, and all the cows' udders had to be washed before we could milk them—by hand, naturally.

Being a regular student enhanced my social life. One wintry Saturday, word came to Pullman Court that extra workers were needed for the day at the Print Shop. Again, anxious to earn extra money (i.e. credit), I volunteered. We were supervised by a sophomore student named Connie Pleasant. And pleasant she was, with dark brown hair that hung down in thick curls to her shoulders, glistening brown eyes, and full, ruby red lips. Her pretty presence and cheery chatter helped to brighten this otherwise gloomy winter day.

I had heard about Connie, that she was engaged to a boy back in Indiana. As the day went by our eyes met frequently, and we exchanged smiles and small talk. Undaunted by Connie's reputation as being unavailable, I asked her to go to the movies that night, and she accepted. Lack of transportation was a vexing problem for maintaining an active romantic life. Virtually no students at Bethel owned a car. In decent weather, it was acceptable to arrange for campus dates, or even to walk your date the two miles to downtown Newton. But in inclement weather it was essential to find transportation. This Saturday night was a cold one; I needed wheels.

Fortunately, Elwin had a car, a faded twelve-year-old Model A Ford coupe. I asked to borrow it, and Elwin obliged. But I had another problem. I was broke. So Elwin also lent me fifty cents. This would cover the price of two theater tickets at twenty cents apiece, and leave ten cents for two nickel cokes.

My only memory of the movie that night is that it had a couple of scary scenes—at least Connie pretended to be frightened; enough so that she had a pretext for grabbing hold of my arm a few times. After the show, we stopped at a restaurant on the east side of Main Street that Bethel students frequented, and had cherry Cokes. When we emerged from this emporium and walked to the car, it was snowing softly.

An inch of snow had accumulated on the sidewalk. Connie bent down, scooped up a handful of snow, and threw it at me. I thought it was very romantic.

I was gratified also when Professor Hohmann selected me to sing in the College Quartet, along with Eddie Schrag, Lester Ewy, and Paul Albrecht. The Men's Quartet was an established, somewhat prestigious institution at Bethel. The quartet performed and represented the college at high schools in the area, and at Mennonite churches around the country. This was another opportunity for new experiences and camaraderie. Our trips, in the spring of 1941, to western Kansas, and to Nebraska, Iowa, and Minnesota were among the year's highlights for me.

My year at Bethel was capped by a three-week tour with the A Capella Choir the following summer. This trek took us through eight states, culminating in an appearance at the national meeting of the General Conference of Mennonites, at Souderton, Pennsylvania, in August of 1941.

In June of that year, I had worked in the wheat harvest in western Kansas, earning sixty-five dollars (at five dollars a dawn-to-dusk day). This covered a fee which the college assessed each participating choir member, and allowed me a couple of twenties for other expenses. We gave musical programs at Mennonite churches along the way, and church members provided bed and breakfast for us. Dormitory beds were provided in our stops at Goshen College in Indiana and at Bluffton College in Ohio, and at conference headquarters in Pennsylvania.

The Bethel College bus and three cars were our means of transportation. Choir members served as drivers. The bus was small and tinny, with non-reclining, hard leather seats, and very limited luggage space; two persons to one suitcase was the rule. But the carefree spirit of youth overcame such discomforts and hardships. And our frivolity was only slightly diminished by the ominous signs of impending war. The nation was mobilizing for World War II, and the military draft had begun. On the highways, we encountered seemingly endless lines of military vehicles and personnel on the move. But for us it was still a time for laughter and song. Professor Hohmann felt compelled at one point to reprimand the girls for leaning out of the windows, waving and shouting at the GIs, as our bus slowly eased past the troop caravans along the narrow highways.

Singing in non-airconditioned churches and auditoriums under heavy black robes in summer was often unpleasant. One evening, Otto Sommer, a stalwart tenor on my left, began to sway from heat exhaustion. With me holding him on his right and someone else steadying him on his left, we managed to keep him upright till the end of the anthem, at which time we helped him off the stage.

But we made beautiful music. We derived our pitch for each number, not from a piano or tuning fork, but from one of our altos who, being blessed with perfect pitch, gave us our cue by briefly and softly humming the appropriate key signature. Choir members thus picked

Bethel College bus 1938

Persons attending General Conference sessions in Souderton, Pennsylvania, 1941. Bethel College choir at left.

up their beginning notes and passed them along among themselves. Many in the audience, unable to hear these cues, could not understand how we derived our pitch and were baffled by this musical stunt—one which I have never seen duplicated.

In spite of the gaiety of this enterprise, I recall having a feeling that we were on a rather risky venture. We were obviously traveling on the cheap, and I specifically wondered about the reliability of the bus and our youthful drivers. But all went well—until near the end.

In the morning of our penultimate day on the road, just east of St. Louis, it happened. At a point where the two-lane road broadened to a divided four-lane highway, our bus driver ran the left front wheel onto a curb on the median strip, and lost control of the vehicle. The bus rocked, swerved, and slowly fell on its side as it slid off the road onto the right shoulder. Miraculously, no one was injured or even badly bruised (according to my memory). The bus was righted up, we piled back in, and rode into St. Louis. I have a vague recollection of a long delay in the city where our flock was gathered (cars and bus did not always follow each other). Phone calls were made, and insurance companies were contacted—but no bus repairs were made. In the afternoon, we renewed our journey. Our last performance was scheduled for that evening in western Missouri. We arrived at the church after dark, tired and hungry—and subdued. A patient audience was still waiting, and we obliged them with a full concert.

The bus was unstable, not riding properly. It tended to sway when turning a corner or running over bumps, as if the suspension system was damaged. The next day, the last of our journey, a decision was made to have the women ride in the automobiles and the men ride the bus the rest of the way to the Bethel campus. Several men decided immediately to hitchhike, considering that to be a safer, faster option. This left perhaps a dozen of us to ride the bus.

The bus driver reduced his speed drastically, but the bus still had a tendency to rock and sway. After an hour or so, two of us also decided to hitchhike. We quickly caught a ride, and soon were well ahead of the bus. By mid-afternoon our luck ran out, and the bus caught up with us. We swallowed our pride, flagged down our bus, and boarded it again—in spite of the razzing by our friends who had remained on board. The bus limped into North Newton and onto campus at sundown without further incident.

I did not return to Bethel the next year. I would spend the rest of my professional life in academia, studying and teaching at a half dozen colleges and universities, but no single academic year would be any more memorable than this one. Bethel College gave me my first glimpse of higher education and of life away from home. I have always recognized Bethel College as an institution with a soul, with a unique tradition, and a forceful ethos. And for me, Memorial Hall stands as a symbol of personal nostalgia, and of the spirit of Bethel College.

Altenheim:

The Sunday Visits

by Nancy Schroeder-Warner

It is a summer Sunday afternoon in a small Kansas town. The combines are at rest in spite of a half-finished harvest, stores are closed, people in Sunday clothes drive by leisurely. Hesston, with only one block of main street, is home to a large implement manufacturing plant and a church-related college. It also has one of the region's finest nursing homes, which is what brings me here. I have come farther than most for this Sunday visit, as my home is in California. My mother has been at the nursing home for two years.

On each visit I am filled with regret, and even guilt, that I cannot see to her needs and visit her weekly. Kids used to tease me about being an only child; I didn't have to share my toys. But now, there is no one with whom to share the difficult decisions about Mother's care either. I think wistfully of Grandma Schroeder having fourteen brothers and sisters when she was at this point in life.

Inside the home I walk down the many corridors, past the crafts room, the physical therapy room, the nurses' station, all brightly lit and decorated in pastel colors. My mind turns back to other darker corridors not far from here in space, but forty-five years back in time to Sunday visits with Great-grandma Schroeder.

One visit in particular shimmers in my memory. In it Mother is young and pretty, Daddy is tan and strong from days on the plow and the combine, and my grandparents are in the prime of their lives. I am eight or nine, and quite unprepared for the thought that I, too, would some day grow old and die.

It was traditional in Mennonite homes to take a nap on Sundays after dinner, and then visit relatives. I liked this enforced quietude. Lying gingerly in my church clothes so as not to get them wrinkled, I played with my paper dolls. Sleep always eluded me, and I waited for the sound of my parents getting up, and Daddy saying, "Well, I guess we better go."

We picked up my grandparents on their farm next to ours. They were very regular in their visits to the "Old" Grandma Schroeder, and frequently we went along. There was the usual negotiation about who would take the car. Daddy won, so we piled into our Ford, freshly washed before church. We sat Mennonite style, the men in the front and the women in the back.

Great-grandma was in the "Altenheim" in Goessel, a village about an hour's drive from our farm. These visits were sad for them, and boring for me, since there was nothing to do but listen to the grown-ups talk. However, after this visit the boredom became something else: an awareness of my connection, and that of those I loved, to this old lady's infirmity, and its inevitable outcome.

As we drove along that hot afternoon, Daddy and Grandpa talked crops and carpentry, while Grandma and Mom covered the latest news of relatives. I especially liked to hear about who was "expecting" and when.

In those days, traveling 30 miles was considered a fair distance. I felt snug and safe hearing the drone of family voices as I watched the landscape unfold outside.

Goessel, Kansas, Home for Aged ca. 1940

Our destination, Goessel, seemed very old-fashioned to me. People had cows and chickens in their backyards. Some even had barns. Goessel had no sidewalks and the streets were not paved. There was not even a "main street." Yet Goessel had an "old folks' home," a large three-story white frame building shaded by elm trees. Many cars were parked out front as we drove up. The front entrance was shaded by a porch.

Inside a grandfather clock ticked in the entry hall. A wide open stairway led to the upper floors. The bannister was satiny smooth from the many hands that had used it. The dark hallways gave me the same feeling I had in hospitals—a sense of mystery and hidden suffering, a sense of being suspended in time. There was an unpleasant smell, a blend of bed pans, cooking odors, and that indefinable odor of old age. And there was silence.

Great-grandma's corner room had large windows looking into the trees. It was furnished simply: a mahogany dresser, on which sat a square black clock and an assortment of old photos; several straight-backed chairs; and an iron bed with hospital sheets. An afghan crocheted by Grandma, neatly folded across the bed, was the only color in the room.

Great-grandma dozed in her rocker as we approached.

"Gohn dach, Mutta!" Grandma said, patting the wrinkled hand on the arm rest. Grandpa, always reticent, merely stood and smiled. Great-grandma woke with a start and stared at us.

"You have visitors. We brought Elmer and Hulda," Grandma said, a little too loudly.

I felt Daddy's hand on my shoulder, gently moving me closer. Great-grandma looked at all of us, as if to make sure we were real. Her thinning hair was parted in the middle and pulled tightly into a "shups" at the nape of her neck. Her back was curved into a dowager's hump, making her chest sink towards her stomach, causing her to breathe shallowly, reminding me of a baby rabbit I once saved from our cat's claws.

Leaning forward, she squinted at me through round glasses with thick black rims.

"Gross mutta," Daddy said, in his soft voice. "Do you remember Nancy?"

Her faded blue eyes studied me, as if this were a spelling bee and she wanted to answer correctly. She looked at Daddy for help.

"Elmer and Hulda's girl, Nancy!" Grandma prompted, a little impatiently.

Raising her arthritic hand, Great-grandma said in a gravelly voice, "Come closer..."

Her mouth looked as if she had too many teeth, yellowed and crooked as they were, and she smelled funny. Then her face lit up with recognition and she took my warm sweaty hand in her cool ones. "Nay oba Nensicka!" she said, and gave me a wet kiss on my cheek. She had bristly hairs on her lip that scratched. I pulled back a little in surprise.

"And how old are you now?"

"Eight," I said.

Turning to Grandma she said, "She looks like her daddy, don't you think, Katy?" Then she smiled and became a different person, alert and happy. I could see how she must have been before she got so old.

"Maybe so, but she resembles her mamma, too."

The ice was broken, and chairs were pulled up. The "visiting" began, stiffly at first, like new shoes, then warming into a familiar rhythm. There was talk of a lady down the hall who had broken her hip.

"That will be the end," Great-grandma said, grimly. "When the hip breaks, you don't come home from the hospital."

This brought a brief spell of silence. There was news of the relatives. A cousin had been seriously burned when a heater exploded. Polio had struck several children, one an identical twin. I had seen these girls at family gatherings, and could imagine them growing up, the crippled one always seeing herself as she might have been in her healthy sister.

They turned to happier things: the Friendly Circle was almost finished with the quilt they would enter at the State Fair. The harvest looked good. If it didn't rain, Grandpa and Daddy would finish cutting tomorrow.

As the visit went on, I wandered about the room. On Great-grandma's dresser were family photos in paper stand-up frames. One showed Great-grandma as a bride, wearing a black taffeta dress. Her long hair was pulled back with a large bow. Beside her stood a blonde young man with a square face. His wedding suit did not fit properly. A later picture showed Great-grandma and her husband, with four children. One of those girls was my grandma. A third picture showed a haggard looking Great-grandma, already a little stooped, with a different man, balding and portly, surrounded by twelve children. When Great-grandma's first husband died at thirty-four, she married a man with eight children, expanding the family to twelve. One of the boys in that picture was my grandfather; he and Grandma were step brother and sister.

I studied Great-grandma's bridal picture again. She was not pretty, but she had a tiny waist, and her hands were as young and smooth as mine. I looked again at the tiny shriveled lady in the rocking chair. The buffer of time between us, for a brief moment, disappeared. I jumped when the mantle clock chimed the hour: three o'clock.

I walked to where Mom was sitting. She took my hand and smiled. When at last all avenues of conversation had been exhausted, Great-grandma broke the peaceful lull, shattered it with a request, a plea.

She addressed it to my father, knowing him to have a soft heart, "Elmer, I want to go outside. I want to sit under the trees. I ask and ask, and they don't take me."

Daddy's face dissolved into sadness. Grandma saved him from an answer.

"Nay, nay, Mutta. Do kount's nicht. Due vaehts daot."

Seeing the disappointment on Great-grandma's face, I desperately wished they would find a way. Maybe let her down with ropes like Thaddeus in the Bible. And Jesus would touch her, and she would stand up, a young woman again, to walk down the stairway, her skirts trailing, and out into the sunlight. But the pleasant spell had been broken. There was a decent interval of small talk. Then, Grandpa, who had said little, made the first move to go home.

"Na yauw, es tiedt we na hoose foarah." It was time go to home. Great-grandma's face faded.

"No, not already!" she protested. "You

Alzheimer's and full care wing of Schowalter Villa, Hesston, Kansas, 1994

Four generations (from oldest to youngest): Suzanna Berg Franz, Susie Franz Siemens, Hulda Siemens Schroeder, Nancy Schroeder-Warner

just got here!"

But the ritual of hundreds of years was the pre-ordained winner.

"Zo est," Grandma added, standing up. There is no adequate translation of this expression. It carries sympathy, resignation, disappointment. So life goes. Not always what we want, but we must make the best of things.

We stood up. Goodbyes were said. No one spoke as we retreated down the creaking stairs. The Sunday visit was completed. We passed a family just arriving, a blast of hot air hit us as we left the building. At the car we waved, knowing she would be watching at the window until our car was just a speck on the road.

The grown-ups were quiet as we drove away. I had, for the first time, looked into abyss, and now shared in their relief that the visit was over and we could retreat into our safe niches in time. I no longer felt that old age was far down the corridor of my future, and the car was no longer a comfortable cocoon. Suddenly, I wanted to be home.

Mother sits in her air-conditioned room, surrounded by her furniture and her doll collection. Favorite paintings hang on the wall. There are no offensive odors. A snap shot comes to mind—it is one of those four-generation poses popular in the forties. I am a 4-month-old baby in a crocheted cap and dress, sitting in Great-grandma Franz's lap. Her crippled hands hold me. She sits under a tree in a willow chair. Behind her stands my young mother, her hair stylishly bobbed, and my grandmother, her dark hair set into waves. All three wear soft flowery dresses, and look down proudly at the baby who is peacefully sleeping.

A sadness fills me for those comforting presences that used to surround me, all gone now. Times seems an escalator carrying us all along too fast, moving those we love out of sight too soon. I put on a smile and walk into the room. "Hello, Mom!" I say and hug her tight.

Book Reviews

Athol Gill. *Life on the Road: The Gospel Basis for a Messianic Lifestyle.* Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1992. Pp. 311. ($11.95 paperback) ISBN 0-8361-3588-1

A common assumption among Christians who grew up in the church is that it is the convict, the self-centered wealthy pleasure seekers or those raised by agnostic families, who have dramatic conversions and make radical changes. Those who grew up as part of the church family can't tell stories of 180-degree changes in direction. Gill's book undermines that assumption.

Just the title of the book and the "on the road" metaphors of map, directions, traveling, imply Christians do not "arrive" and those who have, misunderstood Jesus' call.

But there is more that implies as Jesus' fellow travelers we can expect some life changing. In the "traveling light" chapter we are shown Jesus' call to a joyous discipleship involves a different attitude towards possessions than most Christians accept.

Likewise, there is a deeper kind of fellowship than the service club kind of good-natured mutual respect or the kind due to a shared ideology in the "Friends for the Journey" chapter. Similar tastes, interests, manners, politics, even the same theological background, just about everything included in the "homogenous principle" of church growth sociological advice is not the basis of community that Jesus taught. Helping each other answer the call of Jesus to do God's will and helping each other know God's grace and love is at the heart of community, which also makes for a community very open to a wide variety of backgrounds. This is not the way most churches experience fellowship.

Also, Gill explains how the gospel is good news to the poor, the very group our churches are unable to reach, in the "Jobs Along the Way" and the "Road Under Repair" chapters.

The common heresy of separating parts of the gospel that must be kept together gets Gill's attention: evangelism and social action, prayer/spiritual development and community, costly discipleship and awareness of God's grace. He works at this not just by agreeing both are important but by a different understanding of both ends of what have become polarities so they can't be separated.

Several things will be appreciated by teachers and group leaders using this book: 1) The helpful pattern for doing Bible study: each chapter first describes the insights of Jesus. Secondly, we are shown how different gospel writers interpreted these insights for their different audiences and/or different situations or placed them along side of different material. The contrasts of the ways similar teachings are used are illuminating. Thirdly, there is help for us to explore the implications for our future. We are assumed to be on a journey in need of direction, and the New Testament is a direction-giving map for our journey. The discussion suggestions include actions we might consider. (An appendix even suggests an outline for leading discussions of the book.)

2) The book deals with major themes rather than going through a particular gospel. But the index of the scriptures treated makes it helpful for preachers and others working on a particular passage to find out Gill's understanding of that text.

3) Gill provides scholarly research and background material in interesting and understandable language. We are helped to get behind the scripture's words by a committed Christian who has academic and communication skills.

Readers will understand why a Mennonite publisher published this book. It describes the kind of faith we hope churches in the Anabaptist tradition live. This is more than something for an adult Sunday School class to do while the children are in their classes; it is to help us find the way and plan our future. There are basic choices to make and they are thoughtfully presented.

Stanley Bohn
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C. Norman Kraus, *The Community of the Spirit: How the Church is in the World* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993). Pp. 221 ($14.95 paperback) ISBN 0-8361-3619-5

Mennonites love to write about, preach about, and think about the church. We seem to carry within us idealistic notions of what the church should be or at least potentially could become if only we were faithful to the vision.

As I have heard it, the idealistic vision is rooted in the early church which in that pristine form is to be found the model for our vision. The goal is to recover in 20th century reality that vision which did for two short generations of history find fulfillment. In the first and sixteenth centuries, in the New Testament church and again in the Anabaptist reformation, we think that we find these ideals realized in actual historical communities.

But woe to us; the church has fallen away. And according to the semi-official line the church fell with the Constantinian conquest of the church. And it has fallen again in the 20th century by following the patterns and models of North American Protestantism.

Thus understood, the theological task for today is to reconstruct that ideal out of the New Testament and out of the experience of the 16th century Anabaptist reformation. This must be done, obviously, with some sense of dialogue with the contemporary scene; but the driving vision and energy is rooted in these first generation ideals.

It is within this general framework that I read this revision and expansion of Kraus's work, first published two decades earlier. Kraus sets out to describe what the church might yet become, if only we could recover the true under-

standing and capture the idealistic vision in our own reality.

There is much to be commended in Kraus's interpretation of this vision. Several chapters themselves are structured around uniquely Anabaptist themes of community, love, and peace. And as a true Anabaptist, Kraus rightly roots the church in the gospels rather than in the epistles, thus forming the "God Movement" in the life and ministry of Jesus.

So what is missing? That's the questions I asked myself as I read. Why does this ideal not generate the same response in me that it once did? One answer could be that the problem is within me, that I have lost the vision and compromised the ideal for the sake of a church accommodated to the culture within which we find ourselves. Perhaps; we all know "the world is too much with us."

But I also read the New Testament, and the church I read about there is so much more interesting and instructive than the one constructed out of the selected texts of our imagined ideal. It is a church with real people, warts and all. It is a church with flawed leaders. It is a church with problems, not unlike the issues I dealt with yesterday: issues of sexuality, jealousy, competition for position, divided opinions, misunderstandings, and bad communications.

It is also a church in which people do experience the grace and goodness of God, where in the midst of their life in the world they discover opportunities for witness and service.

I suppose that every pastor carries within their soul the dream that they might serve the congregation of their ideals. It would be the perfect church, and especially if that church embodied and lived the pastor's vision! It's the Anabaptist version of the beatific vision, and my guess is that it is equally illusive in our experience.

For the reality is that we are called to live in and serve in a church that is not unlike the church of the New Testament. And the challenge is to discover what it means to live and serve with vision in a less-than-ideal church. To the extent that Kraus helps to guide us in that experience he deserves to be carefully read.

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Cornelius J. Dyck, ed., *An Introduction to Mennonite History*. Third edition. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993. Pp. 451. ($16.95 paperback) ISBN 0-8361-3620-9

Twenty-five years ago the only two English-language survey histories of the entire scope of Anabaptist-Mennonite history were C. Henry Smith's *The Story of the Mennonites*, first published in 1920, and Cornelius J. Dyck's *An Introduction to Mennonite History*, first published in 1967. Today the same two books hold the field unchallenged, Smith's in a fifth edition (1981) and Dyck's in this new edition of 1993.

The first edition of *An Introduction* was sponsored by the Institute of Mennonite Studies at Elkhart, Indiana. It was a collaborative effort. In the preface, Dyck credited fellow scholars who had drafted all or part of sixteen of the twenty-one chapters. Dyck edited the volume with a "young adult" audience in mind, an intention stated again in the third edition. The 1993 edition is wholly Dyck's work as author, revised and amplified in the light of recent scholarship and contemporary concerns. Among the recent sources used are the three published volumes in the Mennonite Experience in America series, and the fifth volume of *The Mennonite Encyclopedia*, for which Dyck served as general editor.

The overall outline and balance of topics in the book has not changed. The first one third of each edition consists of eight chapters covering the Anabaptist movement in Europe until 1650, concluded with a summarizing chapter on Anabaptist-Mennonite beliefs. The last two-thirds tell of Mennonites in Russia, North America, in non-western continents, and in Europe since 1648.

This new edition takes into account scholarship from the 1970s and 1980s which demonstrated that Anabaptism was a complex social movement of multiple intellectual and geographic origins, rather than a unilinear movement arising solely from the circle of Zwingli's followers in Zurich. In an excellent chapter entitled "This They Believed" (pp. 133-150), Dyck locates Harold S. Bender, founder of the Goshen School of interpretation, among an extended list of historians who attempted to identify the "essence" of Anabaptism, and who thereby revealed their own particular values. But Dyck has not abandoned the idea of normative history for the current vogue of social history. In his final chapter he says this history "is human history, in which by faith we see the hand of God" (p. 429). Anabaptists, he says, were "revolutionaries" whose principles, properly understood and implemented, can make "a great contribution . . . to church and society" (p. 440).

This volume is also notable for expanded coverage of the growth and development of Mennonite churches in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Dyck has served as executive secretary of the Mennonite World Conference, and his special interest in Mennonite missions and cross-cultural developments find expression here.

The book is well illustrated with photographs and maps, but the index unfortunately does not include many of the names of persons and places mentioned in the text. An adequate index for a book of this type and size would be two or three times as extensive as this one. A rare example of a misleading categorization is Dyck's identification of the Church of God in Christ among the "Groups of Swiss Ethnic Origin" (p. 303). Obscured is the fact that some three-fourths of this group's members are of Dutch origin.

The time will no doubt eventually come for another new synthesis of Anabaptist Mennonite history to join the good works by C. Henry Smith and Cornelius J. Dyck. In the meantime, Dyck's well-written and up-to-date

third edition can serve us well as we approach the twenty-first century.

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Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., *The Transfiguration of Mission: Biblical, Theological, and Historical Foundations*. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993. Pp. 256. ($18.95 paperback) ISBN 0-8361-3610-1

This book is No. 12 in Missionary Studies of the Institute of Mennonite Studies. Wilbert R. Shenk, editor, serves as Director of the Mission Training Center, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. He served on the staff of the Mennonite Board of Missions between 1965 and 1990.

The origin of the book goes back to 1975 when some of the contributors to this volume met to explore "the potential of a fresh approach to the theology of mission from the standpoint of the messianic dynamic."

Each of the authors has roots in Europe or North America and has had an association with the Mennonite Board of Missions, Elkhart, Indiana, as a missionary or administrative staff person.

Wilbert R. Shenk describes the central theme of the book in the introduction: "Jesus the Messiah did not reject mission; he transfigured it." Jesus transfigured the proselytizing mission of the Pharisees or the Judaizers during the time of Paul. Their mission focused on a religious system and outward piety. Jesus transfigures the Christendom model of mission which was based on a strategy of coercion to gain new adherents. Jesus also would transfigure much current mission strategy which concentrates too heavily on the growth of the church. A current emphasis among some mission enthusiasts to "complete the evangelization of the world by the year 2000" carries overtones of Christendom triumphalism and needs to be transfigured by Jesus, the Messiah. At the very core of Christian mission is a focus on Jesus Christ the Messiah. Any other focus for mission, according to Shenk, is a misplacement of our loyalty. It occurs to me that contemporary Anabaptists might ponder whether it is possible to focus on a peace witness in ways which might be regarded as a misplacement of our central loyalty to Jesus Christ.

The subtitle is "Biblical, Theological, and Historical Foundations." Central to these foundations is a conviction that "a theology based on the kingdom of God present and coming, led by God's Messiah" is the only adequate basis for Christian mission. And it is the mission of Jesus the Messiah which is the only adequate model for Christian mission.

According to Shenk, "The argument put forward here is that mission in every generation is at risk because of the temptation to resort to methods and tactics that produce proselytes, on the one hand, or rely on various forms of coercion, on the other." For this reason it is necessary to "turn again to the source of mission: the God who creates and redeems as revealed in the work of Jesus Messiah."

Each of the nine chapters has a helpful summary statement in the table of contents. The book also has helpful scripture, subject, and author indexes useful for quick reference.

Chapter 1 entitled "The Relevance of a Messianic Missiology for Mission Today" is written by Wilbert R. Shenk. Mission today, argues Shenk, must be guided by a normative Messianic missiology which he summarizes on page thirty-one and which is detailed in succeeding chapters.

A particularly relevant discussion in chapter 1 focuses on an analysis and appraisal of "Post-Christian mission." "It might seem," suggests Shenk, "that it is inappropriate to label it 'mission' at all because of its censure of Christian mission, as this has been conceived in the past, and its insistence that Christians not call adherents of other faiths to embrace Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord." Adherents of this view of mission, observes Shenk, insist that "to affirm that we come to know God through Jesus Christ is presumptuous." They argue that "the revelation of God in Jesus Christ may be efficacious for those who have lived under the influence of Christianity; but it is arrogant of Christians to believe they ought to invite people of other religious and cultural traditions to come to Jesus their Messiah." Shenk correctly concludes that approach is "irreconcilable with mission."

Chapter 2 entitled "Jesus the Messiah: Messianic Foundation of Mission" is written by David A. Shank, a former missionary in Belgium and Ivory Coast. This chapter is nearly twice as long as any other chapter in the book. Shank explains the usage of the term "Messiah" rather than "Christ" by citing four convincing arguments. One reason is that using Messiah "frees and encourages Christians/Messianists outside the West to do their own messialogical reflection with a knowledge of the ways in which one's cultural history can encapsulate and domesticate Jesus and the apostolic faith to its own detriment as well as to that of others."

Shank also authors the final Chapter 9 entitled "Consummation of Messiah's Mission" in which he responds to the question of the significance of the last times for the messianic mission of Jesus and his people.

John Driver, a former missionary in Puerto Rico, Uruguay, Argentina, and Spain, authors Chapter 3 entitled "The Kingdom of God: Goal of Messianic Mission." Driver asserts "The biblical view of the kingdom of God responds to the deepest needs of humanity and offers a framework in which to understand more holistically the nature and mission of the messianic community."

Chapter 4 entitled "Holy Spirit: Source of Messianic Mission" is written by Roelf S. Kuitse whose missionary experience includes Indonesia and who more recently served as Director of the Mission Training Center and professor of mission at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. After noting the way the Holy Spirit has been neglected in much mission theology, Kuitse describes how the Holy Spirit continues the Messiah's work and empowers the messianic community for witness and for facing the powerful

forces of evil.

Larry Miller who currently serves as the executive secretary of the Mennonite World Conference authored Chapter 5 entitled "The Church as Messianic Society: Creation and Instrument of Transfigured Mission." He argues that transfigured mission "produces... churches which take the form of micro-societies present in and daily interacting with the existing sociopolitical order."

Chapter 6 authored by Wilbert R. Shenk is entitled "Messianic Mission and the World." Shenk calls for a critical engagement of the Christian faith and the world as culture, world view, and the powers.

Neal Blough serves in Paris, France, as Director of the Mennonite Study Center and authored Chapter 7 entitled "Messianic Mission and Ethics: Discipleship and the Good News." Blough argues that ethics is central to Anabaptist theology and must be central to authentic messianic missiology.

In Chapter 8 entitled "Messianic Evangelization" John Driver asserts that messianic evangelization "will save us from those strategies which lead to privatized forms of salvation, those which create the senseless dichotomy of words and deeds and the empty activism which are so common in much of the evangelism of our time."

I heartily encourage missionaries, mission administrators, seminary students, and pastors to carefully study this excellent book. It will keep the central focus of mission on Jesus the Messiah.

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Linford Stutzman, *With Jesus in the World: Mission in Modern, Affluent Societies*. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1992. Pp. 142. ($9.95 paperback) ISBN 0-8361-3599-7

The subject is: carrying out Jesus' mission in our world. And it presents major questions.

- How can we best spread the Gospel in modern society?
- How can we represent Jesus Christ and the reign of God with the same effect Jesus had in Palestine, or Anabaptist Hans Hut had in Europe?
- Why do our best efforts as Mennonites have so little results?
- Is the answer one of marketing?
- Is it strategic planning?

Stutzman has wrestled with these questions both theoretically and in the field, having been a pastor, church planter, and missionary in the United States, Germany, and Australia for over 20 years.

If you like sociology, this book is for you. If you like theology, this book is for you. If you like missiology, this book is for you. Stutzman gives attention to these three subjects in an interesting blend. While it is not easy reading, it does turn out to be an important manual for church planters, pastors, missionaries, and boards, as well as anyone interested in missions.

Stutzman does not just raise questions. He also gives answers. But prior to understanding the answers, you have to understand his constructs. Just like the axiomatic answer to "What are the three things to keep in mind in real estate purchasing?" Stutzman's answer to "How do you start in missions?" would be "Location, location, and location!" "Choose your social location," Stutzman would say. According to Stutzman, Jesus operated out of a specific social location. Jewish society in Jesus' day had a spectrum: a marginalized minority, a majority, and an establishment minority. Modern society has this same spectrum. Where was Jesus located in this spectrum? In the majority. That is, he was basically located in the mainstream of his society, holding a job, not being an outcast, etc. Yet he deliberately chose to align near the marginalized minority. In terms of the power spectrum in society, he chose to use the power of ideas and loving and prophetic actions. He did not align himself with the power of the majority or the establishment minority.

Because of his social location, Jesus was able to bring hope to the marginalized minority, stir the compassion and idealistic hope of many of the majority, and give a prophetic challenge to the false hope of the establishment minority. *The deliberate choosing of social location is Stutzman's call to the church today*. This, he says, is to be the missionaries' primary step. A missionary should go to the society, find people and groups, including Christians and churches, to network with who are already "integrated critics," i.e. those who are in the mainstream but who align themselves near the marginalized minority and call for justice. From this social location, and with these networks, the proclaiming of the gospel of Jesus and the reign of God can be done. Of course, the corollary call Stutzman gives to mission boards and the supporting churches and agencies is to give missionaries the freedom, the time, and resources to take these important steps.

The thing I find compelling about this missionary strategy is its "shalom nature." It takes a holistic approach to the Gospel and the presentation of that Gospel.

One problem I have with the book is Stutzman's maligning of goal-setting and strategic planning. He says this distorts the missionary task. But isn't his own approach a strategic one? And isn't choosing one's social location a goal in itself?

I also find it difficult to imagine that this approach would lead thousands to come into the church like they did at Pentecost. But it does present an approach faithful to that of Jesus and the early Anabaptists. And who knows what the Spirit will do with people who are faithful?

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Gerald R. Brunk, ed., *Menno Simons: A Reappraisal: Essays in Honor of Irvin B. Horst on the 450th Anniversary of the Fundamentboek*. Harrisonburg, VA: Eastern Mennonite College, 1992. Pp. 215.

This volume is primarily a collection of essays presented at a conference on Menno Simons held at Eastern Mennonite College and Seminary in March 1990. The conference commemorated the 450th anniversary of the publication of Menno Simons' *Dat Fundament des Christelycken leers* (*Foundation of Christian Doctrine*). A reading of the essays, however, indicates that many of the authors go beyond the *Fundamentboek* and re-examine the life and thought of Menno Simons. Hence, the inclusion of "A Reappraisal" in the title. As a *Festschrift*, the volume honors Irvin B. Horst's many contributions to the study of Menno Simons and his writing.

Several essays deal with aspects of Menno's theology as found in the *Fundamentboek*. Sjouke Voolstra discusses three major themes in Menno's early theology: anti-clericalism, the mass, and infant baptism. Helmut Isaak gives his attention to the evolution of Menno's concept of the New Jerusalem as the community of repentant, regenerated, baptized believers who realize the kingdom of God as they come together in celebration of the Lord's Supper. M. J. Blok sets the *Fundamentboek* into its sixteenth century context of medieval theology and compares it with a similar contemporary treatise, the *Summa der godliker Schrifturen*.

Three authors study the impact of Menno's writings on later generations. Pieter Visser examines printing history to determine which of Menno's writings were read by the Dutch Mennonites in the early 17th century. A point of interest is that although these believers turned frequently to Menno's writings, he was one among many Anabaptist writers. The waxing and waning relevance of Menno's writings for North American Mennonites in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries is the focus of Irvin Horst's own essay. He begins with a history of the printing of Menno's works in the U. S., and then juxtaposes Menno's emphasis on discipleship, his theology of compassion, and his care of the church with the influence of Evangelicalism on modern Mennonites. Walter Klaassen discovered an imaginary dialog with Menno which was written by an early 20th century Dutch pastor. Klaassen picks up and continues the discussion on four issues: ethics, spirituality, politics, and the call to ministry. He illustrates that although four centuries have passed since they were written, the words of Menno do indeed have relevance for modern Mennonites.

Using "The Blasphemy of Jan of Leyden" as his point of departure, Abraham Friesen examines Menno's understanding of his own relationship to the Anabaptists in Münster and the greater context within which that relationship developed. Friesen concludes that the initial peaceful congregation in Münster followed Melchior Hoffman, as did Menno. Problems arose when the leadership in Münster led its spiritual flock astray on many doctrinal points, for which Menno condemned them.

As befits a *Festschrift*, Myron S. Augsburger presents a warm introductory chapter on Horst's contributions to Anabaptist research and his development of the Menno Simons Historical Library. Augsburger highlights Horst's work on Menno Simons, his tireless efforts to acquire relevant books and pamphlets for the library, and his position as a devoted member of the church.

A final bibliographic essay by Walter Klaassen summarizes research on Menno Simons through 1990. The volume closes with a chronological list of Horst's publications.

Representing the latest research on Menno Simons and the *Fundamentboek*, this volume is a worthy tribute to Irvin B. Horst.

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Janice E. Kirk and Donald R. Kirk, *Cherish the Earth: The Environment and Scripture*. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993. Pp. 183. ($9.95 paperback) ISBN 0-8361-3635-7

Tim Lehman. *Seeking the Wilderness: A Spiritual Journey*. Newton, KS: Faith and Life Press, 1993. Pp. 239. ($12.95 paperback) ISBN 0-87303-205-5

Nearly a quarter of a century after Earth Day, the Church of Menno's attitude toward our finite little world can still be summed up from Genesis to Revelation: populate the earth, have dominion (i.e. work), await the new earth. Mennonites embrace this image. They have enshrined the last part of it in their new *Hymnal* ("New Earth, Heavens New" #299).

The history of Anabaptists, once they left the urban centers of Zurich and Amsterdam, in Prussia, Austria, Russia, the United States, Canada, and Paraguay needs reexamination and confession. It is a history of unconscientious development and dominion, with massive ecological changes that resulted in destroyed marshes, wetlands, and river systems, native prairie, and tropical forests, by farming practices so successful they were invited workers by governments.

Anabaptist worship was closer to nature when it met in the caves and mountains of Switzerland. The best Mennonite hymnbooks can offer is a creation praising God—praising God even as one by one the creature chorus is silenced. The tragedy is not in the listing of the names of species which have gone extinct, but in the extinction of species for which we do not even know their names.

It is lip service to say, "The Earth is the Lord's." In over four and a half centuries of rearranging the landscape all over the planet, Mennonites brought order and dominion to an unruly nature. But not always. To the United States, for example, along with the turkey red wheat and flax came the Russian tumbleweed.

But the economic legacy of the Mennonites is clear. Based on the example of economic prosperity in Russian Men-

nonite villages, Soviet economist Dr. Alexander Zaichenko has suggested that the positive religious orientation toward work is essential and that at least 10 percent of the population of the [former] Soviet Union must be evangelized as Protestant Christians before it can successfully enter into a free-market economy [see *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, July 1991, p. 324].

The Church of Menno is in sore need of some environmental guidance. Two books attempt to add to the modest theology of ecology church library bookshelf. The first, *Cherish the Earth*, comes from Janice and Donald Kirk. Their environmental interest began as staff in 1980 at Holden Village, a Lutheran retreat center near Lake Chelan in Washington State.

Both are California professors and currently active in a Presbyterian church in Redding. They present a mainline Protestant creation theme Scripture study in three parts and fifteen chapters. Part 1 covers the natural world, part 2 a scripture search, and part 3 earth stewardship. Scripture texts are well laid out and questions for discussion end each chapter.

The authors are honest enough to put their fingers on a fundamental flaw in the inspired writings, "Few Scriptures deal directly with the environmental issues we presently face. There is no passage that says: 'Go forth and save the earth.'" (p. 13) Another flaw is of their own making, however, when they write, "In terms of earth stewardship, Scripture provides one difficult passage—2 Peter 3:5-11" (p. 159).

The Scripture contains many difficult passages beginning with Genesis (God said be fruitful and multiply, God didn't say be like fruitflies and multiply) and continuing on to Revelation. It is not enough to dwell only on scripture that might support an environmental ethic. Theology must explain the difficult, not repeat the obvious.

In terms of implementing a ministry of praise, the book dismisses political action and environmental organizations in two sentences. The citizen environmental groups which worked toward passage in Congress of the establishment of the Glacier Peak Wilderness (and incorrectly identified in the acknowledgements) outside of Holden Village would have been a useful case study.

The authors summarize Christian environmentalism around four objectives—sustainability, sufficiency, participation, and unity. However, their discussion of unity and its reference to Acts 2:42-47 (all things in common) contains a curious lapse where, according to the authors, "Such a response seems unattainable in our materialistic society." How did Herald Press pass this by without requesting some reference on Hutterites?

Their conclusion, however, is right on target, "Concerning the importance of God's creation, the body of Christ has been caught napping. The environmental movement started outside the church. As this book tries to show, our faith heritage is rich in concern for the environment. But messages from the pulpit about God's creation have been rare, and environmental action has not been a common outreach of the church" (p. 158).

This is a potent message given the decision of both the General Conference and the Mennonite Church to terminate funding for the Environmental Task Force established by a joint assembly resolution in 1989.

However, one member of that Task Force, Tim Lehman, has found his own voice in *Seeking the Wilderness: A Spiritual Journey*. Tim serves as co-pastor of Faith Mennonite Church in Minneapolis and directs a wilderness camping program involving canoe trips into northern Minnesota and southern Ontario. His wife, Paula Diller Lehman, illustrated the book.

Lehman's approach toward creation is poetic and prophetic. He describes canoe trips into both the U. S. Boundary Waters Canoe Area and the Quetico Provincial Park of Canada, as well as past camping trips into the Cascade Mountains of Oregon and the Rockies. Many of the stories, however, are not geographically identified and take the reader for a disorienting journey from a Kawishiwi River to a Basswood River to a Crab Lake to a Little Saganaga. As an aside, campfires and drinking directly from streams mentioned in the book are no longer considered proper wilderness etiquette.

But Lehman's book is not so much about location as it is about description. It is both dense and deep. Many paragraphs can be easily arranged into reams of prose:

> Shall we not ask again
> Why we humans strive
> To sing along?
> Shall we not let go of our
> Value judgements place on
> the tender heads of songbirds?
> Shall we not finally recognize
> God's covenant as superseding our will
> To climb above our place of birth? (p. 95)

and

> The Power of Thunder Point
> Leaks from cracks in its rocks
> And from the wash of soil.
> It rubs itself raw
> With open roots of ancient fir trees,
> And it cries from the mouths of red squirrels
> Bounding in broad and sweeping boughs of white pine. (p. 177)

Buried within these creative descriptions are other observations, echoed by the Kirks, "Today we embrace a world that is no longer God's creation, for we have removed creation from our theology" (p. 8). "Christian thought has not generally found much time for speaking to the issues of the community of all life" (p. 90). "For the peace churches have always remained narrow in vision, with sights set too low upon the ground. Let them now proclaim their pacifism for more than one species of life!" (p. 178)

Lehman's biblical environmentalism may be missed unless one turns to the last chapters of the book, particularly the one focused on "Living the Beatitudes" (chapter 11). This should strike a chord with Mennonites who have often taken Matthew 5:3-11 as the most direct and profound statement of how Christians should live.

Both these books point to, rather than provide, an elusive ecology of theology. The work that remains is to construct a biblical study along the lines pioneered by John Howard Yoder in *The Politics of Jesus* (1972). To paraphrase this task, can we read the Gospel narrative with the constantly present question, "Is there here an environmental ethic? Can we sketch an understanding of Jesus and his ministry of which it might be

said that such a Jesus would be of direct significance for environmental ethics? Can we state a case for considering Jesus, when thus understood, to be not only relevant but also normative for a contemporary Christian environmental ethic?"

If only the Sermon on the Mount would have included, "Blessed are those who preserve the earth," things would have turned out so much different. A simple direct statement anyone could understand. But then again, maybe not. It also says, "Blessed are the peacemakers."

The joint GC-MC Environmental Task Force is planning a theology of ecology conference prior to the 1995 joint sessions in Kansas. Perhaps it is time to catch up with other denominations which are asking "What is happening to our Beautiful Land?" as the Catholic bishops of the Philippines did in 1989 when they called the environment the ultimate pro-life issue. The earth needs more Mennonite friends.

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Paul Toews, ed. *Mennonites and Baptists: A Continuing Conversation*. Winnipeg and Hillsboro: Kindred Press, 1993. Pp. 261. ($15.95 paperback) ISBN 0-921788-16-9

Mennonites and Baptists is a collection of essays written by eleven Mennonite and Baptist scholars and edited by Paul Toews. Through much of their history, the Mennonites and Baptists exchanged ideas, influencing one another at a number of points. This book is an attempt to describe and evaluate aspects of this dialogue.

Mennonites and Baptists is more about the Mennonites than the Baptists. Eight of the eleven chapters are written by Mennonites and most have a Mennonite focus, recounting aspects of the Mennonite encounters with the Baptists. More specifically, most of the Mennonite authors are Mennonite Brethren and the book zeroes in on the Mennonite Brethren experience with the Baptists, especially the German Baptists. This is appropriate, because of the major Mennonite groups, the Mennonite Brethren have had the closest relationships with the Baptists.

While this book does not ignore the issue of Mennonite influences on the Baptists, the focus is on discerning the Baptist impact on the development of the Mennonite Brethren. Some essays center on Mennonite-Baptist relationships in the Northern European Anabaptist-Mennonite stream (Dutch, Prussian, and Russian contexts) that gave birth to the Mennonite Brethren. Others focus on the continuing contacts between the Mennonite Brethren and the Baptists in Russia, Canada, and the United States.

While the exact relationship between the first Mennonites and Baptists is a matter of scholarly debate, at their points of origin they had significant contacts. In chapter one, the Baptist scholar William Estep revisits the early discussions between the Mennonites and Baptists, exploring one possible avenue in the rise of the English Baptists.

Historians recognize that the Mennonites and Baptists have had a long history of contacts. But they disagree as to the extent and influence of these encounters. In chapter two, Abraham Friesen examines the Baptist interpretations of the Mennonite-Baptist contacts, pointing out that Baptist historians have not always agreed as to the significance of these Mennonite-Baptist interactions.

Chapters three to six examine Mennonite-Baptist contacts in Poland, Prussia, and Russia. Here Mennonite historians demonstrate that the Mennonite-Baptist interactions were abundant but they offer differing interpretations of these developments. Peter Klassen describes these relationships in Poland and Prussia. As he points out, "the birth of the Baptist movement in Poland largely coincided with that of the Mennonite Brethren in South Russia" and subsequently the two movements developed close relationships. John B. Toews examines the Mennonite-Baptist contacts in Russia from 1790 to 1930. While he regards such encounters as significant, he concludes that the influences on the Mennonite Brethren beginnings were diffuse, not specific. Thus, the Baptists did not play a seminal role in the birth of the Brethren.

Albert Wardin writes about the affinities and dissimilarities between the Mennonite Brethren and German Baptists in Russia. He notes the significant influence that the German Baptists had on the early Mennonite Brethren and declares that Mennonite Brethren historians have undervalued this contribution. Yet despite their many theological and cultural affinities, Wardin insists that the Mennonite Brethren and German Baptists "could not overcome their dissimilarities and by the early twentieth century they were growing even further apart."

Walter Sawatsky provides us with a glimpse of Baptist-Mennonite relationships in Russia from 1930 to 1990. He describes the trauma of these years and shows how the repression of the Soviet system forced the Mennonites and Baptists into an intense relationship "never equalled elsewhere." In the quest for survival, the Mennonites became fused with the Baptists in the "Evangelical Christian-Baptist" union. However, by 1992 increased emigration and heightened denominational competition is changing this relationship.

Chapters seven, eight, and nine describe the Mennonite-Baptists in India, the United States, and Canada. The Russian Revolution cut off the Russian Mennonite Brethren in India from their home base. Peter Penner describes the partnership that the Mennonite Brethren developed with the American Baptists in order to do mission work in India.

In Russia and North America, the Mennonite Brethren and German Baptists developed close relationships because they were both strangers in a foreign land. Clarence Hiebert describes the story in the United States. In their early years in America, Mennonite Brethren found it profitable to seek relationships with the Baptists. But as they had done in Russia, after these initial contacts the Mennonite Brethren

began to question the wisdom of the Baptist connections. The issue of nonresistance profoundly affected the relationship between these groups.

Abe Dueck paints a different picture of the Mennonite Brethren-Baptist relationships in Canada. In Canada, most Baptists are of Anglo-Saxon origin, not German, and intense relationships between the Mennonite Brethren and Baptists did not develop as they did in Russia and the United States. However, as the Mennonite Brethren increasingly see themselves as part of the larger evangelical community in Canada, Mennonite Brethren-Baptist dialogue has increased.

Chapters ten and eleven move away from the Mennonite-Baptist relationships in specific geographical areas. Howard Loewen describes the influence of the Baptist theologian August Strong on the Mennonite Brethren. In the last chapter, James McClendon proposes that the Mennonites and Baptists have "an extraordinary amount in common." They are neither Protestant, Catholic, nor Orthodox but are another Christian type, the "baptist" type.

Mennonites and Baptists represents a major contribution to understanding Mennonite-Baptist relationships. In particular, it provides an insight into the development of the Mennonite Brethren. These essays further the dialogue between two closely related religious groups. It helps them to better understand their place in the broader evangelical community, pointing out their affinities and differences.

In any collective work, the quality of the essays vary. Nevertheless, on the whole the book is well researched and well written. The title, however, is a bit misleading. The focus is more narrow than the title would suggest. *Mennonites and Baptists* focuses on the Mennonite Brethren-Baptist relationships.

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Gordon Kaufman. *In Face of Mystery: A Constructive Theology*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993. Pp. 509. ($39.95) ISBN 0-674-44575-9

Gordon Kaufman, professor of theology at Harvard Divinity School for over a quarter of a century, is arguably the most prominent Mennonite theologian in the non-Mennonite academic world. Yet his writings, including nine books and countless articles, have too often been ignored by other Mennonite theologians. Kaufman's ideas have certainly not shaped Mennonite polity and vision to the extent that Bender's "Anabaptist Vision" or Yoder's "Politics of Jesus" have. That Kaufman has published few articles in the Mennonite press and that his writings rarely explicitly mention or address Mennonite history and tradition may partly explain the lack of attention given to his work. But while Kaufman rarely makes an issue of his Mennonite identity, the theological methods and passions which he brings to his work have clearly been shaped by his Mennonite background. His most recent work, *In Face of Mystery*, provides the most comprehensive statement of Kaufman's theology to date—shaped through conversations with differing philosophical and religious perspectives—while bearing witness through its method and purpose to his Mennonite heritage.

The theme of humility has played a prominent role in Mennonite history, and humility before the transcendent God who relativizes all human ideologies, philosophies, and theologies sets the tone of this book. Kaufman carefully abstains throughout the book from dogmatic assertions and is quick to confess the uncertainty of all attempts to fathom the mystery of God.

Kaufman has always been a humble theologian, unafraid to change his mind or say that he was mistaken, so his humility here does not come as a surprise. What might surprise those acquainted with Kaufman's theological writings of the past 20 years, however, is how strongly this humility is tied to the mystery and transcendence of God. Kaufman's conception of God's transcendence admittedly does not fit nicely with the traditional model of transcendence which pictures a being "outside" the universe: Kaufman finds that model unacceptable not only scientifically but also morally, for he claims that its hierarchical dynamic (the Lord ruling over the universe) fosters patriarchal and ecologically deleterious attitudes. Instead, Kaufman develops an understanding of transcendence as a limiting idea, an idea which we can never fully grasp and which checks the human tendency to equate particular theologies or philosophies with divine Truth.

Humility before God translates practically into a humility towards others. Conversations between Christians and those from other faith perspectives should be precisely that: conversations, in which the participants come to listen to and learn from each other. Kaufman believes that to enter an interfaith conversation convinced that one's theology is divine Truth precludes the possibility of such listening and learning taking place. Much of *In Face of Mystery* is the product of Kaufman's conversations with contemporary scientific perspectives. Kaufman listens to what biologists, physicists, historians, and sociologists have to say about the world and proceeds to fashion his theology in light of the "biohistorical" paradigm he sees underlying contemporary scientific thought. He demonstrates how, by beginning with an understanding of the world as an interdependent, evolving whole, in which human beings with the peculiar trait of historicity have appeared, a Christian world view can be reached by making six "steps of faith." None of these steps are logically necessary, but Kaufman's goal is not to produce an argument which would *force* people to faith. Rather, he wants to show that the Christian symbol system is compatible with modern scientific theories.

Kaufman's high regard for human potential also conforms to his Mennonite heritage. Of all the Reformation groups, historians note, the Anabaptists had perhaps the highest anthropology; their emphasis on the freedom of the will and the ability of humans to follow Jesus

showed their high regard for human potential. Kaufman continues this tradition.

A high anthropology, one could argue, is practically necessitated by Kaufman's understanding of theology as an act of imaginative construction. Kaufman has repeatedly stated that theology was, is, and always will be a *human* activity. Previous generations were not aware that their religious symbols and belief systems were their own creative products, formed to satisfy human needs: appeals to revelation or tradition formed their justification of their beliefs. Today, however, humans are aware of themselves as symbol-making animals, and therefore, Kaufman argues, must take full responsibility for their theological creations; whether or not theologies humanize us, rather than their replication of tradition or revelation, becomes the guiding norm for the theologian.

Kaufman's lack of a developed eschatology also leads him to a high anthropology. Having rejected the understanding of God as a transcendent being outside history, Kaufman cannot subscribe to an eschatological "end" of history. Instead, he develops what might be called an "optimistic historicism" in which the serendipitous forces of nature and history, forces he closely associates with "God," move us towards our full humanization. As many of these forces are in our control (although they always transcend us), we are largely responsible for our destinies individually and as a species. Kaufman grounds his optimism in his belief that, thanks to the forces of modernization and technologization, the world, more than ever before, is coming together, and that a new opportunity for interfaith conversation is presenting itself. The pessimist might point to Bosnia, the former Soviet Union, the Sudan, and other parts of the world as arguments against the optimist.

While the Mennonite faith has never been reducible to ethics, a moral passion has undeniably informed Mennonite theology over the centuries. This same passion flows through Kaufman's writings.

Kaufman's emphasis on human responsibility for theological constructions gives his theology an unavoidably moral thrust. Since he came to see theology as a constructive activity, Kaufman has asserted that all theologies must be tested according to a criterion of humanization. In his *Theology for a Nuclear Age* Kaufman argued that the ability nuclear weapons give humans to end all human life on the planet has made it irresponsible simply to accept received theologies on the basis of revelation or tradition. In the present book, it is the ecological catastrophe which draws Kaufman's attention. Humanity's ability to do terrible harm to the ecosystem which supports it forces us to theologize in ways more in tune with contemporary biological understandings; his conclusion, as it was in his consideration of the nuclear threat, is that patriarchal and hierarchical language for God and God's relationship to the world have contributed to the present crises and must be abandoned.

In Face of Mystery is unquestionably Kaufman's finest book. His willingness to interact seriously with contemporary scientific and philosophical thought is admirable. The breadth of his concerns and his in-depth development of those concerns are exemplary. Nevertheless, expanded treatment of some issues would have been helpful.

One wishes that Kaufman would have developed his Christology with more concrete reference to the Jesus story. Kaufman hesitates to associate "Christ" with "Jesus" too closely, preferring to see Christ in communities of love and reconciliation. While the expanded definition of Christ is helpful, the reader is left without much of a sense of the concrete character of those communities. Had Kaufman considered the Jesus story more closely, he would have been able to give the reader a better understanding of what love and reconciliation mean practically.

Kaufman's conception of interfaith conversation also lacks concreteness. The dialogue his book envisions is located in the academic world; while such dialogue has its uses, one can question the representativeness of the participants and the prospect their proposals have for effecting social change. Not all dialogue efforts must be abstracted from practical concerns. Aloysius Pieris' Asian liberation theology, for instance, born in the pluralism of the Indian subcontinent, offers a grassroots approach to interfaith conversation coupled with cooperative social activism.

This reader would also have appreciated it had Kaufman explicitly addressed his nonresistant heritage. Even though Kaufman would certainly reject any absolutist pacifisms based on divine revelation, the theology he outlines in this present book would be compatible with a pragmatic pacifism. An update of Kaufman's "Nonresistance and Responsibility" essay would be welcomed by Mennonites struggling with peacemaking issues.

In Face of Mystery will be a major text for Christians trying to come to grips with issues raised by modernity/post-modernity. One hopes that it will receive substantial attention, even if only critical, from Mennonite theologians working through similar issues.

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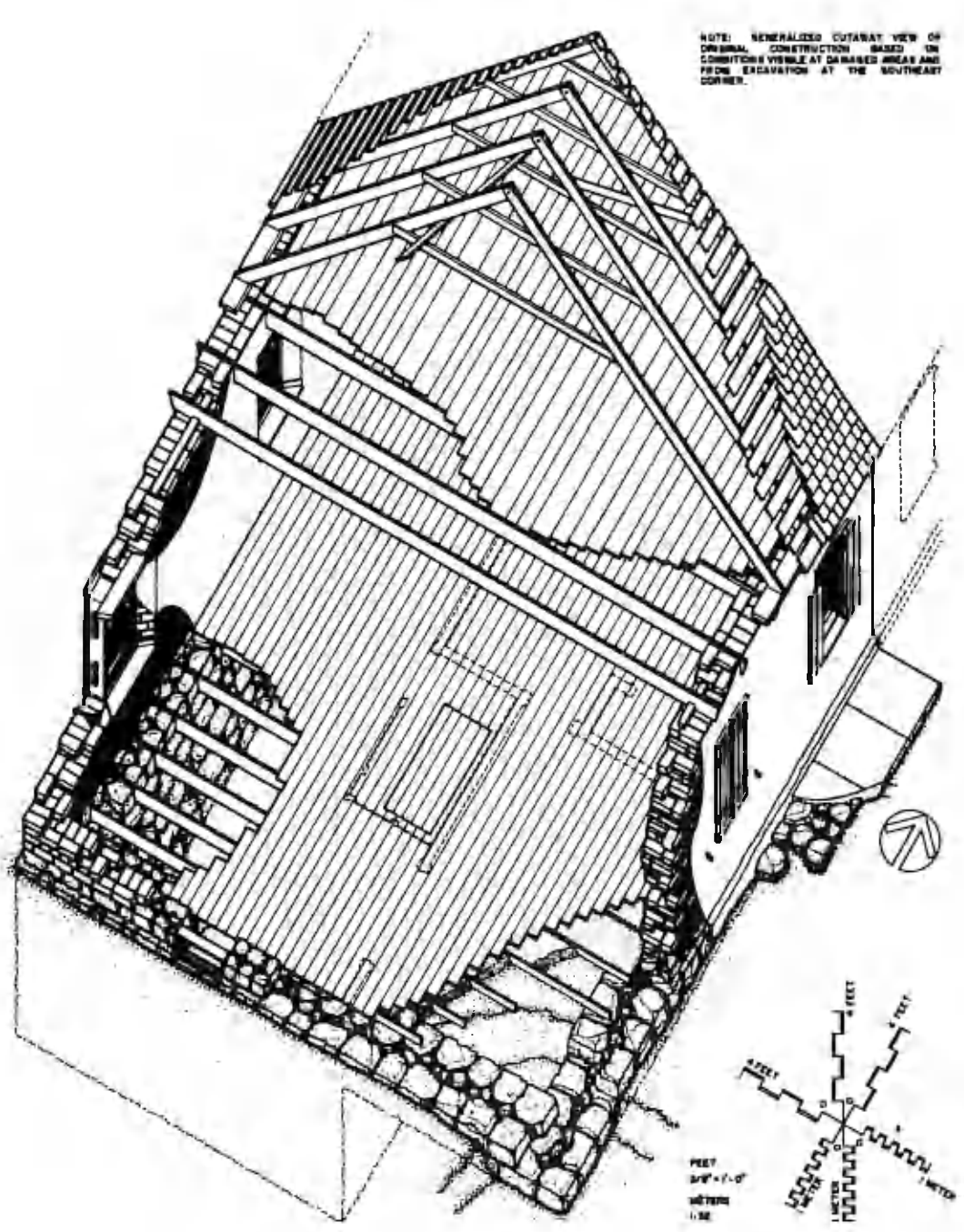
NOTE: GENERALIZED CUTAWAY VIEW OF ORIGINAL CONSTRUCTION BASED ON CONDITIONS VISIBLE AT DAMAGED AREAS AND FROM EXCAVATION AT THE SOUTHEAST CORNER.
FEET
METERS