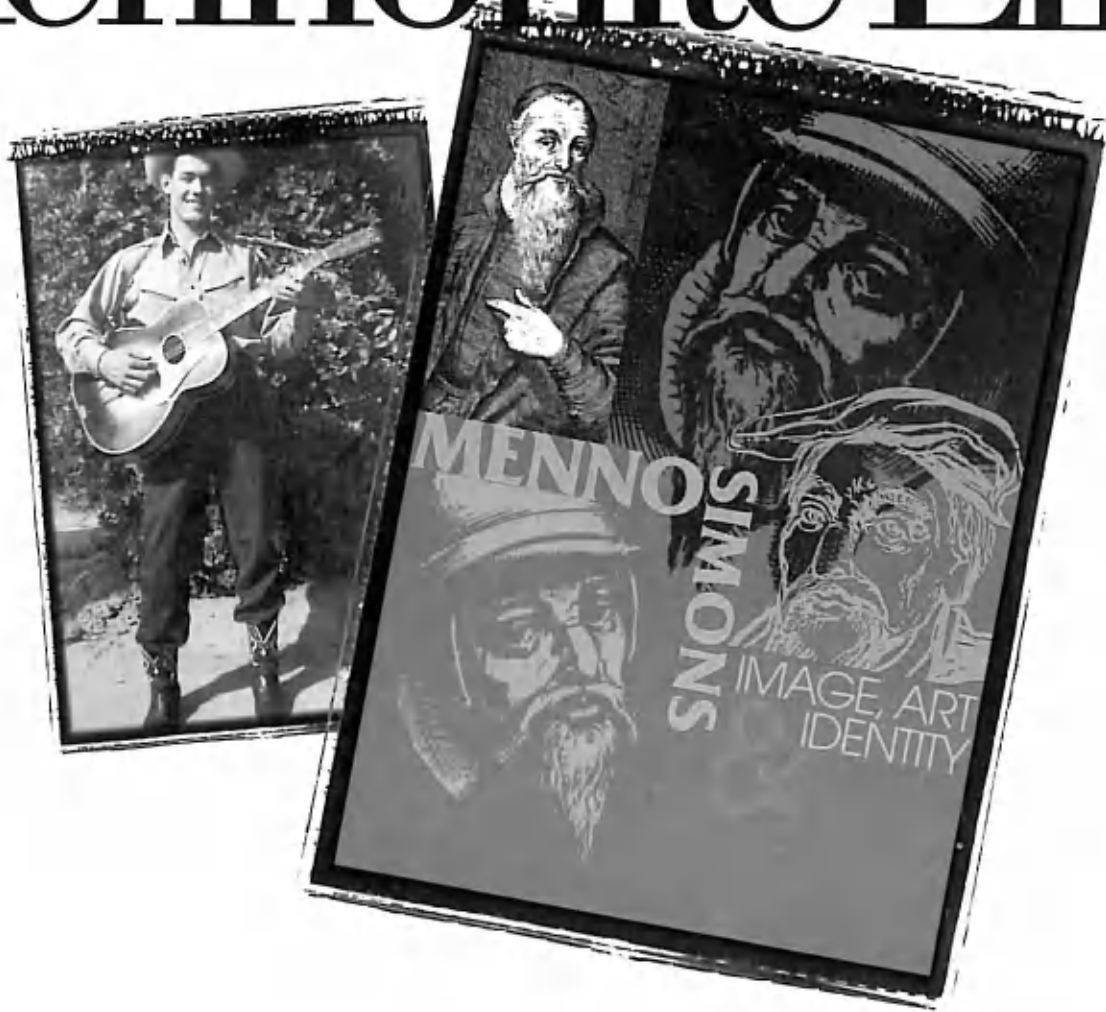


Mennonite Life



DECEMBER 1996
VOL. 51 / NO. 4

In this issue our Arts Section is highlighted. At the end of the Menno 500 year, we publish our obligatory collection of Menno portraits, brought together for an exhibit at the Kauffman Museum, North Newton, Kansas, on "Menno Simons: Image, Art, and Identity." This is followed by a reflective essay and poem by well-known

In this issue

Mennonite poet Jean Janzen of Fresno, California, growing out of her experiences

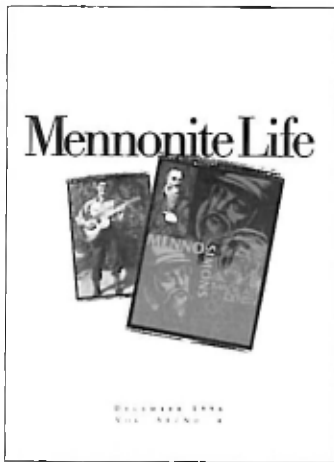
visiting the Netherlands in spring 1996. Also included are three poems by a writer new to Mennonite Life, Cheryl Denise of Philippi, West Virginia.

Our History Section continues the arts theme in a popular culture vein by looking at protest songs from the Civilian Public Service experience of World War II. The memories of CPSer Vincent S. Beck give us a glimpse into an aspect of CPS that is only poorly recorded in written documents.

The Current Issues Section consists of two short articles by Virginia Conference Mennonites on the recent discussions about church membership for military personnel.

We conclude with our usual collection of book reviews.

One additional piece of Menno 500 business: look for the release of a new book in the Mennonite Library and Archives' C. H. Wedel series in early 1997, Menno Simons: His Image and Message by Sjouke Voolstra.



front cover:

(left) Vincent S. Beck with guitar in CPS camp #35, North Fork, California, in San Joaquin Valley, 1942.
(right) Poster designed by Robert Regier for the Kauffman Museum exhibition *Menno Simons*.

Contents

Arts

- Menno Simons: Image, Art, and Identity
Carla Reimer 5
- The Fire, The Light
Jean Janzen 8
- Reading the Fields
Jean Janzen 9
- Poetry
Cheryl Denise 10
-

History

- CPS Protest Songs
Vincent Beck and Ervin Beck 12
-

Current Issues

- Which Bridge into the Next Century?
Harvey Yoder 24
- Making or Breaking the Peace?
Gerald Showalter 28
-

- Book Reviews 32



Christoffel van Sichel
engraving, 1608, Netherlands

Earliest known portrait of Menno Simons. It is part of a series on religious heretics by a Roman Catholic artist. Menno is depicted holding a Bible, which is opened to 1 Corinthians, First Corinthians 3:11—For no other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ—is known to be his favorite Bible passage. He also is shown leaning a crutch, a fact that has been verified in some of his letters, where he signed his name as “the cripple.”

In celebration of the 500th anniversary of the birth of Menno Simons, Kauffman Museum in North Newton, Kansas, is displaying an exhibit entitled "Menno Simons: Image, Art and Identity" from October 12, 1996 through February 23, 1997. The exhibit includes over 30 portraits of Menno Simons, Dutch art works, and items from popular culture that use the image of Menno Simons.

No portraits exist that are known to be based on an actual description or visual depiction of Menno Simons. In fact, it is likely that Menno Simons would have discouraged a portrayal of himself given the fact that he was a hunted man. However, visual representation of religious leaders was common during the Reformation period. Since the Anabaptists were competing with other groups within Christendom, they must have surmised that portraits of Menno Simons would be helpful in their cause; when Menno Simons' complete writings were first printed in 1681, Jan Luyken's portrait of the leader was used on the frontispiece.

For the most part, the portraits of Menno Simons and other art works were bought in Europe during the 1940s-1960s by Cornelius Krahn and John F. Schmidt, who were the director and archivist, respectively, at the Mennonite Library and Archives in North Newton. Dr. Keith Sprunger is the exhibit curator and professor of history at Bethel College in North Newton. In the following interview, he answers a few questions about the

Menno Simons exhibit.

What is the significance of this exhibit?

The 500th anniversary of Menno Simon's birth gives us a natural occasion to ask ourselves who was Menno Simons, what were his teachings and what does he have to say to us today. It is a question, I think, of Mennonite self-identity, but also a question of wider concern. The time is right for Menno's message of seriousness and discipline in religion as well as his message of freedom of conscience and nonviolence. It is a message that belongs to the world and not just to one small group of Christendom.

Why is it important for Mennonites to see a visual representation of Menno Simons?

The visual make the message concrete. If people think only of a name without having an appearance attached to it, the message always is going to be nebulous. If you can see the messenger, then you understand the message. That has always been the reason for making portraits of Menno; people wanted to make his message more clear—here is his teaching and here is the person who gave it, even though no one knows what he looks like. Of course, it is all a matter of conjecture. Based on these pictures, I do not know if we could pick out Menno if he walked past us on the road.

What was the attitude toward visual art within the Dutch Mennonite churches during the 1700s and 1800s?

During that time period,

Menno Simons: Image, Art, and Identity

Carla Reimer



Artist Unknown

oil painting, 16th century, Netherlands

Now referred to as the "false Menno."

This portrait was accepted as the earliest, most authentic version of Menno Simons until the early 20th century. However, new research indicated that it is a portrait of Viglius van Aytta, an inquisition officer who persecuted religious heretics. The oil painting is owned by the Utrecht Mennonite Church in the Netherlands.

Anabaptists had a lot of suspicion about the visual arts. There were warnings against the temptations of the world. Yet, it was possible to be an artist and a member in some Mennonite churches, even in the 1600s. The Dutch environment clearly was a factor. The Dutch Mennonites, more than anywhere else, settled in cities. They were involved in trade



Abraham de Cooge

engraving, early 17th century, Netherlands

Menno is again depicted leaning on a crutch and with a Bible.

and commerce. They sort of picked up on the middle-class life of collecting. As I have looked through the records of Mennonite churches in Amsterdam from that time, I occasionally have seen new members who were listed with the occupation of artist or printer. I am not sure when this became more accepted within the churches, nor do I think they necessarily encouraged it. However, I also think some Mennonites could not resist the movement toward high culture—they were attracted to the pleasures of books, art

and culture; they were convinced that it was possible to be followers of Christ and, at the same time, citizens of culture, if the two were kept in proper balance.

How would you compare 20th century American Mennonites to their earlier Dutch counterparts in terms of their views about visual art?

In America today, Mennonites are at a point where the Dutch Mennonites were 100 to 200 years ago.

If you go back 50-70 years in our history here, Mennonite communities were very suspicious of those who were professional artists or even writers for that matter. It was better to be a teacher or a missionary or a doctor. In a way, that was the teaching of Menno Simons—the church must be separate from world; the church must be pure, without spot or



Jan van de Velde

engraving, before 1636, Netherlands

This artist illustrated Menno as a pious, religious leader.

wrinkle. In Holland, it was difficult for the Mennonites to stay separate because it was a small country and rather urbanized. Here, it was possible to stay separate for decades longer.



Jan Luyken

etching, 1681, Netherlands

Commonly known as "Abraham with the Open Bible," this portrait was used in the first published edition of Menno Simons's complete works, *Opera Omnia van Menno Simons*, which was printed in Amsterdam in 1681. In this etching, Menno points to a passage from the Gospel of Matthew.

MENNO SIMONIS.

WUEST FELDIA Aº CHRISTI MDLXI.

NATUS WITMARSSUMI IN



o MCCCLXXXVI DENATUS

Willem Bardeles van der Kooi
oil painting, 1825, Netherlands

The postage stamp that was issued in the Netherlands to commemorate the 500th anniversary of Menno Simon's birth uses this version. The original oil painting is owned by the Witmarsum Mennonite Church in the Netherlands.



L.E.E. Garreau
etching, 1788, Netherlands

This portrait appears in an elaborate, circular frame. The Dutch inscription states that Menno Simons established the doctrine for the Mennonite Church.

The Fire, The Light

Jean Janzen

I had come to see tulip fields, the paintings of Vermeer, and the landscape. I had left my little study crowded with books to taste the air of Holland and to smell the light. Our first stop, Haarlem, our small hotel opening out to the Grote Markt, the old city center with its great cathedral, gabled commercial houses, and a statue dominating the center. It is Lauretzen Janszoon Coster, the Dutch inventor of moveable type, even before Gutenberg, the locals say.

And one-half block from this Markt, the oldest Mennonite church still used for services, a stately 17th century meeting place hidden behind rows of houses. We stand in this historic space and in the Jorian Simons room, named for the Haarlem bookseller who burned to death on that Grote Markt, so near—where we had peacefully slept, where we had eaten bread. Before the tulips, before the green fields, these words, books, fire. I had stepped into my history.

Jan Luyken's etching in the Martyrs Mirror shows two others burning with Simons. The precious books are flaring and smoking in a huge pile, and in the foreground some men are rescuing books and throwing them out to the watching crowd. 1557, and Menno Simons was writing some of his last pages in Lübeck, his heart on fire with martyrdom and faith.

We drive north to Friesland and trace the paths, lush May washing the thick green fields, the poplars standing sentinel along every lane, and that almost eerie light through the new leaves, even after 10 p.m. Light of reason, light of the Word, light on the blood of the martyr, Snijder, which pierced Menno's darkness. And it is the light of vastness, as the huge sky bounces off the North Sea and writes its own news day after day—that we are part of a mystery much larger than any one person or people. Yet its vastness illuminates each detail in the landscape—the one lamb, straws in the thatched roof, the single brick holding up a wall among the others. Light that leaves its pearl sheen on the canals of Dokkum where Boniface, first Christian missionary to this region, was murdered by my ancestors. It spreads its rays over churches on the terpen, those mudhills created by early tribes, where they huddled to keep from drowning, where their voices chanted over the water, mourning for the light.

Vermeer caught it in the corner of a room, window open, in the poured milk, and in a maid's face. It is the light of giving oneself away, the Christ-light that Menno found. It is the light of knowing we are loved, that we are invited to choose that way of love,

that we are to love even those who kill us.

*The bulbfields respond, lifting their tongues of fire. Tulips
roll out their colors, hyacinths and daffodils pour their perfumes,
fields my ancestors fled to save their lives, to save those words
that Menno wrote, words that gather and flow into this year, 1996,
the 500th birthday year. These words that I find again, the book
burning in my hand.*

*... through mouth and pen,
with possessions and life,
with life and death. Menno Simons*

The tulips unfold their pages
field after field in brilliant
illuminations. Even under

pewter skies, they glow
for weeks, red, yellow and purple
bolts of silk unrolled like a story

of happily-ever-after. But then
the harvest, bright words
cut down and raked into piles.

Brief singing.
Only the bulbs remain, hidden
and nourished by dying leaves,

each one a lit window among
the dark trees—someone
leaning into the next word.

Reading the Fields

J e a n J a n z e n

Poetry

C h e r y l D e n i s e

W

riting often takes me to thoughts and dreams I otherwise might not know I have. Oftentimes it makes me feel more in tune with the spiritual side of life and more connected to God.

My full name is Cheryl Denise Miller but when I write I only use my given names, Cheryl Denise. I guess I feel this is just plain me. My husband and I have recently finished a three-year term as Service Adventure unit leaders for Mennonite Board of Missions. Presently I live in West Virginia and work as a nurse for a public health agency and for hospice.

— Cheryl Denise

Baking Bread

When the news came,
her wedding band
was covered with dough.

She imagined
him coming home still
while the phone receiver dangled.
She could see a smile
edge his face,
the oatmeal bread
rounding the bowl.
She greased the pans
and rolled crescents
that baked light brown.
His calloused hands
broke one.
Thick the butter
thin the elderberry jam,
he tore a piece
and dropped it on her tongue.

A kiss melted her cheek
while she hung her apron,
the day he came back
no more.

Distant Motions

Like children throwing leaves
my days are tossed.
I stoop in the wind
dreams twisting round.
I do not know this season,
if all my leaves have colored
and gone,
if my branches are weeping
touching earth,
or how many rings
I have made and given away.
I do not know
how deep my roots go,
or if there is water
to last the night.
I do know that you came,
but my limbs can't dance
with you no more.
Don't watch son.
Don't watch.

Come

Where's the seraphim,
the baby sleeping,
the dreams of Joseph,
the shepherds' leading,
the east star calling?
Where are the spiced Magi?

There, there is God's son
mangered on street corners
beneath hands praying
unfolded, giving food,
shelter from the cold.
Go tell the angels,
the ragged women, the prostitutes,
the kneeling, broken men.

Bring gifts of whittled wood
and threaded things.
Bring stale bread and stories,
lullabies, and quietness.
And she will let you see,
and touch, and hold him,
while she sings.

CPS Protest Songs

Vincent Beck
and Ervin Beck

The protest songs printed below were sung by the “bad boys” in Civilian Public Service camps in Mancos, Colorado, and Lapine (Wickiup), Oregon, during World War 2.

Since they were sung in the presence of Mennonite COs and were sometimes sung by Mennonite COs themselves, the songs contribute additional evidence to the discussions by Perry Bush and Robert S. Kreider regarding the movement of nonresistant Mennonite young men away from passive cooperation with the government toward outright resistance to government coercion, especially as embodied in the Selective Service system.

The songs were collected and sung by Vincent S. Beck, now 72, of Archbold, Ohio. They became publicly known through the CPS oral history project sponsored by the Zion Mennonite Church of Archbold, Ohio, and carried out by Charlotte Hertzler Croyle, who originally worked with Vincent and his materials.

A description of the contexts in which the songs were originally sung will illuminate the personal and social meanings that they carry.

VINCENT S. BECK

When he was drafted in the spring of 1943, Vincent S. Beck. (born 1923) left his home in Pettisville, Ohio, for the CPS camp in Grottoes, Virginia, administered by the Mennonite Church for young men

from historic peace churches. About two months later he was transferred to a similar camp, the North Fork Camp in the High Sierras near Fresno, California.

In October 1943 he moved to Mancos, Colorado, and in January 1944 to Lapine, Oregon. Both camps were administered by the Selective Service administration for men who

“... the songs contribute additional evidence . . . regarding the movement of nonresistant Mennonite young men away from passive cooperation with the government toward outright resistance to government coercion.”

were not affiliated with the historic peace churches. These were often the “bad boys” of CPS, who tended to cause trouble for camp administrators by refusing to cooperate. Peace church men could choose to be placed in those camps, however. Vincent volunteered for the Mancos camp and later accepted re-assignment to the Lapine camp, in both cases because he wanted to work in as many different locations as possible during his CPS experience. At Mancos he helped build an earthen dam on the Mancos River and was on call to help fight forest fires. At Lapine he cut and bulldozed trees in an area that was later to become the bottom of a lake behind a dam.

In February 1945 he moved to the unit operated by the Church of the Brethren at the veterans’ hospital in Lyons, New Jersey. Finally, in late February of 1946 he spent seven weeks on the ship *Plymouth Victory*,

which delivered 900 horses to war-ravaged Poland. Then he returned to Pettisville, where he soon began selling life insurance and gradually developed a general insurance agency, V. S. Beck Insurance Agency, from which he retired in 1985.

It is possible to identify several personal reasons why Vincent became a preserver of these unusual songs. First, he was and still is a singer and guitar player, especially of country-western music. He took his guitar along to CPS and played it for his own and his friends' recreation. He naturally paid more attention than others to the music that he encountered in CPS. Like other Mennonites at Mancos and Lapine, he joined in singing the songs when they were sung in the camp dining halls. Although he never led in their public singing, he

“Perhaps the critical, even sometimes bitter tone and words of the songs express both his feelings of “involuntary servitude” during CPS and his continuing sense of unfair treatment by the Mennonite church.”

did sing them by himself during personal time near his bunk.

Second, Vincent's own attitude toward his CPS experience was ambivalent. Although he was and still is a staunch conscientious objector to war—“There was no indecision on my part . . . about conscientious objection to war”—he shared some of the “bad boys” feelings about being coerced by the government into work without pay. Like them, he sometimes calls CPS

“Civilian Public Servitude” and refers to camp work as “involuntary servitude.” These attitudes seem to have been influenced by his experience with the “bad boys” at Mancos and Lapine. Vincent says that he entered CPS, like most other Mennonite young men, as a “nonresistant” Christian. However, he now regards himself as a “nonviolent” Christian instead, largely because of his exposure to non-Mennonites and their more resistant stance to governmental coercion.

Also, upon returning from CPS Vincent felt betrayed by his church when he began to sell life insurance, which was at that time forbidden by the Mennonite Church—but which the Mennonite Church itself soon after began to sell, under the name of “mutual aid,” through Mennonite Mutual Aid Association. As an insurance agent in Archbold, Ohio, he was attacked from both sides—by ministers in the Mennonite Church that he had been faithful to during the war and by non-Mennonites in the community who painted one of his business signs yellow and threw a sack of manure in through his insurance office door.

Perhaps the critical, even sometimes bitter tone and words of the songs express both his feelings of “involuntary servitude” during CPS and his continuing sense of unfair treatment by the Mennonite Church.



Vincent S. Beck
(left) and Bill Woniack, a
Jehovah's Witness, working at
Camp Wickiup, CPS #128,
Lapine, Oregon.

MANCOS AND LAPINE CAMPS

Vincent acquired about half of the songs at Mancos and the other half at Lapine. They were composed and sung by essentially the same people at both places, since the CPSers at Lapine had been transferred there from Mancos.

Usually they were sung in the dining hall prior to eating.

Camp administrators never tried to stop the singing.

Vincent recalls the dramatic moment in the dining room at Lapine when "Old Man Olsen Had a Camp," printed below, was first sung.

The camp was in transition from Mennonite- to government-run. The sixteen Mennonite men who had not yet been transferred out were at a table on one side of the mess hall; the newly-transferred non-Mennonite Mancos men were at another table; camp administrators

were at a third in the front of the room.

The Mennonite men had earlier been given a printed set of songs and forewarned that they would be sung at mealtime. As Vincent puts it, "The government men and the Mennonite campers were aghast when the 'Mancos Group' boldly sang 'Old Man Olsen Had a Camp.'" Thus the "bad boys" from Mancos, during their first meal at Lapine, gave fair warning to their government bosses that they would be a non-

cooperative lot.

Vincent describes the Mancos men as "ready and willing to go to prison, men who were anti-war, anti-conscription, and anti-slavery, and didn't hesitate to let the government men know it." They were "individualistic and very intelligent" people, often coming from Yale, Harvard, and the University of Chicago—real "brains," as the song "Our Old and Dusty Loam" describes such trouble-makers.

If they became too resistant at the special camps created for other than Historic Peace Church objectors, the worst trouble-makers were sent to an isolated camp for offenders begun in Germfask, Michigan, by December 1944.

The names of the authors of a few of the songs have been preserved, although Vincent recalls little about them: J. F. Kendrick, Al Partridge, Dwight Rieman, Frank Hatfield. Hatfield, who wrote three of the songs, was an outspoken, smart university-trained New Englander.

For their first singings, all of the texts of the songs given below were presented to Vincent and other campers in printed form. They are grouped below according to topic, rather than the sequence of Vincent's typewritten collection.

SOCIALIST SONGS

Some of the "bad boys"—perhaps especially those more articulate ones from Yale, Harvard, and the University of Chicago—expressed somewhat socialist convictions through many of these songs. Vincent refers to some of



Three men standing outside the "Tobacco Road" barracks at CPS #III, Mancos, Colorado. The sign over the door says "Colonel Mac Welcome to Tobacco Road."

these men as “anti-capitalists.” Melvin Gingerich was apparently thinking of the same people when he referred to the “radicalism produced by our contacts with pacifists.”

“Christians at War,” written by J. F. Kendrick, was to be sung to the tune of “Onward, Christian Soldiers.” In attributing war making to the urge for profit, in indicting organized religion, in implying that preachers are pigs (line 6), and in its offensive rhetoric the songs betrays its aggressively leftist political bias:

*Onward, Christian soldiers,
duty's way is plain;
Slay your Christian neighbors,
or by them be slain.
Pulpiteers are spouting
effervescent swill,
God above is calling you
to rob and rape and kill.
All your acts are sanctified
by the Lamb on high;
If you love the Holy Ghost,
go murder, pray and die.*

*Onward, Christian soldiers,
rip and snite and tear;
Let the gentle Jesus
bless your dynamite.
Splinter skulls with shrapnel,
fertilize the sod;
Folks who do not speak your tongue
deserve the curse of God.
Smash the doors of every home,
pretty maidens seize;
Use your might and sacred right
to treat them as you please.*

*Onward, Christian soldiers,
eat and drink your fill;
Rob with bloody fingers,
Christ OKs the bill.
Steal the farmer's savings,*

*take their grain and meat,
Even though the children starve,
the Savior's bums must eat;
Burn the peasants' cottages,
orphans leave bereft;
In Jehovah's holy name,
wreak ruin right and left.*

*Onward, Christian soldiers,
drench the land with gore,
Mercy is a weakness
all the gods abhor;*



*Bayonet the babies,
jab the mothers, too;
Hoist the cross of Calvary
to hallow all you do.
File the bullets' noses flat,
poison every well,
God decrees your enemies
must all go plum to hell.*

*Onward, Christian soldiers,
blighting all you meet,
Trampling human freedom
under pious feet.
Praise the Lord whose dollar-sign,
dupes his favored race;*

Bull session
at Mancos Camp. The sign in
the background says,
“Pretend you like it.”

*Make the foreign trash respect
your bullion brand of grace.
Trust in mock salvation,
serve as pirates' tools,
History will say of you,
"That pack of G . . . D fools."*

"Money Patriots" also emphasizes the association between government power and moneyed

*Go to church and talk like honey,
Kiss the flag and shout a lot,
That will make you for they'll take you
For a blooming patriot.*

*Boom your business, boom your
business,
Brother love it matters not.
Use your gall, sir, do them all, sir,
Then you'll be a patriot.*

If the "bad boys" could compose nasty songs, they did at times also sing songs that offered a more positive description of what they stood for. "My Country Is the World," to be sung to the tune of "America," gives an attractive picture of a worldwide brotherhood that constitutes a secular, humanistic basis for conscientious objection to war:

*My country is the world:
My flag with stars inpearled,
Fills all the skies.
All the round earth I claim,
Peoples of every name;
And all-inspiring fame,
My heart would prize.*

*And all men are my kin,
Since every man has been
Blood of my blood.
I glory in the grace
And strength of every race,
And joy in every trace
Of brotherhood.*

Since this song refers neither to war-making nor to camp life, it may have been composed and sung prior to any of the men's being drafted.

At the other end of the continuum of socialist commitment is "Solidarity Forever," which uses



Vincent S. Beck
with surveyors at Mancos
Camp in 1944.

interests. As Vincent explains it, the song reveals "the usual Fourth-of-July type of 'patriotic spouting' for what it is—money-grabbing and hypocritical expression of belief in Christianity and devotion to one's country." The words are to be sung to the tune of "Clementine":

*Join the party that is ruling,
Give the boss what brains you've got.
Play the rooster, be a booster,
And you'll be a patriot.*

CHORUS:
*O, my country, O, my country,
How I love each blooming spot!
But ain't it funny how for money
One may be a patriot.*

the Marxist motto of "solidarity" and even exhorts camp members to organize and strike. Substituting "workers" for "campers" in line 2 would make the song a rousing labor movement song; perhaps it was used earlier in that form in the American labor movement. It was sung to the tune of "John Brown's Body":

*When the Union's inspiration
through the campers' blood
shall run,
There can be no power greater
anywhere beneath the sun.
Yet what force on earth is weaker
than the feeble strength of one?
But the Union makes us strong.*

CHORUS:
*Solidarity forever!
Solidarity forever!
Solidarity forever!
For the Union makes us strong.*

*Is there aught we hold in common
with the tyrants we have here?
Who would crush us into serfdom
and would kick us in the rear?
We must organize a union
that these bums will learn to fear,
For the Union makes us strong.*

ANTI-CONSCRIPTION

Seven of the songs specifically protest the draft and the Selective Service system. Probably "The Ballad of October 16" refers to the date in 1940 (actually it was September 16) when Congress passed the Selective Service Bill that resulted in the drafting of men for service in the armed forces of the United States. Both President

Roosevelt and his wife Eleanor come in for criticism, as does J. P. Morgan. Since the notorious capitalist Morgan died in 1913, over thirty years before the Selective Service was formed, the emotional content of the song also incorporates the social discontent of the Great Depression. Perhaps stanza 3 even was sung by soldiers during World



War I. The song is to be sung to the tune of "Jesse James' Death":

CHORUS:
*It was on a Saturday night
and the moon was shining bright
When they passed that conscription bill,
And for miles and miles away,
oh, you could hear the people say,
"Twas the President and boys on
Capitol Hill."*

*Oh, Franklin Roosevelt
told the people how he felt,
And we damned near believed what
he said.
He said, "I hate war
and so does Eleanor,
But we won't be safe till everybody's
dead."*

**View from the air
of buildings and grounds of
CPS #III, Mancos,
Colorado**

*When my dear old mother died,
I was sitting by her side,
And I promised her to war I'd never go.
Now I'm wearing khaki jeans
and eating army beans
And I'm told that J. P. Morgan
loves me so.*

Three of the anti-conscription songs single out Lewis B. Hershey,



**Buildings and
grounds at Camp Wickiup,
CPS #128, Lapine, Oregon.**

director of the Selective Service System, for specific criticism. "The Wickiup Artillery" is to be sung to the tune of "And the Caissons Go Rolling Along." The "dumpsters" were used in moving earth at the Lapine camp.

*Over hill, over dale
We will hit the dusty trail
As those dumpsters go rolling along.
Laws are smashed, rules are bashed
And democracy is mashed
But the dumpsters go rolling along.*

CHORUS:
*So it's work, work, work,
You poor old CO jerk,
Fighting for liberty.
Civilian Public Service*

*Makes everybody nervous
But the colonel from Washington, D.C.*

*COs work all the day
But they don't get the pay,
Still the dumpsters go rolling along.
Hershey bars all around
Keep us guys from going to town.
Still the dumpsters go rolling along.*

"Way Down upon the Deschutes River" refers to the stream being dammed at Wickiup. Al Partridge, the composer, became a professor at the University of Chicago after the war. The words are to be sung to the tune of "Old Folks at Home." "Reclamation" refers to the Bureau of Reclamation, under which some CPS camps were administered.

*Way down upon the Deschutes River
far, far away.
That's where the COs do slave labor,
working without pay.*

CHORUS:
*All the camp am sad and weary, . . .
Oh, Hershey, how our hearts grow
weary,
Sponging on the old folks at home.*

*We're working for the Reclamation
Nine hours a day.
But we don't get no compensation.
Lord, we don't get no pay.*

"Opposition to Conscription" is to be sung to the gospel tune, "Down in My Heart":

*I've got that opposition to conscription
down in my heart, down in my heart,
down in my heart.
I've got that opposition to conscription
down in my heart,
down in my heart to stay.*

*I know that Hershey doesn't like it but it's
down in my heart, down in my heart,
down in my heart.*

*I know that Hershey doesn't like it but it's
down in my heart,
down in my heart to stay.*

Three other songs make more general complaints about conscription. "I Know Conscription's Wrong" simply adds a verse to "I'm Going Down the Road Feeling Bad":

*I'm here, but I know conscription's
wrong. (3 times)*

*Lord, Lord, I ain't gonna be treated
this way.*

*I'm working for ten cents a day.
(3 times)*

*Lord, Lord, I ain't gonna be treated
this way.*

*They feed us on cornbread and
beans. (3 times)*

*Lord, Lord, I ain't gonna be treated
this way.*

*I'm going down that road feeling
bad. (3 times)*

*Lord, Lord, I ain't gonna be treated
this way.*

"The CO Blues," by Dwight Rieman, is a similar lament, to be sung to the tune of "The St. Louis Blues":

*I've got those CO blues,
I'm just as blue as blue can be.
It's all because*

*it's all because,
it's all because of what
Selective Service did to me.*

*I signed old form 47
conscientiously, you see.*

*Now see what
Selective Service has done to me.*

*They told me the work would be
good.*

*They sent me out to the woods
And all I do is cut notches in trees,
cut notches until I'm down on
my knees.*



*And when it's 25 below
Oh, Lord, how I do freeze.*

*Now my gal she gave me the air.
I can no longer look on her face
so fair.*

*She tossed me aside like a battered toy
And gave her heart to a soldier boy.*

*I'm getting bluer day by day
And I don't know how long it will be
before I get out of this mess.
But the man who signs my release
the Lord will surely bless.*

"Kill, Kill, Kill," by Frank Hatfield, is to be sung to the tune of "Old Black Joe." Although the concluding line no doubt refers to war-mongers, it is ambiguous enough to also express the angry

Men at Camp

Wickiup, Lapine, Oregon.

Vincent S. Beck, fifth from
left, back row.

frustration of campers who feel that they are giving "involuntary servitude":

*Gone are the days when I had my
liberty.
I am a slave in the country of the
free.
Gone are the truths that now I cling
to still.*



Mancos work crew.

Vincent S. Beck, far right.

*I hear once-gentle voices shouting,
"Kill! Kill! Kill!"*

CHORUS:
*Conscription, conscription,
It takes away man's will
And bows his soul to voices shouting,
"Kill! Kill! Kill!"*

CAMP TOPICAL SONGS

Four of the songs deal with the specifics of life at Camp Wickiup. "Old Man Olsen Had a Camp," to be sung to the tune of "Old McDonald," refers to the Mennonite "good boys," and is the song Vincent and his friends heard sung at their first meal at Camp Wickiup. Col. Olsen was director of the camp during its transition from Mennonite to government administration.

*Old Man Olsen had a camp,
E-I-E-I-O.
And in this camp were Mennonites,
E-I-E-I-O.
With a yes, yes, here, a yes, yes, there.
here a yes, there a yes,
everywhere a yes, yes.
Old Man Olsen had a camp,
E-I-E-I-O.*

*Old Man Olsen had a camp,
E-I-E-I-O.
And in this camp there was a bell,
E-I-E-I-O.
With a ding, ding, here, a dong,
dong there,
here a ding, there a dong,
everywhere a ding, dong.
Old Man Olsen had a camp,
E-I-E-I-O.*

*Old Man Olsen had a camp,
E-I-E-I-O.
And in this camp there were Mancosites,
E-I-E-I-O.
With a no, no, here, a no, no, there,
here a no, there a no,
everywhere a "Hell, no!"
Old Man Olsen had a camp,
E-I-E-I-O.*

In "I've Been Working in the Timber," to be sung to the tune of "I've Been Working on the Railroad," Col. Olsen asks a heavyset camper named Tiny to announce mealtime by blowing his trumpet.

*I've been working in the timber
all the livelong day.
I've been working in the timber
but I can't get any pay.
Can't you hear those bells a-ringing
so early in the morn?
Can't you hear Old Man Olsen
shouting,
"Tiny, blow your horn"?*

Col. Olsen was eventually replaced by Herbert Murch as director of Camp Wickiup. The speaker in the song "4F and SQ" by Frank Hatfield is a sick camper whose illness is thought by camp officials to be mere avoidance of work. "4F" refers to draftees who are physically unfit. "SQ" refers to sick quarters. "RTW" is an abbreviation for "refuse to work"; after three RTWs a camper went to prison. Gilmore was the camp cook. The words are to be sung to the tune of "Pistol Packin' Mama":

*The doctor pulled my teeth all out,
he found me heart was bad.
He looked at me and said, "T.B."
and even thought me mad.*

CHORUS:

*Oh, get those 4Fs through, Murch,
get those 4Fs through
For I've been here a half a year
and always been SQ.*

*Eating starch in the dining hall
and I am bound up tight.
I am so weak my bones do creak
yet Gilmore wants to fight.*

*"Now, boys, don't get impatient,"
our layman doctor said.
But I'm so weak by bones do creak,
and I can't get out of bed.*

*Now, boys, while you are waiting
you cannot go SQ.
So do light work or else, you jerk,
it's R - T - W.*

*Now rigor mortis has set in,
my bones are stiff and cold.
I have gangrene, as all have seen,
yet I'm not sick, I'm told.*

*And that's the way it goes, boys,
that's just what he said.
So rest in peace, for your release
will come when you are dead.*

LAST CHORUS:

*Oh, get those coffins made, Murch,
get those coffins made,
For I'm not strong, I've not got long
before I will be dead.*

"Johnny Boy," to be sung to the tune of "Billy Boy," refers to John Calef, a six-foot, blond Wickiup camper who was caught sunbathing in the nude between the dormitory buildings one weekend. Even though there were no women at the camp, a camp official turned him over to the Bend, Oregon, police, who jailed him for a short time.

*Oh, where have you gone, Johnny
boy, Johnny boy?
Oh, where have you gone, Johnny Calef?
Some filthy-minded prude
Said he saw you in the nude.
You're a young thing and shouldn't
leave your mother.*

*Do you want to go to jail, Johnny
boy, Johnny boy?
Do you want to go to jail, Johnny Calef?
Except for SQ
It will seem the same to you.
You have gone from one prison to
another.*

*Are you sorry to be gone, Johnny
boy, Johnny boy?
Are you sorry to be gone, Johnny Calef?
You really shouldn't care.
The administration won't be there.
That is something that should make
you happy, Brother.*

“Old Man Olsen Had a Camp,” to be sung to the tune of “Old McDonald,” refers to the Mennonite “good boys,” and is the song Vincent and his friends heard sung at their first meal at Camp Wickiup.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF PROTEST

Three songs consider the consequences of noncooperation with camp authorities. “Who’s Going Next?” considers the option of being put in a local jail, as Johnny Calef had been. Uncle Elmer in stanza 2 was a government crew leader—a “nice little old man,” according to Vincent. Pollard in stanza 3 was a government bookkeeper. Herbert Murch, the Wickiup camp director, is accused here of relishing the notion of COs being hanged, although Vincent concedes that he was a decent man just “doing his duty.”

*’Twas at a camp named Wickiup
and all the lads were there
Raising holy blazes
in the middle of Murch’s hair.*

CHORUS:
*Singing, “Who’s going next, lads?
Who’s going to jail?
You’d better be a-ready
With your pockets full of bail.”*

*And Uncle Elmer came along
a-driving through the fog
And who should be a-sittin’ there
behind him but his dog.
And Pollard was a-sittin’ there
a-messin’ up the books
And when he couldn’t balance ‘em
he blamed it on the cooks.*

*And Herby Murch was also there
and very pleased to see
Four-and-twenty COs
a-hangin’ from a tree.*

Two songs concern the ultimate consequences of noncooperation—being transferred to the camp at Germfask, Michigan, designed to hold the worst of the “bad boys.” “M-I-C-H-I-G-A-N,” composed by Frank Hatfield, was to be sung to the Notre Dame fight song:

*M-I-C-H-I-G-A-N.
We all know that this will be the end—
One-way passage to Germfask,
The cold-storage spot for the bad-
boy class.*

*We don’t believe that slavery is right.
We fight it in our own way, with might.
So off to Michigan are we
And onward to liberty.*

“Our Old and Dusty Loam,” to be sung to the tune of “My Old Kentucky Home,” vows to continue the program of noncooperation begun by the bad-boy “slobs” and “brains” that had been transferred to the Germfask camp.

*Oh, the bad boys are gone
from the forests of Lapine.
They’ve left for a camp in Michigan.
The director thinks
all the brains have gone with them,
But we’ll carry on the work
the “slobs” began.*

*So, weep no more for Mancos.
The brains are not all gone.
We will sing this song
to our friends so far away
and the fight which they began.
Carry on!*

Vincent liked—and still likes—these songs because they were “pretty cleverly written” and “made

a point in a humorous way." He can still sing some of them without looking at the printed texts. In the summer of 1995 he even performed "4F and SQ" at a talent night program at the Mennonite camp Little Eden near Onkema, Michigan, where he has a summer home.

Vincent laments what he senses to be a diminished peace emphasis in the Mennonite Church. He nurtures his own peace convictions by supporting the National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors and subscribing to the newsletter *The Reporter for Conscience' Sake*. He is articulate in discussing developments in national and international conscientious objection.

The songs are an emotional expression of this interest, a direct tie with his earlier life experience, and one means by which Vincent—as well as Mennonites more generally—have moved from being "nonresistant" to "nonviolent" objectors to war.

Vincent
laments what he
senses to be a
diminished peace
emphasis in the
Mennonite Church.

Which Bridge into the Next Century?

Harvey Yoder

Should Mennonite churches extend membership to active military personnel? Although not a new issue for peace churches, this subject was recently revived at a consultation called by the general boards of the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church, and held in conjunction with their meetings November 13-15, 1996. The issue has been particularly significant for churches in the Tidewater area of Virginia, where one in every three people are involved with the military. Formal discussion of the issue within the Virginia Mennonite Conference has been ongoing since 1990. As part of that regional conversation, Gerald Showalter and Harvey Yoder presented their respective opinions in an issue of *Connections*, the Virginia Conference newsletter. Here, in new, expanded essays, they share their views with a broader audience. Yoder is director of the Counseling Center at Eastern Mennonite University, a counselor at the Family Life Resource Center in Harrisonburg, and on the pastoral team of Family of Hope Mennonite Church. Showalter is a land surveyor and is minister of pastoral care at Huntington Mennonite Church in Newport News, Virginia.

"As disciples of Christ, we do not prepare for war, or participate in war or military service."

This clear, succinct statement, taken from Article 22 in our recently adopted Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, sets us apart

from all but a small fraction of other Christians around the world. It would have been embraced by nearly all believers in the first and second centuries, and by most Anabaptist-minded Christians since the 16th century, but it is not because of a reverence for the past that we hold it today. Rather it is because of a conviction that followers of Christ, through a radical new birth, have become active citizens in an eternal kingdom ruled by Jesus, eternally crowned as King of Kings, Lord of Lords, and Prince of Peace.

Tertullian, a leader and theologian in the early church, expressed this vision when he confidently spoke of the church as a people who "join to beat their swords into plows, and their lances into sickles." Origen of Egypt, a contemporary of Tertullian's, said, "Nor do we 'learn war any more,' having become children of peace, for the sake of Jesus, our leader." Jesus clearly was seen as having the latest word from God on this issue of war and peace. War was simply over for Christians, a thing of the past.

All this changed among the

"Surely there should be some remnant, somewhere, that consistently preaches and demonstrates that Christians, by definition, are people who cannot harm or kill their enemies, and certainly not their friends and fellow believers."

followers of Christ in the centuries that followed. Sadly, it is now changing in the Mennonite Church as well, a small "peace church" that has maintained for most of 500 years that military membership and

church membership are incompatible.

To me, any weakening of the church's position in an area of witness the world needs so desperately represents a crying shame. Surely there should be some remnant, somewhere, that consistently preaches and demonstrates that Christians, by definition, are people who cannot harm or kill their enemies, and certainly not their friends and fellow believers, under any circumstances, even in a time of war.

We are not just talking about some Mennonite "peace position" here. This is not simply about our being a "peace church," as sound and as central as that is, given our call to follow a nonresistant Jesus. It is really about an "agape position," about being a church that promotes a passionate love for God above every other love or allegiance, and that lives out a compassionate love for neighbor—friend, foe, or foreigner alike.

And lest we reduce agape to being a mere sentiment, attitude, or feeling toward others that still allows us to engage in their destruction, the New Testament makes clear that love must be defined by its actions, not merely its motives or emotions. Thus Jesus, in explaining what loving one's neighbor means, tells the story of someone binding up the wounds of an enemy. And Paul, in Romans 13, the very passage that urges respect for those in authority, makes it clear that agape will never "do harm to its neighbor."

The New Testament is quite clear. Do no harm. Return good for evil. Take up the cross, not the

sword. Follow Jesus' personal example of a completely nonresistant life. Could anything be more fundamental in defining what being a disciple of Jesus means, or in demonstrating what God's future is about?

If, in our baptism, we receive a missionary commission to evangelize and reconcile God's

"...the New Testament makes clear that love must be defined by its actions, not merely its motives or emotions."

enemies, how can we accept a military commission to harm them? And if we are convinced that, in Christ, God's future kingdom has already been inaugurated, how can we also pledge, under oath, to become a part of an enterprise committed to harming or coercing others "in the national interest"?

Note the wording of the oath of induction for those entering the United States armed forces:

I, _____, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to the regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice, So help me God."

If such a pledge doesn't represent an obvious conflict of interest for Mennonites and any other brand of Christian, try to imagine what it would be like if the

tables were turned, and members of the military were debating whether to induct dedicated pacifists into their number. Would they be willing to compromise their military purpose simply for the sake of getting more recruits? Of course not.

Unfortunately, numerical growth seems to have become a primary concern for many churches today.

“If, in our baptism, we receive a missionary commission to evangelize and reconcile God’s enemies, how can we accept a military commission to harm them?”

Less inclined to be a radical demonstration of God’s future, we try our best to be a relevant influence for the present. We want to be understood. We want people to like us, to want to join our ranks. And while we may agree that we should still preach and teach peace, we seem to have lost our “gleam in the eye” on the issue, and have begun openly debating whether military membership should continue to be a test of church membership.

Sadly, more and more Mennonites insist it should not be. Such a position is too legalistic, they say. Let’s allow the Holy Spirit to do the work of bringing people to faith and to faithfulness. Let’s continue to preach nonresistance as an ideal, but not insist on this particular “agape position” as an entrance requirement. Let’s focus on helping people hold to Christ as their center, then the boundaries, where we draw the lines, won’t be such an issue.

Yet the fact is that we all draw lines somewhere, and would consider it foolish not to do so. Each

church has its own list of taboos, whether written or simply assumed, that they would never think of compromising, or consider just “leaving it to the Holy Spirit” with regard to requirements for church members. For example, most Christians would expect a clear renunciation of all of the following by those entering the “narrow gate that leads to life”:

- armed robbery
- lying or other forms of deception
- physical, psychological, or other forms of abuse
- malicious wounding
- organized acts of terrorism
- using racial or other demeaning slurs
- forced entry
- using explosives to destroy people or property
- destroying land or other natural resources
- stabbing or strangling
- forcing people from their homes or communities
- committing mass murder
- condoning and sometimes encouraging prostitution

Not only would most believers speak out against members of their congregations engaging in the above misbehaviors, they would also disapprove of Christians supporting, or belonging to, any groups or organizations that do. Yet military forces routinely encourage, train, and command people to do all of these and more. Thus we are in danger of accepting, in one package, and on a mass and organized scale, what we could not accept or allow on any other basis.

Having said that, I agree that all seekers and all new believers,

including those in the military, should be warmly loved, respected, and cared for in our congregations, But if we also care about what kind of church we are, and about what direction Jesus is taking us, we will not hesitate to draw certain clear lines for newborn believers just as we do for newborns in our biological families—gently, graciously, and definitively.

“Thus we are in danger of accepting, in one package, and on a mass and organized scale, what we could not accept or allow on any other basis.”

Wayne Spiegel, pastor of the First Mennonite Church in Richmond, Virginia, put it this way in an October 1, 1996, *Gospel Herald* article: “sincere Christians (or anyone) in military service can be a part of the Mennonite church community as seekers or believers in Jesus. When they choose to leave the military, they are ready to become members—meaning in this case that they have accepted the call of Jesus to live without violence or the threat of it.”

Working pastorally and faithfully with individual seekers, this may mean some or all of the following:

1. A congregation might agree on a process and a time frame for an individual withdrawing from military service, as long as the commitment to do so is clear.
2. The church needs to help provide alternatives for those dependent on military-related employment for their livelihood.
3. Church colleges should help

provide alternative educational opportunities for those currently seeing the armed forces as their only way to get advanced training.

4. Above all, we must repent of the “beams” of materialism, arrogance, and indifference that prevent us from “seeing clearly” how to lovingly remove the speck of militarism from another’s eye.

But remove it we must, lest history write off the church as having been both irrelevant and unfaithful in one of the most pressing moral issues of all time.

Making or Breaking the Peace?

G e r a l d S h o w a l t e r

Here in Tidewater, Virginia we expose ourselves to many people with different views. A large number of people in this area are, or have been in some way, connected with the military. Many are open to discuss peace issues. Some are very offended by our Mennonite position on nonviolence. Some want to take us on, while others avoid talking about it. Some will come to our churches. Others will not. Perhaps the best way to “feel this” is to browse through a few true stories (with names altered).

Jeff began attending our congregation on Sunday mornings. He was friendly, but did not open up about himself. It was some time later, when we were in a Bible study about peace, that Jeff opened up and shared some of his own pilgrimage. He was in the military at a base nearby. A short marriage had left him isolated from his family and church. He was the son of a missionary from another denomination and felt he had let his father down severely. He said that he had felt warmth here in our church and continued to come, even after he realized that he was attending a “peace church.” Not wanting publicly to ask questions that would expose his position, he attended “Urbana” and individually searched through all the booths and sessions that Anabaptists had there. He read a number of statements and pamphlets that he found, and came back to search the scriptures and

check us out. Now he was ready to ask questions and reveal himself, and perhaps us. We walked with him through his search and helped him experience peace. There was time for his new beliefs to form and jell. And we both grew.

Eventually, at considerable cost, as part of the negotiations for him to be released from further military obligation, he agreed to pay back the education expense that the military

“Here in Tidewater, Virginia we expose ourselves to many people with different views. A large number of people in this area are, or have been in some way, connected with the military. Some are very offended by our Mennonite position on nonviolence.

figured he still owed. He grew deeply involved with our congregation in a number of vital ways before moving on into further mission service in another part of God’s Kingdom. Although we did discuss membership during his active participation in our church, our denomination did not make any room for him until he was clear of any further military obligation. Was he not “one with us” while he was still “within other confines”? While doctor Jeff was working additional emergency room jobs to pay off his monetary obligations for his military release, was he compromising by negotiating a peaceful resolution?

Another family began to attend our congregation after being befriended and invited. Often Bob was away, but his wife and family were almost always in church, and all participated. Eventually Bob

shared some of his pilgrimage. He was in the Navy and had served on a nuclear powered and armed submarine. He felt uncomfortable there for several reasons, including health concerns and his "direct destruction capabilities." At his request he was transferred to a small surface ship. While at sea he spent time searching and discussing the scriptures with his fellow seamen. When he came to us, he soaked up Bible study and planned on taking notes and booklets back to the ship. Since his ship was too small to be assigned a chaplain, his shipmates had asked him to lead a Bible study group during their next tour at sea. While still in port he had already begun a shipboard Bible study group that was growing, and at home he was involved in a discussion about whether or not to become a member of our congregation. He decided against membership, in order to "keep the peace" within the church, where he was finding peace. He left the military soon after and returned to his former home community. We were able to visit him there several years later. He was a profound part of a vibrant and growing congregation, teaching and freely sharing his testimony and leaving an indelible witness of Jesus in action.

Not all stories end the same. After an exciting Bible study series that a young Army officer and his wife attended, the officer and his wife shared—with great interest and deep thought—that they would no longer be attending our congregation on a regular basis. They would instead attend base chapel. He could not give up his career, nor could he stay in his career

and be comfortable here. It was a struggle for them. Some time later, when they were in Germany, we heard from them that they were having difficulty in their marriage. Later, after encouragement, counsel and healing, they visited us in Newport News, where they hoped to return, but military orders sent them to the Midwest instead. We have sensed their thoughtfulness and spiritual concern and on occasion have opportunity to share together.

More recently we have been invited to and attended the retirement ceremony of a Navy Chief. He and his wife had lived in our community and attended our congregation, but when the family had moved closer to the port where he was stationed they had intended to worship in another church (and denomination), but somehow they had not gotten tied in. He told a couple of us at the reception following the ceremony that they would be back with us again, despite

"We walked with him through his search and helped him experience peace. There was time for his new beliefs to form and jell. And we both grew."

the longer drive. Their son has also been encouraging them to come back to our church. Perhaps it makes a difference, now that he is not in active military service?

There are others. One, a chief petty officer who had brought several other active military personnel with him to church, applied for and received conscientious objector status. After

what seemed a long process, he was suddenly called in one day by his superiors and ordered to collect everything he had on board the ship and get out. He was contaminating the ship with his doctrine. That was great, but then he had to cough up most of his last reenlistment bonus. Jobs for which he had been trained, special work on nuclear reactors,

“Perhaps it makes a difference, now that he is not in active military service?”

were not available locally. Some of his financial struggles were shared by individual persons and some by collective congregational response, but those struggles were not easy for him or us. And at what point was he eligible for membership? Before he declared his CO status? After he was out? How much did that add to his own personal struggles?

If we are walking with Christ, where does our “community” stop? Does it stop with Germanic names and history? Do people need to be completely clear of any appearance of evil to be a part of our congregations? Will our name be blemished if we are too accepting? Or if we are too exclusive? Did Jesus need to struggle with these things before he went with Zacchaeus to dinner? Or before he healed the Centurion’s servant? Was Peter on the spot with the church leaders, only because of the “gentile connection”? Or did the military issue add further complications?

If persons are coming to understand Christ’s peace, and make

a commitment to Him, to what extent are we to hold off baptism or church membership? Until everything is clear? And where do we draw the lines? Our communities are different. Issues and sensitivities are different. For instance, some come from afar to attend the festivities at Busch Gardens, near here, yet are generous with criticism when they think we compromise on issues of peace. Two persons I know, who worked at the Busch brewery until they retired, now struggle with alcohol addiction and wasted health. That is only one reason I don’t want to have any part of Busch Gardens, but I do not stand at their gates and protest when I hear of others who claim the name of Christ who are seeking entertainment there. At times I share my concern with such people, but I hope to let them respond to the Master.

I think this kind of open discussion of the military issue is good for the church, even though some are leery of it. “It might water down the doctrines,” some of the cautious fear. Some would still fault Jesus at the well, if his encounter with the Samaritan woman happened today.

Does this cross-church discussion not exercise, strengthen and enlighten our minds and hearts? The exposure of these ideas and problems will too soon come home to us, wherever we are. After one of these struggles, out of the military into new employment, out of our community into one of yours, came one of these families. The small, careful, Bible believing congregation soon put them to work. They were teaching, they knew their Bible—

after all they had just made life changes based on its message—and to them and others walking with them, it was exciting and alive. But someone discovered that the wife had gone through a short teenage marriage previous to her present 15 year marriage bond. In order to be “pure,” this struggling, sensitive couple, still babes in Christ, were

“Some would still fault Jesus at the well, if his encounter with the Samaritan woman happened today.”

told to live separately if they were to stay in the church. What followed broke this marriage, this home, several lives, and no less than a dozen hearts, mine included. To me this seemed overzealous, “Sons of Thunder Philosophy.” In the end they lived in “pieces.” I don’t know what happened to the “peace” they were reaching for.

Please don’t jump to conclusions too quickly. I hope we can trust the holy spirit to guide us through this together.

Book Reviews

Armin Wiebe, *The Second Coming of Yeat Shpanst*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: Turnstone Press, 1995. Pp. 298. (\$14.95 — paperback) ISBN 0-88801-197-0

With the publication of books like Armin Wiebe's *The Second Coming of Yeat Shpanst* we see writing by and about Mennonites enter the twentieth century. Most so-called Mennonite fiction, whatever that means, is articulated in traditional forms. Most of it is what is generally called "Realistic," that is, it's the kind of fiction that came as a reaction to Romance in the middle of the nineteenth century and has remained as our dominant kind of fiction. It's the fiction developed by Flaubert and Zola in Europe and by the Native American Realists in the U.S. That so-called Realistic mode is rejected by Armin Wiebe for his new novel. *The Second Coming of Yeat Shpanst* is what is generally referred to as "Postmodern." In an epigraph at the beginning of Part III of the novel, "Koadel Kehler, the teacher's son," refers to this kind of fiction as "posthole modern stories." It is a novel that will present difficulties to many readers. To some readers it will seem strange, obtuse, confusing, as will any fiction that is not just a retelling of what the reader already knows.

The Second Coming of Yeat Shpanst is postmodern because it sets its own terms of narration. It doesn't give you a narration that is simple, familiar, superficial, uplifting and sentimental. That's what you expect in most Realistic fiction. But most writers realize, sooner or later, that the reduction of human behavior to narrative is finally a fraud. The postmodern writers recognized that. They realized that the way a story is told is just as important as what is told. They realized that the storytelling mechanism is as much a part of the meaning as is, for instance, theme, character, plot. The behavior of the narrator, author, whoever is conveying the narrative to the reader,

is as complex as any human action. To ignore the complexity of the narrative method is to oversimplify further a narrative that is already an oversimplification. Readers who expect and have been conditioned to expect the simplemindedness of a Hemingway narration will have trouble reading *The Second Coming of Yeat Shpanst*.

Wiebe's novel begins with an in-joke. In the front flyleaf of the novel there is a genealogy of the characters that will appear later. Wiebe calls it "Major Gutenthal Family Bushes," not "trees." The genealogy is the beginning of a long series of in-jokes because it is, for those in the know, a written parody of a typical Mennonite conversation. It is a sorting out of who is related to whom. It is a playing with every Mennonite who got introduced to another Mennonite and then had to stand for the next thirty minutes and unravel his/her relationship to various families. It wonders me that Mennonites never developed printed "cartes de visite" with genealogies on them so that the identifications could take place quicker; "Here's my family bush. Let's see yours." By the way, in case you're interested, the words "Mennonite" and "Mennonitism" never appear in Armin Wiebe's novel.

The narrative itself begins and ends with what are called "Beetfield Choruses." There are six of them. In them two weeders "pluida (to gossip)"; if you know modern German read "plaudern." The choruses are takeoffs on traditional choruses in literature. They are a humorous rendering of the mentality of the community. In the choruses the reader sees what's on the mind of the community, if it has one. The choruses are a frame that encapsulates the ongoing community of Gutenthal, which is a community condemned to an eternity of weeding beets. The stories that make up the novel are the contents of the minds of the citizens of Gutenthal. Even the protagonist of the

title may just be “no more than a joke told by beetweeders under a burning sun.”

There is a phrase that runs through *The Second Coming* that gives a clue as to how the novel exists. The reader must recognize this aspect of the novel. The phrase has to do with Oata Siemens, nee Needarp, writing things down. As a citizen of Gutenthal her mind is filled with the same stuff as the minds of the beetweeders. But she is trying to write it down, using a carpenter’s pencil and a Farmers’ Union Notebook. Oata tries to make some kind of coherence out of her imaginings. She is the source of the narrative. She is the “maker” of the novel.

In short, Wiebe’s novel is all in the mind of Oata Siemens, who is the fat young lady of his novel *The Salvation of Yasch Siemens* and the owner of a zipper Bible in his *Murder in Gutenthal*. The novel is occasioned by the Canadian Prime Minister’s “Dark Day for Canada” speech and by the coming home of Oata’s daughter Frieda. It is a Saturday in June. Frieda is fourteen and is to be a bridesmaid in the wedding of Thecla Thiessen, who is eighteen. The problem is that Frieda has dyed her hair green. Oata sets herself down on her outdoor swing and lets her mind hang out. What she imagines as she swings and goes about her daily activities and as she waits for Frieda to return from Thecla’s wedding is what makes up *The Second Coming of Yeeat Shpanst*. Wiebe’s novel is postmodern and hangs on a tour de force handling of point of view.

As in most postmodern fiction, the dominant tone of Wiebe’s novel is irony. The first irony is that all the craziness of the novel is only in the mind of Oata. The second level of irony is that what goes on in the mind of Oata is fantasy and mystery. The novel that is created in the mind of a commonplace housewife is like a puzzle that the reader has to solve.

Maybe better to say there is an “enigma” and that enigma radically transcends her received culture. The reader will soon recognize that there is a series of “plots” in Oata’s configurations. The “plots” can best be thought of as “patterns of events” that interweave and make together a complex set of disturbances. The most important series of events has to do with Yeeat Shpanst. Who is he? Where is he? What is he up to? Does he only exist as a “geschpenst,” a ghost? That’s what his name suggests. And word play is very important in the events of Wiebe’s book. The reader will have to search for the identity of Yeeat Shpanst. The solution to the riddle has to do with the resolution of Oata’s confusion. Other patterns of events have to do with Thecla Thiessen’s wedding, Bulchi Wiebe and Simple Hein’s bomb runs, Politicks Paetkau’s flatdeck readings, the return of the buffalo, the disappearance of an elevator, a certain tornado, a dropped banana peel, a group of escaped mental home patients, Us and Them, rainbow ice cream, the Good News Testament and more. This review can only begin to suggest the richness of the text.

One of the most brilliant dimensions of *The Second Coming* is that the book is, as the title suggests and as we find in most significant humor, a bleak but moral view of society. Oata is creating in her mind a new religion. Yeeat Shpanst and his second coming is a parody of Christian belief. Oata and her mentally bewildered mother create him. Yeeat is a parody of a Christ figure and the Bible is reduced to a comic scenario. There is the creation of a Scripture, a character who is like the Apostle Paul, disciples. Yeeat is seen as a modern Messiah enacting a comic apocalypse. The novel is saturated with religious references and allusions. The author is as Bible-haunted as the characters in his novel. The religion that Yeeat Shpanst

preaches and which replaces Christianity is articulated as a kind of fable in his black book. Politicks Paetkau reads from that black book at the flatdeck readings. What he reads is Yeeat Shpanst's "new vision for Canada." In that new vision hell is the beetfield where the beetweeders must weed beets forever instead of rolling a rock up a hill and watching it roll back down forever. It is a hell in which Coors Light is called beer. It is a religion of a contentless culture and of pointless activity. It is a religion in which the devil is TV, especially U.S. TV, or popular culture in general.

The language of the novel reflects the cultural confusion. There are many references to popular songs, events in Canadian history, hymns, books, the Bible. The references are to the cultural garbage that infuses and confuses Gutenthal society. The greatest confusion for most readers will probably come in Wiebe's use of "flat German." For readers who do not know flat German, Plautdietsch, the use of the language may be a loss. Certainly for those who do not know the language, and even if they translate the German from the glossary, the tonality of the phrases and words will not be available. The best way to read the novel if you don't know flat German is not to worry about what the flat German phrases and words mean. Simply read on. Most of it will come clear or be translated for you. The author does provide at the end of the novel a glossary and translations of most of the flat German phrases. On the other hand, the reader ought to at least translate the phrases in flat German that a husband and wife say to each other when engaged in sex.

Armin Wiebe's *The Second Coming of Yeeat Shpanst* is a brilliant book. It is brilliant technically and it is brilliant in its content. Readers of this magazine should buy it and read it. It is well worth the difficulties that it presents in the reading. The novel is a

high moment in the emergence of Mennonite fiction. The novel is worth reading just to meet Oata Siemens, who emerges here as a wonderful, complex literary character. She has imagination, love, compassion, tolerance and patience. OK, so she was pregnant when she got married to Yasch. OK, so she sleeps nude and likes sex. OK, so her father was a jerk. Nevertheless, Oata has all those Mennonite virtues. Sorry folks, but she is "the salt of the earth." You've probably met her. She's the woman who knows how to make vereniky that tastes good. She's the woman who brings strawberry Jell-O with sliced bananas in it to the meal after a funeral. She's the woman who will go and tell the Canadian Wiebe's that they ought to learn how to pronounce their last name correctly.

Dallas Wiebe
Cincinnati, Ohio

John Weier, *Steppe: A Novel*. Saskatoon: Thistledown Press, 1995. (\$Can. 13.50 — paperback) ISBN 1-895449-39-1

John Weier's novel *Steppe* is divided into five sections: "Tigers and Harvest," "Thieves; What Was Stolen," "Who Married the Peddler," "They Shot My Isaac" and "A Song and a Judgment." The parts of each section are numbered, the number of parts varying for each section with a total of 116 short parts. The pages are not numbered.

Each part is labeled and in reading the book the reader must pay attention to the headings. The headings tell what each section is or what it is about. Even though the five sections carry different titles, there are recurrent parts that appear in each of the five sections. For instance, a part called "Journal" with a given date appears in all five sections. Other

parts are called "Father," "The Preacher," "History Lesson," etc.

Although there are some continuous parts, the whole of the entries are not worked into a coherent narrative. The parts are more materials for a narrative. The parts are fragments that implicitly contain a narrative. The reader must find the narrative thread within the disparate materials. The author seems to be trying to write poetical vignettes that are key moments in a longer history. The reader must make the transitions and the coherence.

The main contention in *Steppe* is between a fictional narrator and the stories his fictional father told. The narrator/point of view records his thoughts, responses, feelings in the parts called "Journal." The other parts mostly retell the stories that the narrator's father told to him. The novel begins with a part (1.1) called "Journal: September 3, 1992." In it the author records the beginnings of his novel in "The things he told and told and told." He writes: "Father's stories. I loved my father's stories. Words slide through my sleep, pictures drift around me. Everywhere, my father's memories. This is my inheritance. His stories passed on, man to boy. People talk about the male line. This is how it is, and was, father to son. (Is that really true?)"

The novel then is made up of the stories told by the father who was nine years old when the Bolsheviks took power. What then follows are fragments of Mennonite life when the author's father lived in Russia. The stories record the persecutions, the brutality of Makhno, anecdotes of life, vignettes of village life, folk tales, relations with other Ukrainian peoples, family life, escape to Canada in 1924.

The novel carries its force in those memories passed on to the son. And that's where the novel begins to have weaknesses. The problem is that the memories tend to be the standard,

almost trite, episodes and aspects of the history of the Mennonites in Russia, in this case in the Molotschna Colony. We've all read the father's memories before. They are not new or idiosyncratic. The father's stories are a kind of epitome of Mennonite history in Russia, but they all sound familiar. We've all heard or read the stories about Catherine the Great and her lovers and her horses. We've all read about how the Mennonites came to Russia and whose land and what land they occupied. We've all read about Makhno and his furious assaults. We've all read about Mennonite hypocrisy. Perhaps we are supposed to see that the father's experiences were typical. They are, in fact, the clichés of Mennonite history.

That commonplace quality of the stories in *Steppe* appears also in the narrator's entries in his journal. When he writes, for instance, "People are born and people die. In between there are good days and bad days. You're lucky if you have more of the good, (4.21) a reader has to say, "I've heard that before." Or when he writes, "Eventually everybody dies," (1.26) a reader has to agree. One looks and hopes that more will come of the father's stories than does come.

A second important weakness in Weier's *Steppe* is that he fails to define the narrator. Without knowing much about who is recording the stories, the reader is left hanging when trying to assess the responses. Who is this person who responds to his father's stories? Who is this person who thinks they are important? Is he a kid? An adult? An old man? Is he a poet? A farmer? A preacher? The narrator says, "This is a journey of deceit and discovery. I am here to guide you, teach you, mislead you. That is my right, I can say anything I want. Follow me! Trust me!" (1.16) But, trust who? It's not a good idea to trust a person who uses exclamation points. Or who asks a lot of rhetorical questions.

The main virtue of John Weier's book is that it is short. It can be read quickly. If you want a kind of taste of events in the Ukraine before 1924, this is your book. Better yet, after reading Weier's book, go read the sources that he used. They're listed at the end of his novel.

Dallas Wiebe
Cincinnati, Ohio

Rudy Wiebe, *A Discovery of Strangers*.
Toronto: Knopf, 1994. Pp. 317. (\$27.00)
ISBN 0-394-28050-4

Twenty-one years after being awarded Canada's major fiction prize, the Governor-General's Award, for his fourth novel, *The Temptations of Big Bear*, Rudy Wiebe has again received this prestigious award for his eighth novel, *A Discovery of Strangers*. Now retired from his teaching career, spent primarily as a professor of English at the University of Alberta at Edmonton, Wiebe continues to blend a writer's eye and ear with his interests in history, religion, and culture.

Several themes emerge with power and unmistakable clarity in *A Discovery of Strangers*. Placed within the mixture of European and Native American cultures in western Canada—a mix that often becomes a clash—in the years 1820 and 1821, the novel establishes the members of the European overland expedition as intruders, intent on mapping the northern coastline of North America and discovering how to get east to the Hudson Bay. The intruders are referred to as "Whites," "Whitemuds," and "These English" by the Native Americans, who are presented as being more in harmony with the land and animals. As the King of England's warriors, the Whites bring foreign notions, wanting the Indians to show them the great

river to the Northern Ocean and wanting the Indians to hunt for them, thus providing a constant and adequate supply of meat and hides. In return for these services, the Whites promise the Yellowknife Indians that the King will send trading ships and that they will become rich.

The reader's sympathy with the Yellowknives and antipathy toward the Whites is clearly established in the second chapter, where the third-person narration is attached to Keskarrah, who is the elderly, prophetic, storytelling voice of the Indians, along with his wife, Birdseye. Keskarrah sees that, while the Whites claim they have come for the benefit of the Indian, they have in fact come to rename everything. "Of course, every place already was its true and exact name. Birdseye and Keskarrah between them knew the land, each name a story complete in their heads" (24). The Native American understanding that a name inheres from within a place or object, rather than from being assigned by an outsider, illustrates the thematic clash of cultures.

The importance of naming also serves as an allusion to creation stories and points to a complementary theme: the circularity of storytelling and of life. Greenstockings and Greywing, the daughters of Birdseye and Keskarrah, don't want to hear the story of the Whites, but Birdseye dreams, and they must listen. Keskarrah blames the White strangers for what is wrong with the world and thinks their stories are at the root of the problem: "Stories are like ropes, they pull you to incomprehensible places...a story can tangle you up so badly you start to think different" (126, 127). Keskarrah believes the Whites' stories echo their dissatisfaction with the world: "Their first story tells them everything is always wrong. So wherever they go, they can see only how wrong the world is" (132). In contrast, Keskarrah chants the story of Sky and Earth, a

mythology of creation based on harmony and joy. The Yellowknives understand, as Keskarrah says, "everything alive is already within everything else" (25).

The success of Wiebe's thematic interests comes through his stylistic and aesthetic choices. One technique that he uses is an intermingling of verb tenses and points of view. The opening chapter's present-tense narrative drifts into past and future tenses. The opening omniscient point of view attached to the animals ("the animals understood," "all the caribou knew" [2]) moves to a third-person narrative attached to Keskarrah in chapter two and then to a first person narrative told by midshipman George Back in chapter three. These shifts in narrative strategy, continued throughout the novel, underscore the thematic concerns of enmeshed cultures and storytelling.

Brief excerpts from the journals of Englishmen Robert Hood and John Richardson are also interspersed between chapters. This device not only continues the diversity of storytelling viewpoints, but also highlights the contrasting narrative styles of the more "factual," this-is-what-happened Englishmen with the more imaginative Indians' reminders of the melting mountain or of the enemies who came to capture She Who Delights.

Another major aesthetic choice supports Wiebe's primary themes. Critical developments in the story plot, such as the love relationship between Greenstockings and Robert Hood—anticipated in the third chapter—or Robert Hood's death—referred to already in chapter five—are told in advance, with the details supplied in later chapters. The effect of these early tellings is the building of a story, not on the suspense of a reader who wants to know *what* will happen, but on a reader's intrigue with *how* the events will unfold. This literary device enhances the novel's

thematic sense that all of life is interconnected and known, while supporting the superior knowledge of the Yellowknives, who can see ahead and often prophesy with regard to future developments. Keskarrah's words about a story Birdseye tells could apply to the entire novel: "Perhaps this story is becoming like the wolf's track often is, it goes farther ahead into where it will happen, on and on, until it leads into beyond, and only then can it circle back to us again" (152). *A Discovery of Strangers* repeatedly leaps ahead and then circles back with fuller detail.

In chapters seven and eight the narration and storytelling become more fragmented and episodic. Rhymes and stories of Birdseye, Hood, and Greenstockings are interwoven to the extent that it is difficult to know what is dream, what is prophecy, what is storytelling, and what is actual event. While this complication is intentional on Wiebe's part and not the result of sloppiness or inattention, the result borders on needless complexity for the reader. These chapters demonstrate the total and mutual absorption of life and story, but the reader is tested with considerable uncertainty until the ensuing chapters (9-13) give explanation and detail to resolve the reader's perplexity.

For readers who have followed the writing career of Rudy Wiebe, *A Discovery of Strangers* represents a high point in his creative work. Wiebe's dexterity with words continually delights, as in this description of Keskarrah in which the language imitates the action: "His slow words walk step by step through their minds like wolves moving into the lethal curve of a hunt" (132). Mennonites who are interested in "one of their own" and his achievements on the Canadian writing scene will find this novel to be a powerful story that grips and enchants and comments on human

existence within the framework of diverse world views. Along with *River of Stone*, Wiebe's 1995 collection of his most loved stories and memoirs, *A Discovery of Strangers* illustrates the finest qualities of his writing: experimentation with narrative strategy, precise and telling detail in language, and an expansive mind at work with the larger issues of life.

Evie Miller
Athens, Ohio

David W. Shenk, *Global Gods: Exploring the Role of Religions in Modern Societies*. Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1995. Pp. 403. (\$16.95 — paperback) ISBN 0-8361-9006-8

David Shenk's book *Global Gods* represents an ambitious and insightful look at religious belief through the eyes of a twentieth-century Mennonite missionary and missiologist. Shenk's training in theology, anthropology, and philosophy introduce a complexity to his vision which makes this an important work for scholars of religion, particularly those who are interested in the dialogue between Christianity and other religious traditions within the context of the "missionary encounter." This is not a textbook on world religions, but an examination of Christianity within the context of its missionary encounter with the religions of the world. It is also an apologetic, asserting that, of all the religious visions available in our modern world, Christianity has the greatest potential to positively affect the "quality of our global community." Missionaries and missiologists have always stood at the outer margins of congregational life and theological reflection. This marginality has been particularly acute within the American Mennonite community.

Shenk's Anabaptist orientation figures prominently in his treatment of what he calls the "primal vision" inherent in all religious traditions. Among sociologists of religion the search for a central core in each of the world's religions is a long-standing enterprise. Joachim Wach's classic study rests on just such an endeavor. Shenk uses a popular Anabaptist paradigm, which he calls the "Constantinian distortion," to illustrate that "all religious and ideological systems involve distortions of the so-called true original belief." This interpretation of the adoption of Christianity by Constantine as the "fall" of the Church is key to understanding Anabaptist historical consciousness.

Shenk's belief in the devolution of the religious vision contained in the primal, golden period of each religion also allows him to appear open to other religious faiths while at the same time being critical of modern and local manifestations of these same religions. Exceptions include traditions which Shenk believes represent primal religious visions which were evil from the start, such as witchcraft. He sees as key to most of the world's religions what he calls the "ontocratic" worldview.

Some societies perceive that there is little or no difference between divinity and nature. I refer to this worldview as "ontocratic." This is the perception that divinity, nature, and social institutions participate in oneness. Pantheism perceives that there is no difference between divinity and nature. That would be the ultimate expression of an ontocratic worldview. In that case nature or expressions of nature are worshiped. Anthropologists usually refer to the ontocratic worldview as "mythical." However, the term myth is used with a variety of meanings by theologians, philosophers, and anthropologists. For this reason I prefer the term ontocratic when referring to a

worldview which perceives that social institutions or natural phenomena are at one with divinity."

Shenk contrasts this "ontocratic worldview" with what he calls "a biblically-based secular perspective." He contends that "biblical faith is a powerful and effective force for secularization," and "has been more effective than philosophy in exploding the ontocratic worldview because it is rooted in a response to Yahweh's acts in history rather than in philosophical speculation." This is a startling contention on several counts.

First, Shenk's example, that of an Indonesian chief who describes the impact of the Christian gospel as "We aren't afraid of the birds anymore," could just as easily have been "We no longer understand what the birds are saying." To destroy the sacred significance of natural phenomena does not necessarily usher in a "biblical faith." Mennonite Brethren missionary Heinrich Kohfeld discovered this problem in the nineteenth century when he administered medicine to the Comanche. He insisted on praying with the sick individual after administering the medicine. He then instructed those present that, if the person was healed, it was the prayer and not the medicine which was responsible. He did not want to "secularize" the native worldview, because his own worldview was not secularized. He wanted to replace the center of the Comanche's "ontocratic" worldview with the person of Jesus.

Secondly, Shenk asserts that Judaism and Christianity differ from other religious traditions because they are grounded in history rather than philosophy or mythology. To place the issue of belief in the historicity of events described in scripture as a distinctive mark of "biblical faith" is questionable at best. When one asks modern Christians today whether it is critical whether God created the world as recorded by Genesis, or

flooded the earth, or parted the Red Sea, or prepared a fish to swallow Jonah, one is as likely to receive a shrug or a "no" as a resounding "yes." It may be that the belief in historicity is present in varying degrees in every religious tradition.

Shenk's judgment that the historicity of the encounter between Krishna and Arjuna is of no consequence to the essential teachings of the Gita, could be mirrored by a Hindu asserting that the historicity of the Hebrew exodus from Egypt is of little or no consequence to the "meaning" conveyed by the myth of the exodus. I have heard the same said about the resurrection of Jesus. In other words, it is not the reality of the resurrection that makes it so powerful, but the conviction of the disciples concerning the resurrection which propelled this myth onto center stage in human history.

Finally, Shenk's own worldview borders on the "ontocratic" when he contends that "joyful and full personhood in authentic local and wholesome global community" stand as absolute values in modern Christianity. He links these psychological and social norms to divinity when he writes: "Our expectation has been that the journey toward healthy personhood and the wellbeing of the local and global village is also the answer to Singh's question, 'What is truth?'" From an outsider's point of view, this statement could be interpreted as reflecting "a worldview which perceives that social institutions or natural phenomena are at one with divinity," Shenk's own definition of an "ontocratic worldview."

Shenk's perspective embodies the culmination of centuries of Christian missionary ideology. He offers a rich mixture of Anabaptism, rationalism, nineteenth-century optimism, leavened by a heavy dose of apologetics. Missionary ideology has traditionally contained such a

syncretistic vision, accumulated through its progressive and dynamic history. Shenk opens a window into our missionary past and present, for which we should be grateful. I highly recommend this book to all readers interested in missions, Anabaptist/Mennonite thought in particular, and Christian thought in general.

Marlin Adrian
Danville, Virginia

John A. Esau, ed., *Understanding Ministerial Leadership: Essays Contributing to a Developing Theology of Ministry*. Elkhart, IN: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 1995. Text Reader Series 6. (\$18.00 — paperback) Pp. 123. ISBN 0-936273-22-4

This book shakes the foundations of current understandings of ministry by returning to the Anabaptist roots of a theology, or ecclesiology, of ministry. It plows good ground.

John Esau, Director of Ministerial Leadership Services for the General Conference Mennonite Church, has drawn together ten essays which look at the question of how the ministry of the pastor differs from the ministry of the laity. The answer lies in understanding the concept of ministry as an office.

For more than a third of the twentieth century the definition of Anabaptist ministry has seen everyone to be a minister with gifts, skills, and functions. While this spoke the 1960s language of empowerment, its prime effect, according to Esau has been the disempowerment of both pastor and congregation. In challenging what has been called a "servant" understanding, we are called to return to a different understanding of ministry.

Esau's contention is that the laity have a ministry in the world where

they fulfill their vocation. The pastor's ministry in contrast is focused primarily within the church as an office which belongs to the church, not the pastor.

Basing his theory on Marlin Miller's view that the priesthood of all believers does not speak to their ordination to ministry (Vol. 5, *The Mennonite Encyclopedia*), Esau asks us to refocus the issue of gifts away from what we do to who we are. What the minister brings to ministry is not just talents, but the self. This has immense consequences for seminary education. Quoting Karen Lebacqz: in dealing with ministry a "professional is called not simply to do something, but to be something." But the issue is broader. Office means representation: the minister represents both church and the One who is Lord of the church. The office empowers so that the minister's role transcends age or experience.

Esau bases a strong theology of pastoring on the Trinity: the transparency and hiddenness of the unplumbed spiritual depth of the character of God; the sacrificial servanthood of Jesus Christ; and the inspiring, comforting and energizing of the Spirit, in breathing the prophetic and apocalyptic word of God to the contemporary reality of the church.

Almost all of the essays are set autobiographically in the experience of ministry. They include two presentations of feminine themes of call and mutuality in ministry, the latter set in the Gospel of Mark. Another biblical study is taken from the Pastoral Epistles, lifting up its corporate sense of office and a "holy ambition" to leadership. A variety of issues are covered in the other essays: culture (success vs. subversiveness) and theology (call) which affect the minister's understanding and appreciation of self and problems of status, authority or role.

These essays surely are on the right track. One wishes the dialogue between Marlin Miller regarding office and Marcus Smucker's chapter on spiritual direction might have been further advanced. Miller's concept of office built on a corporate understanding of the church is widely different than the individualism which spiritual direction popularly conveys.

Miller hints at this difference in calling the seminary to present pastoral ministry as caring for the welfare of the congregation as a whole rather than a narrower approach in which spiritual formation encourages specific disciplines.

The essays' approach is textual. Other texts might have been lifted up. Galatians teaches that Paul's claim of authority as an apostle sealed his right to speak on the corruption of the good news. The test of the good news is that it liberates. That is also the test of leadership and office. Our temptation is always to become Galatians who prefer control to liberation. An essay might have spoken to the authority of leadership.

The seed of our inability to accept the representational work of the pastorate may lie in our refusal to accept the text in which Jesus called Peter the rock on which all is built.

But that points out that our problem is more than texts, it is the world view of our day *over against* the New Testament world view. Our individualism, so different than the mindset of the New Testament, denies a corporate and thus representational understanding of ministry. Office confronts our individualism.

The world view of the Gospel of Matthew shows us a church which understands itself to have Jesus as its pastor, though absent, and his teaching in the Sermon on the Mount the means of showing it how to keep the spirit of the law while living by the blessedness of the Beatitudes. Its reality is the apocalyptic reality of the

kingdom. These are Moses' people who understand that what the law has ordained is already fulfilled in them.

And so in us. We reconcile with the neighbor, as someone has said, not to feel better, but because we are living out the reconciliation already effected in Jesus Christ. We do so because the court we are being haled before is God's court. We need pastors, who by their office, help us to be part of this Matthean church.

This world view also asks us to confront our difficulty with calling ordination a sacrament. If I may be autobiographical in keeping with Esau's approach, I recall my own ordination. A member, a woman from outside the tradition, came to me afterwards and said that she had been lifted into seventh heaven in being a part of a service of the mystical church, touched by the apostolic laying on of hands.

Needless to say, child of the 1960s that I was, I wanted no daisy-chain authentication. Today, I appreciate her comment. Even though I still prefer a laying on of hands by the congregation than by district pastors, I understand the act to convey a representational hunger which a congregation needs to express and pastors need to live out through their office.

To that end I recommend this book for discussion in adult classes. Helping laity understand the concept of office, will help the church in understanding ministerial leadership.

Donald R. Steelberg
Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church
Wichita, Kansas

Lydie Hege and Christoph Wiebe,
eds., *Les Amish: origine et particularismes, 1693-1993=The Amish: Origin and Characteristics, 1693-1993*.
Ingersheim: Association Française

d'Histoire Anabaptiste-Mennonite, 1996. Pp. 368. (\$25.00) ISBN 2-9509333-0-0

This volume contains eighteen papers presented at an international conference held in Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines, France, in the summer of 1993. Scholars from Germany, France, the United States, and the Netherlands gathered to mark the tricentennial anniversary of Amish beginnings. Most of the essays deal with aspects of European Amish history, although some treat the contemporary North American Old Order Amish, and one focuses on the Beachy Amish. Seven of the essays are in English, seven in French, and four in German. Brief summaries in the other two languages follow each chapter.

Perhaps not surprisingly given the volume's genesis, about half the book deals in one way or another with Amish origins. The first chapters describe the context which gave rise to the 1690s reform movement of Jakob Amman. Jean-Luc Eichenlaub describes the geographic, economic, political, and religious context during the last quarter of the seventeenth century, in and around the valley of Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines. Jean Séguéy—whose 1977 book on French Anabaptists remains a definitive source—briefly traces the seventeenth-century migration of Swiss Anabaptists to Alsatian areas under the tolerant lordships of Ribeaupierre, as well as the community's eventual scattering after the 1712 edict of expulsion. It was the Anabaptists of this community that provided the basis of support of Ammann.

Ammann himself is the subject of an essay by Robert Baecher in which Baecher pieces together the fragmentary material thus far available on this elusive Anabaptist who contemporaries termed "the patriarch." Baecher's genealogical work has led him to posit that Jacob

was born in 1644 in Erlenbach to an Anabaptist couple, his father Michael earning a living as a tailor. Baecher suggests that Ammann moved to the Alsatian plain near Ohnenheim in 1693, and perhaps two years later to the valley of Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines, where he remained until the 1712 expulsion order. Baecher describes Ammann not only as a charismatic religious figure, but also an active and involved leader, intervening on behalf of his people before magistrates, negotiating privileges, quarreling with the local priest, witnessing transactions and purchases, and even on occasion being asked to help settle a dispute between two non-Anabaptist neighbors. Baecher's study of archival documents has also led him to the conclusion that Ammann could not write. On the more speculative side, Baecher wonders whether Ammann himself was a tailor, and whether this occupation might have made him more conscious of the symbolic significance of clothing.

But beyond Ammann himself, the debate over Amish beginnings pits questions of theology against social and contextual factors. In another chapter Baecher clearly argues that the latter elements are key to understanding the schism. His examination of the Alsatian Anabaptist immigrants and their local mining community suggests that socio-economic differences foreshadowed the eventual issues and parties in the Amish division. On the one hand, a small group of pre-1670 Anabaptist arrivals under the leadership of Rudolf Hauser formed an "Anabaptist bourgeois" in the area. Relatively well-off and increasingly integrated into local society, they participated in civic life and forged a working arrangement with the Reformed church. Meanwhile a larger group of subsequent Swiss Anabaptist immigrants rejected the Hauser group's arrangement as a

compromised social ethic, and supported Ammann's efforts at greater sectarianism. While questioning some of Baecher's assumptions, Tom Meyers also argues that sociological, rather than strictly theological, issues were at the heart of the eventual schism. As Meyers reviews the primary and secondary literature he concludes that the controversy hinged on contrasting approaches to establishing and maintaining church order and that different social contexts in Switzerland, Alsace, and the Palatinate pushed participants to see the issues of order and group boundaries in different ways.

But the book contains counter arguments as well. Other contributors treat Amish beginnings in more clearly theological terms. Beulah Stauffer Hostetler, for example, sees the emergence of the Amish movement as an authentic Anabaptist response to Continental Pietism. Establishing Pietism's prominence in the Alsatian region around Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines, and then comparing and contrasting that movement with traditional Anabaptist thought, she suggests that Ammann's interest in separatism and the visible gathered church was a reaction to the competing pietistic emphases of ecumenism and spiritual introspection. For their part, Hanspeter Jecker and Leonard Gross both see the Amish ideal emerging from a creative, though tension-filled, encounter between Swiss and Dutch Anabaptisms—particularly through the Dortrecht confession. That confession proved to be a problematic identity marker for Swiss Anabaptists who had numerous contacts with the Dutch during the seventeenth century, but who never came to theological agreement with them. Indeed, ecclesiology, Jecker concludes, would have surfaced as an unresolved question with or without Dortrecht. Gross also examines Dortrecht's effect

on the nascent Amish movement, but from the standpoint of congregational authority. Jacob Ammann's associate Ulli Ammann, in fact, becomes the more important figure in Gross' telling because Ulli backed away from Jacob Ammann's commitment to episcopal-style authority and blended Dortrecht discipline with Swiss Brethren ecclesiology—a formulation Gross still finds among the Amish three hundred years later.

A second set of essays deals with the development of the Amish community in Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Piet Visser details the orphaned Amish communities in the Netherlands, including the intriguing fact that some of the Amish arrived in the Low Countries in mixed marriages—a situation thought to have been proscribed by the Ammann party. Charly Ummel and Claire-Lise Ummel discuss the Mennonite and Amish communities around Neuchâtel and Montbéliard, Horst Gerlach treats the Palatinate and Hesse, and Rudolf Ingold, Bavaria. Filled with genealogical material, Ingold's chapter focuses on the various Amish hofs and prominent families during the group's 110-year Bavarian experience. Gerlach gives more attention to the process of acculturation and blending with neighboring Mennonites, as well as examples of nineteenth-century civic participation, such as Peter Schlabach's sitting in the Prussian parliament. An essay by Ernest Hege discusses the nineteenth-century French Amish congregations' state of numeric decline and lack of strong leadership. Hege then analyzes their worship life—including baptisms and funerals—as reflected in surviving sermon books.

The final set of papers deals with the Amish in the twentieth century. John Oyer's essay "Is there an Amish Theology?" is one of the most insightful treatments of Old Order

Amish thought available. Based on conversations with Amish leaders and an analysis of the Amish preaching lectionary, Oyer presents the implicit theology of a people who eschew formal dogmatics. His sensitive presentation employs formal theological categories, but in a way that does not detract from the informal reflection he describes. Essays by sociologists John A. Hostetler and Donald B. Kraybill suggest reasons for the continued growth and vitality of Amish communities. Kraybill describes a core group identity coupled with a commitment to continually renegotiate the boundaries with technology, the economy, and the state. Hostetler's presentation includes a brief but effective discussion of silence in the Old Order world. Linguist Werner Enninger offers another contemporary perspective on Amish life through a systematic study of metrical structure in Amish chant preaching, exploring the medium-as-the-message and discussing historic variations involving written Amish sermon texts and so-called "sleeping preachers"

A concluding essay treats a topic less well-known in North America: Beachy Amish efforts at mission in other parts of the world. In recent years members of this more progressive group (begun in 1927) have sent missionaries to several European, Latin American, and African countries. Marie-Odile Allemang examines the 1980s Beachy Amish mission in France and Belgium, concluding that the efforts were largely futile due to a combination of misunderstandings on the part of Europeans and cultural insensitivity and naiveté on the part of the Beachy Amish.

As a collection of conference proceedings the volume includes topics that are somewhat diverse. Thus, the book has appeal for several audiences. The first chapters handily

pull together the most recent research into the person of Jakob Ammann, Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines, and the context out of which the Amish division arose in Alsace. Historians with an interest in the nineteenth century European Mennonite experience and North American genealogists with interest in Amish-Mennonite families will find the nineteenth century essays particularly helpful. Finally, students of contemporary Old Order and Beachy Amish communities will benefit from the discussions of these groups' theology, preaching, and mission programs.

Steve Nolt
South Bend, Indiana

Mennonite Life

An Illustrated Quarterly Devoted to Mennonite History and Culture
ISSN 0025-9365

Founding editor

Cornelius Kralin 1946-1971

Managing editor

John D. Thiesen

Editorial assistant

Barbara A. Thiesen

Editors:

History: James C. Juhnke, Mary Sprunger

Theology and religion: Lois Barrett, Duane Friesen

Arts: Raylene Hinz-Penner, Carla Reimer

Current issues: Brad Born, Rich Preheim

Graphic Design:

Denise Brueggeman-Siemens, Mennonite Press, Newton, Kansas

Printing by Mennonite Press, Newton, Kansas

e-mail

mennonite-life@bethelks.edu

Mennonite Life

is a self-supporting, non-profit publication, and appears each March, June, September, and December.

Subscription rates:

1 year - \$18.00; 2 years - \$27.00. Foreign: 1 year - \$21.00; 2 years - \$30.00.

Single copies: \$4.00.

Editorial Correspondence

should be directed to Mennonite Life, Bethel College, 300 East 27th Street, North Newton, KS 67117-0531 or to our e-mail address.

Change of address

Change of address notification should be sent to Mennonite Life, Bethel College, 300 East 27th Street, North Newton, KS 67117-0531.

Postmaster

Periodical postage paid at North Newton, Kansas 67117. Please send change of address to Mennonite Life, Bethel College, 300 East 27th Street, North Newton, KS 67117-0531.

Abstracted and indexed

in Religion Index One: Periodicals, Historical Abstracts, and America: History and Life.

Instructions for authors

Mennonite Life is aimed at a literate audience interested in Mennonite history and culture, not solely at the academic. Prospective authors should inquire as to the suitability of potential articles before submission. Articles must be original and offered exclusively to Mennonite Life. The author is responsible for obtaining written permissions needed for both quotations and illustrations used. Please attach to submitted articles a brief biographical sketch of the author. Photographs and illustrations for articles should be supplied as black and white glossies whenever possible, which the publisher will return. The author is responsible both for the cost of illustrations and for obtaining permission to publish, and for forwarding a copy of such authorization to Mennonite Life. In seeking permissions, the author should mention that Mennonite Life is not-for-profit.

BETHEL
COLLEGE

*300 East 27th Street
North Newton, KS 67117-0531*