# Mennonite Life

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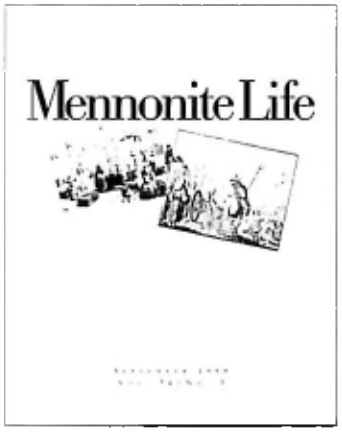
# In *this* issue




In this issue, we begin by updating our readers concerning the future of *Mennonite Life*. In our December 1998 issue we had announced that we would cease publication with the December 1999 issue. Now we need to modify that announcement to include an electronic future for *Mennonite Life*. James Juhnke gives further details in the first article in this issue.

Two articles in our history section constitute a gesture of recognition for this year's 125th anniversary of the major Mennonite migration from Russia in the 1870s. Lawrence Klippenstein's article also builds a bridge from our June issue's focus on mutual aid by telling two mutual aid stories from Canada, one of which aided Russian Mennonite immigration into Canada in the 1870s.

The second article was originally contemporary with the migration. Several etchings from an 1875 issue of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* have become emblematic of the migration into the Plains states of the United States. These etchings have seldom been reprinted as a unified group, even less often reprinted with their original text. Here we reprint both, as a contemporary view of the migration from the broader American public viewpoint.

James Lowry of Hagerstown, Maryland, has had a long-term interest in the *Martyrs Mirror* and its continuing usefulness among Mennonites. In his article in this issue he helps us notice a particular image found in many of the familiar Luyken etchings and explains its origins.

An exposition on the limits of Anabaptist identity comes from Scott Holland, spinning off from an image of the cages of Münster. This was originally presented at the conference on Anabaptists and Postmodernity at Bluffton College in August 1998, and will be appearing in the forthcoming book *Anabaptists and Postmodernity* published by Pandora Press. Scott Holland is a preacher in the Church of the Brethren and teaches Peace, Public, and Multicultural Theologies at Bethany Theological Seminary which is now in partnership with Earlham School of Religion in Richmond, Indiana. In addition, he is a contributing editor to *Cross Currents: The Journal of the Association of Religion and Intellectual Life*.

We conclude with several book reviews, among them an analysis of Ingrid Rimland's controversial novel trilogy *Lebensraum* by Jeff Gundy of Bluffton College.

Photo credits: p. 23, James Lowry; all others, Mennonite Library and Archives

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# *Mennonite Life* to Publish Electronically

## New Beginning, New Technology

Beginning in March 2000, *Mennonite Life*, a quarterly journal of Mennonite history and culture, will be published electronically. It is sponsored by Bethel College and continues the journal we have published in print since 1946. The online version will be a free journal. The subscription print edition of *Mennonite Life* will be discontinued, with the last issue being December 1999. The journal will be accessed at the following World Wide Web address:
<http://www.bethelks.edu/mennonitelife/>

As the first Mennonite scholarly journal to appear fully on the World Wide Web, we intend to take advantage of the possibilities of the new technology. *Mennonite Life* has long been a richly illustrated journal, drawing upon the extensive photograph collection of the Mennonite Library and Archives at Bethel College. We now will include color photographs and brief audio segments. In the future we hope to add video segments as well.

The site will include an index of topics and authors from the first fifty-four years of print publication. Given the pace of technological advancement, we expect that at some point in our second half-century of publication, we will be able to put the full text and images of past issues online. The body of information in these issues is extensive. Robert Kreider, editor from 1975 to 1984, wrote at the outset of his tenure, "If all books and records by and about Mennonites were destroyed and only the [past issues of *Mennonite Life*] survived, here would be a comprehensive and significant record of this people, their history and self understanding, their life and faith." (March 1975, p. 4)

The new *Mennonite Life* reaches out to youthful readers who are attuned to the new technology. We have also learned that our more senior subscribers, some of whom have bookshelves graced with bound volumes of past issues, are rapidly becoming computer literate and web-connected. We expect our readers of all generations to selectively print out articles, poems, or reviews of special interest. The cost of printing out an entire issue on a printer at home will be less than the old cost of a subscription.

## Scope and Substance

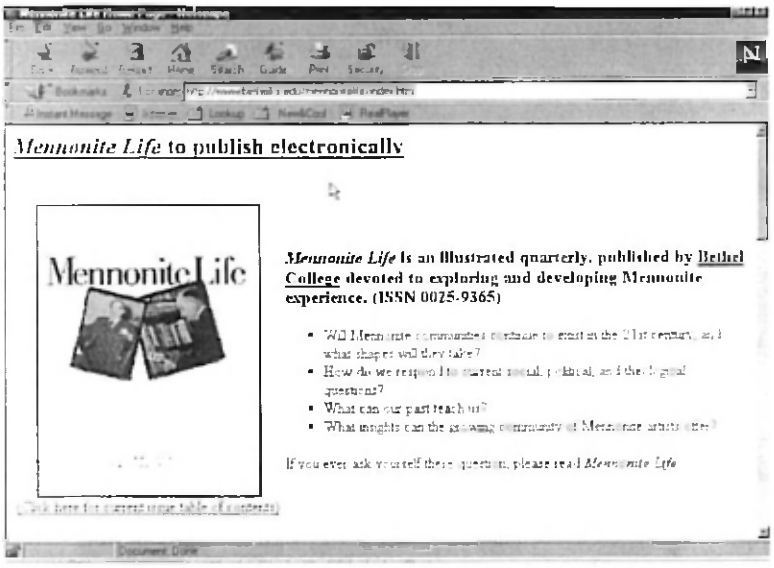
For fifty-four years of print publication, *Mennonite Life* has focused on the Anabaptist- Mennonite heritage and its contemporary expression. The journal has reflected the ethos of mid-western and plains Mennonites of Dutch-Russian background, as well as of Mennonites of different ethnic backgrounds. We have countered the common stereotype of Mennonites as a religious community that sets Christ against culture. Our course has rather been one of cultural engagement. On these pages have appeared the best of Mennonite historical investigation and ethical reflection, as well as representations of painting, sculpture, philosophy, poetry, drama, and other creative arts. We have documented the remarkable creativity of folk Mennonitism in fraktur, paper cuttings, Low German aphorisms, Swiss Volhynian nicknames, and the

patterns in Mennonite quilts and canned fruit jars.

The basic purpose, design and thematic range of *Mennonite Life* will not change in the transition to cyberspace. We will continue to publish articles, poems, book reviews, and the annual Mennonite Bibliography—which has long remained the most complete and up-to-date listing of scholarly and popular writing about Mennonites. We will address the contemporary and historical issues with which Mennonites wrestle. A rich sampling of the best papers, performances, and exhibits presented at college and church conferences will appear on this site.

The World Wide Web offers new ways of connecting Mennonites around the world. Our issues will now be instantly accessible overseas. In years past, *Mennonite Life* has given significant attention to Mennonite overseas missions. We now hope to include material on the growing global Mennonite churches. One of the new frontiers is the Global Mennonite History Project, in which Mennonite scholars outside of North America are writing the history of their churches from their own perspective.

*Mennonite Life* intends to be scholarly, readable, and richly illustrated. All articles submitted for publication will be subjected to peer review by two or more scholars. Unlike denominational periodicals, the journal will seldom publish letters to the editor. Readers interested in informal "chat room" conversations about topics and issues raised in *Mennonite Life* are encouraged to subscribe to one or more of the discussion groups on

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<http://www.MennoLink.org/email/register.html>

## Editors

The editors of the electronic *Mennonite Life* will be John D. Thiesen, Raylene Hinz-Penner, and James C. Juhnke. All are on the staff of Bethel College. In past years they have served as editors of the journal in various capacities. They will be supported in their tasks by a group of consulting editors, who will be listed along with our first online issue, March 2000.

*Raylene Hinz-Penner.* Raylene taught contemporary American literature, creative writing, and linguistics in the English department at Bethel College for nearly two decades before moving into work for the College Advancement Office four years ago. She maintains her interest in writing poetry, public reading of poems, the history of Mennonites in central Oklahoma, and broadly, the writing and thinking of contemporary women poets. On the Bethel campus, Raylene fulfills the unofficial position of poet laureate. She has served as arts editor for *Mennonite Life* for most of the past decade. She is married to Douglas Penner.

*James C. Juhnke.* Jim has taught United States history at Bethel College since 1966, with time out for leaves or sabbaticals in Botswana; China; Goshen, Indiana; and Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania. In the late 1970s and early 1990s he served two five-year terms as *Mennonite Life* editor. Jim has written five books of Mennonite denominational history, including *Vision, Doctrine, War: Mennonite Identity and Organization in America 1890-1930.* That was volume three in the *Mennonite Experience in America* project (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1989). He has also written several Mennonite historical dramas, including "Dirk's Exodus," the story of Anabaptist martyr Dirk Willems (*Four Class Acts: Kansas Theatre*, Topeka, Kans.: Woodley Memorial Press, 1992). He is currently at work on a project to re-interpret the main themes of American history from a peace perspective. Jim and his wife, Anna Kreider Juhnke, are the parents of two adult children.

*John D. Thiesen* is co-director of libraries at Bethel College and archivist at the Mennonite Library and Archives. Since 1992 he has served as managing editor of *Mennonite Life.* His book *Mennonite or Nazi? Attitudes among Mennonite Colonists in Latin America, 1933-1945* was published by Pandora Press in 1999 as volume 37 in the *Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History* series. He is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Kansas, and presently working on a dissertation, "The Evolution of Mennonite Identity in Prussia, 16th century to 1945: The Heubuden Congregation." To the technical challenges of electronic publication, John brings his expertise and experience as a computer programmer and analyst for Bethel College and other firms. John is married to Barbara (Thieszen), who is also co-director of libraries at Bethel. They have one son.

# Mennonite Mutual Aid in Canada, 1860-1890: The Mennonite Aid Union and the Russian Aid Committee

Lawrence Klippenstein

The Mennonite experience in Canada began in Ontario just over two hundred years ago. This year, 1999, the western sector of the community celebrates its separate origins in Manitoba seventy-five years later in 1874-1875. Mutual aid has been an integral part of those episodes as it has been in every similar new settlement situation throughout the world.[1]

Two organizations, the Mennonite Aid Union and the Russian Aid Committee, both based in Eastern Canada, can be viewed as cases in point. The first of these represents a more local Ontario focus, but the second one has its context in the nineteenth-century western growing edge of the community as a whole. Both will help to fill in the fabric of mutual aid research which has been developed especially by J. Winfield Fretz.[2]

## The Mennonite Aid Union

The Mennonite Aid Union had both a material and a philosophical reason for coming into being. The Union was in respect to its material basis a fire insurance institution. It was formally established in 1866, three years after the founding of the Waterloo County Mutual Fire Insurance Company which no doubt also sought to market its policies among the Mennonite farmers of the area.[3]

Ontario Mennonites had in fact been purchasing insurance policies from commercial insurance companies since the 1840s. They found the informal kind of community assistance given traditionally "inadequate, both in terms of the methods employed and the amounts raised." One particular problem raised by the commercial companies was the fact that Mennonites found the liberal use of courts to deny claims to be in contradiction to their own beliefs and practices of giving community aid.

The doctrinal point of view which became a factor here was their understanding of the doctrine of non-resistance.[4] In the situation of offering aid in what would normally be a relatively routine case of collecting insurance, the Mennonite nonresistant approach would be one of giving needed help in the true spirit of a Christian community, the church. It would imply the refusal of taking recourse at any point to such pressures as a court might exert. Such pressures were seen simply as an attempt to avoid obligations which a true community ought to have for assisting those needing help. There would not be the assumption that one was somehow owed such help simply by virtue of being a citizen of the state.

The need for a more compatible "Mennonite" fire insurance company had been expressed at a Waterloo Church Council meeting already on 9 September 1864. This meeting approved the idea of a plan which would guide church members in deciding what they might

Bernhard Warkentin in 1872 upon arrival in New York City. (Warkentin is seated on the left. The other men include Jacob Boehr, Philip Wiebe, and Peter Dyck, but which one is which is not known. The fifth man is unidentified.

reasonably be expected to give in case a brother suffered loss by fire. Such a plan was not formulated at this time because the threat of the Civil War spreading to Canada diverted attention temporarily to other concerns.[5]

In the first resolution adopted in the Waterloo (Church) Council meeting of 7 April 1865, the fire insurance plan re-emerged. Here the proposal of the previous meeting was reaffirmed, and the following resolution was passed:

> When fire damage occurs among the brotherhood, it shall be the duty of the deacons in whose charge the damage happens, to go and inspect the damage, and then if required, to take one or more of his fellow members along to appraise the damage, and to notify the preachers in our entire brotherhood, so that each preacher can inform the church under his jurisdiction. After this announcement, it shall be the duty of each church member to bring his liberal contribution, to support the one who suffered damage according to the rule set down in God's Word.[6]

A concern to establish a more formal system of fire relief was expressed at the Council's meeting in September of 1865. It was suggested that a special meeting be called to set up a society of some sort to deal with these concerns.[7]

The actual move to follow through on this proposal came on 2 April 1866, with a constitution then completed a week later. In its fifteen clauses the task of the Central Man and the District Man were spelled out, with the latter keeping records, and handing in accounts under the Central Man. In case of an actual fire, the District Man would collect the fire tax and send it to the Central Man whose task it would be to disburse insurance payments and to keep records of all his actions.[8]

The rules also called for an auditor to check the records regularly. Then it was stipulated that a normal coverage would be two thirds of the value of the fire loss, though in more extreme cases of loss or difficulty more might be given if neighboring brethren and the District Man would agree to do so.

Other items of interest, showing again how the regulations were tied to the Mennonite church community as such, include the fact that Mennonite ministers were exempted from paying a fire tax on their buildings if they used them themselves. "Brothers" of the community, meaning simply members, were enjoined to remind (perhaps meaning reprimand) persons seen to be handling fire in some careless fashion. District and Central Men would do their duties voluntarily with no salaries given for their services.

A direct reflection also of the "non resistant" character of the philosophical, i.e. theological, underpinnings of this organization is the following stipulation:

> Because the opinion of the people differs so widely regarding the restoration of fire loss, each brother in charge is expected to follow his own convictions in such matters, in order

to be most helpful to all; we are not to treat anyone with suspicion but rather should bear each other up with love and patience."

Central Men would be elected by District Men getting together annually. Meetings were always held on the first Saturday in October before 1870, and after than on the first Saturday of January. Sometime after 1900, the District Man would be renamed "Director" and the Central Man called "Secretary Treasurer." The constitution limited coverage to the property of Mennonites who had signed up for membership in the Union. Signing up seemed to mean signing one's name to the pertinent District Man's constitution.

The evidence suggests that a dozen fire districts were formed at the outset in 1866.[10] They were tied directly to fourteen different Mennonite congregations. The restrictions of eligibility were not strictly enforced during the first several years. At the annual meeting of 1875 a resolution was passed prohibiting further collection for any fire loss sustained by a party before he or she had become a member of the Union.

Just before that in early January of 1874 the Union passed a rule that it would incur liability only after the owner of given property had signed up as a member, and the buildings for which coverage was to apply had been appraised by a duly appointed representative of his fire district. It seems that appraisal in such instances referred to the value of Union coverage which the owner and appraiser jointly agreed would apply, a maximum of two-thirds of which would be paid in the event of loss.

Joseph E. Schneider's barn loss in June 1873 provided an illustration of the way in which the company treated its clients in the early years of the Union. A local newspaper account suggested that Schneider could hope to recover only two thirds of a $1000.00 valuation placed on the barn which was a total loss after being struck by lightning. The loss was estimated at $2000.00.[11]

The Berlin City Council failed to give significant help in putting out the fire because its equipment was defective and because of a brawl which took place among the councillors and the old water-pump operators when equipment did finally get to the scene of the fire. It has therefore been suggested that any commercial insurance company might well have demanded Joseph Schneider's participation in a subrogated action against the city of Berlin and others who had volunteered to fight the fire because of the facts noted above.[12]

With the Union such was not the case. It simply paid its claim unconditionally, even though

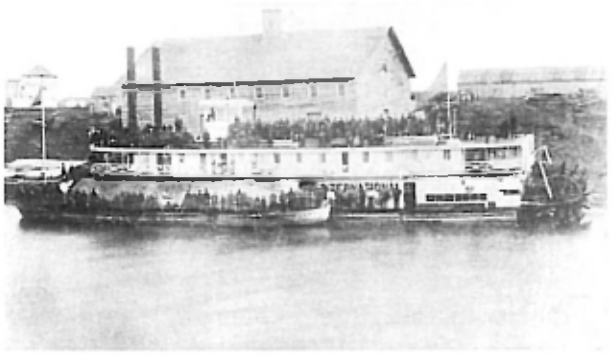
"The Berlin City Council failed to give significant help in putting out the fire because its equipment was defective, and because of a brawl which took place among the councillors and the old water-pump operators when equipment did finally get to the scene of the fire."

it might have hoped to win a court action initiated on the basis of negligence and even maliciousness on the part of the Berlin Council and the fire department members. In acting as it did the Union was thus "demonstrating the consistency of its nonresistant witness," in other words, attempting to administer its claim in keeping with a Mennonite theological perspective.

It has been pointed out as well that the Union preferred to err on the side of leniency when it came to defining criteria for membership or eligibility for compensation. In the 1873 Schneider case it might have argued against an award to Schneider because he had by then left the church body he had belonged to earlier in order to become a founding member of another Mennonite body.

Details of the Union's operation are not available for the next number of years. With respect to the period under study here, one could however note one other related development in the larger North American Mennonite community. This is the fact that the Union became a kind of model for the organization of other similar organizations in several US sectors of the Mennonite Church to which the Ontario members of the Union belonged.

When the Mennonite Conference of Indiana,



First Mennonite Immigrants

from Russia arriving in Manitoba,

August 1, 1874

for instance, began to discuss a similar fire insurance plan in 1882 it was suggested that the twenty-year old pattern of the Mennonite Aid Union be utilized in Indiana also. The plan was accepted then, as it was by the Illinois Conference the following year, and by the Lancaster Conference in 1886. Discussions of planning revealed a variation between the Canadian and US plans which helps to delineate the precise character of the Canadian organization more clearly.

The difference had to do in part with the justification given to the plans in the respective areas. To the American Mennonites it seemed that the charity aspect of these plans had more appeal than did the economic ones which came to the fore more overtly in the Ontario pattern. It meant that the American Mennonite organizations were more selective than the Ontario one in deciding who was worthy of assistance. These groups viewed assistance not so much as the right of a policyholder, but as a privilege of membership in such a plan.[14]

By the mid-eighties there were clear indications that the Union's directors were opening up the Union to non-Mennonites as well. With it came a "trend to secularization" which would become ever more marked in the ensuing years.[15] Later years would bring with them the decision to branch out into other forms of insurance such as health and automobile insurance. However, this period is beyond the scope of this study. It will continue with a brief sketch of a second Canadian Mennonite aid society.

## The Russian Aid Committee

In the 1870s, Ontario Mennonites would face a call to help in a quite different way. The challenge here was a call to assist Mennonite immigrants leaving Southern Russia to settle in North America, in this instance, Manitoba. The Ontario Mennonite most directly linked to this enterprise from the outset was a Berlin (Ontario) button-factory owner, Jacob Y. Shantz.

Very little was known in Canada about the problems of Russian Mennonites during this period. Their difficulties included a growing anxiety about the new Russian universal military conscription legislation which had been proposed in Russia in 1870.[16] Shantz, an avid reader of newspapers, probably got his introduction to the Russian Mennonite dilemma by reading the articles of W. Wagner published in the *Berliner Journal* during the spring of 1872.[17]

Not long afterwards Shantz received a telegram from John Lowe, then Canadian Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, asking about the whereabouts of a Russian Mennonite "delegation" alleged to be in Ontario at the time. Shantz learned from personal contacts that several young Mennonite men from Russia had indeed visited Ontario, but that they had returned to Europe already. A fourth person from that group, Bernhard Warkentin, was said to be still traveling in the USA. It took only a few days for Shantz to locate Warkentin at the home of John F. Funk at Elkhart, Indiana, and to bring him to Canada immediately.[18]

Warkentin could provide abundant details about the Mennonite situation in Russia. The two men decided then that a personal visit to Manitoba would give both of them a useful first-hand look at the province's settlement potential. Shantz's quite positive report on this trip, written to the Minister of Agriculture, J. H. Pope, led to a government request that Shantz write a pamphlet-

length report on this trip. It would be used to promote settlement in Western Canada.[19]

In January 1873, Shantz was informed that the government was planning to provide financial help for a planned Mennonite emigration, and that an official delegation of Mennonites from South Russia would be arriving in Berlin in April later that year. Shantz met the delegation at the Preston train station on 31 May, and prepared at once to accompany them on a tour of Manitoba. The group also included William Hespeler, a government appointee (an acquaintance of Shantz) who had spent time in the South Russian Mennonite colonies the previous year urging emigration, and who was now serving as a Canadian agent for the emigration.[20]

It was clear that the Russian Mennonites would need financial help if a move was to be undertaken. American Mennonites had already begun to raise funds to assist any émigrés who might wish to come to the USA. An effort to do something similar in Ontario began with the 1873 arrival of Cornelius Jansen, a grain merchant from Berdiansk who had been forced to leave South Russia because he had been promoting emigration there, particularly after William Hespeler's visit in 1872. By the end of August 1873, Shantz and several members of the delegation, i.e. Leonhard Sudermann and Andreas Schrag, and with the help of Cornelius Jansen, had raised loan pledges totaling $10,000.00 to aid immigrants when they would arrive, perhaps as early as the next year.[21]

No money was actually collected, however, and no formal committee of any kind had been established so far. By October, that began to happen in Indiana where John F. Funk, a Mennonite newspaper editor, had accepted the emigrant cause as his own. The Mennonite Board of Guardians came into being in the US in the following month, and Shantz felt a strong urge to set up something similar in Ontario. The Ontario Mennonite Russian Aid Committee, later simply the Russian Aid Committee (RAC), came into being before the year was over.[22]

Shantz's report to the Mennonite Board of Guardians in January 1874, noted the formation of the new Canadian committee. It cited the membership as including an Amish Mennonite bishop, John Gascho, as well as a prominent Waterloo mill owner, Elias Schneider, and Shantz himself as treasurer. He stated that the committee was trying to collect half of the pledged eleven thousand dollars to have it ready when the first immigrants would arrive that summer.[23]

Shantz however turned down the suggestion that the committees amalgamate all their treasuries into one, somewhere in the USA. He offered to send $1500.00 with the Inman Ship Line chosen for the project if other committees would do the same in proportion to their size and the money collected. By 6 April 1874, seven thousand dollars had been collected. Another three thousand would become available, Shantz promised, after the first sum would be disbursed.

The first group of South Russian Mennonites (Kleine Gemeinde families) who arrived in Toronto on 19 July 1874, did not seem to require financial help. The next group (Bergthaler families) had brought much less money, and asked at once for a loan of $20,000.00.[24] The Russian Aid Committee had only $6,000.00 in its treasury at the time, with no more than $2500.00 in pledges remaining to be collected. By placing an appeal in Mennonite church papers, Shantz was able to gather additional sums very quickly. He could report in November that 270 families had received loans totaling $22,264.00.

When some of the travel expenses incurred by families going from Quebec to Toronto remained uncollected due to a misunderstanding, Shantz made a quick trip to Manitoba to obtain the extra five dollars per person still needed. In submitting these fares to the government Shantz added a covering letter in which he suggested that the government itself would need to extend a loan to cover transportation for future immigrants if their needs were to be met adequately.[25]

A formal petition asking the government to make a loan in the sum of $100,000.00 was submitted by a group of Ontario Mennonites (probably the Russian Aid Committee) in January 1875. A request for this sum, plus another

$70,000.00 to help with transportation, was passed on to Parliament. The offer of a loan became part of a larger immigration bill the following month. Mennonites in Waterloo County, Ontario, would be required to provide bonds for repayment of this loan. It claimed that most of the loans made by Ontario Mennonites earlier had been repaid, although no evidence has been found to suggest that more than $20,000.00 loaned to the second group of immigrants had been returned by then.[26]

It was also reported to Parliament that Waterloo Mennonites would be holding mortgages on properties of persons who received loan aid, and that a leading Mennonite (probably Shantz) had said that these same Mennonites would make themselves liable for up to 10% of their property-worth to ensure that the loan could be repaid easily if required.

"All Mennonites in Ontario were to be asked to help either by assisting with loans, or by offering security to the government. The committee saw it as the duty of all Ontario Mennonites to help, even if the loans given should not be paid off."

Extant minutes of the RAC meeting of 13 April 1875 offer a graphic picture of its activity during this time. Its members were now listed as Elias Schneider, John Gascho, Samuel Reesor, and John Koch, with Shantz the secretary and treasurer. His report stated that total expenses to date amounted to $22,958.00 of which the bulk, i.e. $20,491.35, was "Loan to church in Manitoba." Gift monies to a total of $981.62 had been spent on provisions for immigrants traveling from Toronto to Manitoba. Income included $23,422.00 as monies received as loans and another total of $2,061.72 received as gifts, leaving $2526.54 in the treasury at the time.[27]

The longest minute was a statement of theological underpinning for the work of helping the immigrants. All Mennonites in Ontario were to be asked to help either by assisting with loans or by offering security to the government. The committee saw it as the duty of all Ontario Mennonites to help, even if the loans given should not be paid off. Eight or nine Scripture verses were cited to support such a view.

The new formal relationship with the government had made the enlarging and renaming of the committee necessary, suggested Shantz in a letter to John Lowe dated 21 April 1875. The committee would now be known as the Committee of Management for Mennonites in Ontario. Thousands more immigrants arrived throughout the rest of 1875. Shantz would travel with groups going west or take extra trips to places like South Bend, Indiana, to order supplies.[28]

Besides providing money for provisions the Committee would attempt to provide every two poor immigrant families with other necessities such as a yoke of oxen, a plow, a cow, and a small stove so that setting up a home and beginning to farm would be somewhat easier. When Shantz returned from his May 1875 trip to Manitoba he found that yet another member, Philip Wismer, had been added to the Management Committee. The committee met on 25 September 1875 to make some new decisions and receive their treasurer's report.[29]

Shantz noted that he had spent $17,500.00. A total of $25,000.00 of the government loan had been used up, and the Ontario Mennonite bond guarantees were $12,000.00 short of the money actually advanced by the government. Another $25,000.00 request from the Manitoba Mennonites had just been received.

The real crunch would come in 1876, however. The call for funds again reached $25,000.00 beyond the money already on loan. Immigration was continuing, and many of the comers were poor and needed help. A group of Mennonites met in February to look at the situation—how to help more Russian Mennonite immigrants when the Management Committee had run out of funds. At this point only half of the government's "Mennonite Loan" was covered by Ontario Mennonite "guarantees."

It was agreed that further fund-raising would be restricted to subscriptions only, that monies paid back by Manitoba Mennonites would be used to help other immigrants and that additional

assistance would need to come from other sources, perhaps through appeals by potential immigrants in South Russia to funding committees in the USA.

The search for these "other sources" became the task again of Shantz himself. He made the suggestion to the Canadian government that it should consider the possibility of having Russian Mennonites already established in Canada serve as guarantors to the Mennonite Loan for limited amounts. John F. Funk, Shantz's colleague in the USA, could offer no other help than publishing the Canadian Mennonite appeal in his paper *Herald of Truth*. The relationship of these men was, however, under some strain now since Shantz had in fact moved his membership from the Mennonite Conference which both men had shared till now, to take up membership in the newly-formed United Mennonite group.

In late December, five individuals with the Management Committee decided that they by themselves would provide the bonds for releasing another $25,000.00 from the Mennonite Loan. Shantz covered one-third of this sum himself, with his partner from their Berlin business, the Dominion Button Factory, covering five thousand more. That left five thousand each for Samuel Reesor and Philip Wismer, and one thousand to cover by John Koch. The pressure for this money had come when a third group, the so-called Fuerstenlaender, asked for a loan which the Management Committee had thought would be covered by repayment from the Bergthaler group.[30]

This payment was late however, so alternate arrangements became imperative. A mortgage arrangement designed for the recipients of the loan (i.e. the Manitoba Mennonites) was not accepted by the Canadian government. Hence, the Ontario bondsmen set up the "lien" instead, meaning that the loan recipients would not get titles to their land until the loans were repaid.

In the fall of 1877, a year in which immigration had diminished significantly, Shantz with his wife and friend Samuel Reesor along with Mrs. Reesor traveled to Manitoba to secure the financial arrangements which at this point left the Management Committee to preside over loans totaling over $100,000.00. By now the government had begun to entertain certain reservations about the entire setup, since the remaining $7,600.00 in the Mennonite Loan were declared frozen until further bonds by Ontario Mennonites would be put in place.[31]

The emigration itself ceased completely in 1880, with just under 7000 persons finding their way to the Manitoba settlements by that time. Shantz made numerous other trips to visit the Mennonite "reserves" in the Red River Valley, no doubt keeping the matter of the loan in mind constantly and also managing that way to circulate up-to-date information about the new settlements, and giving other non-financial forms of aid at the same time.[32]

The loan itself remained in place for several decades, with repayment continuing for this entire period. A potentially disconcerting aspect of it was the view taken by the federal government of this loan. It viewed the loan as given simply to Ontario Mennonites, meaning that as long as it was not paid the government considered the Management Committee as being in arrears. Manitoba Mennonites were not in the picture at all in this concept of the situation.

> "By early 1888 the Manitoba Mennonites had repaid over $100,000 on their loan, but still needed to pay over $50,000 which had accumulated in interest."

The Management Committee itself felt a need therefore to encourage repayment of the loan as soon as possible. It set up a list of persons who still owed money on the loan (using the help of Manitoba Mennonite leaders), and then asked the government to view these as a lien against the land patent and issue an Order of Council to that effect. That meant the patent would not be paid until the loans were paid.

When the loan payments fell behind schedule by over fifty thousand dollars in mid-1883, the Treasury Board of the Canadian Government decided to demand payment on the bonds posted by the Ontario Mennonites. It was prevented from

doing this by the Minister of Agriculture. Repayments did increase however once the lien was in place.

By early 1888 the Manitoba Mennonites had repaid over $100,000.00 on their loan, but still needed to pay over $50,000.00 which had accumulated in interest. The Management Committee proposed that the government change the interest on the Mennonite Loan from six percent compound to four percent simple interest on all money already paid. This would reduce the balance still to be paid to $12,950.22, and the Management Committee proposed it would pay that balance, and thus have the loan paid up entirely.

The Privy Council agreed to this in June 1888, and the House of Commons approved it the following year. Shantz shared this news joyfully in letters and reports in the fall of 1888. In actual fact, the situation was not quite what it was made to appear. Only 40 percent of the direct loans made by Ontario Mennonites had been repaid at this point. In 1889 another 35 percent was distributed to the lenders. The committee believed it would be four or five years before the rest would be paid unless a concession on the interest was made again. The remaining repayments of the loan did come in during 1900s, although a few small outstanding portions may have remained.[33]

As a small minority on the frontiers of Canadian settlement, first Ontario, then Manitoba, Mennonites expressed a visible concern to help each other in ways consistent with their traditions of community self-reliance and their religious beliefs. Organizations set up by the Ontario Mennonites to meet specific needs within and outside of their immediate communities reflect the considerable energy devoted to render mutual aid where needed.

In both organizations, the Mennonite Aid Union and the Russian Aid Committee (later Management Committee), leaders stressed the importance of meeting needs as a mandate of their religious commitment. In the case of the former, large areas of the community could come to be involved. In the latter instance more and more responsibility came to rest on a few individuals. Always the assumption was however that the entire community needed to stand behind these endeavors and they were appealed to again and again. The fact that Ontario (and Manitoba) Mennonites could call on their American Mennonite co-religionists was, of course, an asset, although actual funds seem not to have crossed the Canada-US border much at any time.

Attention needed to be given to the limitations placed on stated objectives of each committee. Negotiations with local, provincial and federal governing agencies were carried forward in good faith while local initiatives remained steady and strong. Mutual aid put in simple terms as simply helping as a straightforward requirement of biblical faith, had a central place in the Ontario Mennonite "worldview" applied both to the individual and the larger community as well.

## ENDNOTES

[1]One "portrait" of the entire spectrum of Mennonite groups in Canada is in Margaret Reimer, *One Quilt, Many Pieces: A Reference Guide to Mennonites in Canada*, 2nd ed. (Waterloo, Ont.: Mennonite Publishing Company, 1990). It cites the total membership (meaning official adult church membership) as being 102,425 persons. That would suggest a total community of about 200,000 or more if unbaptized persons, including children, were included. For the beginnings of the Canadian Mennonite story as a whole see Frank H. Epp, *Mennonites in Canada 1786-1820* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1974). See also Marlene Epp, *Mennonites in Ontario: An Introduction* (Waterloo, Ont.: Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario, 1994).

[2]See J. Winfield Fretz, *The Mennonites in Ontario* (Waterloo, Ont.: Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario, 1974) and *The Waterloo Mennonites: A Community in Paradox* (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1989). It will not be possible to review here the broader, world-wide phenomenon of what has come to be called "mutual aid" in Mennonite research. See J. Winfield Fretz, "Mutual Aid among Mennonites, I", *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 13 (January 1939), 28-58, and "Mutual Aid among Mennonites, II" *MQR* 13 (January 1939), 187-209.

[3]This treatment of the Mennonite Aid Union is heavily indebted to an unpublished MA thesis written by E. Reginald Good, "War as a Factor in Mennonite Economic Policy: A Case Study of Insurance Institutions Sponsored by the Ontario Conference, 1864-1954" (University of Waterloo, 1984). The impact of Fretz's thought on Ontario Mennonite mutual aid activities is noted in Good, "Changing Patterns of Mutual Aid in Ontario 1864-1894," in Willard M. Swartley and Donald

B. Kraybill, eds., *Building Communities of Compassion: Mennonite Mutual Aid in Theological Practice* (Scottdale, Pa.: Pandora Press, 1998), 171-191.

[4]An older attempt to define the concept of non-resistance and suggest how it might apply to practical life situations in Mennonite communities is in Guy F. Hershberger, *War, Peace and Non-Resistance* (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1953). This work does not discuss its application to areas such as insurance, which in fact does not appear as an entry in the index of the book. Most discussions of Mennonite non-resistance are directed specifically to the question of participating in war and pacifism. The vast extent of related discussions is illustrated in Willard M. Swartley and Cornelius J. Dyck, eds., *Annotated Bibliography of Mennonite Writings on War and Peace, 1930-1980* (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1987).

[5]See Good, 34; Burkholder, 156-157; and Isaac Horst, ed. and trans., *Discussions of the Preachers and Deacons of the Mennonite Parishes in the County of Waterloo Containing Resolutions Passed at the Semi-Annual Conferences* (N.p., n.d.), 7.

[6]Horst, 8.

[7]Good, 37, and *Community Union of the Mennonites for the Purpose of Restoring Fire Damage or Loss* (N.p., 1876; n.p., 1959), 1.

[8]*Calendar of Appointments* (N.p., 1866).

[9]Quoted from No. 14 in the constitution, as cited in *Community Union of the Mennonites*, 1-4.

[10]The districts are listed in Good, 43, Table I, without reference to any source. For maps showing the locations of the congregations represented, see Burkholder, 44, 63, and 108, and Epp, 271.

[11]The Schneider story was covered in "Struck by Lightning," *Galt Reporter*, 13 June 1873, 2, and "Feuer in Berlin," *Berliner Journal*, 12 June 1873, [2].

[12]On the problems related to putting out the fire see Miriam Helen Snyder, ed., *Hannes Schneider: Their Descendants and Times, 1534-1939* (Kitchener, Ont.: privately published, 1937), 268C.

[13]Good, 45.

[14]See discussion of creating new fire insurance among American Mennonites in the newspaper *Herald of Truth* as discussed in Good, 48-49. Note particularly David Sherk, "Concerning the Russian Affairs," *Herald of Truth* XI (1874), 51-52, and David Boesiger, "Loss by Fire," *Herald of Truth* XI (1874), 120-121.

[15]Good, 49-50, especially his references in footnote 33.

[16]See Lawrence Klippenstein, "Mennonite Pacifism and State Service in Russia: A Case Study in Church State Relations, 1789-1936" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1984), 22ff.

[17]Articles on Mennonites facing military conscription problems in Europe (first of all, Prussia) began to appear in the *Herald of Truth* as early as June 1870, with comments on a possible emigration from Russia to America entering the news in the spring and summer issues of 1872. In Berlin (later Kitchener, Ontario) itself the matter received extensive coverage in a six-part series of articles published in the *Berliner Journal* by W. Wagner, titled "Einwanderung nach Manitoba," and running from April 4 to May 9 that year.

[18]The full story of these developments, including Shantz's introduction to the emigration program of the Canadian government, is detailed in Samuel J. Steiner, *Vicarious Pioneer: The Life of Jacob Y. Shantz* (Winnipeg, Man.: Hyperion Press, 1988), 65ff. On Bernhard Warkentin's involvement at this point see David Haury, "Bernhard Warkentin: A Mennonite Benefactor," *MQR* 49 (July 1975), 179ff.

[19]Jacob Y. Shantz, *Narrative of a Journey to Manitoba* (Ottawa: Robertson, Rogers and Co., 1873). The report portion of the pamphlet is reprinted in Steiner, 16ff.

[20]Documents dealing with emigration negotiations in 1872 and 1873 were published in Ernst Correll, "Mennonite Immigration into Manitoba: Documents and Sources, 1872, 1873," *MQR* 11 (July 1937), and 11 (October 1937), 196-231.

[21]See Gustave E. Reimer and G. R. Gaeddert, *Cornelius Jansen and the Great Mennonite Migration, 1874.* (Newton, Kans.: Mennonite Publication Office, 1956). 102ff.

[22]H. S. Bender, "Mennonite Board of Guardians," *Mennonite Encyclopedia* 3:591-592, and Steiner, 90-91.

[23]Letters by Shantz written to the Board of Guardians on 22 January and 26 March 1874, in Board of Guardians correspondence, folder 1 and 2, Mennonite Library and Archives, North Newton, Kansas.

[24]Russian Aid Committee financial data is summarized best in Steiner, 95ff. An excellent treatment of the coming of the Mennonites to Manitoba was offered earlier in E. K. Francis, *In Search of Utopia: The Mennonites in Manitoba* (Altona, Man.: D. W. Friesen, 1955), 50ff.

[25]The major extant manuscript document noting detailed expenses managed by Shantz at this stage is titled "Mennonites to Manitoba. This Book Contains the Names and Number of Families and Souls that Moved to Manitoba." See Clarence Hiebert, comp. and ed., *Brothers in Deed to Brothers in Need* (Newton, Kans.: Faith and Life Press, 1974), 106ff.

[26]Discussions in Parliament about the Mennonite loan are surveyed in Ernst Correll, "Debates in the House of Commons on the Mennonite Immigration from Russia in 1873 and 1874," *MQR* 20 (October 1946), 257-272.

[27]See "Minutes of the Mennonite Aid Committee of Canada," published in Hiebert, 240, 244.

[28]Letter from J. Y. Shantz to John Lowe, April 21, 1875, PAC, RG Vol. 131, cited in Steiner.

[29]See a printed broadside "Beschluesse" cited by Steiner, 104-105. It seems Wismer took over the treasurer's task when he joined this committee.

[30]This information, and other listings of sums guaranteed or donated by Ontario Mennonites may be gleaned from records kept by Philip Wismer, in particular "A Copy of a Record concerning the Russian Mennonite Immigration to Canada in the Years 1874-1880" which is part of the Philip Wismer collection at the Archives of the Mennonite Church, Goshen, Indiana. The Bergthalers were people of the Bergthal Colony which was emigrating en masse, and the Fuerstenland families came from another daughter colony of Chortitza. The latter began to arrive in 1875, with the former starting to come the year before.

[31]Steiner, 108-109.

[32]Shantz continued to publish very positive reports in the Mennonite press about the progress of the Manitoba settlements, and communicated these views to the government also whenever he could. An important example of the latter is found in his "Testimony to Parliament" produced at an interview he gave in Ottawa on April 8, 1886, concerning the background and progress of the Mennonite migration to Western Canada. See Steiner's printed version, 181ff., based on "Mr. Shantz' Evidence," *Journals of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada*, 49 Victoria, Appendix (No. 6), 34. Shantz was also asked a number of questions about the Mennonite loan during this interview.

[33]The fullest overall discussion of the loan question is in Steiner, ch. 7, "The Mennonite Loan," and 144ff.

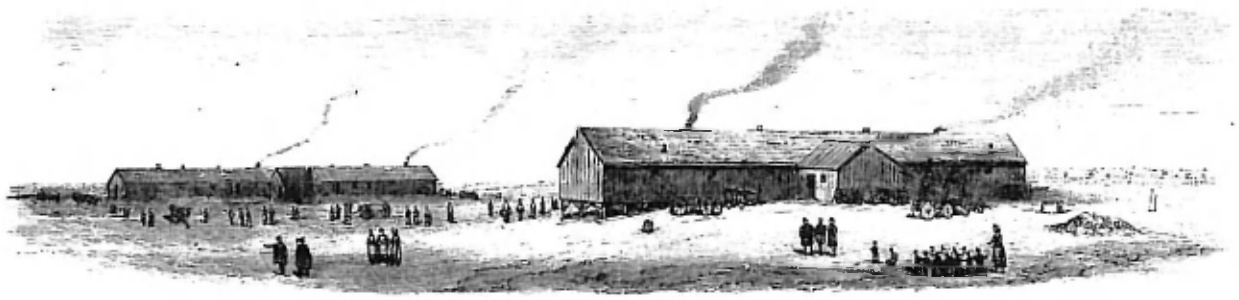
# "The Disciples of Menno Simonis: Their Settlement in Central Kansas": Mennonite Immigrants in 1875

Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper

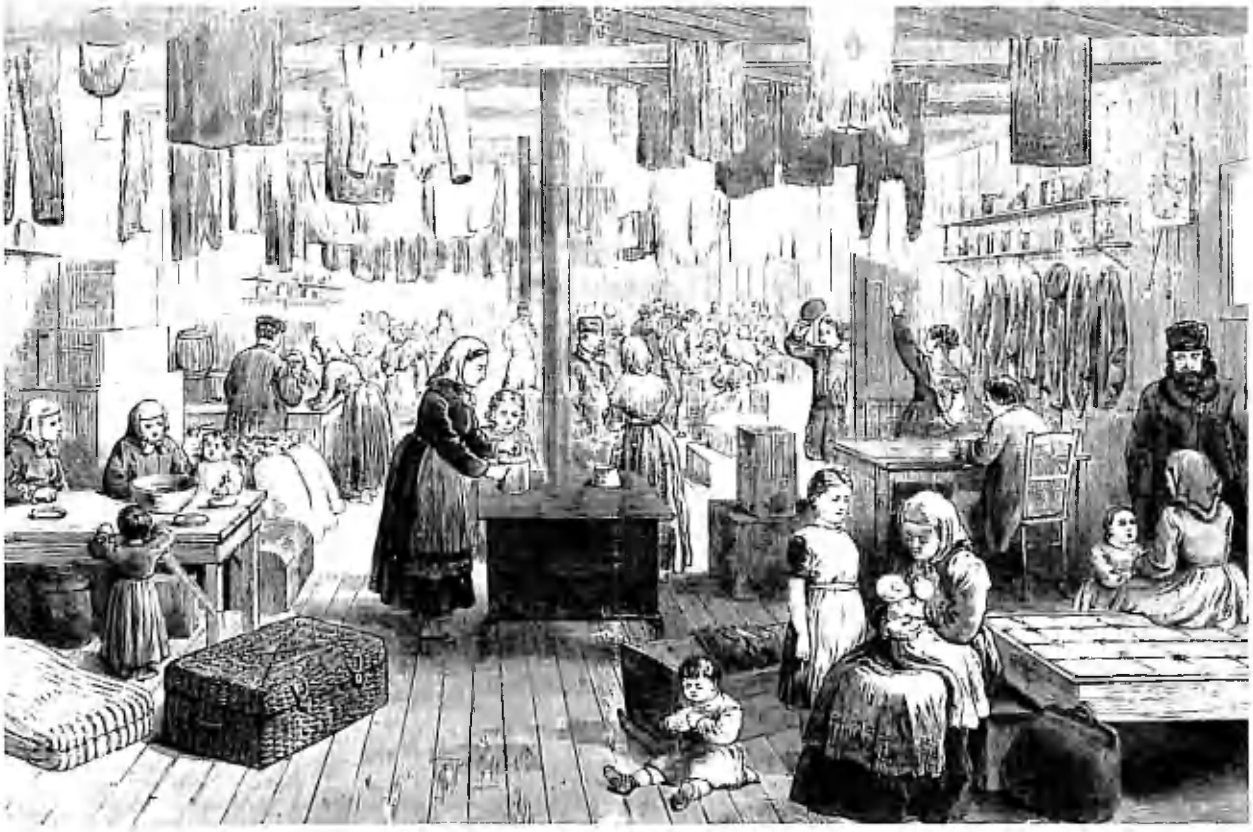
*On March 20, 1875, a periodical called* Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper *published a set of 8 depictions of Russian Mennonite immigrants in Kansas. These images, published by a national weekly newspaper out of New York City, have become the classic visual symbols of the 1870s Mennonite immigration into the United States. The illustrations also appeared in the German version of the paper,* Frank Leslie's Illustrirte Zeitung, *on the same date with the same illustrations, but with a text (in German) that focused more on the Mennonites' European history and less on the Kansas settlement. Many of these have been reprinted at various times in Mennonite publications to represent the immigrants, although they have rarely appeared together as a set, and even more rarely have they had their original accompanying text. Here we reprint the article and illustrations of an outsider's view of the great Mennonite immigration of 125 years ago.*

Our population has received an important and valuable addition in the past two years by the extensive emigration of Mennonites. This is not the first time that representatives of this thrifty society have found an asylum in this country. As early as 1683 many left Holland and Germany to escape religious persecution, and settled in various parts of Pennsylvania. In 1708 a school and a meeting-house were erected by them in Germantown, near Philadelphia. Another colony was established in what is now known as Lancaster County, Pa., and numerous stable farmers of that delightful agricultural region are the descendants of these worthy pioneers, and retain many of the characteristics and habits of their forefathers. Subsequently Mennonite settlements were established in Maryland, Ohio, Indiana, New York and Canada.

With the advancement of religious toleration in Europe the



## "Temporary Home of the Russian Mennonites"



# "Central Kansas — Interior of the Temporary Home of the Russian Mennonites"

causes which led to the large emigration of religious sects decreased, and this particular body being peaceful, home-loving people, but few representatives of it were found among the crowds of emigrants yearly arriving at our shores. The Mennonites recently landing in this country came from Russia. They are the descendants of a colony that left Germany in 1780 to escape the conscription of Frederick the Great, and settled in the southern provinces of Russia, upon land granted by Catharine II. They now leave Russian territory to avoid an edict of the Emperor requiring all able-bodied men to perform military duty. Their religious tenets teach peace, and they are unable to reconcile their conscience to the order of the Czar. In Russia their number is said to have been about 40,000, and so many have emigrated since the edict was published, June 4th, 1871, that the Czar has been induced to modify the order, and has signified his willingness to accept from this particular sect service in the military hospitals in lieu of service in the regular army. This, however, does not appear to have stopped the exodus, and it is probable that in a few years the great

# "Central Kansas — The Russian

## Mennonites – Types of Faces and Costumes"

bulk of the Russian Mennonites will be citizens of the United States. The Russian Government, fully aware of the importance of retaining this thrifty, hard-working community, has made every possible effort to prevent their emigration. When the authorities first learned that the Mennonites would not enter the army, the time of conscription was extended, but without the anticipated results. Then an attempt was made to force a renunciation of their belief, and the acceptance of the doctrines of the Russian Greek Church, but without effect. The latest compromise in the matter appears to have come too late.

The Mennonite Church was founded in Germany in the early part of the sixteenth century by Menno Simonis, a priest settled at Pingium, who early imbibed the reform doctrines of his contemporary, Luther, and renounced all connection with the Roman Catholic Church. For this he was driven into exile, Charles V, setting a price on his head, and for twenty-five years he struggled valiantly with want, suffering and persecution. He found an asylum in Holstein, and received permission to publish several religious essays on the true Christian faith. He died there on the 13th of January, 1561. His doctrines gained followers, and a colony of exemplary men, who favored his religious views, was established in Holland. During the eighteenth century the number of Mennonites had increased to 160,000 and in 1735 they established a theological seminary.

As a sectarian organization, they resemble the Baptists, and follow many of the simple customs of the Quakers. The sacrament of baptism is never celebrated until the candidate has acquired sufficient intelligence fully to comprehend the nature of the obligations about to be assumed. They choose from their own members certain ones notable for high moral standing, intelligence and ability as teachers, to be their priests. For these ministers no special preparation is required. They must be pure, honest and faithful to the teachings of Menno. They serve without pay. The Mennonites strive to live an everyday, practical Christian life; they are strict in discipline, oppose the taking of oaths, and, like the Friends, are strongly antagonistic to war. The brotherhood in America have organized a Board of Guardians, which is charged with arranging for

"Mennonites at Worship on the Prairie"

"Gnadenau, Looking East"

"Central Kansas — The Public Well at the Temporary Home of the Russian Mennonites"

# "Halstead, and a Mennonite Mill"

transportation across the Atlantic to New York, and then from thence to points of destination in the West. These guardians are custodians of a fund contributed by the brethren who have already settled to provide for the ocean passage of those who are without means. The emigrants are a conscientious, hard-working agricultural people, and most of them are the possessors of a moderate capital. A very large amount of money has thus come into the country, as it is estimated that the head of each family brought from $2,000 to $10,000. They will be welcomed by any State within whose limits they settle.

One colony has purchased 150,000 acres of land in Central Kansas. The ground selected was a bleak, wild prairie—lately the frontier buffalo range, but the industrious settlers have built up a prosperous colony, with thriving towns and well-ordered farms. We give illustrations showing some of the scenes in this settlement. Two large, rough buildings were erected sixteen miles north of Newton, as temporary barrack residences, whilst the emigrants were building permanent dwellings. All newcomers are lodged in the barracks—the interior of which presents an animated and grotesque appearance. Crowded with strange-looking, battered trunks, boxes, beds, cookstoves, sacks, bags, fur coats, and the numerous articles that go to make up an emigrant's outfit, a perfect Babel is created. In pleasant weather the religious exercises are held in the open air, and in this temple not made by human hands the fervent prayers of these simple worshipers go up to heaven. Midway between the two temporary buildings is the public well, where our artist made his sketches of costumes. A handkerchief is the only headdress worn by the women, and gay aprons seems to be their only vanity. The men wear caps of cloth or fur, and have huge fur-lined overcoats.

About seven miles northeast of the temporary homes is the quaint brand-new village of Gnadenau, where there are some twenty small farmers, who have built the queerest and most comfortable cheap houses ever seen in the West, and with the least amount of timber, being merely a skeleton roof built on the ground and thatched with prairie-grass. They serve for man and beast, being divided on the inside by a partition of adobe.

The lands purchased by the colony are distributed in four counties. Halstead, on the Little Arkansas River, being the most central town, has been selected as a trading-point, where some of the community have opened stores and built a fine mill.

The Mennonites are a peaceful, temperate, industrious, and very frugal people, and will soon build up on the plains of Kansas a settlement rivaling in beauty and prosperity some of the most favored agricultural districts in the older States.

# The Rod of Justice in the *Martyrs' Mirror*

James W. Lowry

As a reader of the *Martyrs' Mirror*, I had been puzzled for years by an odd object which appears in many of Jan Luyken's illustrations—a strange, long stick with three short branches at the top. Frequently someone in the picture was holding such a stick, sometimes plainly visible in the foreground, silhouetted against the sky, sometimes less visible, less prominent, perhaps against buildings with lines running in the same direction, making the pole harder to see. In such cases the pole remained unnoticed—until I began to look for it deliberately. It was usually present at executions and extremely rarely in other scenes. What is this three-pointed pole?

I hunted in reference books, but did not know what to look for. Of course, I did not know the name of the pole. I asked people who were interested in the *Martyrs' Mirror*, but no one could give a satisfactory answer.

It looked a little like a rune, like one of the letters of the old *futhark* alphabet, the ancient Germanic writing system, used by the Vikings and other peoples across northern Europe, less civilized peoples who lived just outside the edges of the Roman Empire. But a rune was a short letter and this had a long stem.

It also looked like a death symbol, used during the black days of National Socialism in Germany. But that symbol, as printed in books of that era, had the three points turned

**Leonhard Keyser** is taken to his execution at Schardling in 1527. The man on horseback carries the three-pronged pole.

Two young women are mocked on their way to execution in Bamberg in 1550. A man on horseback carries the three-pointed pole.

down to mark the death of someone.[1] Certainly the ominous associations would fit the Luyken picture, but how could there be any connection?

One friend, who speaks with a Pennsylvania Dutch accent, said he thought it looked like a "maze." That really puzzled me, but I did not want to contradict him. How could it look like a labyrinth, *ein Irrgarten* as it would be called in German, a puzzle for children, or a place in which a person could get lost and not find his way out? Later I realized he was confusing a "z" sound with an "s" as a Pennsylvania Dutch person might be apt to do. He meant to say "mace," the scepter a ruler carries, a symbol of authority. However, a mace was apt to be much shorter and more substantial, made of precious materials, ornamented as befitted the importance of the office and the person who carried it. The thing in Luyken's pictures was crude, a long skinny stick, always towering above the heads of the people present. What was it?

Plenty of evidence exists that Jan Luyken read the *Martyrs' Mirror* accounts carefully before he made his illustrations. He often chose a striking scene from the account to depict in his etching. Then he depicted that scene exactly. For one brief example, compare the pictures on pages 831 and 873 of the English *Martyrs' Mirror*, both of executions in Amsterdam. You will notice that the pictures show the same buildings, all on the main city square, called the Dam, where executions took place. Of course, Luyken lived and died in Amsterdam and could represent the buildings accurately from his first-hand knowledge.[2]

Since there is much evidence that Luyken made his illustrations

for the *Martyrs' Mirror* thoughtfully, he must have put the stick with three points in the engravings deliberately. I noticed it appeared in the engravings in the English *Martyrs' Mirror* twelve times[3] and three other times in a more or less developed form.[4] An especially striking drawing of the pole is shown as Leonhard Keyser rides to his execution on page 421 and another drawing as two young girls walk to their execution on page 501. Both times a man on horseback carries the pole. But what was this strange, knotted branch with the small points at the top end?

For many years I wondered. One year I lived near the city of Amsterdam in the Netherlands and worked there. Toward the end of that year's stay, I finally visited the historical museum in Amsterdam. Exploring the museum, I suddenly saw the long stick with the points! There it was, in the distance, outlined against a white wall, a real specimen of the three-pointed pole from Luyken's engravings. It was about eight feet long.

Rushing up to the pole, I read the museum label, "*Roede Justitie*," or Rod of Justice, official symbol of the Amsterdam sheriff's office, carried at serious public occasions such as executions. But the rod here had only two points.

Later, I read through materials the museum had collected on this object. Someone had found it in the attic of the city hall and, from there, brought it for display to the museum.[5] An old photograph showed that this rod once had three points as in the Luyken etchings.[6] A glass case nearby held two shorter examples of the rod of justice, only about nine inches in length with many points at the end. Their handles had traces of red paint, the color red symbolizing the authority to shed blood at executions. The rod of justice was sometimes called the "red rod."

Officials had carried this rod already in the early middle ages as a symbol of the authority of their office.[7] Evidence of use of it in other Dutch cities has been found. For example, a museum in Leiden also

In the Amsterdam Historisch Museum the rod of justice is clamped securely to the white wall.

displays one. Dutch artists depict it in early paintings. Use of the rod was probably not confined to the Netherlands since the sources call it an old Germanic custom.

So, now I had a name for the object and could look it up in the Dutch equivalent of the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Under the word "roede" I found a long discussion about this exact object and numerous quotations in Dutch, and one each in Latin, English, and French.[8] The sources explained the object well. But another question came to mind. At the executions of the Anabaptists, was it truly "a rod of justice?"

The rod of justice did not appear in the first, full edition of the *Martyrs' Mirror* in 1660. In fact, no illustrations did. The editors of the second edition of 1685 commissioned Luyken to make pictures. Luyken probably took the first edition in hand and read through the book, searching for scenes to depict, starting from the front. He would follow the work procedure of the printer. The printer would almost certainly set the type, arrange the pictures on the pages, and print the signatures in order from the front to the back of the book.[9]

If Luyken produced the etchings largely in the order in which they were printed, he must have been aware of the rod of justice even as he began reading and sketching to make the illustrations. He hints at the rod of justice already in an early illustration, from Roman times, perhaps "Romanized" into a staff with a spiked ball at the end, in the fourth picture, which shows the execution of James the greater at Jerusalem in A. D. 45. Luyken was historian enough to realize that he could not take a contemporary Dutch practice and project it exactly into all places and periods of history. Yet a kind of rod of justice, as an object belonging to scenes of execution in Luyken's mind, appears in various protean forms in some early and geographically remote martyr illustrations. Examples are a rod with an odd multi-pointed end held by a man riding a much odder elephant in remote Calamina at the execution of Thomas in A. D. 70, a stiff little stick at the death of Simon the Zealot in Syria in A. D. 70, and other rods with a spiked ball in the pictures of Origen at Alexandria in A. D. 234 and of Pelagius at Cordoba, Spain, in A. D. 925.[10]

The picture of Clement (of Scotland) executed in France A. D. 750 shows the first fully developed and accurate drawing of the rod of justice. The picture of eighty Waldensians burned at Strasbourg in A. D. 1215 shows the next accurate rod.[11] After that time, Luyken very frequently depicted the rod of justice at scenes of execution in the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, France, and Italy.

As Jan Luyken read on toward the back of the *Martyrs' Mirror* to prepare illustrations, he came to the account of the death of a man and a woman from Dordrecht, Jan Wouterss and Adriaenken Jans.[12] Luyken must have been struck by Thieleman van Braght's use of the theme of justice in this account. Van Braght repeatedly uses different phrases with the word *justice*.

"In the year of our Lord 1572, *the lords of justice*[13] at Dordrecht in Holland laid their hands on two very meek and dear friends of God, who followed their Savior, the slain Lamb of the cross, Jesus Christ. . . . They were both taken out of the fold like lambs for the slaughter." Van Braght recounts only briefly that the woman Adriaenken was arrested, but gives more details about the arrest of the man, Jan.

Van Braght tells how officials took advantage of Jan's honesty in admitting who he was. "*The ministers of justice*" immediately seized and bound him in the presence of his seven-year-old daughter and took him from his home, leaving the little girl behind alone.

Later, as Jan was taken to his public execution, a man called out from the crowd, "Strive valiantly, dear brother." But the "*servants of justice*" were displeased and sternly demanded the bystanders reveal the man.

Since van Braght was himself from Dordrecht, he was especially interested in these two martyrs and found much material on them. He gives three accounts of their end, in spite of the fact that the death sentence had been recorded only on loose sheets of paper and later was destroyed. The officials had not written the sentence in the firmly

bound record books. Why had they recorded it on loose sheets?

In 1572, the year of execution, the city of Dordrecht would soon change from a Catholic government to that of William of Orange, who would not persecute Anabaptists. Officials wanted to be able to cover up what they had done just before the change of governments. Van Braght concludes one of the accounts of the execution by saying, "*The (so-called) justice* was finished."

Van Braght had been dead for around twenty years when Luyken was making illustrations for the second edition. Van Braght and Luyken would never have met and discussed what pictures to make. But it appears Luyken, perceptive and spiritually sensitive person that he was, noticed the recurrent, ironic references to justice as he read about Jan and Adriaenken, the martyrs from Dordrecht. So Luyken included the "rod of justice" in the illustration on page 898, also in irony, but rather small in form. "Justice" was small in Dordrecht back in those days.

Arnold Toynbee has demonstrated that war has been a major source of inspiration for historians. The experience of war in personal life has moved historians to write some of the greatest books of history.[14] Van Braght and the earlier editors of the Anabaptist martyr books have been moved by an opposite, far nobler theme. Their theme has been obedience and suffering for the sake of the religion of Jesus Christ. In using the "rod of justice" in his illustrations Luyken chose a part of this greater theme of obedience and suffering: the distortion and abuse of human justice, which produces suffering.

## ENDNOTES

[1]Enno Folkerts, *Tirol: Volk, Heimat, Brauchtum* (Innsbruck: Gauverlag Tirol-Vorarlberg, 1943), title page and p. 5.
[2]For another picture by Luyken of an execution on the Dam of Amsterdam, see page 88 of *In the Whale's Belly* (Harrisonburg, Va.: Christian Light Publications, 1981, 1997). For three other pictures by Luyken of executions in Amsterdam, but found in no edition of the *Martyrs' Mirror*, see "Mennonite Martyrs as Amsterdam Martyrs," by Mary Sprunger in *Mennonite Life* (June 1997), 18-21; one of these shows a different view of the Dam. One further picture by Luyken of an Anabaptist execution on the Dam is found in *Beschryvinge van Amsterdam* by Casparus Commelin (Amsterdam: Wolfgang, Waesberge, Boom, Van Someren and Goethals, 1693), II, 938.
[3]On pages 231, 421, 501, 725, 843, 875, 886, 898, 1055, 1058, 1090, and 1094.
[4]On pages 72, 89, and 92. The present English edition of the *Martyrs' Mirror* has only 55 of the 104 etchings which originally appeared in the 1685 Dutch edition of the *Martyrs' Mirror*. Nineteen other illustrations with the object, not in the English edition, are found in this 1685 edition. These other illustrations can be seen in *The Drama of the Martyrs* (Lancaster, Pa.: Mennonite Historical Associates, 1975) on pages 53, 54, 64, 70, 71, 74, 76, 77, 78, 80, 81, 82, 86, 87, 89, 92, 93, 99, and 114. *The Drama of the Martyrs* contains a complete set of the pictures as they appeared in their original edition of the Dutch *Martyrs' Mirror* of 1685. However, *The Drama of the Martyrs* has eleven additional pictures at the end, which were never in the *Martyrs' Mirror* and which conflict with the philosophy of Thieleman van Braght.
[5]N. de Roever, "De rariteiten-kamer," *Oud Holland* VI (1888), 213-214.
[6]A. M. Koldewij, "Het stocxken van die Justicien," *Spiegel Historial* XVII (1982), 38, 39.
[7]H. J. Versteeg, *Van Schout tot Hoofdcommissaris: De Politie voorheen en thans* (Amsterdam: Van Holkema en Warendorf, 1925), 6-7.
[8]*Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal* XIII ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1924), 664-666.
[9]Some evidence that Luyken was producing engravings for the *Martyrs' Mirror* even as the book was being printed is given on page 122 of *The Martyrs' Mirror Made Plain* (Aylmer, Ont.: Pathway Publishers, 1997).
[10]See these pictures in the *Martyrs' Mirror* on pages 72, 89, and 92 and in *The Drama of the Martyrs* on pages 53 and 64.
[11]*Martyrs' Mirror*, 231, and *The Drama of the Martyrs*, 70.
[12]*Martyrs' Mirror*, 897-901. Luyken may have been especially interested in Jan because he too was an artist. The *Martyrs' Mirror* also reproduces a number of letters of Jan and Adriaenken on pages 901-929.
[13]Van Braght also uses the expression "the lords of justice" on page 900.
[14]As examples of such historians he gives Herodotus, Thucydides, Polybius, Josephus, and Procopius. *A Study of History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), X, 59-67, 80-82.

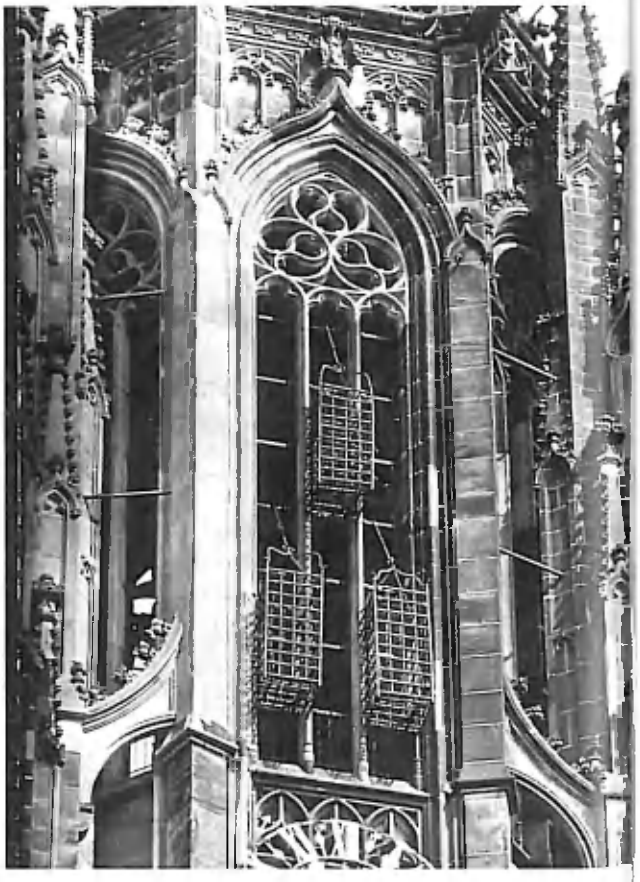
# When Bloch Pointed to the Cages Outside the Cathedral

Scott Holland

*(Muenster, 12 August 1534)*
*The Anabaptists have the city now:*
*One night a defrocked priest, one "Bread Bernard,"*
*Ran naked through the streets crying aloud*
*That all alone he'd wrestled many nights*
*With evil spirits (as I well believe)*
*And God Himself had told him to go forth*
*Into the public ways to choose the saved.*
*So out they came, tangled in their sheets*
*No less than their bad consciences, and said*
*The day of woe will come upon them soon*
*(Which, no doubt, it will), and beat their heads*
*Upon the paving stones, tore their hair,*
*And showed other ways their perfect faith.*
*Just after that we brought our armies in.*

*A certain tailor they have made their king.*
*He also talks with God, calling himself*
*The death-angel, and well makes good his boast.*
*Just bread, says Juvenal, and circuses*
*Can rule an Empire, but this tailor does*
*One better: short of bread, thanks to us,*
*He rules the town with circuses alone.*
*He parodies the Mass, devises hats,*
*And with great ceremony disembowels*
*The luckless wretches he's suspicious of,*
*He's saved the city from the curse of gold,*
*I've heard, by taking all of it himself,*
*And many saintly women came to sing*
*Hosannas in the highest to his name.*
*Atop the walls are angels militant*
*Like none that heaven ever saw.*

*How strange...*[1]



Poet John Burt's narrative description of Münster is enough to make any modern Anabaptist cringe. De-frocked priests running naked through the streets, true believers mocking the Mass, militant prophets bringing in the kingdom with the sword, and a tailor king seducing sweet sisters with the word of God and holy kisses. Little wonder why Mennonite historian H. S. Bender, in a skillful rhetorical move called "The Anabaptist Vision,"[2] brought a bishop's soul to discipline the unruly body of Anabaptist historiography and theology. With political and pastoral brilliance, Bender rescued Anabaptism from the trash bin of history as he excommunicated many rebels and redefined normative Anabaptism as an evangelical commitment to Christ through community, discipleship, and nonresistance. Through Bender's historical theology, Anabaptism even won the respect of the reserved suit-and-tie scholars of the American Society of Church History.

Bender's reconfiguration of Anabaptism[3] has been very useful for the believers church, giving it a normative narrative and moving it from sect to church status in modern Christendom, while retaining some of its original oppositional and counter-cultural impulses: communal solidarity over the autonomy of the soul, discipleship or ethics over mere orthodoxy, and peace over all holy crusades and politically just wars. For at least some contemporary Anabaptist faith communities, the old era of the bishops has been replaced with the new era of Anabaptist scholars.

Yet Bender's almost exclusive attention to Swiss Anabaptism in the composition of his Vision, and his suspicion of other Free Church radicals who failed to neatly embody the evangelical ideals of community, discipleship, and peace, has cut some of our most interesting ancestors from the family tree: revolutionaries, antinomians, mystics, and radical pietists. So if you would, consider with me the day "When Ernst Bloch pointed to the cages outside the Cathedral."

One afternoon Ernst Bloch and Johannes Baptist Metz were walking the streets of the city of Münster. As their conversation turned to political theology, Bloch pointed to the three iron cages that still hang outside the Saint Lamberti Church. Heretics of the Radical Reformation were executed in those cages and their bodies and bones remained on public display as a warning to dissenters and witness to the triumph of imperial Christendom. "One must do theology from there," Bloch said to the Baptist.[4]

Although Bloch's declaration was driven by important political concerns, pragmatic considerations would also lead one to conclude that if theology is to continue as a mode of reflection at the end of this century, it must be conceived after Christendom in creative spaces

> "...if God is to indeed return, it will be from the cages, from the margins, from life's liminal spaces, from somewhere other, from somewhere *Beyond*."

outside the Cathedral. Both modern statisticians and postmodern theorists agree: the grand temple of Western Christendom can no longer seduce and satisfy the religious imagination nor can its old Constantinian heresy provide an interesting or instructive vision of God in the world. God is dead or eclipsed or exiled. Yet as Bloch's prophetic gesture implied, if God is to indeed return, it will be from the cages, from the margins, from life's liminal spaces, from somewhere other, from somewhere *Beyond*.

Literary theorists Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari write of the importance of "minor literatures." A minor literature, according to Deleuze, makes intensive and transgressive use of

a major language as a witness to the representational incompleteness in all discourse.[4] As such, it points to an Other beyond the meta-narrative.

Current, creative scholarship is reminding us of two of Christendom's others: Anabaptists and Jews. Roger Bådham has recently written: "The Anabaptists became, in their radical otherness, a voluntary Christian counterpart to the Jewish communities in Europe. Like the Jews, they were seen as outside the homogenizing structures of society. Like the Jews, they offered Europe early warning of the pluralism to come and were persecuted for their difference."[5]

> "Like the Jews, they offered Europe early warning of the pluralism to come and were persecuted for their difference."

Anabaptist and Jewish theological expressions were and in fact are "minor literatures" within the dominant discourse of God-talk. While such minor literatures can be tempted by tribalistic arrogance or sectarian withdrawal, they can also be truly public discourses as they work within, through, and even against more dominant expressions of theological writing to render it incomplete, unstable and unsafe. This imaginative theological composition invites the return of the repressed and exiled; indeed, it invites the return of the Other.

Deleuze and Guattari turn to Kafka as a fine example of the importance of a minor literature. Franz Kafka believed that "writing is a form of prayer." As all faithful Anabaptist preachers and Jewish rabbis know, prayer opens one to an Infinity that reveals every totality to be not only incomplete, but idolatrous.[7] They know that prayer and song in the Jewish and Christian traditions is Doxology against all idolatry and ideology. God is Other beyond Cathedrals, Creeds, and Moral Codes, indeed beyond even the God we name.

## Beyond Cathedrals

We with roots in the Radical Reformation heritage have joyfully encountered God in the Cathedral, yet we have also known God in caves, forests, and at the incendiary stake of the executioner. With the postmodern fall of Christendom, how tempting it could be to construct a new Anabaptist Cathedral, supported by the foundational pillars of community, discipleship, and nonresistance, especially nonresistance, the most essential pillar.

How tempting it could be to replace a *Corpus Christianum* with a *Corpus Mennoniticum*. Yet Anabaptism was, and is, a polyphony not a harmony. A genuine hermeneutics of peoplehood beyond the Cathedral must engage its many voices, literatures and narratives, striving not for objectivity, but for a spirited intersubjectivity and intertextuality.

There are many wonderful and terrible Anabaptist stories. Here is one that is not often told. By 1885 a young South German Mennonite named John Horsch had become impassioned by the richness of his Anabaptist heritage after reading Ludwig Keller's book on Hans Denck.[8] Keller celebrated the undogmatic, mystical Anabaptism of Hans Denck and criticized what he considered the overly dogmatic Menno Simons. John Horsch was so inspired by the undogmatic Denck that he planned to encourage European and American Mennonites to adopt Denck's theology as the finest expression of Anabaptism.

> "...Anabaptism was, and is, a polyphony not a harmony."

In 1887 Horsch emigrated to America with the writings of Denck and Johann Tauler's *German Theology* in his bags. He showed up on the Elkhart doorstep of John Funk, publisher of the Mennonite

periodical, *Herald of Truth*. He was penniless and looking for work in the American Mennonite publishing community. He found it!

Within the next few years he became terribly entangled in the American Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy. Surprisingly, he turned

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from his beloved Denck and cast his lot with the Fundamentalists, that culture of resentment. Soon, and not surprisingly, he declared that Menno and the Swiss Brethren were the "real Anabaptists." He described the latter as "Anabaptist Fundamentalists."[9]

By 1908 the established Mennonite editor and writer John Horsch carried his message of Anabaptist Fundamentalism to the village of Scottdale, Pennsylvania, the new home of the Mennonite Publishing House and its company church. Along with Daniel Kauffman and others, he helped set the dogmatic tone for a normative Mennonite theology.[10] Now John Horsch had a daughter whom Harold Bender loved and married. H. S. Bender learned much about Anabaptist history from John Horsch. Although Bender certainly moved far beyond the fundamentalism of his father-in-law, he nevertheless clung to Horsch's dogmatic Anabaptist historiography and shunned undogmatic mystics like Denck.[11]

Even now, can't you almost hear the voice of our dear, departed Clarence Bauman as he insisted again and again: "Hans Denck represents the contemplative genius of the Anabaptist Movement at its highest and best. No understanding of the Anabaptist Vision is complete without coming to terms with the uniqueness of Denck's intellectual spirituality: its inner dynamic, its medieval context, its mystic content, and its Jewish roots."[12] Unlike the counter-modern projects of Horsch and Bender, postmodern Anabaptism is inviting Denck back to the Lord's Table. Some of us are suggesting that it is even time to invite the Radical Pietists back to the table.

The influence of the great preacher, poet, and historian, Gottfried Arnold, on the development of Pietism can hardly be overemphasized. We have much to learn from him.[13] He spoke of the spiritual life not in terms of duty or even discipleship but as desire: *Die erste Liebe*, The First Love.[14] It was this "love theology" that found its way into the themes of much of early Pietist literature, and later into Brethren theology.

Arnold's mystical piety was refreshingly suspicious of both religious community and theological creeds. As a poet and preacher he recognized that the order of community and the language of creeds threatened to collapse *theos* into *logos*. This is always the great temptation of church and creed, to bring Infinity into submission to a historical totality.[15] Arnold also understood very clearly how the formal language of church and creed had been used in the history of the church to punish dissidents and nonconformists who were often true believers. He therefore preached a stubborn but enlightened

"...his thesis was that the heretical movements had actually perpetuated the true church, while the orthodox church that disciplined and punished them was in reality the anti-church."

noncreedalism. His historical work pointed to the absence of disciplinary creeds in the apostolic church and to the terrible violence and persecution that creedal Christianity produced.

This concern is at the center of Arnold's massive work of historical theology, *A Nonpartisan History of Church and Heresy*.[16] Applying the principles of love theology to the entire history of the church, his thesis was that the heretical movements had actually perpetuated the true church, while the orthodox church that disciplined and punished them was in reality the anti-church.

He charged that orthodoxy had more to do with the politics of power and position than with the true spiritual church.[17]

Following Arnold's thesis about the manifestation of God in the world, it might be said that the orthodox who control the order of salvation have great political interests in managing a system of church doctrine and

"Many postmodern Anabaptists are as ethically earnest as liberal Unitarians and humanistic Quakers, only worse...."

discipline wherein all yield submissively to an established theological cycle of sin, repentance, and redemption. Arnold's creative theological criticism demonstrates that in the history of spirituality, *theos*, in moments of *kairos*, refuses the *logos* of orthodoxy and enters history and the human soul not through the established formula of sin, repentance, and redemption, but through a heretical revolution of transgression, excess, and gift. Heretics, ecstatics, saints, mystics, pietists, and poets remind us that often God comes first as transgression, then excess, and finally, gift![18]

## Beyond the Creeds

We know God through yet beyond the Cathedral. Likewise, we know God through yet beyond the creeds. One day that great unsystematic theologian Søren Kierkegaard found his melancholic heart strangely cheered while reading about Radical Reformation noncreedalism.[19] He was reading Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography*, of all things.

Franklin records a conversation he had with the Dunker, Michael Wolfart. Wolfart was talking with Franklin about the problems and possibilities of Brethren pluralism. Franklin suggested that perhaps it would be good for the Dunkers to establish a clear creed and a systematic theology like the rest of Christendom. Franklin writes:

> I told him that I imagined it might be well to publish the articles of their faith and the rules of their discipline. He said that it had been proposed among them, but not agreed to, for this reason: "When we were first drawn together as a society," says he, "it had pleased God to enlighten our minds so far as to see that some doctrines, which we had once esteemed errors, were real truths. From time to time He has been pleased to afford us farther light, and our principles have been improving, and errors diminishing. Now we are not sure that we have arrived at the end of this progression, and at the perfection of spiritual or theological knowledge; and we fear that, if we should print our confession, we should feel ourselves as if bound and confined by it, and perhaps be unwilling to receive farther improvement, and our successors still more so, as conceiving what we their elders and founders had done, to be something sacred, never to be departed from." This modesty in a sect is perhaps a singular instance in the history of mankind, every other sect supposing itself in possession of all truth, and that those who differ are so far in the wrong.[20]

And Kierkegaard laughed, for he also knew that the Jesus story carries us to a God of hope beyond time and narrative closure.[21] Indeed, Kierkegaard understood that this God is beyond even the category of the ethical.[22]

## Beyond the Ethical

This is perhaps the hardest lesson for postmodern Anabaptists. Yes, God is beyond the Cathedral and Creed, but certainly not beyond ethics![23] Many postmodern Anabaptists are as ethically earnest as liberal Unitarians and humanistic Quakers, only worse, gathering in the name of Jesus not for Doxology but for a more splendid orthopraxis!

The great temptation for Anabaptist

Fundamentalists like John Horsch was to substitute a doctrine of justification by belief for the gracious mystery of justification by faith. The great temptation for neo-Anabaptists, indeed, even for postmodern Anabaptists, is to substitute an earnest doctrine of justification by ethics for the biblical stories of justification by faith. Ah, but we are saved by grace through faith.

Even as there are many voices in the contemporary church, there are many voices in the Bible. There are even many stories and models of repentance, forgiveness, and redemption. With so many wise and interesting voices from which to learn, why are our ministers, bishops, and theologians drawn to the harshest words of Scripture? My 102-year-old grandmother used to insist that because Mennonites and Brethren don't believe in war, we must nevertheless find some way to shed blood through our religion. This peace has destroyed many!

Last Lenten season I had the privilege of meeting Father Raymond Brown, whom some call the premier New Testament scholar in North America. He astonished me with words that fell like reckless, irresponsible grace on my well-trained Anabaptist ears. Professor Brown suggested that Jesus teaches us through the Parable of the Prodigal Son that there can be

> "The stern language of discipleship and ethics rarely saves anyone. Ah, but the elegance of holy kisses has called many sinners home."

forgiveness without repentance. Forgiveness without repentance? Imagine that.

In the Gospel story, when the father saw his wayward son from a great distance, for all he knew the young man was returning home for a loan. Or for a larger cut of the family inheritance. But the father did not weigh the prodigal's intentions. Instead the old man ran out to greet him and fell on his neck with kisses.

Brown was careful to state that this is just one narrative. There are also hard words in the Bible. Yet shouldn't we, as members of the peace church tradition, be most attracted to stories of tender mercies and extravagant love?

The stern language of discipleship and ethics rarely saves anyone. Ah, but the elegance of holy

> "'If you find you no longer believe, enlarge your temple.'"

kisses has called many sinners home. This I know. This is not mere liberal tolerance; this is reckless grace. In our Anabaptist zeal to keep salvation ethical, may we also keep it graceful; may we also keep it artful.

## Beyond the God we Name

God is beyond the category of the ethical, God is beyond the cathedral, God is beyond the creed. Indeed God is beyond the God we name. Jews and Anabaptists writing minor literatures can easily join the prayer of that great heretic, Meister Eckhart, "Oh God, Beyond the God I name!"[24]

The rabbis teach us that Genesis is not the beginning of religion and morality; Genesis, in the words of Aviva Zornberg, is *The Beginning of Desire*.[25] Emmanuel Levinas, standing between Judaism and Postmodernism, insisted: "The relationship with the Infinite is not a knowledge but a Desire."[26]

A deeper understanding of imagination, mystery, and grace has returned Desire to postmodern Anabaptist theology. This postmodern theological writing is not driven by mere duty or discipleship but is itself a light in the head and a fire in the belly. It is passion. With the return of Desire to theology there is less austerity, humility, morality, and self-rejection—and more play, poetry, story, irony, mystery, grace, carnal vitality, and creative power in the blessed work of theological composition. With the return of Desire we may again know *jouissance*, the pleasure of the text, for with the return of Desire, God has

returned, and with the return of God, you see, we have the return of the strong author.[27]

Long before the postmodern death of metaphysics, the seer, sage, and preacher Ralph Waldo Emerson declared that a philosopher or moral theorist must work by art, not metaphysics. Unhappy with both moral philosophers and philosophical theologians, Emerson wrote, "I think that philosophy . . . will one day be taught by poets."[28]

Last month I was reading Emerson on a commuter flight from Pittsburgh to Manchester College in Indiana. My eyes fell on a passage that gave me such intense pleasure that I almost stood up and read it aloud to the other passengers. Being a very reasonable and respectable Anabaptist preacher, I of course did not. But I will conclude this essay with it.

Emerson of course not only influenced the great poet of radical democracy, Walt Whitman, he also greatly influenced that counter-modern divine, Friedrich Nietzsche, and his longing for a strong soul.[29] This passage is from his inspired essay, "The Poet:"[30]

> The poets are thus liberating gods. The ancient British bards had for the title of their order, "Those who are free throughout the world." They are free, and they make us free. An imaginative book renders us much more service at first, by stimulating us through its tropes, than afterward, when we arrive at the precise sense of the author. I think nothing is of any value in books, excepting the transcendental and extraordinary. If a man is inflamed and carried away by his thought, to that degree that he forgets the authors and the public, and heeds only this one dream, which holds him like an insanity, let me read his paper, and you may have all the arguments and histories and criticism. All the value which attaches to Pythagoras, Paracelsus, Cornelius Agrippa, Cardan, Kepler, Swedenborg, Schelling, Oken, or any other who introduces questionable facts into his cosmogony, as angels, devils, magic, astrology, palmistry, mesmerism, and so on, is the certificate we have of departure from routine, and that here is a new witness. That also is the best success in conversation, the magic of liberty, which puts the world, like a ball, in our hands. How cheap even the liberty then seems; how mean to study, when an emotion communicates to the intellect the power to sap and upheave nature: how great the perspective! Nations, times, systems, enter and disappear, like threads in a tapestry of large figures and many colors; dream delivers us to dream, and, while the drunkenness lasts, we will sell our bed, our philosophy, our religion, in our opulence.

I could write more about the God beyond the cathedral, beyond creeds, beyond ethics and beyond the God we name. However, I must conclude with a line from the poet W. S. Merwin: "If you find you no longer believe, enlarge your temple."[31]

## ENDNOTES

[1]From the narrative poem of John Burt, "Viglius Zuichemus" *Salmagundi* 111 (Summer 1996), 166-169.
[2]See J M. Stayer, W. O. Packull, and K. Deppermann, "From Monogenesis to Polygenesis: The Historical Discussion of Anabaptist Origins," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 49 (April 1975), 83-121. For an analysis and criticism of "normative Anabaptism" see Rodney Sawatsky, "The Quest for a Mennonite Hermeneutic," *Conrad Grebel Review* 11 (Winter 1993), 1-21. Mennonite historian Arnold Snyder has recently published an introduction to Anabaptist history and theology, which unlike many earlier works in the field, struggles seriously with the reality of polygenesis, yet in an imaginative search for a "theological core," demonstrates significant areas of consensus in the midst of conflict: C. Arnold Snyder, *An Introduction to Anabaptist History and Theology* (Kitchener, Ont.: Pandora Press, 1995).
[3]H S. Bender, "The Anabaptist Vision," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 16 (April 1944), 67-88. This version of Bender's classic reconfiguration of Anabaptism was reprinted with minor revisions from *Church History* (March 1944), 3-24.
[4]I learned about this exchange between Bloch and Metz from Jürgen Manemann during a personal conversation with him in the summer of 1997 at Columbia University where we were both doing research under an ARIL Coolidge Fellowship. Manemann is a member of Metz's circle of political theologians on the Roman Catholic faculty at Münster.
[5]Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor*

*Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986) Christian theologian Charles Winquist has recently noted the usefulness of thinking of theology in terms of Deleuze's notion of a minor literature in his *Desiring Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

[6]Roger Badham and Ola Sigurdson, "The Decentered Post-Constantinian Church: An Exchange" *Cross Currents* (Summer 1997), 155. I have corresponded with Badham about this matter. Further, I have been in touch with the Postmodern Jewish Philosophy Network and their electronic journal *Textual Reasoning* in exploration of Badham's interesting links between Jews and Anabaptists after Christendom. Two important collections of postmodern Jewish essays have recently been published–Steven Kepnes, ed. *Interpreting Judaism in a Postmodern Age* (New York: New York University Press, 1996); Steven Kepnes, Peter Ochs, and Robert Gibbs, eds., *Reasoning After Revelation: Dialogues in Postmodern Jewish Philosophy* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1998).

[7]This essay emphasizes the many possibilities for the postmodern "return of God" Some years ago during a memorable conversation with Wayne Booth at a narrative conference in a Utah ski lodge, Booth offered some interesting reflections on the possibility of "deconstruction as a religion revival." Booth grew up in the Mormon Church and thus is no stranger to the many uses of minor religious literatures within the dominant narratives of Christendom. He has recently published a paper on the constructive use of deconstruction: "Deconstruction as a Religious Revival," in *Christianity and Culture in the Cross Fire*, Hokema and Fong, eds. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 131-152. My other work tracing "the postmodern return of God" appears in *Mennonite Quarterly Review* (April 1997) and *Cross Currents* (Fall 1997).

[8]Ludwig Keller, *Die Reformation und die älteren Reformparteien* (Leipzig: S Hirzel, 1885).

[9]The best narrative account of the evolution of John Horsch's theology from "undogmatic to dogmatic Anabaptism" is found in the first chapter of Abraham Friesen's new book, *Erasmus, the Anabaptists and the Great Commission* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 6-19

[10]See John Horsch, *Modern Religious Liberalism* (Reprint; New York: Garland, 1988) and *The Mennonite Church and Modernism* (Scottdale, Penn: Mennonite Publishing House, 1924).

[11]Note the new Bender biography –Albert N. Keim, *Harold S. Bender 1897-1962* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1998).

[12]Clarence Bauman, ed and trans., *The Spiritual Legacy of Hans Denck: Interpretation and Translation of Key Texts* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991). Daniel Liechty has recently edited, translated, and introduced a collection of Anabaptist writings on spirituality. Note especially his translations of South German and Austrian Anabaptists in *Early Anabaptist Spirituality: Selected Writings* (New York: Paulist Press, 1994). My evolving work suggests these mystics had a more independent "Christomorphic" spirituality in contrast to the more communal "Christocentrism" of the Swiss evangelicals.

[13]Gottfried Arnold's life, theology, and connections to medieval mysticism and spirituality are treated in Peter Erb's *Pietists, Protestants and Mysticism: The Use of Medieval Spiritual Texts in the Work of Gottfried Arnold (1666-1714)* (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1989) Also see Peter Erb, ed., *Pietists: Selected Writings (Classics of Western Spirituality)* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983).

[14]Arnold published *Die Erste Liebe* as a book in Frankfurt in 1696. He speaks of the Christian life in the language of "a first love" (Rev. 2:4). His links to the great love mystics are evident in this work, and this "love Pietism" was warmly received by the early Brethren.

[15]Postmodern theology and philosophy share some of the concerns of the premodern mystics and Pietists about the problems of "naming God" in language and "thinking God" through creed and church Note also David Tracy's concerns about the captivity of *theos* and *logos*, which is the grand temptation of the discipline of theology–"The Hidden God," *Cross Currents* 46 (Spring 1996), 5-16; and "The Return of God," in *Naming the Present* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1994), 36-46.

[16]Gottfried Arnold, *Unparteyische Kirchen und Ketzer Historie* 3 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Thomas Fritsch, 1699-1700).

[17]Donald P. Durnbaugh's new narrative history of the Brethren, *Fruit of the Vine* (Philadelphia: Brethren Encyclopedia, 1996) captures how redemptively oppositional and subversive Arnold was in his historiography, which championed many heretics as true believers and condemned many orthodox as the anti-church.

[18]A creative study showing connections between postmodern categories such as deconstruction, transgression, excess, gift and the experiences, expressions and discourses of saints, mystics, and heretics is Edith Wyschogrod's *Saints and Postmodernism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990). Also, for a fine postmodern interpretation of the great mystics and their writing see Don Cupitt, *Mysticism After Modernity* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1998).

[19]Vernard M. Eller, "Kierkegaard knew the Brethren-sort of," *Brethren Life and Thought* 8 (Winter 1963), 57-60.

[20]Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography* (New York: Henry Holt and Co, 1912), 128-29.

[21]This is to remind the reader of the irony, play, and pleasure in Kierkegaard's texts. Consider his statement on holy laughter: "Something wonderful has happened to me. I was caught up into the seventh heaven. There sat all the gods in assembly. By special grace I was granted the privilege of making a wish. 'Wilt thou,' said Mercury, 'have youth or beauty or power or a long life or the most beautiful maiden or any of the other glories we have in the chest? Choose, but only one thing.' For a moment I was at a loss. Then I addressed myself to the gods as follows: 'Most honorable contemporaries, I choose this one thing, that I may always have the laugh on my side.' Not one of the gods said a word; on the contrary, they all began to laugh. From that I concluded that my wish was granted, and found that the gods knew how to express themselves with taste; for it would hardly have been suitable for them to have answered gravely: 'Thy wish is granted.'" See Roger Poole and Henrik Strangerup, eds. *The Laughter is on my Side: An Imaginative Introduction to Kierkegaard* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 241.

[22]For the purpose of clarification I must stress that I am not suggesting that Kierkegaard's program would move us to a place "without ethics." I am rather calling attention to the Dane's understanding of a God "beyond" the category of the ethical. A fine experiment in postmodern ethics with the work of Kierkegaard in view is John D. Caputo's *Against Ethics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993).

[23]What might this movement "beyond the category of the ethical" look like? In a forthcoming essay I argue that the final years of Dietrich Bonhoeffer demonstrate a movement beyond ethics on behalf of the Other "First We Take Manhattan, Then We Take Berlin," *Cross Currents*, 1999-2000.

[24]Matthew Fox, *Breakthrough: Meister Eckhart's Spirituality in New Translation* (New York: Image Books of Doubleday and Co, 1980). Also see Reimer Schurmann, *Meister Eckhart: Mystic and Philosopher* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978).
[25]Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg, *Genesis: The Beginning of Desire* (Jerusalem: The Jewish Publication Society, 1995)
[26]Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity* Alphonso Lingis, trans. (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969).
[27]I develop this more fully in my "Theology is a Kind of Writing: The Emergence of Theopoetics," *Cross Currents* 47 (Fall 1997), 317-331.
[28]Emerson is quoted here by John Dewey in his University of Chicago lecture, "Emerson—The Philosopher of Democracy," May 25, 1903. See Dewey, *Characters and Events* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1929), 70. In the constructive development of my own Theopoetics I am grateful for my conversations with poets Julia Kasdorf and Jeff Gundy and for their literate approach to Anabaptist history, thought, and life.
[29]See George J Stack, *Nietzsche and Emerson: An Elective Emerson* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1992). Among the many contemporary Nietzche commentaries, the most engaging work I have read is Lesley Chamberlain's *Nietzsche in Twin: An Intimate Biography* (New York: Picador of St. Martion's Press, 1996).
[30]Ralph Waldo Emerson, Intro by Alfred Kazin, *The Essays of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987), 236-237.
[31]W S. Merwin, *Second Four Books of Poems* (Port Townsend, Wash.: Copper Canyon, 1993). From the poem, "A Scale in May," p. 112. A special thanks to Jeff Gundy who first recited this great Merwin poetic fragment to me.

# Book Reviews

**"Just What Did We Do Wrong?": Ingrid Rimland and Selective Memory**

Ingrid Rimland, *Lebensraum!* Vol. 1: *A Passion for Land and Peace*. Vol 2: *The Theft of Land and Peace*. Vol. 3: *The Dream of Land and Peace*. Toronto: Samisdat Publishers, 1998. 510, 464, 576 pages.

The first task of a reviewer is to decide if a book deserves review. Given the flood of books published each year, my rule of thumb is that only very good books should be reviewed; the rest can safely be left to sink into oblivion.

So I mention Ingrid Rimland's *Lebensraum!* trilogy in print only because of the minor controversy these books have caused in some Mennonite circles. Rimland's name has been somewhat known among Mennonites since her 1977 novel *The Wanderers*, which treats the Mennonite exodus from the Ukraine. Born in the Soviet Union in 1936 to a Mennonite mother and a non-Mennonite German colonist, Rimland has never claimed Mennonite allegiance, but has occasionally sought recognition especially among ethnic "Russian" Mennonites now living in North America.

In a brief preface to the first volume, Rimland defines a novel as "fiction against the backdrop of genuine emotions." The books, however, lack almost all of the qualities of good fiction. Rimland writes clumsily, without either subtlety or clarity; her characters are stereotypes and clichés, the plot utterly predictable, the style numbingly repetitive and wordy, the frequent narrator's commentary heavy-handed, redundant, and appallingly unbalanced. Even more troubling is the failure of imagination and emotion that allows Rimland to sentimentalize and hyperbolize the travails of her chosen people—ethnically "pure" Aryans—while trivializing or dismissing that of everyone else.

As the title suggests, the subject of *Lebensraum!* is the National Socialist project of claiming "living space" for the Aryan people and clearing out, however violently, the prior inhabitants of that space. If one were to read only Rimland's version of European history in the middle of this century, one would think that the noble Nazi soldiers merely tried to remove a few inconvenient obstacles in a clean, almost surgical effort to set things straight. One would certainly never guess that Adolf Hitler and the National Socialist party ignited the bloodiest conflict in human history, one that left at least fifty million people dead and great portions of the planet in a shambles. Blitzkrieg warfare, the occupations of Czechoslovakia, Poland, Belgium, France, Denmark, Norway, the Soviet invasion? Nearly bloodless. The enormous network of concentration camps, deportations, systematic executions on a massive scale? Somehow those never become part of the narrative at all.

In Rimland's version of the German invasion of the Soviet Union there are no atrocities, no hundreds of thousands of prisoners of war methodically executed. It is more like a child's fantasy of the Just War: "The Führer's planes kept floating on the wind as though they were but toys. The engines cascaded white steam. Trains, hung with flags and garlands, whistled through the countryside. Ships, loaded with emergency supplies, plowed through the foaming sea. Trim girls on bicycles waved happily at handsome soldiers as panzer spearheads started ripping through the fields." (140)

The war is so pretty, at first, and (we are asked to believe) so good. Not only do the ethnic Germans of the U.S.S.R. welcome the Nazi

invaders, but so do many of the "real" Russians, or so Rimland would have us belive. Those who do not are either pawns or henchmen of the Red Terror and the international Jewish conspiracy. Her characters are seldom troubled by moral ambiguity: "He knew with steely clarity one single, red-hot point: were it not for the Führer and his might, a sea of red would have, by now, washed over all of Europe. . . . This, too, is now forgotten. How genuine it was. How sweet and virginal it was." (vol. 3, 144)

The delusion that total war and mass killings can be "sweet and virginal" is essential to Rimland's project. Make no mistake: these books are unabashed apologies for Hitler, National Socialism, and the cause of "Aryan" supremacy. They are frankly racist and unapologetically anti-Semitic. Rimland would have us believe that the enormous violence the noble German "race" perpetrated during Hitler's years in power was just the necessary cost of restoring cleanliness, decency, and Aryan superiority, and ridding the world of the twin specter of Jews and Communists. She evidently hates Russians, who are uniformly depicted as stupid and brutish, and has little more than contempt for Americans, who fall for the propaganda of Roosevelt and the *New York Times* and take the wrong side. She brushes aside the Jewish Holocaust, dismissing it as a "corny story" that pales beside the suffering endured by "real" Germans: "'Just what did we do wrong,' I ask myself, 'except to lose the war?'" (vol. 3, 524, 525)

Rimland actually believes, as far as I can tell, that the answer to this rhetorical question is "not a thing." She seems quite sincere in her conviction that killing those not of Aryan "blood" is simply not a moral issue. It is as though her moral universe has enormous empty spaces in it, spaces where millions of people can be killed without compunction for the sake of "Lebensraum," spaces where Dachau and Auschwitz and all the rest somehow vanish. On the other hand, the suffering of idealistic Germans, especially women, is foregrounded and depicted in numbingly overwritten detail; somehow despite their innate Aryan superiority they are also hapless victims, not at all responsible for the terrors they undergo. The only "tragedy" of the war, by her lights, is that her side lost, because the international Jewish conspiracy and the foolishness of the Americans caused ethnic Germans to kill other ethnic Germans in what she repeatedly terms "fratricidal" warfare. Brothers shouldn't kill brothers, she suggests; they should kill their real enemies. If we don't know who those are, she has a list for us.

To be fair, I must acknowledge that not quite everything Rimland depicts is false, and that some of what she describes has tended to be overlooked. The terrible hardships Mennonites and other German-speaking residents of the Ukraine underwent during the Russian Revolution and the Stalin era have been well documented in recent years, in novels such as Al Reimer's *My Harp Is Turned to Mourning*, in films such as *And When They Shall Ask*, and in numerous other memoirs and historical works. The citizens of Germany did suffer greatly during the relentless Allied bombing raids of the last years of the war. The end of the war brought hunger, privation, and misery to millions of Germans. Triumphant Allied troops surely did rape, abuse, rob and kill German civilians.

Yet even Rimland's description of these events is slanted and distorted, as James Urry demonstrates carefully in a recent *Mennonite Quarterly Review* article. The claim on which Rimland's entire project seems to rest—that the suffering of one group of people somehow cancels out that of another—is ethically incoherent. Her appropriation of the term "Holocaust" for the suffering of German people in a war begun by the German government and undertaken with enormous ruthlessness by the German military is especially and essentially dishonest. The vast and meticulously organized slaughter of millions of Jews, homosexuals, communists, Poles, Russians, Gypsies, and others deemed enemies of the state simply cannot be overlooked or excused or explained away.

It may be true, as Rimland insists, that many of those who supported Hitler did so for idealistic reasons. And it is true that our bloody century has no shortage of other atrocities. But murder done in the name of the Fatherland or the name of Christ is still murder. Mennonites committed to Biblical nonviolence should be especially resistant to Rimland's attempt to blur and soften the realities of Nazi terror.

The back covers of this trilogy—designed by Ernst Zundel, a well-known neo-Nazi leader based in Canada and Rimland's close collaborator—are mainly devoted to describing Rimland's and Zundel's "Revisionist" efforts to minimize and deny the Holocaust and to blame its

continuing place in the world's memory on Jews. The same vaguely grandmotherly photo of Rimland on these books can be found on her "Zundelsite" web site, which features an American flag, a tipped-Z symbol clearly meant to be reminiscent of the swastika, and a claim to the protection of the First Amendment. The site contains the same blend of paranoia, innuendo, half-truth, exaggeration, distortion, and out-and-out lies that characterizes the *Lebensraum!* books.

It is painful but necessary for Mennonites to recognize our own involvement in such far-right politics. Early on, many Mennonites in Europe and North America felt and expressed considerable support for Hitler. Among Russian Mennonites who had experienced the terrors of the Revolution and its aftermath, anti-Communism and corollary sympathy for Hitler were especially common. Especially before the war, and before the extent of Hitler's atrocities became widely known, such attitudes seem at least comprehensible. But now we know, and there is no excuse.

One of Rimland's few characters to escape stereotypical flatness is a young German girl named Lilo. Near the end of the war, as she speaks to a middle-aged greengrocer whose draft notice has come, she suddenly exclaims, "One can be sure and wrong. One can be right and lose. That's just my opinion." (vol. 3, 400) This voice of humility and balance, however, breaks through only for a moment, while page after dreary page is devoted to the incoherent, racist nonsense that even the characters clearly meant to be sympathetic spout endlessly:

> "We dislike usury. We hate corruption. Waste. We want a healthy world. No rotten teeth, enormous warts. We don't want to spread disease the way mongrels pass on to each other their fleas. A life without hard rules is hardly any life worth living. That is my firm opinion. We want a healthy earth. We don't want cities black with soot. We don't want people mating motley-style until the world is gray on gray and all distinction gone. Nobody argues that an ass should be a horse. Nobody doubts there is a difference between a thoroughbred and a mule. If you ask me, there is a clear-cut difference between a sheep dog and a poodle. Let poodle mate with poodle." (vol. 3, 466)

If you believe that human beings are more or less like dogs or horses, that "mating" should be restricted to one's own "race," and that "we" are clearly thoroughbreds while most others are mules, then Rimland may be for you. If you believe as I do that Jesus called all human beings to live in peace and brotherhood, and that in Christ there is no East or West, then her work will be of use mainly as an example of how terribly mistaken even very sure people can be. Of course, Yeats saw the danger in 1919 of things falling apart; "The best lack all conviction," he famously wrote, "While the worst are full of passionate intensity." What intensity the *Lebensraum* trilogy can muster is born only of fear, hatred, and prejudice. We must not mistake it for the truth.

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Abraham Friesen, *Erasmus, the Anabaptists, and the Great Commission*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998. Pp. xii, 196. ISBN 0-8028-4448-0

As the volume of scholarly publication continues to multiply in all disciplines, we can expect the same in studies of Anabaptist history and theology. And so it has been. Such increases in scholarly output, however, often lead to greater specialization in which the scribblings of the scholars become ever more distant from everyday concerns. Scholars of Christian history and theology may find themselves moving further and further away from the practical concerns of the church that their kind of scholarship might originally have been intended to illuminate. The title of Professor Friesen's book may therefore deceive us. In what appears on its cover to be a narrowly focused study, the author in fact presents an historical analysis that has broad implications for understanding the origins and shape of the Anabaptist movement to the present day. This is a work whose subject should appeal to a wide audience; Professor Friesen's lucid writing style and clear argument make it easily accessible to that audience.

In his masterful history of the Radical Reformation, George Williams showed in several places the influence of the theological, ethical, and textual methods and concerns of Erasmus and other evangelical Catholics on the early radical reformers. While Professor Friesen's book might

have remained merely an extended gloss on William's earlier work, his depth of scholarship and his extensive knowledge of the Reformation period make it much more than that. He clearly and firmly establishes the links between Erasmus' thinking about ethics, church matters, and doctrine on the one hand and the same Anabaptist concerns on the other. Friesen makes these links not merely by inference, but by showing direct attributions and influences (for example, 41, 44, 50).

The most important vehicle of influence between Erasmus and early Anabaptists in Zurich and elsewhere came through Erasmus' translation of the New Testament, his paraphrases of certain New Testament books, and especially his *Annotations*, which accompanied the translations, all published in several editions between 1516 and 1523. Friesen shows clearly that the radicals in Zwingli's circle, as well as other Anabaptists used these various translations and related writings, in many cases taking up Erasmus' specific theological perspectives wholesale. The most important of these perspectives occurs in Erasmus' interpretation of the Great Commission in Matthew 26 and the links he established between that commission and the baptismal and missionary practices of the apostolic church as these are described in Luke's *Acts of the Apostles*. While the influence of Erasmus on the early Anabaptists is most direct here, it may also have made itself felt on questions of communion, pacifism, and egalitarianism in the church, all of which strongly resemble the later Anabaptist views of several Swiss and South German groups (40-42). "Were one to read Erasmus without his Neoplatonic perspective," Friesen suggests, "one might nearly think him an Anabaptist." (36). And it is precisely this Neoplatonic philosophy, he argues, that falls aside in the scripturally-oriented *Annotations* that so strongly influenced the scripture-centric, not philosophically-minded Anabaptists (39).

Friesen is also able to show that when differences did arise between Anabaptist groups, these differences often correlated with which groups or leaders did or did not use the Erasmian translations and commentaries. This point is of particular importance, because it demonstrates that the Anabaptists were not a phenomenon that sprang from the ground completely independently, and it helps to account for some of the remarkable theological similarities among geographically and ethnically disparate groups of Anabaptists (96-97). Certain of the writings of Erasmus were the common point in both cases.

Similarly, the negative reception of Erasmus' work among Roman Catholics and magisterial Protestants may partially account for the inability of Anabaptist preachers and martyrs from the very start to persuade their persecutors of the scriptural legitimacy of their views: The earlier Erasmian versions of these arguments were already known, and the convoluted defenses against them established, so that the theologically and philosophically unsophisticated arguments of the Anabaptists could hardly expect a hearing (76-96). Examining this negative reception, we are also led to consider the different *uses* debates about baptism and other questions have had in the history of Christianity. Erasmian and Anabaptist interpretations were focused on a re-establishment of Apostolic practices, which stood in sharp contrast to the specifically political concerns of Christendom as it was represented in the magisterial churches from the time of the later church fathers onward.

In summary, Professor Friesen has provided us with a helpful window on a generally neglected aspect of Anabaptist origins and Anabaptist theology. This uncommon perspective may have implications for how we think even about the modern ancestors of those radical movements. His careful historiography, clear prose, and extensive footnotes make his effort particularly valuable, because they make it available to everyone without sacrificing depth or breadth. He asserts toward the end of his study that "not only is the Great Commission as interpreted by Erasmus the key to the problem of the *intellectual origins* of Anabaptism; it is also the key to understanding the movement as a whole" (98). It seems to me that he makes his case, and that it is worthy of careful consideration.

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