J. B. FREY
MISSIONARY TO THE HOPI IS

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PREFACE

The object of this paper is to elucidate the life and beliefs of Reverend Jacob Benjamin Frey in relation to his missionary activities in the Southwest. This man particularly interested me because it has been said that he taught that in the end of time the devil would be saved from eternal punishment through God’s goodness and grace. This belief is in contradiction to the beliefs of the General Conference Mennonite Churches from which Reverend Frey was sent and financed in his missionary work. Since this was such a serious charge, I decided that objectivity was of utmost importance. To maintain objectivity it was important to acquire information from both sides of the controversy. This became increasingly more difficult when the General Conference Board of Mission refused to allow me to look into their files and correspondence. After repeated discussions with them, they finally relented. I asked them to produce the evidence which was used as the basis of Frey’s condemnation by the General Conference Board of Missions; they could not produce the evidence.

I do wish to sincerely thank Ben and Ted Frey, sons of Reverend Frey, for their kind help in writing this paper. Also, much of the information in this paper is due to the kindness of Alvin Frey of Shawnee, Oklahoma. Mr. Frey supplied me with more than enough information to complete the writing of the paper. He allowed me to take and read at my leisure many invaluable writings, letters and
books of Reverend Freys; these shall be referred to as the Frey collection.

The attitude of the Freys was well put by Ben Frey in a letter to me when he said, "Our lives have always been an open book. There are no family secrets." This is exactly the way I found the life of Reverend Frey: "an open book," that no one had bothered to read.

It is regrettable that such an incident would occur in our General Conference Churches and even more regrettable that they would become so defensive on the matter. When in 1928 the Mission Board shut the window on Reverend Frey's activities in their churches, they opened up all the doors to him in the rest of the Southwest. For as the Mennonites can well remember from their own history, persecution will never destroy; it can only serve to strengthen.

R.H.H.
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A LIVING MESSAGE
TO
THE HOPI PEOPLE

Pre-Missionary Activities

"More than once during her life with the Freys, she had heard the Reverend Frey talking with God. Sometimes in the night, hearing his voice, she had looked out and had seen him walking the mission courtyard, bent a little forward, his hands clasped behind him, as he placed his problems in the hands of the Hopi people. He loved them. More than they ever knew, he loved them."¹

Who was this loving Reverend Frey who brought the reality of God's message to Hopiland as no other white missionary has done?

Frey was the son of immigrants from South Russia. His father, Benjamin Frey, and mother, Maria Wedel Frey, were married in South Russia, Feb. 18, 1864. They immigrated from Berdiansk, South Russia and settled in Greenfield township, Marion County, along with other Mennonites. Here they homesteaded land offered to them by the government. On April 21, 1875, Maria Frey gave birth to a son and named him Jacob Benjamin.²

¹Elizabeth Q. White, No Turning Back (New Mexico: The University of New Mexico Press, 1984), p. 82.

Jacob grew up as most other farm boys in this Mennonite community. While attending the grades in the Greenfield District School he helped his father do the farm work. He did well in school and went on to Bethel Academy in Newton, Kansas. Also doing well in his work here, it is believed that he taught for a short time in the same district school he attended as a boy. In 1899 Jacob was married to Aganetha Balzer in the Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church.¹

After this time, life became a struggle for the Frey family. He worked hard to continue his education at Bethel, for, shortly after his marriage, a call had been extended to him to fill a position as a missionary in Arizona to the Hopi Indians. Besides his school studies he had to find time to do farm work to support his growing family. A new addition to the Frey family came on August 15, 1900, when Mrs. Frey gave birth to a son whom they named Theodore.

Frey took special interest in the study of languages while at Bethel. He felt that to really understand the scriptures one must be able to read them in their original languages. He studied German, English, three years of Greek, two years of Latin and managed to teach himself Hebrew between wheat harvests. It is no wonder that the story his son Alvin tells is believable.

"Dad use to study in the field while he was plowing. He would wire his book to the plow and read it while he walked along behind the team."²

¹From an interview with Rev. Frey’s son Alvin of Shawnee, Oklahoma, April 16, 1967.

²Ibid.
During the summer of 1902 he was helping his father harvest 130 acres of wheat when he fell ill. He was quickly taken home where the doctor diagnosed his fever as a case of hopeless typhoid. The President of the Mission Board was notified that Frey did not have long to live. The Mennonite Board of Missions then notified Frey that they had begun to search for a replacement. His reaction to this was that he would not die, but that he and his dear wife would work at least ten years on the Indian mission field.¹

Through his conviction he regained his health and was waiting at Bethel College for his senior year that following fall. His last year there was spent once again in language study. Besides taking a full college load he labored with the Rev. H. R. Voth, who had recently returned from the Hopi mission to teach Frey the language before he entered the mission work. His college work had gone well, and he graduated in May, 1903. He was ordained under the auspices of the Foreign Mission Board on June 2, 1903.²

Soon after commencement we were ordained and sent to the Hopi Mission field. Our send-off from the Newton, Kansas, railroad station was an encouraging affair in that there were so many churches represented to bid us farewell and assure us of their prayers. When the conductor asked for our transportation he said he had never seen such a send-off; the station and yard were filled with people and the tracks lined for quite a way; he added, "You must have many friends."


²From a letter by Rev. Philip A. Wedel, pastor of the Alexanderwohl Church to Rev. J. B. Frey, April 27, 1953.
And we felt it, and it encouraged us greatly, because we felt assured of their prayers.1

Mission Activities in Hopiland

Before going into the work of Frey with the Hopi Indians, it is necessary to speak about the history of the Mennonite mission work in Arizona.

Shortly before the turn of the century the old Hopi chief, Lalolma, went to Washington D.C. to arrange for the establishment of federal schools in Hopiland. In his foresight he saw the need for his tribe to learn the English language and the necessary training to prepare them for approaching civilization. He also remembered the old tribal story about the Hopi's search for the white man's religion. It was then that he decided that his people should have a church to teach them the white man's religion.

As there are many church organizations to choose from, he wondered which organization should be the one for his peace loving tribe. He finally decided that he would ask them about their methods of dealing with war. He went to the Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Christian Reformed Church and the Mennonite church. Finding that all but the Mennonites would join in the war efforts by taking an active part with guns, he decided that the Mennonites should be the church for his people.

The Hans have a belief that the one who lives in heaven is pure and holy, and anyone that is not pure cannot go to heaven.

So when the Mennonites came to Oraibi, Arizona, they were welcomed because they did not believe in killing other human beings.

Then the Indians began to wonder what would happen if the Mennonites would quarrel among themselves. How could these Indians who knew nothing of the scriptures be able to tell who was right. They then decided that since it was God's word, He would reveal who was right. Later the Indians believed they saw this revelation.\(^1\)

It was in 1892 that the first Mennonites came to Hopiland to study the possibility of a mission in Oraibi, Arizona. Reverend G. Krebsiel and Missionary H. R. Voth visited Oraibi in 1892. They managed to gather the necessary funds to send H. R. Voth as a pioneer mission worker.

"Bro. Voth set to work at once to study the language, the customs, manners and ceremonies of the Hopis because he believed that he would thereby be better able to understand them and get closer to them in friendship and be better fitted to preach the Gospel to them."\(^2\)

As Voth acquired this knowledge of the Hopi Indians he worked his way into their private lives shooting hundreds of pictures as he did this. These actions angered many of the more conservative Hopis. Some people have said that this helped cause the great division that soon came to the Hopi Indian tribe. In Oraibi there

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\(^1\) Appendix A.

were two factions: those Indians that were friendly to the white government men and missionaries and those who were fed-up with the government and missionaries of the whites. The "unfriendlies" wanted to get rid of the white man in whatever way was necessary. These "unfriendlies" were eventually "pushed out" of the Oraibi village. They wandered north and settled in Hotovilla, Bakabi, and eventually forty miles northwest in Moencopi. It was in Moencopi that Frey was to do the majority of his mission work.

In 1901, when Voth's wife died, he left the mission field and returned to Kansas. In his place the Reverend J. B. Epp came. Epp had told the Mission Board that he would remain for two years after which he would go back east to finish his medical studies. During these two years the Mission Board searched and found Reverend J. B. Frey to take Epp's place. So in 1903 Frey and his wife left comfortable Kansas for Oraibi, Arizona.

The Freys traveled by train as far as Canyon Diablo, Arizona, where they were met by Epp who took them on a two day ride across the desert in a wagon to Oraibi. Here in Oraibi they were met by the chief, Loelima. They immediately put to use their knowledge of the Hopi language and from then on always spoke to the Indians in their own tongue. Frey said this helped to create a better atmosphere in which to work with the people. The Freys always talked to each other in Hopi showing the Indians they had no secrets to keep from them.

A few months after Frey arrived on the mission field, he became in great demand as a speaker. The Baptists asked him to give
the Thanksgiving sermon at their mission at Keams Canyon, Arizona. None of the Baptist missionaries knew the Hopi language and were always using interpreters. They thought the Indians might enjoy hearing someone speak directly to them in their own language.

When Frey began to preach and pray in the Hopi language, they all looked quite shocked. When he had finished giving his sermon from his little black loose-leaf notebook, many came forward and spoke those words to Frey: "My father has been telling us about what would happen today, saying, "A white man will come with a black book, and he will read in Hopi out of the book and speak Hopi without an interpreter; listen to him, he has the word from heaven," and you are that man?!"

This story tells of how a Hopi prophecy came true; and the result was that many believed that Reverend Frey was sent from the "Great Spirit" to show them the right way. Fulfiling this prophecy gave Frey a great advantage on the mission field.

From 1903 to 1905 Reverend Frey lived with his wife in the Voth home in Oraibi. He spent these early years getting established in the Hopi culture and learning their language. Each month they received the sum of $125.00 from the Mennonite Mission Board to support them in their work.2

In these early years their preaching services consisted mainly of street meetings. At these meetings he would weave a sermon

1 Appendix B.

around his slides. The slides were shown with a carbide lamp projector. It was rumored at this time that Frey was showing moving pictures. This is of particular interest because at that time moving pictures had not yet been invented. After digging into this story it was found that Frey had been showing his slides on a sheet which, when the wind blew, would give the effect of a picture in motion.\footnote{Ibid.}

Besides slides, singing was a favorite of the Indians. For this reason Frey spent many hours translating his German song book into the Hopi language. Eventually he translated such a large number of songs into the Hopi language that they were compiled into a song book and published. They are still used by the missionaries today.

Then in early 1905 Frey acquired some land in Moencopi and began work on a mission station there. He packed his tent and family and headed for Moencopi, forty miles northwest. The Freys now had two sons, and they went with them to Moencopi. Soon after setting up their home in a tent, the youngest son Alfred died of typhoid.

It certainly must have been a dark hour for the Freys when they began the work in Moencopi. The Indians gave them the poorest land near the mesa. Frey had to level and terrace this land by hand. All the limestone rocks he hauled off the mission station were then put to use in building a chapel and home. To save money
he made his own mortar and did almost all of the work himself. The General Conference Mennonite Mission Board gave him little help in those days. Finally with some help from the Indians the house was complete enough to move in after a year and a half of building.\textsuperscript{1}

It was also during this time that J. B. Frey terraced the rocky side of the mesa and built an irrigation system leading from a nearby spring to his future gardens. When he finally got settled, he planted a large garden which grew as well and better than many of the Indian's gardens. The Indians were quite surprised at this white man and would often walk miles to see his wonderful undertaking.

Frey would use those times as an opportunity to teach them his farming methods in hopes of gaining their friendship.\textsuperscript{2}

For a short time in 1905 J. B. Frey had to do the mission work at both the Oraibi and Moencopi missions, because J. B. Epp had not yet returned from his studies in the east. "This made it necessary to undertake the work at these two stations for the next two months although fifty miles apart. It was often necessary to make the journey from one station to the other during the night in order to be there the next day for services."\textsuperscript{3}

When Epp finally returned to the mission at Oraibi, Frey began to devote more of his time to the mission station in Moencopi. It was during this period that he constructed a Hapi alphabet and

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{1}] Appendix B.
\item[\textsuperscript{2}] White, \textit{Ho Turnin' Back}, p. 80.
\item[\textsuperscript{3}] Gustav Harder, \textit{On Cit.}, p. 24.
\end{itemize}
began translating the Bible into the Hopi language. By the end of his life he had translated Daniel, Luke, John, Acts, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I and II Thessalonians, Titus, Philemon, Revelation, Exodus 1-3, Psalm 121, Isaiah 33, Ezekiel 16, Matthew 7-8, Romans 1-8, and parts of Genesis and Mark. Also during this time Frey revised and printed a Hopi Bible study guide.1,2,3

During these years at the Moencopi mission station J. B. Frey would pack up his tent and travel to the neighboring villages. Here he would conduct tent meetings which consisted of singing and the showing of "heart pictures." These pictures were drawn for him by an Indian called Homer Coyawma, a young artist. They depicted the evil heart of man before salvation and then the good heart of man after he becomes saved. In each large canvas heart were drawn pictures of things the Hopi believed to be evil, such as snakes, etc. Reverend Frey could weave interesting stories around these pictures and consequently convinced many Indians of their need for redemption by using these "Heart Pictures."4,5

Although Frey had many happy experiences such as saving many Hopi Indians, his mission experiences were not all pleasant.

1. From an interview of Alvin Frey of Shawnee, Oklahoma, April 16, 1967.


3. J. B. Frey, letter to Rev. Gustav Harder, February 15, 1915. From the Gustav Harder Collection, Bethel College Historical Library, North Newton, Kansas


5. Appendix C.
One winter day he was riding between Graibi and Moencopi when he came to a very narrow spot in the path along the side of the mesa. His horse began to slip on the iced path and he quickly dismounted. Then he came to a spot where the path was only two feet wide and straight down on the side. He was leading his horse across this icy spot when its hindlegs slipped out and off the path. There the horse hung over the side of the mesa, its legs dangling over a several hundred foot drop and Frey trying to pull it back up on the icy path. Frey pulled with all his might and succeeded in saving the scared horse. Had the horse fallen over, Frey would have had to walk twenty-two miles with pack and saddle.\(^1\)

Not only did Frey have his trials with nature, but also with some of the "unfriendlies" living in Moencopi. A small band of Indians had been stirred up against the missionary by several government workers nearby. They even actually made an attempt to take Frey's life.

The Reverend Frey was walking past the schoolhouse when a rider came thundering along the road, twirling a lariat in one hand. The missionary saw him but made no effort to run away. The loop was thrown, but fell short. The rider rode on, the rope trailing.

Friendly Hopis rushed to the side of the missionary and no second attempt was made. The incident would have gone unreported except for one of the Hopi friends. The culprit was apprehended and brought up for trial, and he would have been imprisoned had not the missionary made a plea for his release, declaring that the man had learned his lesson and would not repeat his error.\(^2\)

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1 Appendix D.
2 White, No Turning Back, p. 32.
This unfriendliness toward the Mennonite missionaries was shown in still another way. At Christmas time the General Conference churches in Kansas would send food and clothing to the Freys. Then in turn the Freys would, on Christmas day, hold services and afterwards distribute the gifts from Kansas. The church was always packed with smiling Indian faces on those days. But the following Sunday would find only the same loyal handful in the stone church.¹

Nothing seemed to discourage Reverend Frey, for when the automobile came to the mission station, he took on more work. It was in the 1920’s that Frey built a chapel at the government school in Tuba City. Every few days Frey would travel to this small settlement to hold services in his chapel.²

Frey’s automobile often took him to Flagstaff, Arizona. Flagstaff was the home of the newly organized Southwest Bible and Missionary Conference. As president of the organization he pushed it forward when he supervised the construction of a large church and some twenty cabins nearby. In the cool summers Indians and missionaries from all over the Southwest would use these facilities to hold conferences. Under Frey’s leadership these facilities were financed by large donations.³

In viewing the mission work of J. B. Frey it is easily seen that he was a hard worker. He put forth much effort to bring the

²Ibid., p. 2.
³Ibid., p. 2.
scriptures to the Hopi Indians in their own language as it had never before been done. He offered the Indians a book of Christian songs in their own language, thus fulfilling the need for and love of music by the Hopis. Frey worked hard to establish himself with the Indians. He showed them love and comfort when a great influenza epidemic struck the Hopi Reservation. He tenderly cared for the sick and buried those lost to the disease. He taught them farming techniques for which he became admired by even his enemies. Through Government agencies, Frey managed to acquire mules, horses, and wagons for all the needy Hopis. All these things J. B. Frey did for the Hopi people he dearly loved. Many believed in his messages or in his daily Christian life and became the most staunch of Christian followers. Others who found it too difficult to throw off the old ways, nevertheless admired and respected this white missionary as they had no other white man. He was the most successful missionary ever to go to the Hopi Indians because of his love and patience on the mission field.¹

The Great Controversy

Throughout the ages of history it has been evident that when a man becomes loved and revered by his fellow men seeds of jealousy and hate find rich soil for growth. So it was in the life of Jacob B. Frey. At the height of God’s successes on the mission field seeds of evil blew across the sands of the Arizona desert

¹Don E. Frey: letter to author, p. 3.
into the lives of the Frey family. It was in 1912 when the spirits of injustice took hold of the Mennonite mission work in Hopiland.

When Reverend John R. Duarksen began his work as a missionary (1912) in Hopiland, Reverend Frey offered to help him get a foothold in that desert wilderness. So during a Baptist evangelistic campaign Frey offered to take Duarksen along to the mission activities. (Late 1912 or early 1913.) The trip was some distance, and the missionaries spent the night at the Baptist mission in Polacca. During the night Frey and Duarksen were discussing the scriptures as they lay in their bed. During the conversation Frey asked Duarksen if he believed Colossians 1:20 ("Through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross") also referred to the Devil being included. Duarksen answered, "he must..." Then Duarksen wanted to know what Frey thought about the matter. Frey answered that he "accepted it as it was written there." After this comment was made both men either fell asleep or the subject was changed, for this was all that was said that evening about the salvation of the Devil.¹

About two weeks later Frey received a letter from Reverend P. H. Richert, Secretary of the General Conference of Mennonite Churches Mission Board stating that Reverend Duarksen had written

¹From an undated letter by Rev. Frey to Elizabeth C. White, probably written in the early 1950's, p. 1.
him stating that Frey had told him that he believed the Devil would be saved. Richard asked Frey to explain his position on this matter.¹

Frey immediately wrote a few statements explaining the whole issue and that he had never believed, taught or preached this doctrine of Universalism. Reverend Frey suggested the reading of Jude, verse 7 as an example of what he believed would happen to the devil and his followers. Jude 7, "just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise acted immorally and indulged in unnatural lust, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire."²

Richard wrote back and said, "Brother Frey, I admire your scriptural defense."³

Then the Board of Missions sent their President, J. W. Kliwer, to investigate the whole matter. Frey, Kliwer, and Duerksen met at Winslow, Arizona, to discuss the matter. After much intensive questioning Kliwer concluded that there were some great inconsistencies in Duerksen's argument.⁴ But at that same meeting Frey was asked to resign from the mission field because of his false teachings. It is beyond the comprehension of the author that this could be asked of Reverend Frey after the evidence that had been

¹Ibid., p. 1.
²Ibid., p. 1.
³Ibid., p. 1.
⁴Appendix E.
presented had finally been reviewed by the Mission Board. It would seem that Reverend Duarksen would have been the one to resign. In actuality, based on the evidence of that conversation in Polocos, it would seem that Reverend Duarksen was the one that believed that the Devil would be saved.

Frey did finally resign from the Hopi mission field because his presence caused continued friction among the missionaries, and he felt that the work was so important that he would give it up so that others might in their own way manage to continue.

Later J. B. Frey received word that the Mission Board had investigated the whole matter and had decided that he was not guilty as had been charged and that they then considered the whole matter to be closed. But, was Frey actually vindicated by the Mission Board? Had the Mission Board and all concerned seen the errors and sought Frey's forgiveness for the gossip and slander that stopped the Hemonites dead in their dusty tracks in Hopiland? Evidence that piled up over the next thirty years indicated that someone had spoken with a "forked tongue."

Several incidents must be reviewed with reference to the truth of the Mission Board's vindication of Frey.

"When the Board sent Brother and Sister (John) Suderman to Craihi (according to Mrs. Suderman) the Board instructed the Sudermans not to have much to do with me.... And to be in favor with the Board gossiping about Fred Johnson and me seemed to be

1Appendix E, F.
the profitable avenue. The more they gossiped about our so-called "false teaching" at Conferences and meetings, the more they were praised that in the face of such "false teaching" they "stood firm for the truth." 1

"The way it appears to the Indians now is, that the Board is fighting against myself and Fred Johnson, whom the Indians consider in the most favorable light, saying they knew of no bad things about us; while the Board is shielding and standing up for the Missionaries whom the Indians openly charge with such corruption that would justify the government to close up their work and remove them from the reservation." 2

"Your whole procedure is far below the high standards and so unworthy of the Mission Board representing the Gospel ministry of the General Conference of Mennonites. It smacks of Roman Catholicism which our forefathers experienced.

First your Board acknowledges that my ministry has been successful in leading many souls to Christ. But that it is not as important as an interpretation of the Scriptures regarding the future state of those who die in unbelief, that appeals to the Board." 3

Only a few years later in a confrontation with the nearby Baptist mission Frey himself managed to truly vindicate himself.

2 Ibid., p. 3.
3 Ibid., p. 5.
at least with these missionaries. It seems that they had been told by the Mennonite Board or the missionaries that they should beware of Frey and his false teachings. For a while this satisfied the Baptists; finally they called for Frey to come to them and talk. He did so, and after questioning many of the Baptist missionaries, it was found that J. B. Frey was innocent in their eyes. All the Baptist missionaries confessed that they had never heard Reverend Frey teach or preach anything that could not be verified in the scriptures. Also present at this meeting was the Mennonite missionary John P. Suderman. They also asked him if he had ever heard Frey preach or teach any false doctrines. Suderman was then forced to admit in front of everyone that he had never heard Frey do such things.¹

Then in April, 1913, the whole matter finally came to a head when a sweet and dearly loved young Indian girl passed away. The mother of the poor girl had been saved by Reverend Frey and had much confidence in him. It was for this reason that she sent her sister to get J. B. Frey from his home over one hundred miles away to help at the funeral services the next day. The mother approached the General Conference missionary, Reverend Jansen, and asked him if the funeral services could be held in the Mennonite Church on the mission station; this was fine with him. Later the next day Jansen came back and said that he was sorry but that they could not permit J. B. Frey to come into their church with his false 

¹This, p. 6.
teachings. He also stated that this was the ruling made by the Mennonite Mission Board, and he simply had to carry it out. Consequently, the funeral service was moved into the aunt’s home. Who should appear at the services but the Reverend and Mrs. Jensen. They sat through the service until J. B. Frey stood to speak, and then they stood up and walked out for all to see. It is amazing how one could be so tasteless at a moment of grief that this family and community was experiencing.¹

This discussion, gossip, and slander has had a grave effect on the mission activities of the Mennonites in Kipiland. It is saddening to read the comments of some of the native Christians.

"Are we God to say and to judge as to who is to go here and there? Are we to go by man-made rules and by people’s feelings and words? Man-made religion. I don’t want any of that. If that is your religion, you keep it. No never mind Mr. Jensen, don’t worry about us. You keep your religion, we want none of it."²

Mr. Wolf also told Mr. Jensen, "You Mennonites, with your kind of religion have pushed me away from the Lord."³

"These Mennonites say they don’t go to war for it is against God’s Word to kill man. But they seem to think nothing of it when

¹Elizabeth G. White, Letter to the General Conference of Mennonite Churches Mission Board, April 25, pp. 1-5.
²Ibid., p. 3.
³Ibid., p. 4.
they turn right around and murder the character of a servant of the Lord without giving him a chance to defend himself.¹

Because of the attitudes of the General Conference Mennonite Mission Board, there has come to Hopiland a great schism among the Christians. The majority have broken from the General Conference Church and followed Fred Johnson, a native missionary prepared for the work by J. B. Frey. Until this split is mended on the Hopi mission field, and in Newton, Kansas, at the Mission Board's offices, I can see no future in the Mennonites remaining in Arizona. The Independent Church led by Johnson is continually growing, but the General Conference Church is more or less static. It must be a difficult situation for the Indians to face with so many different churches to choose from. It appears that, to be most profitable to Christianity, a consolidation of the existing churches is necessary. The Mennonites should pick up their regrettable past and get out of Hopiland leaving their churches to be operated by the native Fred Johnson. Since it is doubtful that the Mission Board will ever consider this action, they should consider teaching their missionaries the Hopi language and Hopi traditions or history, before they send them to Arizona. A second step would be necessary. This would involve some humbling and a little forgiveness. If the Mission Board and their missionaries are going to continue to believe that J. B. Frey taught Universalism and condemn the man without even hearing him, they should at least find it in their

¹J. B. Frey, undated letter to the Mission Board, Probably late 1940's, p. 4. Frey Collection
"Christian" hearts to forgive him. If this action is not taken and made public to the Indians, the Mennonite Church should not expect the respect of many of the middle age and older Indians who loved J. B. Frey dearly.

Frey suggested, "...that if our Board acknowledge their failure to God and also to the Indians and apologize to the Indians for causing them to suffer through their failure to correct matters long ago; and would correct what was neglected; that God was able to turn the defeat into blessing; and that done, God would also find a way to clear the two missionaries, if they were not guilty."

Post General Conference Activities

In 1928 Reverend Frey resigned from his position as a missionary in the General Conference of Mennonite Churches to the Hopi Indians. With his family, which now numbered eight children, he moved north to Flagstaff, Arizona. Here he managed to scrape together enough money to buy an old lumber camp with a saw mill. In the next ten years he turned this run down camp into a prosperous tourist camp ground with cabins. He had a small gas station, grocery combination on the camp grounds. With the help of his growing sons he ran the saw mill for the residents of Flagstaff. Many homes in the area were constructed from the wood he cut in his mill.

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2 Alvin Frey, Interview, April 16, 1967.
Despite his rejection by the Mennonites he continued to keep his hand in mission activities. During this time he began to make plans for an all Indian Conference of Christians which he later formed in Prescott, Arizona. He continued to be invited as a speaker by the Baptists for they had truly vindicated him of his accused universal teachings. Fred Johnson and his church also invited Frey to come and teach Bible classes occasionally. Once again the Mission Board stepped in and asked that Mr. Frey not be invited to speak at any of the churches. This action immediately caused Reverend Fred Johnson to resign from the General Conference, and most of the Indians followed him in his action.

In 1934 J. E. Frey and his family moved to Mno, Oklahoma, where Frey had been employed as a teacher in the Oklahoma Bible Academy. Here he taught for four years until gossiping ministers came to the O.B.A. and tried to make it hot for Frey. J. E. Frey apparently was getting tired of fighting with the Mennonites, so he packed up his family once again and moved back to his beloved Arizona after only six years in Oklahoma.

In 1941 he and two of his sons moved to a small ranch in Oak Creek Canyon which they had traded their Flagstaff property for. From here Frey was only a short drive from Parker, San Carlos, Cottonwood, and Prescott where he had helped to establish Indian churches. Now he took the time to work in the all-Indian Conference in Prescott, which he helped to organize. He traveled between these churches as guest speaker from Sunday to Sunday.¹

¹See Frey, Letter to author, p. 4.
I had written Bro. Richert that we had sold our small mission on Cottonwood Main Street with only twenty-five feet frontage and had bought a large place on Main Street with 160 feet frontage and 210 feet deep, including a two room cottage and a large garage, the large building being 32 feet long and 32 feet wide with a basement 18 feet wide and 32 feet long.

On his way from the General Conference in the East, he wrote me. "We with the large Conference behind us, have to reduce our work for lack of funds; and you, with no Conference or church supporting, you spread out." "Yes, we had no church or Conference supporting us. Our help came from individual friends, without any solicitation; and when money did not come in, it took from 25 to 35% of our income, and we adjusted our living expenses to the needs of the mission which came first.

Then we bought 21/2 acres timberland, 2 miles out of Prescott, for the Southwest Indian Bible Conference ground and enough lumber and other materials to build the Nest Hall and the Tabernacle. We mortgaged our Mission and the newly bought Conference ground and we still owe—which includes all our Conference debts—$300.00 which comes due March 9, 1950. Through the Conference and the different Indian Camp meetings and Evangelistic campaigns, Bro. Fred Johnson and I reach all the Indian tribes that gather at those meetings. And I have a standing invitation to keep me busy all the time.

So you see your telling the missionaries and Hopi Christians not to invite me, has not destroyed our missionary zeal nor closed the door to our ministry for the Lord. The Lord has set before us an open door and no man can shut it."

Reverend J. B. Frey saw himself in Revelation 3: 8, 9. "I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut; I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. Behold, I will..."
make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and learn that I have loved you."  

For over half a century Frey devoted his life to God's work among the Indians of the Southwest. Most of the time Frey went thankless for his hard work. On August 15, 1937, he peacefully died at his home in Oak Creek Canyon, Arizona. On that day I'm sure that he finally received an overdue reward for his diligent work as a missionary and Christian.

Conclusions

In conclusion several things must be said about J. B. Frey and about the General Conference Mennonite Church Mission Board.

First, it is evident that both Frey and the Hopi Indians felt that Jacob Benjamin Frey was a man sent from God to the Hopi nation. Frey interpreted his miraculous recovery from typhoid in 1902 as a work of God because God had plans for this Mennonite farm boy. The Indians saw in Frey the fulfillment of several old prophecies which were prophesied long before the Mennonites ever thought of working with the Hopi Indians. This fact gave Frey a definite advantage with the Hopis. It also gave the General Conference Mennonite Church Missionaries a distinct disadvantage when they took up a crusade against J. B. Frey.

The Indians also saw God's hand at work in other ways. If you will remember that when the Mennonites first came to Hopiland the question came up: what if the Mennonites would fight among
themselves, how would the Indians know who was right. It was decided that God would make known who was right and wrong since it was his work. So when lightning struck the Church in Craibi, the Indians said Rev. John Suderman is wrong. When lightning struck the mission at Basabi, the Indians said the Schmirrs were wrong.1 These two missionaries were among the primary gossips and slanders of Frey. So the Indians felt here white man’s God had shown them where the evil lay.

Second, the General Conference Mennonite Mission Board must change their ways if they ever intend to have success on the Hopi mission field. They cannot continue to accuse without ever once giving the accused a hearing. This is exactly what they did to Frey. Even in 1953 they refused to allow Frey to come before the Board to defend himself. Frey wrote them begging them to allow him to present his side of the issue. The secretary wrote back saying, “Your telegram of December 5, arrived here during the Board meeting. I read it to the Board and all the members who know the past shrugged their shoulders and no action was taken.... I personally have no ‘chip on the shoulder’ against you; but I must needs act according to the will of the Board. So at least at this time there is no reply.”2

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So we can see that the Mission Board based its entire condem-
nation on the words of one man, Reverend Duerksen. Everyone else
who testified against Frey based his whole testimony on the basis
of slanderous gossip. Not one person ever came forward and said
that they had ever heard Frey preach, teach or claim to believe in
the salvation of the devil. It would be well for the General Con-
ference Mennonite Church Mission Board to read the words of I
Timothy 5:19 which says, "Never admit any charge against an elder
except on the evidence of two or three witnesses."

As I began this paper with a quotation by Mrs. Elizabeth G.
White, I would like also to conclude with another statement by Mrs.
White from her book, No Turning Back. "The Reverend Frey always
heard her out with grave courtesy, and when she had stopped lec-
turing him for allowing himself to be lied about, he would assure
her, smiling, his blue eyes thinking, that he was not the judge of
those people, that a lie was not the truth and mouthing it could
not make it more or less than the lie it was. Leave them to God,
he advised the bustling young champion. Let God judge them in
His own good time."

1 White, No Turning Back. p. 81.
Appendix A

When the old Hopi chief, Kholoma, was in Washington D.C., making arrangements for the establishment of schools in Hopi country to teach the Hopi children English and prepare them for civilized life, he became conscious of the fact that they should have a church also where the Word of God should be taught.

There is evidence that the Hopis had sent a delegation of men east to get "White man's book from heaven," and they had gone as far east as Fort St. Louis and General Clark had befriended them and taken care of them as stated in the following tradition and historical release, as it appeared in the Christian Indian, a Conference periodical:

About one hundred years ago, four Indians were found walking down the streets of the frontier post Saint Louis. They were inquiring for the white man's Book of Heaven. General Clark befriended them and gave a feast in their honor before they left. At the feast, one of the Indians arose and poured out his heart saying, "My white friends, I came to you over the trail of many moons from the setting sun. My people sent us to get the white man's Book of Heaven. You took me to where they worship the Great Spirit, and the Book was not there. You showed me pictures of images and the land beyond, but the Book was not among them to show us the way. We are going back the long way. You make my feet heavy with gifts and my moccasins will grow old carrying them, and yet the Book is not among them. After one more snow I shall meet my poor blind people in the big council. They will ask us one question, "Where is the white man's Book of Heaven?" We shall say, "We do not have it." One by one my people will rise up and go out in silence. They will die in the darkness and will go to other hunting grounds. No white man will go with them and no white man's Book to make way plain. Farewell my white friends."

As there were a number of church organizations, the Hopi chief went to investigate and contact the different organizations to establish that their method of dealing with certain difficulties was especially in case of war.
1. He went to the Presbyterians and asked what they would do in case of war. The Presbyterians answered that they would take the gun and fight.

2. He contacted the Christian Reformed Church group and received the same answer.

3. He went to the Methodists and again received the same answer.

4. The Baptists also answered the same.

5. He asked the Hopenites what they would do in the event of war. They answered that their belief was that they must not kill, so they would not take the gun and kill and shed man's blood.

Then the chief held a meeting where he told the Hopenites that if they did not believe in blowing the horn of war, they should not do it. The Hopenites agreed, and the meeting was held in peace.

6. Then the Hopenites came to their meeting with the chief. They were happy because they believed in living in peace. The chief claimed that he was a Christian and should be built on the top of his house; so the chapel was built on top of the house.

The chief saw that the Hopenites were not in the right for they did not know the Word of God. The decision was made that it was God's Word, that God would make known who was in the wrong.

In the early years of our mission work in Hopiland, the Baptist missionaries had heard that I preached in Hopi without an interpreter and that they were to have a meeting on Thanksgiving Day at Mesa Canyon for all their villages, they invited me to meet with them and give the Thanksgiving talk in Hopi without interpreter—maybe it was not a novelty.

When the time came for my talk, I walked behind the pulpit with my black loose-leaf holder. I read the translation of the prodigal son, who left his father's house and went into a foreign country.

The Hopenites looked for my interpreter, but no one came. After the reading of the story, I prayed in Hopi. Then I began to speak, and there were many smiles, especially by the high school students. But when I described the young man's suffering, his money gone, his clothes ragged and harding hogs to have something to eat; and how he was not even at liberty to eat the feed the hogs ate and then how he began to think of his sin against his father and against heaven; and how he decided to go home and confess his sins—many Hopenites were weeping and many handkerchiefs were in evidence. After finishing my talk, I again prayed in Hopi and sat down.

Then the Baptist missionary, who was in charge of the meeting said, "Our Indians do not come to us missionaries with your troubles, because we do not understand Hopi. And if we use an interpreter you are afraid the interpreter will tell it on you. Here is a white man who speaks your language; you can go to him and tell him everything. He will keep your secrets and will be able to advise you. And now you can go to the front and shake hands with him."
and with bowed heads and their tears flowing, sobbed out their failures and confessed their sins. Now that the Holy Spirit con-
ficted them of sin, they did not even seem to mind that others
heard their confessions.

It took quite a while to pass that large company of people.
But the last man in line was a middle-aged man who seemed to be
smiling all over. When he got to me, he gave me a hearty grip
and said: "My father told us children again and again, 'A white
man will come with a black book, and read Hopi out of that black
book and speak Hopi without an interpreter. Listen to him, he has
the Word from heaven!' And he added, 'You are that man!'"

Appendix B

On this trip to Moon Copi, our youngest son, Alfred, took sick
and soon after our arrival at Moon Copi died. This was a hard
hour and the little mound that marks the grave near the foot of the
Mesa, marks the beginning of the mission work at Moon Copi. A tent
was pitched on the hill which served as a dwelling for the time
being. The Indians were opposed to the mission and a long time we
had to wait until a piece of land could be procured on which to
build the house for the mission. The land that was finally obtained
lay at the foot of the Mesa and had to be leveled and terraced,
which necessitated a great deal of hard work. A further idea of
the work required will be had when we remark that all the buildings
are made of limestone, procured in the neighborhood and the lime
used was burned right close to the place where it was used. This
saved a good bit of expense in building, but on the other hand it
took much time and hard work. Twice the Board sent workmen out
from Kansas but each time they had to return again because of some
business matters at home and the work had to be completed by the
missionary himself. The barn was erected by the aid of the Indians
and it served as a dwelling-house for the family until the house
could be built. After about a year and a half the house was so far
completed that the family could move in, but there still remained
a great deal of work to be done.²

Appendix C

At one time Mr. Frey came from Tubac City (about fifty miles
from here) to show pictures over here. My wife went to the meet-
ings, but I did not go. Mr. Frey had put up a tent. In the day-
time he visited the Hopi. I hated the missionaries and my heart

¹J. B. Frey. An undated Letter to the General Conference
Mennonite Church Mission Board. (Frey Collection) Probably early
1900's, p. 1-2, 11-12.
²Gustav Harder. A Review of the Rise and Progress of Mission
Activities of the General Conference of Mennonites of North America.
was aroused. When my wife started to go to church, she began to talk to me; but I paid no attention. Prior to the opening of the meeting, the village crier would call out for the people to come. I did not go for several days. I began, however, to think about the Hopi prophecy. It said that some one from the east should come to deliver us from our enemies and set us free. He would also bring a looking-glass with him and in it we could find out what kind of a man we are. He would be somebody who would have great power. So I began to think that the prophecy is like the Bible which says that when He comes, everybody would be free. The gospel must be the thing we have been waiting for. I did not know that it was the Holy Spirit talking to me, but now I know.

Now it started to work in me from both sides. I was trying to find out which was the best. I also began to realize that this was the One the Hopis were waiting for. I didn't go to church yet, but my mind began to stick to the gospel. I wanted to know more about the gospel and myself. When the last meeting in the tent came, it was at night. This time I was going to know. So I dressed myself up like a Navajo Indian. Soon there was singing in the tent. As I came to the tent, I looked for a hole where I could peep through; but I found none. So I took my knife and cut a little hole into the tent so I could look through. I tried to find out what people were there. The missionary was just showing the heart pictures and it made me angry. That evening my wife again wanted to talk to me, but I stopped her. Mr. Frey went from here to Pocass, about seventeen miles further east. Then I began to think more. No sleep came to me because there was a fight in me. I did not know that it was the devil and the Spirit. I did not know what to do.

Appendix B

Almost had an accident when I came home on the 5th. The bridle path goes by several overhangs which the sun doesn't shine. In the first place the horse began to slide and I quickly dismounted, in the second place the path is only two feet wide and completelyiced. I got off before we got there. First I almost fall, there was no other way to go. Then the horse slipped, his hind legs went down and he dropped to his front knees. And I fraced myself against a rock and pulled with all my might while the horse with its hind legs over the side tried with his front legs to pull himself up and as luck would have it he came back up. The horse was now worn out and shaking with fear. And I thanked God because if the horse had rolled down I would have had to have walked 22 miles with saddle and pack to Craibi.

1John P. Suderman. A Hopi Indian-Friends Christ. (No Date or Publisher Given) Bethel College Historical Library, North Newton, Kansas, p. 24.
Appendix E

When Bro. Kliwer the President of the Board investigated the trouble at Omaibi the native christians demanded that Bro. Duerrksen should resign.

So to relieve the situation, I said I would resign. But for this the native christians did not give their consent to my resignation until Rev. Kliwer told them, they should consent to my resignation as rest was the doctor’s advise for me, and the Board would send me back as soon as there was an opening.

When Rev. J. W. Kliwer was investigation matters on the Mission field, Bro. Duerrksen and I met him at Winslow. At the Hotel lobby in Winslow we had a discussion of matters before leaving for Omaibi. For instance Rev. Kliwer said to Bro. Duerrksen, you wrote the Board a letter saying your conscience forbid you to attend the Southwest Bible and Missionary Conference at Flagstaff, because Frey with his false teaching, was President of the Conference. But now since Bro. Frey has resigned as President, and has withdraw from the Conference, can you now attend the Conference without any pangs of conscience? Bro. Duerrksen said, “Yes.”


Bro. Kliwer said to Bro. Duerrksen, you told the Mission Board, it was against your conscience to attend the Conference because Bro. Frey was on the Conference Board, and now you acknowledge, Rev. Butler believes the same as Bro. Frey, and Bro. Butler is still a Board member of the Conference, yet now you have no conscience scruples to keep you from attending the Conference. Will you explain the difference. Bro. Duerrksen said, “Frey had been of long standing.” “Yet Butler and I were co-organizers of the Conference.”

Appendix E

And now that the Board members, Rev. Nyce and Rev. Wedel, have really investigated the slandering charges against me, because of the native Christians’ insistence, and have acknowledged that my teaching is scriptural, they have verified Bro. P. H. Richert’s acknowledgment on what proved to be his death-bed. When he stated he was perfectly satisfied as to my being scriptural and it made him very happy."

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Letters


Miscellanea