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# mennonite mirror

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volume 7/number 3/december 1977

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RADEO  
O O O O  
BLONE  
O O O O  
VIGGIN  
G O V I N G  
THAWEL  
O O O O



The spirit of Christmas  
is not liquid but



From among the 46 entries to our November contest, Mrs John Dyck, 1187 Kildonan Drive, was selected the winner.

Answers for the November contest were: truce, amity, friend, pardon, innesty, peace.

The letters are to be re-arranged and written in the squares to form words. Letters which fall into the squares with circles are to be arranged to complete the answer at the bottom of the puzzle.

A winner will be drawn at random from among the current entries and a cash prize will be awarded.

Entries must be sent to the Mirror office by December 21.

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## SNOOPING SPOUSE?

Newlywed: "I tell my wife every thing I am doing or thinking."

Oldtimer: "I don't need to. My wife knows everything I'm thinking, and the neighbours tell her everything I'm doing."

## LOST BIDS

An auctioneer suddenly announced: "A gentleman in this room has lost a wallet containing \$2,000. It if is returned, he will pay a reward of \$200."

There was a moment's silence, and then came the cry: "Two hundred and ten!"

## TOO MANY IDEAS?

Committee: "We started with two plans of action and now we have narrowed them down to eight."

## MEETING OF THREE

The small boy interrupted his father who was reading his newspaper. "Pop," the boy said. "I'm supposed to tell you there's going to be a small meeting at school tonight."

"Well," replied the father, "if it's a small one do I have to go?"

"You'd better," the son replied. "It's just you, me and the principal—and he's awfully mad."

## ESCAPE FROM MISERY

Success in love consists not so much in marrying the person who can make you happy as in escaping the many who could make you miserable.

## CAR INCLUDED

If the cost of gas goes much higher, more and more garage sales are going to include the car.

# mennonite mirror

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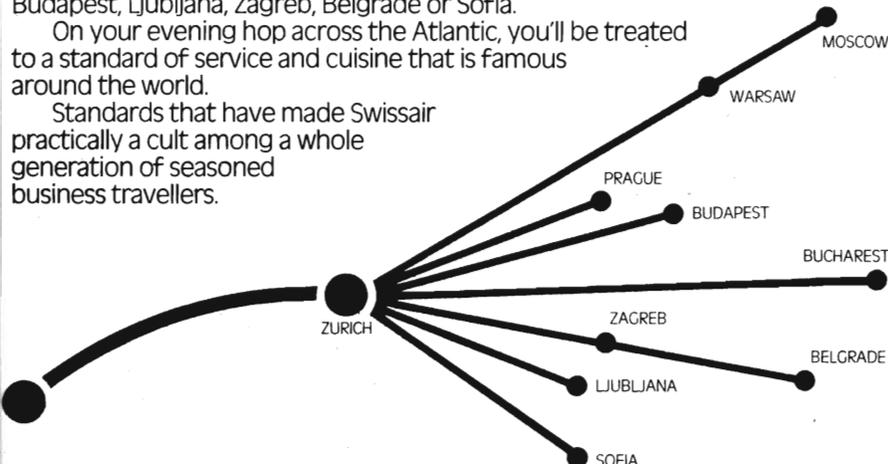
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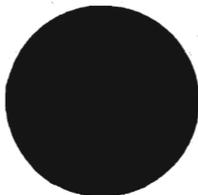
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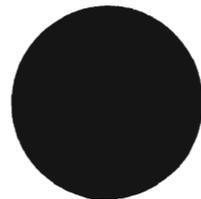


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# Reality of Poverty jars Christmas spirit

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By Anne Funk

Christmas is wonderful. The happy faces of the children, and the brightly coloured lights declare it is truly the merriest time of the whole year.

Excitement and anticipation abound. Carols proclaim the wonder of the Birth. Youngsters wait impatiently for Christmas morning. Families celebrate together.

The music and laughter inspire strangers to greet one another with a familiarity that would be impossible to achieve at any other time. The tantalizing aromas of the coming feasts invade the air.

Christmas brings out the child that is hidden in every adult. For a short while, it is quite alright to put aside the pretenses of sophisticated dignity grown-ups need to cloak their uncertainties, and let the wonder and magic of Christmas relax and refresh their souls.

But does Christmas mean all these things to everyone? I thought so. I was a young girl growing up on a small farm in Manitoba, and for me Christmas was a yearly glimpse of Paradise. We weren't wealthy, measured by certain standards, but at Christmas time I felt rich. There was so much to do; programs to attend, pastries to sample, and secrets to keep.

I can remember the Christmas programs in the one room schoolhouse where I got my elementary education. Each year we decorated the classroom, using the same tinsel and streamers over and over. But the colours of the streamers and the sparkle of the silver never faded.

On the night of the program the school filled as parents and siblings came to hear our presentation. We crowded into the tiny entrance, eyes bright with excitement, proud in our best clothes.

The program got under way. Those well rehearsed lines had an amazing way of eluding one's memory at the crucial moment. With much prompting and throat clearing, however, we got through the evening.

Then the scratching and fidgeting and shuffling stopped. It was time to exchange gifts. Solemnly we promised not to unwrap our presents, to wait

until we got home to find out what we had been given. It was the cruelest test of obedience I was ever put to, and the tentative shake I couldn't resist giving my package, only heightened my curiosity.

We went home then, but we knew this was just the beginning of the festivities.

Then came the Christmas which was to be the most memorable experience in my young life. I was 14 years old when I discovered that poverty wasn't an abstract idea relevant only to far-off places, but that it was alive and thriving in this country. I had to look beyond the close-knit sheltered Mennonite community I lived in. I saw people who lived in conditions they had not created, and could not improve. I found the reality hard to accept.

I participated for the first time that Christmas in the activities of the church choir as it caroled and delivered hampers of groceries to families in need.

I enjoyed packing flour, sugar and other staples into boxes and sharing in the camaraderie. The work went quickly and soon we piled into cars and set off on our 'mission of mercy'. I felt noble and brave. This selfless giving would indeed merit reward in heaven.

It seemed that we drove many miles along a narrow, winding road, deep into a snow-clad forest. My overly romantic nature was stirred to the core. Doubtless we were heading toward a grand adventure.

Abruptly the road ended. We were in a small clearing. Nestled against the tall, silent pines was a dwelling. Light showed through the cracks in the walls, outlining the smallness of the house. We picked our way carefully across the uneven ground, and knocked on the door.

It opened cautiously. An old woman, wearing faded and illfitting clothes stood before us. Her feet were weighted down with heavy boots. A black kerchief partly covered her graying hair. Her face was lined and tired. The hand that held the door open was chapped and swollen, the nails blunt and broken.

Someone placed the hamper of groceries on the floor. We crowded into

the room. A lamp on the table against one wall cast weird, unsteady shadows on the bare walls. There was a stove of some sort, a small fire flickered in the grate. On the floor in one corner of the room lay a mattress. A young child lay on it, asleep. The woman was not as old as I had supposed, and I saw then that poverty does not allow its victims to enjoy age distinctions because its victims are either young or old, there are no in-between times.

I looked at the woman, the child, the room. There was nothing to indicate to me that Christmas was only one night away. There were no pretty lights, no gifts, nothing. There was just the drab colour of need.

My thoughts were forced into some very uncomfortable channels. This place had nothing in common with Christmas! Christmas was joy and laughter, peace and hope!

I searched the gloomy atmosphere for some redeeming quality. I needed to find something quaint and poetic in the soft lamp-light, something in the small room to paint for me a nostalgic picture. Nothing in the ballads and folklore had prepared me for the stark reality of deprivation. There is nothing heroic or gallant in sleeping on a drafty floor, there is nothing romantic about facing an empty cupboard.

The choir sang. I mouthed the words, but my throat was too full to sing. What was the meaning of this place? Who was responsible for its existence? Why was I not made aware of such things before? I didn't understand what I felt: anger, pity hurt, frustration, sorrow, incredulity.

The beautiful, timeless strains of 'Silent Night, Holy Night' related the Nativity story for the woman as she sat on a chair near the table, listening, with her face full of peace and her eyes dark and gentle.

The song ended. She got up and began to speak. She hadn't understood one word of our singing; she couldn't speak English. I don't know what she said to us, but that wasn't important, but it was clear that the spirit of Christmas was present in that poor home.

I never knew her name, but she taught me more during that short visit about the meaning of Christmas than all the other years put together.

The Child who came to live among us, was born in poverty, but He was sent from highest of Glory. His birth was a miracle, and anyone can participate in the celebration of it. Christmas cannot be measured in terms of wealth or poverty. It is a state of mind, an affair of the heart. Each individual must discover something special in Christmas if it is to have any meaning at all, something very personal to apply to all the rest of the year. **mm**



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# Craft Co-operative keeps profit where it belongs

By Rob Enns, Erwin Baentli and Freda Peters

Bangladesh is a land of beauty. The wet tropical climate results in abundant growth and greenery throughout the year. However, life has not been easy for the Bengalis. Foreign rule, first by the British colonial powers, then by the West Pakistan government, denied Bengalis the right to rule themselves until after a back-to-back tidal wave and war of independence in 1970-71.

Bangladesh, with about one quarter the land area of Manitoba, must now overcome these odds to enable her 75 to 80 million people to catch-up on food production, health, education, technology, etc. in an attempt to become self-supporting. It's a tremendously large challenge, but Bangladesh, asking for co-operation rather than opposition from other countries, is seeking to meet that challenge.

It is an accepted fact today that the developing countries of the world can be helped more through the purchase of finished products than through the purchase of raw materials and foreign aid. Today the exporter of 1,000 kg of first class jute, for example, gets

approximately \$325. If he exports the same amount, manufactured into hessian cloth, he receives \$375. However, from this 1,000 kg. of raw jute, the women of Bangladesh can make place mats, flower pot hangers and other beautiful handicraft to the value of \$3,775 to \$5,660.

Is this not a typical example where the country of origin could keep their "value added through processing" by utilizing its own labour force in the processing of raw materials? The western world has used this principle for years in the manufacture of chemicals, tools, automobiles, and machines, and it has no doubt gone a long way to bring it to its present high economic level. Why should we then discriminate against similar strivings by a developing country? This has been a reason for the poverty of these countries for too long. Through colonization, through economic agreements amongst rich industrialized nations, and through almost insurmountable custom duties, they are forced to deliver raw materials. Because these developing countries are dependent on the rich countries, and because an equal exchange in trade between the two countries exists



Drying jute.

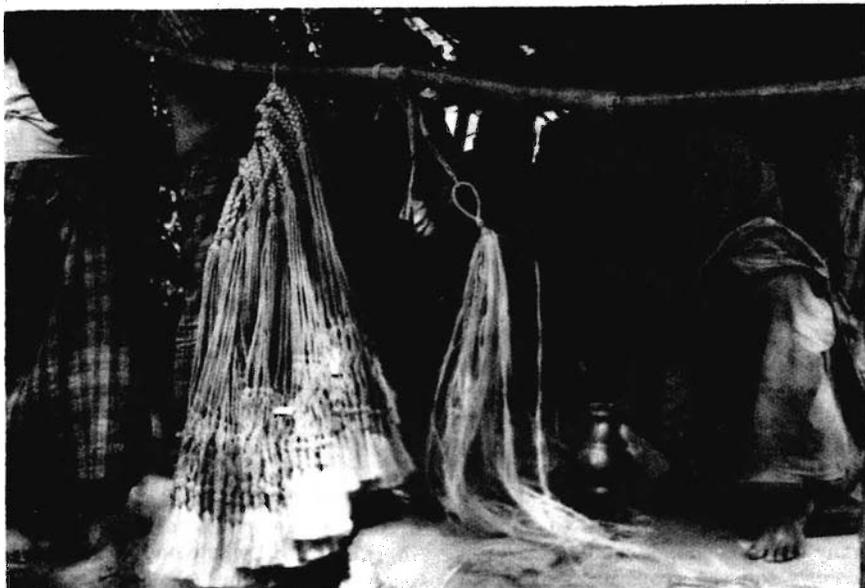
in principle only, the price of raw materials has not kept pace with the manufactured goods of the industrialized nations. These unbalanced terms of trade are invariably to the detriment of the developing countries. It becomes particularly noticeable when, for example, each year they have to export ever larger quantities of jute in order to purchase a pump or tractor.

As one way to increase local produce, the Bangladesh government has permitted a wide variety of projects to be initiated by foreign groups. The emphasis is shifting more and more to development projects rather than relief projects.

## Jute Handicrafts

Approximately 650,000 hectares, or six percent of the cultivatable land, is planted to the four to five meter high jute plants. Planted between February and April, and harvested in July or August, the stalks of the plants are then "rotted" in water for three weeks. Skillful hands then strip the loosened fibre from the stems, wash and dry the fibres, and finally tie them into bundles. Middlemen then buy the jute fibre and transport it by boat or oxcart to the city. Approximately 55 percent of the jute fibres are then processed locally into hessian cloth, 35 to 40 percent is exported in its raw state, and the remaining five to ten percent is used locally or made into exportable handicrafts.

About eight years ago, Bengali women organized themselves into jute handicraft co-operatives. Each of the about 40 co-operatives now operating meets monthly, checks the quality of their handmade goods, and transports them to Dacca. There, The Jute Works,



Making export products with jute.

begun by several voluntary agencies, including MCC, in 1973, acts as an export marketing co-operative for them. The number of women producing jute handicrafts through the Jute Works has risen from 300 to 6,000, with The Jute Works presently being staffed by 38 personnel, including three foreigners from Canada, the U.S.A., and Switzerland.

The Jute Works offers the women fair and fixed prices. It is a non-profit organization, but even so, 40 percent must be added for training, quality control, administration, packing and transport. The women are paid by their co-operative managers or secretaries, plus if The Jute Works should make a profit at the end of the year it is channelled back to the women. Handicrafts from the Jute Works have been sold in England, continental Europe, Canada, the U.S.A., Japan, Australia, and New Zealand.

The Jute Works helps Bengali women in their quest for acknowledgement and self-esteem in the men's world of Islam. The housewife has an assured market through The Jute Works, and has an additional income for the household. With skillful and willing hands, using only local raw materials, she fashions decorative and useful handicrafts. Annual sales of \$470,000 means a yearly income averaging 1,200 takas for each of the approximately 6,000 women. These sales are made possible through MCC self-help stores (including two self-help stores in Winnipeg) and similar non-profit outlets in the western world. If the same quantity of jute fibres was to be exported in its raw state, and the goods manufactured in another country, these women would be unemployed and the country would have earned 90 percent less in foreign exchange.

### Family Planning

As the Biharis are virtually refugees in their own country, a variety of projects have been initiated in their settlements in Dacca and Saidpur. Making living conditions more sanitary, 'seeding' the ponds with young fish, beginning small vegetable gardens, and establishing jute handicraft co-ops are all efforts that MCC encouraged and helped Biharis to undertake. With the crowded living conditions and with doors to outside jobs usually closed, real needs were not only these health and income factors, but also how to keep the population within limits.

MCC set up a Family Planning Clinic, attempting to convince people that smaller families had more chance of living happily. At first, reaction was very minimal, as religion, society, and tradition all strongly discouraged anyone from taking such a step as birth control. (Also, there are strong eco-

omic factors which favour large families, so birth control is but one part in the needed family planning process. However, it is an important step.) Eventually a few people did risk the unknown, and when they returned from the operation safe and healthy, a few others were ready to listen to them and do likewise. Opposition to birth control still does exist, but gradually the number of men and women coming to the Family Planning Clinic is increasing. MCC encourages clients of the clinic to discuss with their friends the importance of planned families, so that such a practice will be acceptable to all. Bangladesh has a large and growing population, so MCC hopes that the first steps taken by some Biharis in accepting the idea of family planning will spread to the rest of the population.

### Agricultural Development

"Nutritional self-sufficiency in Bangladesh" is the ideal toward which MCC's agricultural development program is structured. The program seeks to help increase not only the amount of food grown but also the nutritional level of food grown.

October sees the beginning of vegetable seedbeds and "demonstration days" at homes among farmers' co-operatives. (The vegetables MCC presents, for their nutrition content, are: tomatoes, cauliflower, broccoli, cabbage, Chinese cabbage, kohlrabi, lettuce, carrots, cowpeas, and beans.) Soon after, come the planting seasons for potatoes, soybeans, wheat, sunflowers, and sorghum. Some of these crops are totally new to Noakhali and Comilla districts, while others were known before 1972 already. MCC, through experimenting, seeks to find the most suitable varieties and the fertilizer, cultivation practices which will evoke the best yields for farmers in Bangladesh. Demonstration plots are then planted so that the farmers can see and compare for themselves. Those who feel willing to try one or more of the crops buy some seed, plant it at home, and can ask any MCC representative to come out should any questions or problems arise during the planting, growing season, or harvest. As some of the new planting methods, with use of fertilizer, are more expensive for the farmer than he's used to, he may have to personally see a high-yielding demonstration plot before he's willing to risk the extra expense. However, once one farmer in an area gets a big crop, his neighbours are immediately much more eager to try those new crops themselves the following year.

MCC has initially had to import many of the seeds, as well as help the farmers sell the crops at a profit to buyers who know how these food

crops can be used. The latter is accomplished by conversations, leaflets, some soybean cooking demonstrations, some price guarantees, etc. Contact with farmers and consumers is increased by Bengali Thana Agricultural Co-ordinators (TACs) whom MCC hires and trains. The TACs are an important part of these agricultural efforts being practical and accepted on a local level.

During the monsoon season, rice needs no new introduction. However, higher-yielding varieties and more efficient cultivation practices comprise MCC's training and extension efforts. Much of the information for rice is gained from publications from International Rice Research Institute in the Philippines.

Throughout the year, in order to grow more crops, the farmers often need more community co-operation, financing, irrigation, etc. With varying degrees of success, MCC has sought to revitalize the farmers' co-operatives (Krishi Shamabhai Shamities). In some areas where potatoes and wheat are now grown, interested co-operatives share the cost of tubewells so they can irrigate their crops in winter. Grain storage projects are another co-operative effort. The cost for these, and in other areas also for rice and sunflower crops, are gradually being covered by loans from the local Janata Bank. When MCC saw how farmers can be victimized by local moneylenders, they tried to bridge the gap between bankers and farmers. The Janata Bank has agreed to try this 'new risk' and has been doing fairly well. MCC has initially guaranteed the loan repayment themselves, even if some of the farmers can't or don't repay their loan in their first season. This is done only for the initial period so that the farmers will learn how to work with the bank and the bank will simultaneously discover the best way to meet the farmers' needs. As in its entire program, here MCC is seeking to foster a process which will continue to benefit Bengalis by their own involvement long after its workers are gone.

Some lights of hope are beginning to shine. Obstacles are still there, but Bengalis, together with us, are seeking solutions which are practical in Bangladesh, rather than just in Canada, so that gradually a healthier, happier people will be able to shout, "Joi Bangla." mm

### A PERFECT QUESTION

Since there are no perfect husbands in the world, what becomes of the perfect sons mothers are always bragging about?

# Northern nurse makes tough decisions alone

The nurse in charge at the northern Manitoba nursing station of Poplar River put faith into action on a wild and stormy winter night when a patient began hemorrhaging and she couldn't stop the bleeding.

Phyllis Nickel, the 20-year-old nurse in charge, had to decide between two options: keeping the patient in the nursing station until a plane arrived in the morning, by which time the patient would almost certainly have bled to death; or sending the patient to Norway House by Bombardier, a six-hour ride fraught with risks and perils in the stormy darkness.

The doctor at Norway House told her to send the patient by Bombardier; the patient's brother said no, the trip was too dangerous.

"I didn't feel qualified to make the decision," Phyllis says. So she prayed to God for help.

She decided to give the order to send the patient to Norway House, after involving the chief and band council.

The Bombardier set out at 1:30 a.m., accompanied by three Skidoos and another Bombardier. It broke

down before reaching Norway House, however, eventually arriving there at 11:30 that morning—hours after the regular plane had landed in Poplar River and flown out again.

But enroute, a miracle had happened. Two hours after the patient left Poplar River, the bleeding stopped. The patient survived.

"That was my worst night," Phyllis says, "I couldn't sleep wondering what was happening, whether I had made the right decision. I don't know if I could have made a decision without the Lord at my side. He calmed me."

As one of two nurses at the small lake shore community 250 air miles north of Winnipeg, Phyllis has had to make many decisions usually made by doctors because of the isolation of the community.

The small young woman from Emerson, Manitoba went to Poplar River in August 1975 as a Mennonite Central Committee volunteer. Just out of nurses' training, she felt unsure of herself many times in the responsibilities she was required to undertake. But now that she has met many different situations, she feels she would

be stifled in a city hospital where nurses are not allowed to dispense any medication whatsoever without doctor's orders.

Phyllis and the other nurse in Poplar River ran all aspects of the nursing station: examining and diagnosing patients, dispensing medications where needed, organizing vaccinations and community health care, even, if necessary, pulling teeth and delivering babies. A doctor came once every three weeks; dentists held two-week clinics every four or five months.

Several times a week the nurses held clinics for different health fields—such as vaccination, pre-natal care, and well baby clinics. Two or three afternoons a week—afternoons because homes were cleaned in the mornings—the nurses made home visits to follow up clinic visits or to see old people. During these visits the nurses discussed health matters geared at prevention, such as nutrition and safety.

They had assistance from paid community health workers appointed by government services, who went to the homes with the nurses, took water samples, assisted in teaching—again, work geared toward prevention. A three-person volunteer health committee, organized one month before Phyllis left, promoted health in the community and performed practical tasks such as cleaning houses.

Very sick patients and women expecting babies were usually flown to Winnipeg.

During the two years Phyllis was in the community she developed a love for the people and the place. She has decided to take a course in public health nursing in Halifax for the next nine months, but, she says, if she followed her feelings, she could stay in Poplar River the rest of her life.

"I like the way of life; it's quiet; and I like the situation. The nursing station was right on the waterfront. It was pretty. It has always been my dream to live near the water. And the community is very friendly."

The residents are Saulteaux, very open and communicative. "I got to know everyone in the community, not just on a hello-and-good-bye basis, but on a personal level. The people would share about themselves, their past and their feelings."

Accessible only by air and by boat in summer and snowmobile in winter, the community is far removed from the hurry and pressure of city life.

"In the city you have meetings every night and you rush here and there, with no time to be alone," Phyllis comments. "In Poplar River the farthest you can go is one mile. You don't have to drive for an hour to see a person as you do in the city."

One improvement she would we-



Phyllis Nickel at work.

come in Poplar River would be the installation of a telephone. All calls had to be by radio-telephone. Often you couldn't get a signal when you needed it most—in an emergency. Also, private conversation was difficult by radio-telephone.

"The whole North could hear you," she says with a grin.

In addition to her work as a nurse, Phyllis became involved in the community by teaching Sunday school in one of the community's three churches, and by assisting with a drop-in centre started by a medical student one summer.

She also went camping and hunting with local families. The expeditions to fishing camps were among the highlights of her two years in Poplar River.

When she left, the community showed its appreciation by giving her a gift and holding a farewell party for her. **mm**

#### DOCTOR'S ORDER

Doctor: "You're overweight. Have a glass of skim milk and a piece of dry toast three times a day."

Patient: "Should I take that before or after meals?"

## MCC to keep nursing service

Mennonite Central Committee (Manitoba) is satisfied there is a need for MCC teachers and nurses in northern Manitoba and will continue to assign suitable persons where possible, says Peter Penner, MCC (Manitoba) co-ordinator for Voluntary Service.

The first group of nurses and teachers assigned to northern Manitoba in August 1975 having completed their terms, MCC (Manitoba) has been re-considering the nature of future involvement in the North.

Penner says an active effort will be made to assign nurses but doubts that teachers will be placed. Immigration restrictions as currently interpreted limit recruitment efforts to Canadians. (The three MCC teachers in northern Manitoba the past two years have been Americans.)

Canada Manpower clearance for American teachers has been difficult to obtain and is expected to be well-nigh impossible this year. Penner says the Canadian teachers applying to MCC who possess the spiritual and personal qualifications are being assigned overseas, where the need for teachers is also great. Nurses are less

easily placed overseas and therefore more are available for northern Canada.

MCC (Manitoba) stipulated that any volunteers assigned in the North must be allowed to stay in one community for the length of the two-year term, and must be assigned with another MCC volunteer. The practice of the Medical Services Branch has been to transfer nurses as they gain experience so that each station has at least one experienced nurse.

Another stipulation is that MCC volunteers must be free to become involved in the local church and in any other community affairs where they can be of service. MCC's goal is not only to provide good professional services, but to minister to the whole person, to spiritual and emotional as well as physical needs.

The wisdom of the MCC policy has been borne out by the actual experiences of the volunteers. Phyllis Nickel, a nurse from Emerson, Manitoba who was assigned to Poplar River, pointed out in an interview that it takes some time for the nurses and the community to build confidence and trust in each other. **mm**

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# Anabaptist women took discipleship seriously

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Menno Simons

By LaVerna Klippenstein

Rapid cultural changes in recent years have led to increasing interest, research and discussion of the role of women in Mennonite congregations, particularly as it affects public worship services and employment outside the home. There is a wide difference of opinion and conviction on the subject even within congregations.

The role of Mennonite women has been determined largely by needs, cultural setting of a congregation, tradition, and interpretation of scripture.

Early Anabaptist women studied the Bible together with men, were martyred with them (almost one-third of the martyrs in the Martyr's Mirror are women) and in some cases, both had leadership roles. Anabaptist women were less dominated than other women around them. They took their discipleship seriously.

The translation of the scriptures into the everyday language and the introduction of printing encouraged literacy for women. Both men and women left their homes to go on evangelistic tours.

Within later Protestantism, a significant role for women in the life of the church came through the rise of foreign missions and the Sunday school.

Currently some Mennonite congregations are de-emphasizing the significance of ordination, presenting possibilities for an increased public participation of women. Others believe that it is for the woman's protection and preservation of a healthy church family structure to accept Paul's instruction in I Timothy 2. They recognize that although there are women who are capably carrying out leader-

ship of churches, their ministry is valid but irregular.

Most Mennonite congregations evidence some inconsistency in their interpretation of scripture, those who "do not permit a woman to speak" i.e. preach, nevertheless have women who are soloists, choir leaders, Sunday school teachers and missionaries. Few check whether the books or articles which instruct men are written by women. Women serve family suppers at church, men serve the Lord's supper.

Scanzoni and Hardesty (*All We're Meant To Be*) maintain that the prohibitions to ordination of women are based on theological tradition and cultural prejudices rather than on scriptural grounds. Their interpretation of I Cor. 14:34 and I Tim. 2:12 varies greatly from the treatment given those passages by Rita Bennet (*I'm Glad You Asked Me*) and Shade Driscoll (*My Full Inheritance as a Woman*). The latter maintain that in God's plan for authority in the church and home, there is no question about man having the final authority.

Mennonites have identified with both positions, most falling on a line somewhere between these two. A few agree with John R.W. Stott, who holds a third view. In marriage he says, the husband has a certain authority to which the wife is to be

## Credible Faith

*He said  
have bread  
and  
have belief  
do not take one  
without the other*

*So we said  
we'll share our bread  
we'll advocate belief  
neither contingent  
on the other*

By Menno Wiebe

submissive. This is not cultural but permanent, because it is rooted in creation. In the church however, both are under the authority of scripture.

Whatever position one takes, the fact remains that effective witness for Jesus Christ must take into consideration the human factors. the cultural context, the traditions and sensitivities of those to whom one would minister. All things may be lawful, "but all things are not expedient."

It may be unwise therefore, for those who desire to make Christ known, to spend a great deal of time and energy pounding on an impressive front door. when the side door is wide open.

Whether Anabaptist women found fulfillment in deference and domesticity was not questioned by their church leaders. Menno Simons' was a call to *faithfulness*. Faithfulness to God meant faithfulness to husband, home and children. Some would smile today, at the simplicity and antiquity of his message. But faithfulness is so rare today, when vows are easily broken, that it may become the Spirit's most convincing characteristic in our lives.

The truly Christian home remains the most powerful witness of the Christian faith. Apart from the personal tragedy is that when a home breaks up, God loses his best means of explaining himself. A Christian home is a symbol of Christ and the church. In any neighborhood, it is a manifestation of a redemptive society reflecting the reality of the Christian message. To nurture loving relationships continues to be a responsibility of no small significance for Mennonite women.

The role of women within the Church and outside the home has been discussed at length and with vigor in many congregations. Taking a vote on opinions says little, however, about their validity. Background, temperament, culture and life situations produce a variety of prejudices and convictions. The important thing is to see beyond one's own emotional horizons.

We must never be more conscious of ourselves or our roles than we are of God and His purpose for all people. Jesus came to set people free. His was a new kind of freedom. From chains greater than those recognized by the people.

To be free from self-pity is a much greater freedom than freedom to conduct weddings or pilot a commercial plane. The freedom Jesus offered was strange then and it is strange now. The role model for women and men in the Church must be that of Christ who came "to serve and to give his life." To join the family of God is to find a new freedom. And fulfillment through faithfulness. mm



## Assertive seventh son emerges as preacher and teacher

By Peter Patkau

The irony of being Antonea D. (Tony) Doerksen is that, although God never intended him to be a farmer forever tilling the fields, he permitted Tony to be born into a rather traditional Mennonite home which held to the notion that higher education is unnecessary for a respectable son.

The seventh son in a large family, Tony was to find growing up just a little difficult because he liked to assert himself but was forever being put down. The family situation was not necessarily conducive to academic or social advancement, for the privations endured in childhood due to difficult times tended to depress the sensitive spirit, and as a result Tony began early in life to nurture both an inferiority complex and an aversion to being taught, and perhaps to being told, revealing that streak of individualism which had earlier caused the elder Doerksen to be ostracized from the folds of the Sommerfelder Church and the subsequent move to the remote fringes of the Mennonite Reserve northwest of Morden.

Within the large family of nine sons and one daughter, Tony had to contend with "the pecking order in a Mennonite family." He was, in fact, considered and even told by his only sister that he was different, a "Joseph", disliked by everyone.

Like countless children of the traditional Mennonite persuasion, Tony stopped school at the legally permissible age of 14, initially determined that there would be: "No more teachers, No more books, No more lessons, And cross-eyed looks." High school was to come much later in bits and pieces. In the village of Neuberghthal, from where mother Doerksen came, no person was ever known to have gone to high school, much less university. Of the *Mennonitische Lehranstalt* at Gretna there never was even a whisper.

A portion of his youth may be considered quite bleak: "It would hold you back from aspiring to that which inside of you you knew you should accomplish." In the eyes of the church ignorance was certain bliss and curtailed artistic or creative development. Oh, father Doerksen read a great deal. One time he bought a copy of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* from a travelling bookseller, to the surprise of at least his seventh son. Father was a curious person from whom Tony inherited his particular curiosity and musical intuition.

One year, Tony Doerksen entered the U.S. School of Music Mail Order Course to learn to play the violin. Labouring four winters at the basics of music, he earned his Certificate, quite to his astonishment: "Maybe being a Mennonite was not such a great liability after all."

In the meantime, about 1946 to 1948, while attending the evangelistically-oriented services in the Morden Berghthaler Church, a religious fire was kindled in the life of Tony Doerksen. His brother Henry had been killed overseas at the end of the war, and it was Rev. Wm. S. Buhr and Elder J.M. Pauls who visited and comforted the family at this time. Attending the Pentecostal church later, Tony was converted in 1951—to some extent due to the influence of Elder Pauls, who had talked about salvation to the family.

At this time he gave up playing the violin at dances and became more involved in the Pentecostal church at Morden, to which he soon became attached. He found himself taking a Sunday school teachers course, and spent a summer at a Pentecostal camp, where he received God's call to the ministry or at least to extend his education. The academic year 1954 was spent at the Bethel Bible Institute (now Central Pentecostal College).

Up to now education was considered wicked and degenerate and derived

from the Devil. Yet now it occurred to this student—"the loneliest boy in Saskatoon that winter, 600 miles from home"—that Jesus Christ is the author and founder of all education when he "suffered the little children to come unto him". Sheer determination kept Tony at school, and he passed his examinations well. While he may not have entirely conquered the world, at least he had found his bearings and overcome his inferiority complex, concluding his third year as editor of the yearbook and valedictorian of his graduating class in 1957.

After graduation Tony took the resolute and indisputable advice of Pastor H.H. Barber when he said: "He who hesitates is lost", and entered the ministry at Napinka in the Turtle Mountain region, at the same time commencing high school by correspondence.

His desire to write was being stirred frequently. When he heard that the coal mines at Deloraine had been in operation in the 1880s, he wrote his first major story, of which an edited version appeared in the *Tribune*, won the *Margaret McWilliams Medal*, and was subsequently published by D.W. Friesen in 1971, and is now recommended by the Department of Education for use in the schools of Manitoba. As a result of the research on that story, material for about 50 other stories were located, some of which have been published.

A new period dawns for Tony Doerksen in 1975 as he searches for something innovative for his Sunday school class at Faith Temple, where he attends and faithfully teaches his 13 to 16-year-old boys. Together with flashing signs, graphics and the time sequence, he puts together an intriguing pantomime on the history of Bethlehem.

At this stage Mr. Doerksen became the president of *El Shaddai*, and has since become general superintendent in charge of overseas chapters. The work of *El Shaddai* consists in publishing *The Generation* magazine, of which Tony is editor-in-chief, and holding special services for rehabilitated drug addicts and alcoholics, as well as services on Sundays and throughout the week at *El Shaddai* headquarters on Main Street in Winnipeg.

Doerksen is also associated with Interdenominational Revival Program founded in 1972 in the living room of the Doerksen home, together with Wilhelm Janzen. All the executives are past members of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada and firm believers in the Pentecostal experience. They put on a TV broadcast on Channel 13 Cablevision and conduct open air meetings in Memorial Park during the summer months, no evangelical group being barred from participation in the program. mm

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# Mennonite's Journal captures gripping detail of Russian Revolution

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## *A RUSSIAN DANCE OF DEATH* Revolution and Civil War in the Ukraine

Like thousands of other Mennonites, Dietrich Neufeld (Dedrich Navall) lived through one of the most violent and chaotic periods in modern world history—the Russian Revolution and Civil War. What was unusual about him was that he had the courage, foresight and skill to write down his experiences as they happened, and thus was able to preserve a unique record of violence, destruction, suffering and, finally, escape. He wanted to reveal to the Western world the harrowing events that shattered his homeland—not the broad pattern of events we usually think of as history, but the intimate, personal trauma of life in a world gone berserk with hatred and blood-lust. In later years he described his motives at the time:

*The events were so pressing and dangerous that sometimes discouraging thoughts would enter my head: "Why write, since there are so few chances that I can survive or that the manuscript will find an intelligent hearing." It happened, however, that I was among those who survived.*

After his dramatic escape from Russia in 1920, Neufeld published his experiences in three separate books. Written in German, the books were well-received in Germany and other European countries. Later, after Dr. Neufeld had become a college professor in the U.S. he translated the first of his three books—a daily journal about the Makhno reign of terror in Khortitza—into English (1930). This book was also well-received. The distinguished American novelist Willa Cather stated in a letter to the author that the book "has made me realize the terribleness of the Russian revolution more vividly than anything else I have read."

Al Reimer has now re-translated this journal along with the other two books, which have not appeared in English before. The three short books form a natural sequence and have been combined into a single volume under the title *A Russian Dance of Death*. Part I (the journal) records in grim, relentless detail the stark horror

of life in the Old Colony under the Makhnovites during the fateful winter of 1919-20. Part II is a heart-rending account of the massacre at Zgradovka (the author's native settlement) in which 200 people were slain in one November weekend in 1919. In Part III the author describes his dramatic and suspenseful escape from the Russian nightmare.

*A Russian Dance of Death* has been carefully annotated and edited so that the author's personal experiences can be read against the historical background of the times. Since Neufeld was afraid to name the persons in his journal, the translator had the difficult task of identifying the characters in this moving drama. Many older readers will recognize the names of people who lived and suffered (and in many cases died) in Khortitza and Zgradovka during this terrible period. Younger Mennonite readers will get a vivid impression of what their parents and grandparents went through sixty years ago. The author was not afraid of controversy and expresses strong views on such issues as Mennonite military activities—the Self Defence—for example.

*A Russian Dance of Death* is being published for the Mennonite Literary Society by Hyperion Press, a new Winnipeg publishing house. The book is expected to be out this month and will receive national distribution. It contains 138 pages, is bound in soft cover, and is priced at \$6.95.mm

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## Another book about Russia

Reviewed by Ruth Vogt

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The publication of the book *Roots* and the TV series that followed has resulted in a revival of interest on the part of many North Americans in their ancestral heritage. In the past few years, many Mennonites have visited the U.S.S.R. from which they or their predecessors travelled to the New World. Nothing can equal the exper-

ience of being there and seeing the country at first hand, yet all travellers will agree that there is also a certain frustration which goes along with this. In a three or four week visit, one's impressions can only be superficial and one cannot learn very much about the people or the country.

The writer of *The Russians*, Hedrick Smith, was Moscow bureau chief for the New York Times for three years, 1971-1974. Unlike many North Americans, who take it for granted that they can manage anywhere in the world using the English language, he learned to speak Russian and thus was able to converse with Russians from all walks of life. He travelled extensively in the Soviet Union and his children were enrolled in Russian schools. His book is a comprehensive account of life in the Soviet Union today, and his portrayal of the country and its people makes fascinating reading.

While reading his opening chapter on "The Privileged Class", I was constantly reminded of George Orwell's classic satire, *Animal Farm*, in which the animals overthrow the tyrannical farmer, Jones, and set up their own system in which all animals are equal. Eventually, though, the pigs take over power, move into the farmhouse, and rule with more brutality than farmer Jones had used. Their slogan becomes "All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others." Such is the case in Russia today. The elite, important officials in the Party, live lives of luxury with their chauffeured limousines, country "dachas" and access to western goods and fine foods, available in stores which the average citizen cannot enter.

Despite the supposed elimination of class distinctions, in the "worker's paradise", Smith notes that these are very much in evidence. Blue collar workers and the "intelligentsia" live in separate apartment blocks and neither they nor their children have contact with each other. Workers' children generally expect to finish high school and become taxi drivers or factory workers, while the children of professionals usually go on to college. The children of party officials are generally assured of university graduation if they so wish.

Smith has interesting chapters on the upbringing of children, the life of women in Russia, and perceptive comments on the character of the Russian people and their attitude toward authority in general and toward their political leaders. He notes that while there is a general cynicism towards people in authority, the Russian people have a deep love for their country and the land itself.

While it is very easy to point out the rather glaring disparities between the

# Some hints on buying children's books

by Betty Dyck

"The time has come," the walrus said . . . to talk about books—specifically, children's books. Whether we want it or not, pay-TV is just a breath away. The arts community and the public are unprepared, but the cable operators and broadcasters are ready to move in and their prime concern will be to earn profits. Behind the scenes, frenzied efforts to produce a programming policy are going on. If the arts community is unsuccessful in lobbying for "the potential of pay-TV to create a new cultural forum for people of all tastes," we will end up with program packages appealing to the lowest common denominator.

We already have too much mediocre and mindless TV. With several recent studies showing that children spend too many hours in front of TV and the implications that this exposure is having a dramatic effect on both moral and physical behavior, concerned parents are looking for alternative forms of leisure-time activities.

Reading is a time-tested, fulfilling and pleasurable experience. Not all children like to read and there is no formula to make them pick up a book. There are some hints, though, that might help parents encourage their children to read more good books.

Poor content is not confined to TV. There are also good and bad books.

## More about Russians

ideals they proclaim and the reality of the system, we in the West should be somewhat wary in doing so, for we also could easily be challenged on the same grounds. To what extent do we have "pure democracy" here, and how often could those of us who claim to be Christians be challenged on our failure to live up to the teachings of Christ? Those, however, who think that Communism is a more humane system than Capitalism will derive very little comfort or support from this well-documented, readable study. mm

This I learned during a course in children's literature, and it would have been useful to me when our children were small. It was heartening to find out that some of the books we have provided were amongst those our professor deemed "good." These included Grimms and Anderson's fairy tales, *Treasure Island*, *Anne of Green Gables* and a set of children's classics which ran the gamut of fairy tales, folklore, poetry, animal stories plus Greek and Roman mythology.

A good book gives the child credit for his imagination and allows him to create meaning with already learned information. The book should be easily readable but combine complexity with what our real world is like. Such a book will associate solid ideas with mythical elements that will eventually revise the child's way of thinking, but it will never noticeably teach a lesson.

Parents cannot possibly read each book before buying, but most of us grew up with books and have some idea about the proven ones. What we do have difficulty with today is choosing from the proliferation of children's literature flooding the market. No matter where you shop—the supermarket, drugstore or corner store, there is a rack of children's books with attractive covers. You are tempted to take one—any one, because you have experienced the exposure to the fundamental lessons about life that books can communicate. The fact that some children's books contain bad ideas is something we are not always conscious of.

Bad children's books perpetuate prejudices, are limited by the author's conception of childhood and engineer what the author thinks children want. Numerous "bad" books relate nostalgic reminiscences of the author for a childhood that never was—happy, beautiful, perfect—and proclaim an intolerance to variety and an insistence on conformity.

Your local librarian and teachers are sources for recommending titles. One of the main criteria is to provide a variety of reading experiences for young children. It is damaging to choose one category and give them a

steady diet of the likes of *The Bobbsey Twins* and *The Hardy Boys*. This limits a child's imagination by stifling it. He still has a lot of exploring to do before he can accept himself in a limited way (like an adult).

Another factor is the atmosphere in which books are introduced. Remember when your parents cradled you on their knees and read you a story. If ever there is a way to create a zest for books this must be it—the association of love and security couples with vicarious experiences from the pages of a book cannot help but encourage a child to seek further pleasure in other books.

With Christmas just around the corner, you might appreciate a short list of suggested titles to get your children started on some "good" books.

For the pre-schooler and first graders begin with Dr. Seuss books and those written and illustrated by Maurice Sendak. *Piping Down the Valleys Wild* edited by Nancy Larrick is an excellent introduction to poetry for the young of all ages, and a good "read-aloud" book.

For the 8 to 15 year olds, there is *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett—living is the magic; *The Animal Family* by Randall Jarrell, a hidden lesson in acceptance of differences where the philosophy of the author comes through beautifully and simply; *The Book of Three* (one of a series) by Lloyd Alexander, which is fantasy—a tale of enchantment of good and evil and of the Assistant Pig-Keeper who wants to become a hero; *Puck of Pook's Hill* by Rudyard Kipling, where history and fantasy are excitingly interwoven. A new book on the market is *Jacob Two Two Meets the Hooded Fang* by Mordecai Richler, listed as children's satire. Our whole family waited breathlessly for the next episode when Richler read his book on CBC a couple of summers ago.

There is an old saying that "If you have but two pennies, spend one on bread and the other on music. The bread will give you the means to live and the music, the reason." This could easily be adapted by substituting "books" for "music." mm

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# Review: a good evening of men's singing voices

By Leonard Ratzlaff

On November 12, the Mennonite Male choir marked the 15th year of its existence by presenting a concert of favorites (suitably named a *Liederschatz Wunschkonzert*) at the Playhouse theatre before a near capacity audience. The choir of 80 men was directed by Bernie Neufeld and accompanied by pianist Elsie Klassen. Assisting the male choir in the concert were John Martens, tenor, trumpet soloist Arthur Fast (both accompanied by Jane Ellen Krause), and humorist John Wiebe.

Male choir singing is becoming a rare phenomenon these days, it seems. There was a time when glee clubs flourished all over Canada and the U.S., but today we hear of little more activity than the occasional weekend Saengerfest workshop for interested singers. What the main reason for this decline in interest is, is debatable—lack of time, or the takeover of electronic gadgetry in music-making, for example—but one didn't have to listen for too long on Saturday night in order to be convinced that we've got something to cherish in this group of men. The Mennonite German Society should be congratulated and encouraged to present this organization more often.

The choir presented a varied repertoire of favorites, mostly in German,

with two Robert Shaw arrangements of well-known English songs and a short low-German ditty interspersed in the program. The repertoire spanned 300 years of music history, with a heavy concentration on the German composers of the Romantic period. The program began with a beautifully controlled singing of Schubert's 'Heilig' (Sanctus). This was followed by a stirring version of 'Nun danket alle Gott' by Johann Crueger and a rather fast-paced 'Dank sei dir, Herr' by Handel, which to my mind lost some of the power and breadth of line this beautiful composition could convey at a slower tempo.

John Martens, tenor and professor of voice at MBBC, then joined the choir for Gounod's setting of 'Heilig'. Martens' singing throughout the evening was marked by his usual attention to every detail of the text and the music, and a sense of line and phrase that at times was spellbinding. This was especially the case in the Russian folksong 'Abendglocken' (Wetschernij Swon). Here, the choir's bell-ringing in the background provided the appropriate accompaniment for Martens' lovely singing of this simple melody. Later, Martens sang two contrasting Lieder from Schubert's song cycle *Schwanengesang*, 'Nacht und Traeume' and 'Das Fischermaedchen'. Hearing

these two beautiful songs, I was struck by the idea that the German society might do well to sponsor a few Liederabend recitals featuring some of our soloists in the city. We don't get to hear our vocal recitalists nearly often enough!

Arthur Fast's performance of a Handel trumpet concerto provided a pleasant change of pace from the predominantly vocal program. Fast's playing was mostly excellent, characterized by sensitive dynamic control and clear articulation in rapid passages. He was supported very well by Jane Ellen Grunau's crisp and solid accompaniment.

I am afraid I cannot speak intelligently about John Wiebe's presentations from the works of Fritz Reuter, but judging by the audience response, these short vignettes provided a good dose of Plattdeutsches entertainment for those lucky enough to know the language.

After singing several more religious selections (including Ruecker's setting of Luther's famous words 'Hier steh ich, anders kann ich nicht'), the choir turned its attention to secular songs. Of the two 'Jaeger' songs, one by Mendelssohn and one by Weber, the latter was more successful in conveying the atmosphere of the hunt. This chorus has to rank as one of the best ever written for a male chorus, and the choir sang it in convincing style. The Brahms 'Wiegenlied' on the other hand, was sung a little too quickly, and the gentle swaying quality of the rhythm in this lullaby was lost. The two Shaw arrangements were always well-controlled, and provided some of the best over-all singing of the evening from the choir. The program ended with a spirited version of Schubert's 'Widerspruch' with some fine support from the choir's accompanist Elsie Klassen.

This choir is made up of men of all ages, who obviously take to singing male chorus music in a big way. Although it could have stronger tenor sections, director Bernie Neufeld seemed to have worked out most of the balance problems. Neufeld's direction was very disciplined and clear, and the results of much hard work on perfecting the finer points of ensemble singing were quite obvious throughout the evening.

This concert was in every way an enjoyable evening, and the Mennonite Male Choir under Bernie Neufeld's direction deserved the enthusiastic reception from the audience. We hope to hear from them again soon. A word of appreciation should also be directed to the program chairman George Epp and the German Society for making such evenings possible. Let's have more!mm

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# do you know / weetst uck waut

**Dr. Walter Sawatsky** was the guest speaker at the North Kildonan MB Church morning service on November 13 and at the Central MB Church in their evening service. Sawatsky is the MCC in Europe working with Umsiedler Concerns.

**Dr. A. Friesen**, formerly teacher at MBCI and at present on staff at University of California, presented lectures on Aspects of Anabaptist tradition on October 23 to 25 at the Portage Avenue MB Church. In his lectures he noted that young Mennonites should not cast off their Mennonite heritage without first examining the theological traditions established by the first Anabaptists. There are many pleasant surprises, he said, to make a Mennonite identity valuable.

**David Friesen Jr.** of D.W. Friesen and Sons Ltd., Altona, was one of 10 panel members addressing a local histories workshop at Brandon University on November 23. He provided information on printing of local history books.

**Dr. John Sawatsky**, co-founder of Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ontario, and professor at University of Toronto addressed the banquet guests at the Winkler Bible Institute gymnasium on October 20 on the occasion of the annual Credit Union Day. The speaker discussed the results of a five-day tour and survey of the 13 Credit unions comprising the Southern Manitoba area.

Steinbach's **Treble Teens** with its musical director Shirley Penner have begun their 1977-78 season with an action packed program. Besides fulfilling various engagements they are working on a television production. They will be participating in the Nativity Parade in December at the Winnipeg Convention Centre. Their latest recording "Makin' Music" is accompanied by a group of professional instrumentalists and will be released early in December.

## CORRECTION "MANITOBA NEWS"

Frank Enns was not the first Elder of the Glenlea Church, but Rev. Toews was. Prior to retirement, Mr. Enns taught at Niverville, having taught at Gretna prior to that. Elder G.G. Neufeld of the Whitewater Church and Elder Toews officiated at the ordination. Rev. Neufeld was the presiding Elder at Mr. Enns ordination 26 years ago.



**Karen Anne Rempel**, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Rempel of 608-480 Charles St. in Winnipeg, won top honors in the recent graduation from the Health Sciences Centre School of Nursing. She was awarded the H.E. Sellers Memorial Award for highest overall average in theory and clinical practice, the Claire Bond award for proficiency in Maternal-Child Nursing, and a bursary to be used for further studies. Karen is currently employed at the Health Sciences Centre.

**Gordon Penner**, Winnipeg, received the Mountbatten medal, the highest Royal Life Saving Award in the British Commonwealth and the Canadian Society's M.G. Griffiths Award for bravery in saving a boy's life.

**Debbie Zacharias**, 10, outstanding athlete of West Park School, Thames District, attended a banquet for 200 professional and amateur athletes in Ottawa in mid October. Debbie was one of 13 outstanding athletes in the Canada fitness Program.

Residents and staff of **Donwood Manor** were host to a record number of guests at their annual tea and bazaar on November 4.

**Dr. Peter Dyck** MCC (Akron), and **Dr. Herb and Ruth Friesen**, missionaries in Afghanistan, Nepal, and Indonesia, were guest speakers at the annual Missionary Conference at MBBC November 4-6.

**Elim Bible Institute** of Steinbach held its opening program in late October with students, staff, and alumni joining in the celebration. John Froese, Altona resident and Elim graduate brought the message and several graduates of various generations described the role Elim played in their lives. Elim offers a two-year diploma program in Christian education and Church music. The present enrolment states at 42 full-time and 22 part-time students.

**Joe and Marie Wiebe** now make their home in Winnipeg but for 40 years they have served their God and their church in many parts of Manitoba. **Along Highways and Hedges**, by Hedy

Durksen, is the story of their four decades of service. This book is being published by the Manitoba Mennonite Brethren Conference and should be available for sale this month through the Christian Press, 159 Henderson Highway.

**Abe Loewen**, pharmacist, Steinbach, has been named co-ordinator of an Amateur Radio Emergency Corps. As such he organizes amateur radio buffs in his community to perfect arrangements for quick communication in the event of emergencies or natural disasters. George Hart, communications manager of the American Radio Relay League, announced the appointment. Hart indicated that Loewen as co-ordinator will be required to organize local hams through regular drill periods under simulated emergency conditions. Liaison will be established with relief and public welfare agencies as well as area protective services such as the fire and police departments. When sleet storms and other conditions disrupt regular communication services, the corps assistance will be invaluable, says Hart.

"**Friends**", a group of Christian artists, has prepared a program to be shown on CKY TV on Christmas Day. Produced by Gareth Neufeld, the program is entitled "Journey of the Magi", and features music of Benjamin Britten, based on the poem by T.S. Eliot. Also included will be music by J.J. Niles and Fauret. The music will be interspersed with readings written by Hedi Martens and read by Ken Reddig and Judith Dick. Principal artists will be singers John Martens, Sylvia Dick, Len Ratzlaff and Karen Kroeker and pianist Judith Lynn Kehler. Check TV guides for time of production.

**Northdale Mennonite Fellowship** recently held a sod-turning ceremony for a new Mennonite church at the corner of Edelweiss and Springfield Road. The general area has experienced a sharp increase in housing and population growth in recent years. While the group awaits completion of the church structure, services will be held at River East Collegiate.

The **Landmark Alumni Drama Club** presented on two evenings of last month, five low-German skits or plays written by Kay Friesen of Mitchell and Mary Pauls of Steinbach. Landmark Collegiate, situated in the heart of low-German country where people still speak that way, at work and play, had a good crowd of some 450 people. Refreshments in this theatre were different, sunflower seeds instead of popcorn. Perhaps the degree of spit and polish of a gymnasium floor scoured by the action of 'well-threshed' sunflower seeds could here serve as a measure of audience participation and enjoyment.

# The Glass Menagerie a Triumph

Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre's production of Tennessee Williams' **The Glass Menagerie** at the Playhouse Theatre, November 25 and 26, 1977.

A review by Al Reimer

Most reviewers would rather shout than whisper, praise than nag, accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative, as the old song has it, whenever conscience permits. I am happy to say that this year's production by the Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre inspires me to do all these things and more. This German version of Tennessee Williams' **The Glass Menagerie** was a fine piece of theatre by anyone's standards and easily the best I have seen this company achieve in the past half dozen years.

I went to the Playhouse Theatre on opening night wondering how on earth the play would sound in German, especially without the Southern accent. I also wondered how a WMT production would fare without Horst Friesen in a lead role. I soon discovered that I could rest easy on both counts. This was one of the least amateurish amateur productions I have ever seen. From start to finish everything went exceptionally well except for the lighting, and that technical short-coming was little more than a minor irritation in the general triumph of the evening.

**The Glass Menagerie** is not an easy play to do well. It has the barest of plots and only four characters to carry the considerable burden of its dialogue and its subtly shifting moods. A delicate mixture of poetic fantasy and sordid reality, it demands intelligent directing and sensitive acting. In this production it got both to a degree that had the audience applauding after even the briefest of its many scenes.

All four roles, I thought, were extremely well cast. The two dominant roles are those of Tom Wingfield, the frustrated young poet, and Amanda, his bravely neurotic mother. Tom, both as narrator and as the restless, fretsome son of Amanda, was admirably interpreted by Henry Schroeder, who showed a commanding stage presence astonishing in a player of his limited experience. He speaks well, moves well, and radiates the kind of on-stage confidence that usually comes only from a natural talent

augmented by a sound technique and long experience. He actually stole a scene from Selma Enns early in the play, which is a little like stealing a scene from Bette Davis or Glenda Jackson.

Selma Enns as Amanda, the mother, was simply superb. Her opening scenes as the shrewish mother living in her aristocratic past were competent and convincing. But in Act II, when she appeared in her fading, furbelowed red gown to greet "the young gentleman caller," you knew that she was in her dramatic element and that she would make the most of it. And she did! Mrs. Enns has the voice, the bearing and the technique to carry an audience along with her, to make that audience forget everything but the stage reality of the moment (the man beside me squirmed and cackled with pleasure every time Amanda got off one of her grandly pretentious sallies).

The long scene between Laura, the shy, crippled daughter of Amanda, and Jim O'Connor, the "ordinary young man" who comes to dinner, is not easy to bring off. Gina Rempel and Gerhard Wiebe brought it off splendidly. The scene had a poetical magic tinged with pain and finally despair which was deeply moving. Not for a moment did either actor allow the scene to sag. In the past I have criticized WMT actors for not interacting enough, for playing to the audience rather than to each other. Not here. Gina Rempel and Gerhard Wiebe created a dramatic bond with each other that was intimate and exactly right for the scene. The expressions on Miss Rempel's face were eloquent and heart-wrenching.

Acting of this calibre, especially in an amateur group, does not happen by itself. A major share of the success of this production has to go to Gert Neuendorff the director and to his assistant Dave Riesen. Their skilful hands were very much in evidence throughout. Mr. Neuendorff had drilled and coached his cast as only a good director can. The set by Ted Korol was also the best I have seen in any WMT production, as were the costumes. The lighting was a little embarrassing at times — either too early or too late, too abrupt or too slow — but lighting for a production of this kind probably requires more time and money than an amateur group can afford.

Good amateur theatre has a special charm; when it rises to near-professional

standards without losing that charm the results can be as exciting as they were in this memorable performance.

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catch you with  
your head down.

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## Coming events:

**Dec. 10:** 8:00 p.m. Saturday. At Sargent Ave. Menn. Church. CMBC Oratorio Program. Choir director - George Wiebe.

**Dec. 11:** 7:00 p.m. Sunday. At First Menn. Church, Variety Christmas Choir Concert. Three Choirs, Jr., Youth and Sr. with Noreen Gafic, Ed Hildebrand and Henry Engbrecht respectively, directing. Sr. Choir, "Machet die Tore weit" by Telemann, with orchestra.

**Dec. 11:** 7:00 p.m. Sunday. At Bethel Mennonite. Song Service.

**Dec. 11:** 7:30 p.m. Sunday. Steinbach Bible Institute. Christmas Concert.

**Dec. 12:** 7:30 p.m. Monday. Steinbach Bible Inst. school gym. Concert with the Bowker Bros. a duo-piano team from Edmonton.

**Dec. 16:** 8:00 p.m. Friday. At Sargent Ave. Menn. Church. Westgate Christmas Concert.

**Dec. 16:** At printing time undetermined. Friday night. At Altona Bergthal Menn. Church. Elim Christmas Concert.

**Dec. 18:** 7:p.m. Sunday. At Bethel Mennonite Church. Jr. and Sr. Choir Program.

**Dec. 24:** 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. Saturday. At First Menn. Church. Christmas Candlelight Services.

### Westgate sod turns

On October 27, 1977, friends of Westgate Collegiate attended a long-awaited ceremony—the ground breaking for the new facility which will include a gymnasium, library, office area, multi-purpose room, lounge, lunch room and shop. Representatives from 12 Winnipeg Mennonite churches which support the school were present to assist in the ceremony. In his introductory address, Rev. David Epp, chairman of the board, reminded the guests that in this 20th anniversary year since the founding of the school, there are now 166 students and 13 staff members, compared with 36 students and 2 staff members who started the school in the Education Wing of First Mennonite Church. Excavation work is now well underway, and the students hope to be able to use their new facilities at the beginning of the 1978-79 school year.



Crowd at Westgate sod turning.

### COMPUTER PASSES BLAME

"I've invented a computer that's almost human," boasted a scientist.

"You mean it can think?" asked his friend.

"No," said the scientist, "but when it makes a mistake it can blame some other computer."

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5:05 - 7:00 p.m.	— CHRISTMAS MUSICAL

*Special programs have been scheduled for December 24, 25 and 26.*

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Your Christmas Stations.

# “Koennen Sie mir sagen, was es mit den Aenderungen bei der Arbeitslosenversicherung auf sich hat?”

Gerne! Einige Grundregeln der Arbeitslosenversicherung sind durch neue Gesetzgebung geaendert worden.

Allgemein kann gesagt werden, dass sich die Bedingungen fuer Anwartschaft und Leistungen gebessert haben. In der jetzigen Fassung spiegeln sie genauer die Arbeitslage in den einzelnen Regionen wieder — dem Gebiet also, in dem Sie arbeiten und wohnen.

Laut Parlamentsbeschluss sollen Leute, die in Gebieten mit hoher Arbeitslosenzahl wohnen, gewisse Vorteile gegenueber denen erhalten, die in Regionen mit relativ grossem Stellenangebot leben.

“Schoen und gut. Aber wie steht es, wenn ich zum Beispiel gerade meine Stellung verloren habe?”

Am 4. Dezember aendern sich die Bedingungen fuer Ihren Leistungsanspruch.

Wenn Sie also in einer Region wohnen, in der die Arbeitslosigkeit gering ist, muessen Sie bis zu 14 Wochen versicherungspflichtig beschaeftigt gewesen sein, um Anspruch auf Arbeitslosenversicherung zu haben. Das bezieht sich natuerlich nur auf Gebiete, in denen es verhaeltnismaessig leicht ist, einen Arbeitsplatz zu finden und zu behalten.

Sollten Sie jedoch in einer Region mit hoher Arbeitslosigkeit wohnen, brauchen Sie unter Umstaenden nur 10 Wochen beschaeftigt gewesen zu sein, um einen Leistungsanspruch zu haben.

Jedenfalls gelten bis zum 4. Dezember unveraendert acht Wochen als Voraussetzung fuer einen Leistungsanspruch, ganz gleich wo Sie Ihren Wohnsitz haben.

“Hat sich dadurch auch die Wartezeit geaendert?”

Keineswegs. Die Mindestwartezeit von zwei Wochen bleibt ueberall dieselbe.

Unveraendert bleiben auch die Vorschriften fuer die Wartezeit, wenn ein Arbeitnehmer ohne guten Grund gekuendigt oder durch eigenes Verschulden seine Stelle verloren hat. In solchen Faellen muss der Antragsteller unter Umstaenden bis zu acht Wochen nach Stellenverlust warten, ehe ihm Arbeitslosenversicherung gezahlt wird.

“Wie lange wird enn jetzt Arbeitslosenversicherung gezahlt?”

Die Leistungen werden bis zu hoechstens 50 Wochen gezahlt; frueher betrug das Maximum 51 Wochen.

Seit dem 11. September haengt jedoch die Leistungsperiode, d.h. die Hoechstzahl von Wochen, in denen Versicherungszahlungen erfolgen, von der Arbeitslosenquote in der Region des Antragstellers ab.

Zur Zeit ist Kanada noch in 16 Wirtschaftsregionen unterteilt, von denen die Arbeitslosenquote errechnet wird. Um unser Programm noch genauer auf die oertlichen Gegebenheiten des Arbeitsmarktes einstellen zu koennen, wird es ab 1978 anstatt 16 insgesamt 54 Wirtschaftsregionen geben.

“Bekomme ich den gleichen Betrag ausgezahlt?”

Ja. Der Leistungssatz fuer die Arbeitslosenversicherung betraegt zwei Drittel Ihres durchschnittlichen versicherungspflichtigen Wochenverdienstes.

Der Hoechstbetrag ist 147 \$, abzueglich Steuern.

“Wie steht's mit Schwangerschafts-, Kranken- und Altersgeld? Hat sich da etwas geaendert?”

Frueher wurde Krankengeld nur waehrend der ersten 39 Wochen Arbeitslosigkeit gezahlt; jetzt wird es jederzeit waehrend der vollen Leistungsperiode gezahlt.

Die 15 Wochen Schwangerschaftsgeld und die besondere, einmalige Zahlung fuer Leistungsempfaenger im Alter von 65 Jahren (die Summe von drei Wochenzahlungen) bleiben unveraendert bestehen.

Die Vorschriften ueber versicherungspflichtige Arbeitnehmer und versicherungsfaeihige Beschaeftigungen nach dem Arbeitslosenversicherungsgesetz bleiben ebenfalls unveraendert.

“Muss ich nun wegen meiner Arbeitslosenversicherung zu einer anderen Stelle?”

Nein. Bis Ihr UI Office und Canada Manpower Centre zusammengelegt werden, gehen Sie weiterhin zur selben Stelle.

*“Unemployment Insurance Commission” und “Department of Manpower and Immigration” sind zu einer einzigen Behoerde, der “Canada Employment and Immigration Commission” zusammengefasst worden. Einige Zeit lang werden Sie zwar noch die gewohnten Bezeichnungen an den einzelnen Dienststellen sehen, aber sobald diese zu einem Amt zusammengelegt worden sind, werden sie “Canada Employment Centre” genannt.*

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# Weihnacht im Wandel der Zeiten

Von Elisabeth Schlichting

Unser Juengster war bereits eifrig damit beschaeftigt Weihnachtsmaenner und Schneeflocken ohne Ende auf's Papier zu zaubern, obwohl draussen ein warmer Novembertag uns die Jahreszeit vergessen liess. Etwas ungehalten ueber die verfruehte Weihnachtsvorbereitung versuchte ich (-zwar ohne Erfolg-) ihn davon abzulenken, bis mir das in Gedanken und einem unbestimmten Laecheln gehuellte Gesicht der alten Dame auffiel, die mir gegenuebersass. Ich merkte, dass Vergangenheit und Gegenwart oft unmerklich ineinander uebergehen und im Augenblick lebte sie sichtlich im Reich der Vergangenheit. . . . Langsam richtete sich ihr Blick auf mich und sie meinte: "Was waren das doch fuer schoene Zeiten, als meine Kinder noch so voll Vorfroede waren und ganz dabei vergassen was fuer ein schweres Leben wir damals fuehrten! . . ." Dann versank sie wieder in die Vergangenheit. . . . Mit meiner Frage, ob sie sich noch gut an vergangene Weihnachtsfeste erinnern schreckte ich sie etwas aus ihren Traeumen auf. Sie lachte nur und sagte: "Kind, wenn man erst einmal so alt ist wie ich erinnert man sich an viele verflossene Feste, frohe und unbeschwerte aber auch an sehr viele traurige und hoffnungslose. Ja, je aelter ich werde umso mehr muss ich an die Jugendzeit zurueckdenken. . . ."

"Mir ist es so als sei es noch garnicht lange her, dass ich ein kleines Maedchen war und mit Eltern und Geschwistern sorglos und gluecklich auf dem Gut in Russland lebte! In der ersten Zeit fing das Feiern schon 14 Tage frueher nach dem gregorianischen Kalender im russischen Stil an. Vater und Mutter, der Bezirks-

hauptmann und der Doktor fuhren zum Onkel auf's Jagdrevier. Das Erzaehlen ging so gut und nebenbei haben sie noch Rehe und Wildschweine gejagt. Das war jedes Jahr ein grosses Ereignis, von dem noch Monate lang erzaehlt wurde. Wir Kinder blieben mit den Gouvernanten und Lehrern zu Hause. Zum Heilig Abend kamen die Eltern mit einem riesigen Weihnachtsbaum nach Hause! Wir Kinder durften die grosse Stube dann nicht mehr betreten. Sie war fest verschlossen, doch durch's Schluesselloch konnten wir den Duft der Tanne riechen und waren in grosser Erwartung, — nicht viel anders als eure Kinder heute — Oh, liebe Zeit, drei lange Tische wurden aufgestellt und jedes Mitglied der Familie, sowie auch die Angestellten, der Tischler, Schmied und Mueller alle waren von den Eltern zum Heiligen Abend eingeladen und hatten ihren traditionellen Platz an dem sie beschert wurden. Die Maenner erinnere ich mich, bekamen meist Hosen und die Frauen Kleider. Der "Spiegelstisch" war mein Platz und ich konnte es kaum abwarten bis wir hereingerufen wurden — aber noch hiess es abwarten —. Wir knieten nieder und Vater las die Weihnachtsgeschichte. Erst dann fiel ihm auf, dass zwei der gewohnten Personen nicht anwesend waren und zwar eines seiner Toechterchen und die liebe Tante aus Lemberg. Wie sich bald herausstellte hat das "verlorene Toechterchen" eine Dose Schokolade verwischt und sie total aufgefutert. Jetzt fuehlte sie sich natuerlich schrecklich elend und konnte sich nicht einmal an der wunderschoenen Puppe erfreuen, die ganz in hellblau gekleidet auf ihrem Platz thronte. Die gleiche Puppe, nur in rosa gekleidet sass auf dem "Spiegelstisch" — sie war mein

und wartete nur darauf von mir in die Arme genommen zu werden! Ich war seelig!! Was waren das doch fuer herrliche Kinderjahre! Die liebe Tante tauchte erst den folgenden Tag auf. Sie geriet auf der Bahnreise von Lemberg in eine etwas "heikle Situation". Spitzen aus dem Ausland waren damals in Russland der Traum jeder Frau und jeden jungen Maedchens, — nur waren Naemliche damals durch die Einfuhrsteuer recht teuer. Die liebe Tante glaubte nun klueger wie alle Zollbeamten zu sein, kaufte meterweise Spitzen in Lemberg ein und wickelte sich regelrecht wie ein Kokon darin ein. Darueber kamen dann Kleider, Hut und Mantel und frohgelaunt tritt die Dame ihre lange Bahnfahrt ueber die Grenze ein. — Oh nein, sie wird nicht geschnappt, alles geht gut und die Reise weiter. Ohne Hindernisse kommt sie auch an Ort und Stelle an, steigt wohlgelaunt aus, geht den Bahnsteig entlang und wundert sich nur, warum alle Menschen so hinter ihr herlachen. Ja, ein heimtueckisches Endchen der Spitze muss sich doch wohl geloest haben und wickelte sich Meter fuer Meter langsam ab, die sie als Schleppe hinter sich herzog. Ein lustiges Bild muss das gewesen sein! Den Rest der Geschichte brauche ich wohl nicht mehr zu erzaehlen, ausser dass das "arme Tantchen" nun Doppelt Zoll bezahlen musste.

Ein anderes Jahr erinnere ich mich, wollte das gleiche Tantchen aus Lemberg Mutter eine ganz besondere Weihnachtsueberraschung mitbringen. Diesmal waren es nicht Spitzen, die sie mitbrachte, sondern vier — blutjunge Dienstboten — Amenja, Marenja, Sophie und Baerbel. Was fuer eine Ueberraschung!! Wie sich bald herausstellte nicht nur fuer Mutter, sonder auch fuer die jun-

gen Maedchen die von der Stadt auf ein abgelegenes Gut geschickt wurden. Nun, drei der Weihnachtsueberraschungen haben sich auch bald davon gemacht, nur Sophie blieb und heiratete den Schmied. (Hm, reimt sich sogar)

Nicht lange danach habe ich das Lachen und den Frohsinn verlernt. Langsam und unmerklich zogen dunkle Wolken am Horizont auf, bis es fast nicht mehr zu ertragen war. . . .

Spaeter als ich aelter wurde schickten meine Eltern mich fuer drei Jahre auf die Maedchenschule in Halbstadt. Ich litt unter schrecklichem Heimweh nach dem Elternhaus. 1905, ich war 16 Jahre und die Revolution gerade in den Anfangsstadien. Vater holte mich wie ueblich fuer die Weihnachtsferien von Halbstadt ab. Wir fuhren mit der Bahn nach Hause. In Losowaja mussten wir umsteigen. Es dauerte stundenlang bis ein Bahnbeamter gelaufen

kam und uns bat so schnell wie moeglich in einen anderen Zug zu steigen und darin zu warten . . . es sei ein "Hindernis" eingetreten! Das "Hindernis" wurde auch bald in Form einer Horde Russen mit roten Fahnen sichtbar. Vater war sehr unruhig, ich konnte das alles nicht ganz verstehen, ahnte jedoch, dass unser sorgenloses Leben nicht mehr von langer Dauer war. Das Weihnachtsfest verlief recht ruhig. Beim Abschied hatte ich Angst vor dem Unbestimmten das in der Luft lag, taeuschte Zahnschmerzen vor und vergoss bittere Traenen. Nichts half, Vater blieb standhaft und ich musste zurueck nach Halbstadt.

Die Jahre wurden nun immer schwerer, ich war nun schon 22, die Revolution tobte. Als ich 26 Jahre alt war wurde unser Gut ueberfallen. Wir verteidigten uns so gut es uns moeglich war. Vater bot ihnen alles an, was wir besaessen aber sie schrieen nur: "Wir wollen nicht euer Geld, wir wollen Eure Seelen!" dann herrschte Stille. . . .

Ich ging zurueck nach Halbstadt, mit 29 Jahren heiratete ich. Die Umstellung war sehr schwer. Immer gewoehnt aus dem Vollen zu schoepfen und nun ploetzlich in den tiefsten Tiefen des Elends war schwer! Du fragst ob wir unter diesen Umstaenden noch an Weihnachten dachten? Ja, so gut es ging, wenigstens am Anfang noch im kleinen Rahmen. Spaeter hatten wir furchtbare Angst, aber man wollte den Kindern doch auch etwas von dem Miterleben lassen, was wir geniessen durften. Ich schlich mich des Nachts heimlich 'raus und stahl ein kleines Tannenaestchen das ich im Mantel versteckte. Im Schlafzimmer stellten wir es auf und beteten, dass doch bald dem Elend ein Ende gemacht werden wuerde. Irgendwie, ich weiss schon nicht mehr wie trieb ich

irgendwo drei Bleistifte und etwas buntes Papier auf. Die Seeligkeit der Kinder ist fast nicht zu beschreiben. Frag' nicht was auf den Tisch kam, Zuckerrueben hab ich gerieben und daraus Kuechlein gebackt. Aber auch damit war es bald zu Ende.

Bald darauf holten sie meinen Mann und schmissen ihn in Gefaengnis. Jetzt war ich mit den drei Kindern allein. . . . Wir hatten nichts zu essen, — rein garnichts!! — Ein Jahr verging, es wurde wieder Weihnachten und mein Mann lag als Gefangener mit Lungenentzuendung im Krankenhaus. Wie trostlos diese Weihnachten waren kann man nicht in Worten ausdruecken. Heilig Abend wartete ich vergebens den ganzen Tag vor dem Krankenhaus um nur wenigstens ein Mal meinen Mann zu sehen. Jedoch vergebens. Am 1. Feiertag war ich wieder da und wartete stundenlang bis man mich endlich einliess. Nicht einmal eine Minute durfte ich bei ihm bleiben, es reichte nur fuer einen Kuss, dann musste ich wieder gehen — ohne Hoffnung. . . . Am 2. Feiertag erfuhr ich, dass die Polizei den kranken Mann wieder geholt und zurueck ins Gefaengnis befördert hatte.

Todkrank mit Tuberkolose schickten sie dann nach Monaten meinen sterbenden Mann, den Vater seiner Kinder wieder nach Hause. Wir pflegten ihn so gut es ging bis ans Ende und um die Weihnachtszeit beteten wir ihn eigenhaendig zur letzten Ruhe. — Ich war verzweifelt, die Kinder gebrochen.

Die Jahre gingen weiter, ich kann mich schon nicht mehr erinnern wie, es war doch wohl zu schwer. . . . Meine Tochter starb, auch sie musste zu Grabe getragen werden. . . . Mein aeltester Sohn wurde nach Sibirien verschleppt: "Ich komme bald wie-

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Sunday, December 18 — 4:00 p.m.

der, Mutter, mach' dir keine Sorgen!"

Es ist wieder Weihnachten, das wievielte ich weiss es nicht mehr. Heilig Abend wurden wir in eine grosse Halle gerufen und es hiess: "Die Verschleppten kommen zurueck!! Wie gluecklich und voll Hoffnung waren wir alle. Und gerade an Heilig Abend, ein Wunder Gottes! Wir warteten und warteten, Stunden um Stunden vergehen aber keiner kam, bis wir endlich unter Traenen und im Ge-laechter der Beamten nach Hause gingen. Den geliebten Sohn nie wieder vor Augen zu bekommen! . . .

Auch der zweite Sohn geht auf der Flucht verloren . . . und wieder ein Weihnachten. Ich bin ganz allein geblieben . . . wo sind meine Lieben? . . . Da treffe ich eine Nachbarin aus Halbstadt die mich fragt: "Frau D. wo sind ihre Kinder?" Weinend breche ich auf offener Strasse zusammen. Heilig Abend und wo, ja wo sind meine Kinder? Das waren doch wohl meine schwersten Weihnachten.

Wie, ich weiss es schon nicht mehr kam ich in Potsdam an. Ich fuhr nach Berlin zur Fluechtlings-lager um mit dem Fluechtlings-transport in den Westen zu gelangen. Der erste Transport ging ab, ohne mich. Vier Mal machte ich diese Reise von Potsdam nach Berlin. Der 5. Transport war der Letzte in den Westen. Ich betete die Zeit ueber und war schon zu muede zu kaempfen auch wenn sie mich wieder nach Russland geschickt haetten. Doch mein Gebet wurde erhoeht! Nach stundenlangem Warten wurde ich dem letzten Transport zugeordnet. Zwei Wochen verbrachte ich im Fluechtlingslager Berlin. — Dann sitze ich im Zug Potsdam — Karlsruhe ich kann es selbst fast nicht glauben. Es ist Heilig Abend, die traurigsten meines Lebens . . . meine Lieben sind alle weg! Der Krieg war erst einige Monate zu Ende. Die zerschlagenen Fenster des Zuges noch nicht repariert, mit Lappen versuchten wir so gut es ging den eisigen Wind abzuhalten. Dann hoere ich im Nachbarwagon eine Frauenstimme "Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht" singen. Traenen laufen mir die Wangen herab als ich in den anderen Wagen gehe. Da

sitzt eine Mutter, haelt fest ihre zwei kleinen Kinder im Arm, auf dem Schoss ein Tannenzweigchen und singt ein Weihnachtslied. Die Weihnachtsstimmung macht der Traurigkeit Platz und bald singen alle im Wagon mit. Leise gehe ich heraus, hole eine Hand voll Bonbons die mir vor der Abreise zugesteckt wurden und gebe sie den zwei kleinen Kindern.

Ich bin schon zwei Jahre in Karlsruhe, von keinem meiner Soehne ein Wort. Wieder ein Weihnachtsfest. Ich kann nicht zu Hause bleiben, weinend laufe ich durch die Strassen. Als ich

zurueck komme sagt eine Freundin zu mir: "N. hoere auf zu weinen, Deine Soehne wirst du nie wieder sehen!" Ich weine und bete die ganze Nacht! — Vier Tage spaeter kommt ein Telegramm aus Kanada. Mein auf der Flucht verloren gegangener Sohn ist ebenfalls in den Westen gelangt und sucht seine Mutter durch unsere Verwandten in Kanada. Mein Sohn ist mir wieder-geschenkt. . . .

Allen Lesern des M.M. ein Gesegnetes Weihnachten und Frieden auf Erden!mm

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### More Do You Know

A highly successful **Russian Mennonite studies seminar** was held at CMBC and MBBC on November 11-12. Present among others were people who attended on November 9th an all-day North American Mennonite Archivist and Historical Librarian seminar. Reading major papers were Dr. Peter J. Klassen from California State College and Dr. Carl Bangs, professor of Historical Theology, Kansas City, Missouri. Klassen dealt with the interesting subject (to historians), of Mennonite research material available in non-American libraries. Bangs then introduced himself as one who naively consented to do a little background study of his wife's clan for the occasion of a family reunion. (His wife is the former Marjorie Friesen of Nebraska.) The story grew like Topsy and promises to become an interesting book on the subject of the Kleine Gemeinde (Small Church) group. Other major papers were by Walter Sawatsky of Neuwied, Germany and Jim Urry of Australia. Urry's paper was presented by Frank Epp. Presenting an idea of things to come were reports of research in progress by Dr. C.J. Dyck, on the Trakt Settlement, Dr. Victor Doerksen on Eduard Wuest and Dr. Cornelius Krahn on Mennonite acculturation.

The town of Carman has been experiencing a business boom in 1977. Housing construction stands at an all-time high, with major subdivision developments nearing completion in the north end. Several new businesses include Livingston's hardware outlet and a \$350,000 Credit union building. Businessmen such as Ron Penner, who specializes in Suzuki motorcycle sales, and John Penner and Son, selling new and used cars, have recently begun operation in the town.

**Henry Poettcker**, of CMBC, has announced that he will vacate his position as president of the college at the end of June, 1978. In view of this, all churches of the Canadian conference have been consulted about candidates for the position and about requirements for such a candidate. John H. Neufeld, chairman of the board of directors, Gary Harder, William Toews and David Schroeder have been appointed by the board to examine the requirements and to find a likely successor. Poettcker takes over his new position as president of the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries in July.

A November 10th **East-West Consultation** held at the MCC offices was the third session of its kind. Concerns vis-a-vis the present, and the future of East-West relations were discussed. Peter Dyck, Walter Sawatsky, Paul Kraybill, Waldo Neufeld, J.M. Klassen and Erich Ratzlaff shared their ideas with a group of delegates. Given, among other things, was a quick briefing on the possible impact of the Helsinki accord on church-state relations. The group also explored the background of general change in Europe and the Soviet Union. Major issues discussed were the needs of the Umsiedler who have left the Soviet Union for Germany, and the possibility, among other things, of their being able to join co-religionists at the coming Mennonite World Conference in Wichita, Kansas.

### PLASTIC FUNDS

It seems quaint to us that our ancestors used clamshells and beads for money, but then what would they have thought about a wallet full of little plastic cards?

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## ... your word

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Dear Sirs:

Must congratulate you on "The Holdeman Revival". The writer should receive a gold medal. We live amongst this witch hunt. It is rather sad to see what goes on.

Name withheld  
Ste. Anne, Man.

Dear Sirs:

I have seen your publication just recently and was sufficiently impressed to want to subscribe. I have enclosed a cheque for the subscription.

S. Derksen  
Winnipeg

Dear Sir:

I am not renewing because I believe your paper is missing the real issues of the day. In educational centers there exists a conflict between very basic philosophical positions. Shall it be humanism and materialism, or will there be a return to theism and system of Biblical values?

Most Mennonites would be interested in educational reform and I think your paper has a duty to address itself to that topic.

Why not include some articles on the Renaissance movement and on the work of creationist scientists?

If the Mennonite Mirror is simply to reflect the social affairs of Mennonite communities, then I don't have time to read it.

Yours truly,  
Abe Enns,  
Rosenort

Dear Sir:

Over the years I have enjoyed reading your magazine and looked forward to its many and varied articles every month. Also I think you have had some excellent cover photos in the past so it was with much dismay when I saw the cover of your last edition. As a mother of three small children I strongly objected to the cover photo. My children are exposed to so much violence through TV, newspapers etc. and I don't feel a magazine which is delivered to so many homes with young children should display such a cover photo.

Thank you for letting me express my opinion.

Yours sincerely,  
Mrs. Sharon Enns  
Winnipeg

Dear Sirz;

Enclosed is a cheque for my subscription. Sorry I neglected it for so long. Thank you kindly for sending the Mirror so faithfully. It is greatly appreciated. I wouldn't want to miss any issues. I want to commend you for such a fine paper. It is truly a "mirror" where we, as Mennonites, can see our reflection. The paper is also informative and might I add, educational. Keep up the good work!

God bless you!  
Mrs. Anne Patterson,  
Morden.

Dear Sir:

Have heartily enjoyed the gift subscription I received from friends in Saskatoon. I am sorry to have missed checking the date of renewal. Enclosed please find cheque to cover two more years of picturesque travel through the mountains of Mennonite thought.

Signed:  
J.W. Dick  
Winkler

Dear Sir:

Greetings from the borderland area. Thank you for continuing to send the Mennonite Mirror even though as I look on the address my subscription ran out.

Enclosed find check for two year subscription to keep this good paper coming. I have many good friends of the Mennonite faith living in Canada. Being a Mennonite by birth and also one by choice I find your paper very interesting.

I think your Manitoba country is very beautiful. I was just up to the MCC office with a two-ton load of used clothing. I have also been to Phillips Wise in MDS work and had 22 volunteers from Manitoba there while I was field director. Enclosed find a picture of the Jacks and Jills in MDS work. These are a group of young folks from the Riverton and Arborg area. I would like to have the picture back please. If you would like me to write an article on MDS sometime I would be happy to do it.

Also I think the articles on the Holdeman group very interesting. I do believe we are living in the time of the Lord's (soon) return. The anti-religious folks are very unloving. I heard a new one this past summer: a bishop father could not accept his son-in-law who he had ordained some years before because of the potential of future sin. I say Lord help us!

Faithfully,  
Noah Hege  
Little Fork, Minn.

Dear sir:

Christian greetings from Germany! This is to inform you that your paper was much appreciated and very informative during our service here in Europe. Because of my wife's physical condition we must return home at this time. Please send your paper to our Winkler address.

Sincerely  
P.J. and Kornelia Froese  
Torneystrasse 76  
Neuwied, West Germany

### DEAR READERS:

The Mennonite Mirror welcomes paid-up subscriptions from its readers. Renewal notices are sent out to each reader once a year to encourage such paid-up subscriptions. It is our policy not to charge pensioners but, unfortunately, we have no way of knowing who is a pensioner and who is not. We would therefore like to make it clear that pensioners who are not in a position to pay for a subscription are not expected to do so. We would like them to let us know so that they will not be bothered with further renewal notices. Please call us on Tuesdays at 786-2289.

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**PERFECT MOTHERHOOD AND PERFECT VIRGINITY—  
A NOTION NO ONE UNDERSTANDS IN OUR TIME**

If Christ were to be born in our time, in this year for example, would His birth have been allowed to take place?

Malcolm Muggeridge in his 1975 book, *Jesus the Man Who Lives*, explores the question in this way:

“Until comparatively recent times Christians found little difficulty in combining these two themes of perfect motherhood and perfect virginity. . . . A contemporary virgin—assuming there are any such—would regard a message from the Angel Gabriel that she might expect to give birth to a son to be called the Son of the Highest as ill-tidings of great sorrow and a slur on the local family planning centre. As a matter of fact under existing conditions it is extremely improbable that Jesus would have been permitted to be born at all. Mary’s pregnancy, in poor circumstances, and with the father unknown, would have been an obvious case for an abortion; and her talk of having conceived as a result of the intervention of the Holy Ghost would have pointed to the need for psychiatric treatment, and made the case for terminating her pregnancy even stronger. Thus our generation needing a Savior more, perhaps, than any that has ever existed, would be too humane to allow one to be born; too enlightened to permit the Light of the World to shine in a darkness that grows ever more oppressive.

“To a twentieth-century mind the notion of a virgin birth is intrinsically and preposterously inconceivable. . . . Yet for centuries millions upon millions of people never doubted that Mary had begotten Jesus without the participation of a husband or lover. Nor was such a belief limited to the simple and the unlettered; the most profound and erudite minds, the greatest artists and craftsmen, found no difficulty in accepting the virgin birth as an incontestable fact. . . .”

Whatever one may think of Muggeridge and his writings, the observations just quoted are arresting because the idea of Christ as an aborted fetus is only too real in the context of our time, and thus becomes the ultimate way of taking Christ out of Christmas.

In looking at the way Christmas is celebrated in our time in North America, the non-birth of Christ is not necessary—for the most part we have succeeded in reducing the Christian significance to such small proportions that an observance of two minutes of silence in remembrance of Christ’s birth on Christmas day would be a thousand-fold improvement for many in our continent.

Christmas as it is celebrated in North America is more a celebration of unrestrained consumer consumption than it is the commemoration of the birth of Christ. No one can escape the commercial Christmas build-up. At the same time, no one can, to use the trite words, put “Christ back into Christmas” in such a way that the general society will notice. Can anyone succeed in urging all people to be mindful of Christ when everyone is mindlessly buying the treasures of this world?

For those who want to recover a sense of the Christian significance of Christmas it will remain, as it always has, an act of individual faith as well as an act that stands in stark contrast to the activities of the rest of society. ELU

**Paradox**

One with Christ — Perfection in Decay  
In God’s presence — Undestroyed and joyful  
Fire cannot penetrate the blood  
Paradox of Love — Redemption without Answer  
Enslaved I fly unshackled on eagles wings  
of God’s own presence shared with me  
Unworthy yet undying.  
The cross of horror and of slivered hate  
Is beauty for I see, carved by the grace of God,  
“I thirst” he cried — but for my thirst he died and broke through death.  
Because he lives I live  
The prize is only Christ.  
Fettered by your freedom let me be  
Till in death or life, my Lord,  
you come for me.

Clint Toews

**Christmas Gift Subscription Special Offer**

Gift subscriptions to the Mennonite Mirror can now be ordered in time for Christmas. Help someone who isn’t currently receiving the Mirror to keep in touch.

You can send that person the Mennonite Mirror as a gift for only \$5. for one year. This is a special rate for Christmas gifts only. If you send us this subscription by December 12th and indicate the name and address of the person for whom the gift is intended, the Mennonite Mirror will send a card to the person acknowledging your subscription and that person will begin receiving the MM with the December issue. The subscription will run to December 1978. Please send subscriptions to the Mennonite Mirror, 203-818 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, Man. R3G 0N4.

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Enclosed find my cheque/money order of \$5.



# Your contributions dug this well.

They shall neither hunger nor thirst, no scorching heat or sun shall distress them; for one who loves them shall lead them and take them to water at bubbling springs.

Isaiah 49:10 NEB

**T**he desert sun blazes down as MCC worker Paul Schroeder crawls carefully down an Upper Voltan well to where the diggers are at work with short-handled, hoe-like tools.

Earth is hauled up in buckets as the well drops slowly deeper. Some wells must be 150 feet deep to get a steady supply of water.

When the life-giving water is reached Pierre makes a cement cutting ring to lower into the well. Near the well Antione mixes mortar while Kaleb, the mason, rides to the bottom by rope. He builds a casing like a narrow silo of curved cement blocks on top of the ring to prevent the sandy soil from caving in. If the water level drops and the well needs deepening, the casing will slide down the well as earth is dug from around the cutting ring.

The final touch is a cement guard. It prevents people and animals from tumbling in and keeps out the water that rushes along the hard-baked ground during a rainy season downpour. Villagers and MCC workers Ian Wallace and Terry Stuckey rejoice over the finished product.

Well digging in the Sahel where the Sahara Desert encroaches never ends. The countryside is dotted with wells that have caved in or run dry. MCC worked in Upper Volta three years before completing a well.

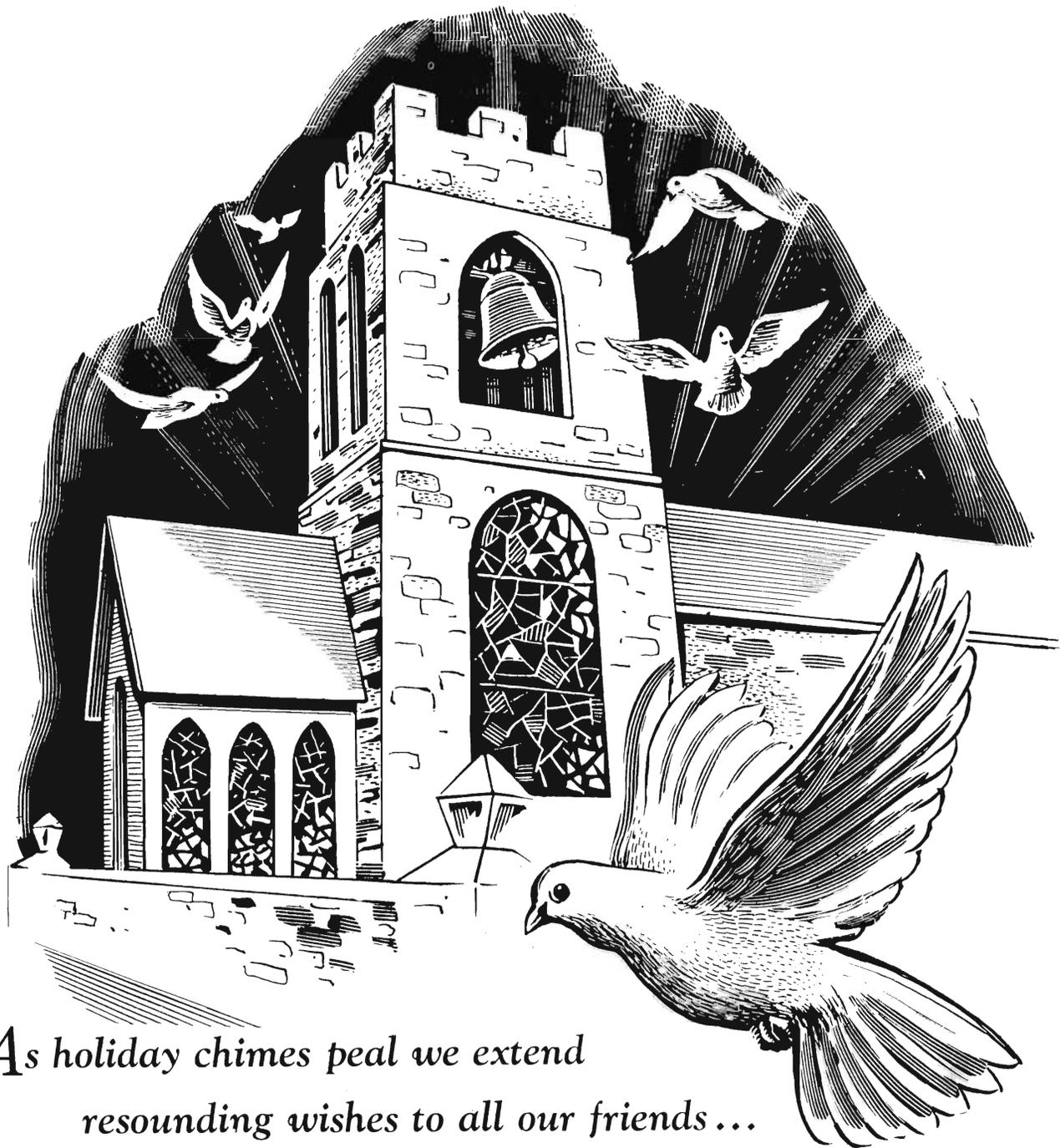
The Upper Voltan Christian church and MCC are happy with the 26 wells they completed in 1977, but the real goal is training Upper Voltans to build casings so they can continue to improve wells after MCC leaves.

Wells in Upper Volta, schools in Bolivia, vegetable gardens in Bangladesh, drip irrigation in Jordan, person-to-person counseling with offenders in Canada—projects like these help people who want to improve their lives. They are possible only to the extent that concerned congregations and individuals contribute from their bounty in the spirit of Christian love for their neighbors around the world. Send your offering to your conference headquarters clearly marked for MCC or to



Mennonite Central Committee  
21 South 12th Street, Akron, PA 17501  
201-1483 Pembina Highway, Winnipeg, Man. R3T 2C8

**mennonite mirror/december 1977/27**



*As holiday chimes peal we extend  
resounding wishes to all our friends ...  
may Hope, Love and Peace be  
with you at Christmas and always.*



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