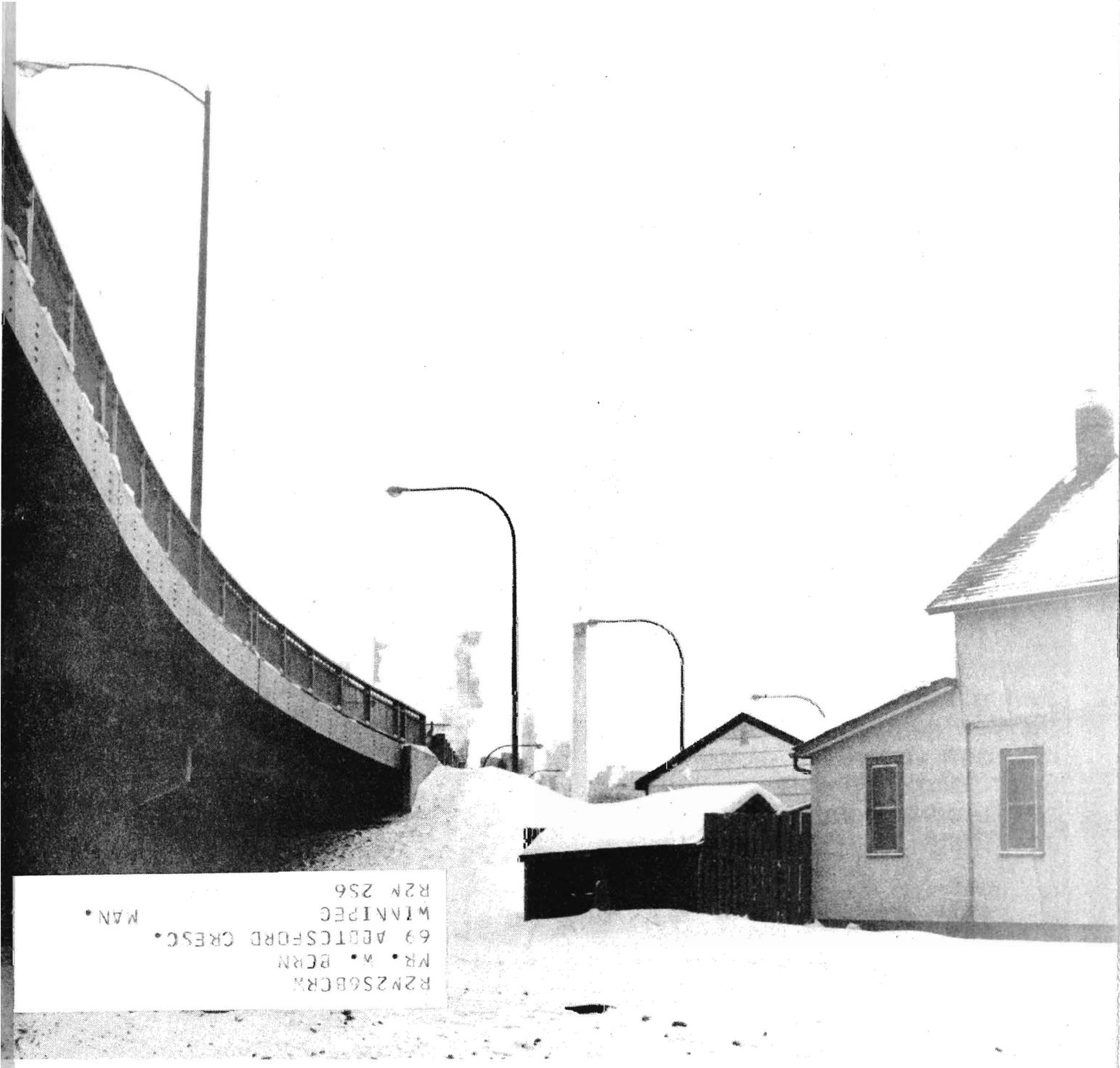


# mennonite mirror

volume 11 / number 6  
february 1982



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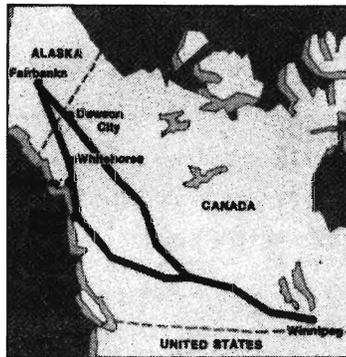
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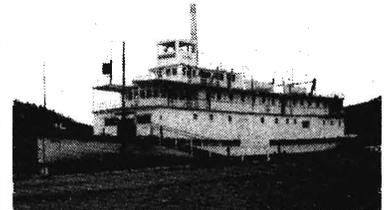
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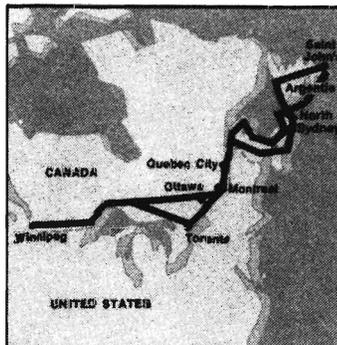


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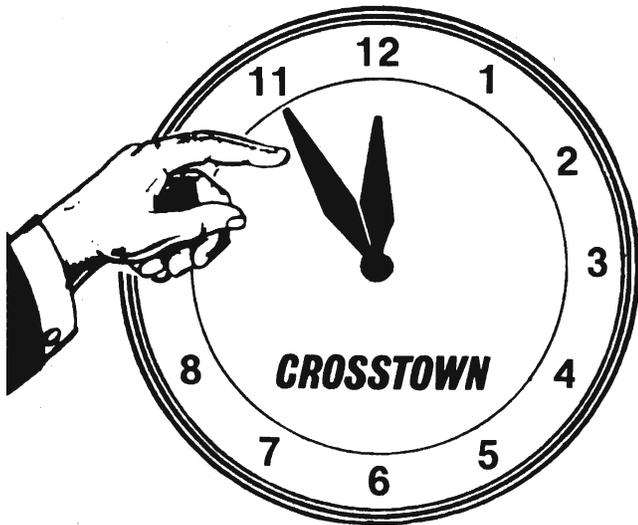
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# Floods and fish: a spring problem with a blessing

by Rhinehart Friesen

Jacob Friesen was impatient to get on to the land to seed his crop and plant the garden. But spring was late in 1877 and it was still much too cold and wet. This stubborn land did not yield its gifts easily! He recalled to mind some of the difficulties they had not anticipated when they left Russia nearly three years ago; the brutally cold winters, the intolerable hordes of mosquitoes, the rocks that seemed to grow in the fields as fast as they removed them, the grasshoppers that had completely devoured their first crop, and he wondered what additional misfortunes might still lie ahead. Even without any unusual troubles they were unable to increase their breeding stocks because every year by the end of winter they were desperate for food. It was only the generosity of the Canadian government and the Ontario Mennonites that had saved them all from starvation after the grasshopper plague. How would they ever repay this *Brodtschuld* (bread debt)? And if a similar calamity should occur, could the colony survive?

But Jacob was as stubborn as the land and refused to admit the possibility of failure. He had no doubt that they had a source of help that could overcome all difficulties. He was completely convinced that the Mennonite way of life had been in danger in Russia because of the Czar's decrees and that God had guided them to this new home in Manitoba. And if that were true, would he not continue to provide for His children?

He looked once more at the Pastwa

Creek which in summer was dry but now was a rushing torrent with the spring runoff, then turned to the house which had replaced the *Serhai* in which they endured that first cruel winter. The slow drizzle increased to a steady rain so he hitched up the collar of his jacket. Margaretha had made it out of the heavy canvas which had covered the large wooden crates in which their belongings had been shipped across the ocean. She had made lighter clothing from the cotton bags in which they got their flour. Perhaps they would soon be able to buy more clothes because they were starting to take in a little money occasionally. They had a fair-sized flock of chickens and two milk cows so that, if they deprived themselves temporarily before someone went to Winnipeg, they could sell butter and eggs for cash. The thought of money renewed his impatience about the weather because he realized that the only way they could better themselves appreciably was to be able to harvest and sell wheat and other grains.

As he entered the door Margaretha reminded him unnecessarily, "Take off your muddy boots and wet clothes. I can't for the life of me understand why you want to stand outside in weather like this; it won't make spring come any faster."

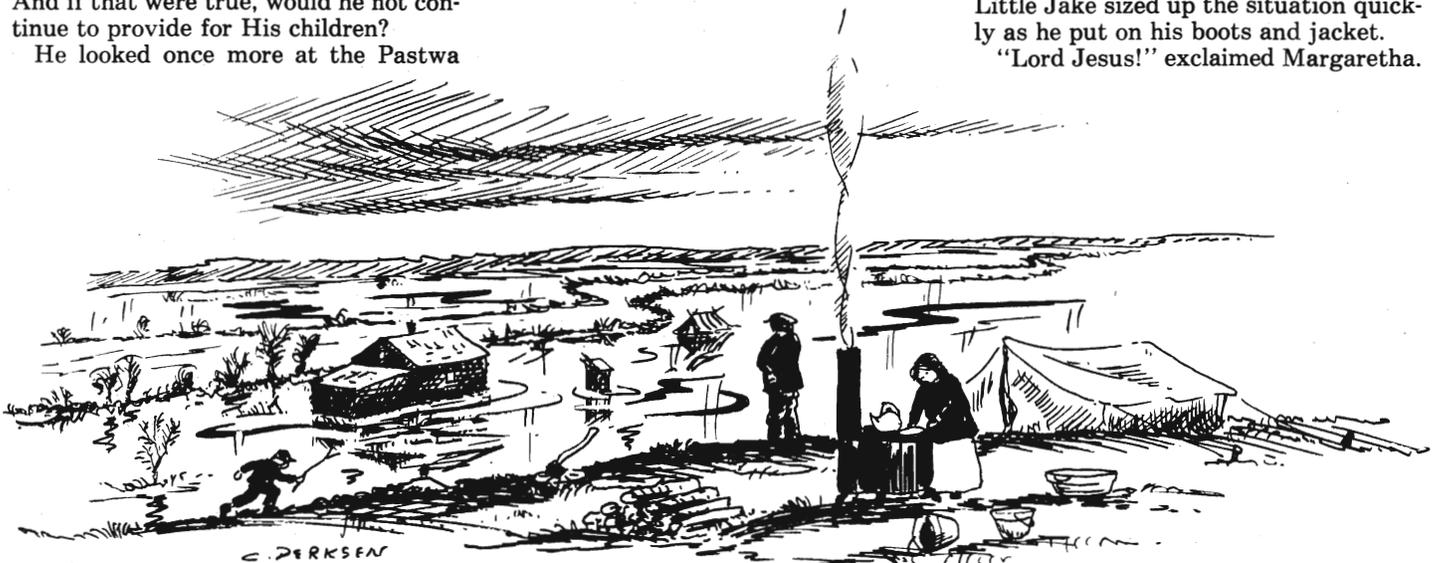
"How will we ever learn to overcome this environment if we just sit indoors and don't take every opportunity to study it?" It had not occurred to him that that was why he had gone out in the first place, but it seemed like a satisfyingly intellectual way to answer her womanly common sense.

They did not continue the quarrel. Both realized they were irritable after the long winter and equally frustrated by the way the cold rainy weather was delaying the summer's work. She continued bathing the new baby. Little Anna, named after the girl they had lost a few days after arriving in Manitoba, had been born on Christmas Eve and restored the family to the two boys and two girls that they had when they left their home in the old country. Jacob, mean-time, resumed making a set of harness out of the same canvas as his jacket. He mused again about the team of horses he hoped to buy; if only he could be sure of a good crop this year! Maybe the rain would stop and the sun shine tomorrow.

But next morning when he opened the door to go out to do the chores he drew back in dismay. "Peter, Jake, come quick! The creek is up to the *Serhai*. We must get the pig and chickens out in a hurry or they will drown."

"My tame white rooster especially!" Little Jake sized up the situation quickly as he put on his boots and jacket.

"Lord Jesus!" exclaimed Margaretha.





"What next?" She interrupted nursing the baby, put on a heavy shawl over her head, and followed Jacob and the boys down the path to the old serhai to see how things were. And they were bad! The chickens, with their natural antipathy for water, had stayed safe and dry on the roost; but the sow, whose expected litter was so important for their year's food supply, was standing ankle-deep in the ice-cold water. Transferring the animals to the new barn attached to the house, where the oxen and cows were stabled, was a simple matter although accompanied by much squealing and cackling.

"I am going to see how things are going with Anna and Peter and the other neighbours," Jacob told Margaretha when they were finished. "I hope it doesn't get much worse, but I suggest you make plans to get everything up off the floor in case it looks as if the water will reach the house."

He found his brother-in-law in a confusion of poles and canvas. "Whatever are you doing, Peter?" he asked.

"Building an ark." Peter tried to joke although he was obviously concerned. "Seriously, if the water keeps rising as fast as it has done overnight we will not be able to sleep in the house for a while. I am seeing whether I have enough material here to make a tent. The ridge that runs through the pasture behind our houses is several feet higher; it will not flood until the whole country-side is under water."

"What about your animals?"

"I will move some hay and feed onto

the ridge but leave them in the barn as long as possible. I will leave some of the hay beside the roost so that the hens can keep dry and lay their eggs as usual. Most of my feed and hay are safe in the loft. If I lose a little hay it doesn't matter because the stock will soon be out to pasture anyway." Then Peter added anxiously, "How bad do you think it will get?"

"God only knows," Jacob replied. "But I noticed one interesting thing; yesterday the creek was a rushing torrent, but today it is quiet like a pond. I think the Red River is backing up to here. If that is true, we don't need to fear a sudden surge of water from higher up the creek any more but rather a gradually spreading lake from the river. And I think it is encouraging to think of the tremendous amount of water that would be needed to produce a lake all over the country-side deep enough to cover the rise in the pasture. I agree that we should be safe there. My boys and I will be back in case you need help to move your heavy things up into the loft."

They worked steadily all day while the water crept higher insidiously until by nightfall it was lapping at the door. But by that time their preparations were complete and everything movable that might be damaged was well up off the floor or stored with what remained of last summer's flour, grain, and hay, in the large loft over the combined house and barn. Margaretha made a temporary home for her family out of a rude shelter that Jacob had built in the pasture the

year before where the cows could be milked, fed, or just find shelter in case of a storm. Anna's tent was nearby, and several neighbours had hurriedly built Serhais. Others had sought refuge with relatives in nearby villages.

The water continued to rise slowly for several days and then receded even more slowly. The men fussed impatiently about the additional delay in getting onto the land. "If we don't get our seed in soon we might as well forget about it because the autumn frosts will destroy the crops before they can ripen anyway," Peter said, expressing a widely held fear.

"Don't get too discouraged," Jacob consoled him. "We must do what we can and then trust that God will take care of us."

"Oh you and your sermonizing! Next you will be telling me that the flood is good for us."

"No, Peter," Jacob stood his ground, "but sometimes He has to do things for reasons which we find hard to understand or accept."

"Are you saying that He sent the flood to punish us for our sins?" Peter asked, and then added sarcastically, "But then how comes it that he didn't warn you righteous ones to build an ark like he did to Noah?"

"Perhaps we have no righteous Noahs among us." Jacob was trying hard not to show his own frustration and anger so he chose his words carefully. "I think we have all tended to worry too much about

our daily needs rather than being concerned about making this country into the kind of home for our children that God wants it to be."

"Now I suppose you are referring to the desire of some of the people to move onto their own homestead rather than settle in villages like we did in Russia."

"It may not be a sin to want to live on your own land, but it does suggest selfishness rather than neighbourly love. And of course our leaders are urging us to stay in villages because that would make it easier to build the schools and churches and other community institutions that we need to carry on our way of life."

"But, Jacob, be practical; you surely must admit that Pastwa hasn't enough people to make a proper village, and never will have because the land here is too poor to support that many."

Jacob had given this problem a good deal of thought during the past winter so he had an answer ready. "If we were friendlier and more co-operative I'm sure

that the people in one of the neighbouring districts would be willing to accept our families and annex our land to their village because they are all still not big enough or strong enough. In fact, I

discussed this with my cousin Aaron in Strassburg to the south of Pastwa not long ago. Do you know Aaron, son of Preacher Abraham Friesen who died in Russia after doing so much to get the idea of migration started?"

But Peter had another gripe he wanted to get off his chest and refused to be distracted by chit-chat. "In the same way the Preachers are discouraging us from giving up our land here and taking up a new homestead in the West Reserve on the other side of the Red. Is it a sin to want to live on the other side of the river if the land is better there? You have yourself said that you would be tempted to move there if it is true, as they say, that stones don't grow on the land there."

"I wonder what God would have done

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to the Israelites if they had left Canaan because it was too rocky; and just after He had freed them from the Pharaoh, too." Jacob found a convenient excuse to terminate the conversation as one of his cows seemed to be having trouble getting out of the mud after going down to the water to drink.

As soon as the water was below floor level the cleanup began. Although it had been less than a foot deep in the house, it left nearly an inch of black sticky clay and debris everywhere. To remove it, Jacob started with a shovel. Then he carried in bucketful after bucketful of water while Margaretha and the boys swept the resulting black soup out of the door. Finally, when all their home-made brooms were worn out, she got down on her knees and scrubbed with hot water and harsh soap until the floor boards were bleached white again. Fortunately the rain stopped, the sun came out, and it warmed up so that they could throw open the doors and windows to dry things out and to get rid of the smell.

One day when the cleanup was about complete the boys made an interesting discovery. Peter was fearful about revealing it. They had got their clothes wet and muddy again after being warned and scolded repeatedly about going near the pools of water which still lay

everywhere. But Jake was far too excited to consider the consequences.

"Fish, father, fish!" he shouted as he ran into the house without even stopping to take off his boots.

"Where, boy, where did you see a fish?" Jacob wasn't much impressed but he wanted to cut Margaretha short as she started scolding the boys because of the state of their clothes.

"On the other side of the pasture there is still a big pond and it is full of hundreds of big fish. We tried to catch one and we would have, too, except it was too muddy."

"Really? Come and show me. I never was very fond of fish but it would make a pleasant change from the noodles, potatoes, beans, and occasional eggs that are all that Mother has been able to give us since we ran out of salt pork a few weeks ago."

Back at the pond, Jacob saw that the boys were indeed correct. Numerous fish had become trapped as the water receded and were now in serious trouble. He took off his boots and socks, gave the boys permission to take off even their trousers, and they waded in, sinking halfway to their knees in the soft ooze. It was exciting for the boys but a relatively easy matter to herd a tired fish into a shallow little bay and then scoop it up on

to the low shore. When they had caught four they started for home because that was all they could conveniently carry, and even at that Jake's fish was dragging on the ground by the time they reached the house.

Back in Russia they had regarded fish as greatly inferior to other meat; but here, where many people had subsisted mainly on bread and noodles for several years, Jacob realized the boys had stumbled on a veritable gold mine. He also realized that this was perishable gold; that the fish would die and spoil in just a few days. So they quickly spread the news throughout the flooded Colony suggesting that they check all similar ponds and also the pools remaining in the creeks which had almost stopped flowing. The result was that for the first time since they arrived they had more food than they could eat.

The next day the men and boys caught fish; and as fast as they could bring them home, Margaretha and Anna dressed them. The same thing happened at dozens of homes in the colony. To preserve what they couldn't use immediately, they did what they had done with meat for generations; they packed the fish in salt barrels like pork, or they smoked them like they usually did to hams, bacon, and sausages. The word



also went round that under similar circumstances Indians simply cut them into rather thin fillets and hung them up to dry like laundry.

The following Sunday when they gathered as usual in the best clothes they could muster they heard a very topical down to earth sermon. Was the flood intended as punishment or at least as a warning? At any rate the bounty of the fish was proof that God still loved His children and would continue to provide for them. After the service Jacob and Peter walked home together, with Margaretha and Anna shepherding the children several paces behind them.

"You know what?" Practically minded Peter was interpreting the sermon in his own way. "I was thinking. All these fish will not only give us a change from the monotonous diet we always seem to have in spring. Because of this variety we will not be tempted to cull our chicken flocks so early; this means we will have more broods of chicks. Also, because we will have the meat of the old chickens a few weeks later we can give the piglets more time to grow. Remember last year we butchered some suckling pigs almost as soon as the sows farrowed because we had finished all the old chickens and the broilers were not yet ready for eating? And obviously we should not have to slaughter any spring calves until they have grazed all summer."

Jacob had a little trouble keeping up with the scenario that Peter outlined so rapidly. "You mean that because of the flood and the fish that the flood brought us, everything that we kill this summer will be a little older and bigger and, therefore, we will have more of all kinds of meat for next winter?" he asked with obvious skepticism.

But Peter had not yet reached his high point. "Not only more for us, but also lots to sell for cash money; and best of all, we will be able to increase our breeding stock of all kinds so that we will also be better off for future years."

"Peter, don't let yourself get carried away," Jacob cautioned. "You make it sound as if the flood was the best thing that could have happened and that it will be the turning point in the material welfare of our Colony. What if we lose our grain crops to an early frost because of such a late seeding season?"

They reached the turnoff to Jacob's house so they said their good-byes. As he joined Margaretha and the children he decided that in the afternoon he would get down the big Bible and meditate further on the Preacher's text; "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose." mm

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# Vic Schroeder's political career takes him to the front bench

by Ed Unrau

Although Vic Schroeder had good reasons to expect an appointment to the cabinet following his election to the Manitoba legislature from Winnipeg's Rossmere constituency in the November election, he was surprised by the portfolios premier Howard Pawley assigned to him. During an interview he noted that he had little prior background directly related to the departments he now heads; there were other areas he knew more about and expected an appointment related to one of them.

He went on to add that the cabinet appointment has dramatically altered his political career in that he is now in a position to shape and make government policy, and not merely criticize it. He said it has been a challenge not only to adjust to the change in roles but also to learn about the departments he is now responsible for.

Mr. Schroeder is minister of finance, minister of labor and manpower, and the minister responsible for the civil service commission and the civil service commission superannuation board.

In terms of political philosophy, Mr. Schroeder describes himself as a "firm democratic socialist," an approach to government which tries to see public policies in terms of their effects on people; particularly the weak and the poor, that tries to provide for equality of opportunity, and that tries to provide safe-

ty nets to help those whose needs might otherwise be missed. His involvement in the New Democratic Party arose more or less from this political philosophy.

Mr. Schroeder said he has always been interested in political events, noting that as a youth he evolved from the Conservative position to the democratic socialist philosophy, and was supporting the NDP by the time he could vote. He formally joined the NDP in 1968, having been recruited by a friend. He then worked in the Wolseley constituency where he became chairman of the party organization, and NDP candidate (unsuccessful) in a 1972 bye-election. He described the constituency as one of the last in the province to enjoy a genuine three-party fight in an election. He also became more active in the provincial organization, serving as party president for two years. He also accepted a variety of other political tasks.

Mr. Schroeder was first elected to the legislature in 1979 in a Rossmere bye-election following the appointment of Ed Schreyer to the governor-generalship. And in the November general election he easily won the Rossmere seat again; it's a constituency that Mr. Schroeder regards as a fairly "safe" NDP riding largely because the demographic mix is one that has been traditionally pro-NDP.

Rossmere is an area that is known to have a high concentration of Mennonites

within its borders. Although Mr. Schroeder thinks that Mennonites are no more inclined to vote in a bloc than any other established group, he is convinced that the bulk of Mennonite votes were cast in his favor. He said he lost in 12 polls in the constituency, and only one of these was a poll having a high concentration of Mennonites. Further, there were other polls in which he estimates as many as 35 percent of the eligible voters to be of Mennonite background, and he won easily in these.

He agreed that the Mennonites were the largest identifiable ethnic group within the riding, but it affected his election strategy only in so far as assigning appropriate canvassers to known Mennonite neighborhoods.

Mr. Schroeder said that during his political career he has encountered resistance within the Mennonite community to his choice of political party. He has observed, for example, that in the rural area where he grew up the Mennonites organized a number of excellent self-help projects and were ready to help those in need within and outside their community; yet Mennonites never transferred this social consciousness to the political arena, generally tending to support the most right-wing party or candidate. In this context a left-leaning viewpoint is bound to encounter resistance.

He also said there is a group within the Mennonite community that is uneasy about any type of left-wing stance, a group that is typically comprised of people who escaped from, or have family connections with people in the

Soviet Union. As a person whose own parents came from Russia and whose grandfather was shot during the Revolution, Mr. Schroeder appreciates their concern.

At the same time, Mr. Schroeder in-

# mirror mix-up

sists that these Mennonites do not appreciate the fact that there is a vast difference between the Communists and social democrats. He notes that the Communists were as cruel to the social democrats, a political group which opposed them, as they were to any other group that stood in the way of their objectives. He also notes that in Canada it was politicians with democratic socialist philosophies (that is CCF or NDP) who spoke out against the internment of the Japanese in the Second World War, and the imposition of the War Measures Act during the October Crisis of a decade ago.

Mr. Schroeder agrees that it is easy for political opponents to exploit the so-called "communist" image that arises from the generally left-leaning policies of the NDP. Although his November opponent ran what he called a "clean" campaign, Mr. Schroeder said there were times when he had to take the time to explain what he wasn't. In general he said the core of constituency workers in Rossmere, including those who are Mennonite, have managed to get the message across that he and his party are committed to democracy, with the result that the "communist" label isn't as haunting as it might be.

Mr. Schroeder has the kind of varied

life experience that should make him a good MLA. He was born in Altona, attended the Kronstaaal elementary school and later the Mennonite Collegiate Institute in Gretna. After high school he came to Winnipeg and worked at various jobs for two years before becoming a switchman with one of the railways in 1964. Two years later he joined the St. Boniface Fire Department and was elected president of local 940 of the International Association of Fire Fighters. In 1968, while still a fireman, he enrolled as a part-time student at the University of Manitoba. In 1970 he was successful in entering the Faculty of Law as a mature student and completed half of his law degree before finally resigning from his fire fighting job. He graduated with his law degree in 1973, was called to the bar in 1974, and has been practising with the Beausejour law firm of Bellan, Schroeder, Baker and Wasylin.

He notes that he is "not especially involved" in church affairs; his membership is with the Charleswood Mennonite Church but he and his family have been attending First Mennonite Church most recently.

Mr. Schroeder, his wife, Leona, and their two daughters, Andrea and Ainslie, are currently resident in North Kildonan. mm

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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; the drawing to the right provides a clue.

A winner will be drawn at random from among the contest entries and the prize awarded.

Entries must be sent to the Mirror office by February 25, 1982.

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# Observed Along the Way

January, 1982

*In the course of a month we observe many people and events which our readers might find interesting. This is the beginning of a series of monthly journals by the publisher, recording a few observations from the previous month.*

by Roy Vogt

Jan. 2:

Returned to Winnipeg from a week's visit to Washington D.C., where I attended the annual meetings of the American Economic Association. Heard a few Nobel-prize-winning economists discuss the current state of the U.S. economy. Almost no one is enthusiastic about Reaganomics. The general feeling seems to be that the government is trying to solve complex 1980s problems with 19th century methods. Economists are perplexed by the combination of high inflation and unemployment. They face a problem similar to a medical doctor who is confronted by a patient suffering from both low and high blood pressure.

Washington is a fascinating city, with exciting museums and art galleries. I am particularly thrilled to see the Lindbergh plane, the first American space capsule, a special Rodin exhibit, and a remarkable number of French impressionist paintings. American wealth has captured many of the finest cultural achievements of Europe. The line-up to get inside the White House is over a mile long but the weather is beautiful and the 1 1/2 hour wait passes quickly. Though our black guide wonders why we are so anxious to see the inside of "Whitey's House" we enjoy the tour of the East Wing. The monuments of Washington remind me of similar edifices to national heroes in Moscow and Leningrad. Leading nations presumably are created by heroes and need to be sustained by a hero mythology. Can you imagine the equivalent of a Washington monument or a Lenin mausoleum for any of our prime ministers? The people would laugh. I was reminded of a few lines in Durrenmatt's play, *The Physicists*. One of the characters observes: "Pity the land that has no heroes", to which another replies, "Pity the land that needs heroes."

But we had a lot of good fun. I personally like America, and Washington

ranks as one of the most interesting cities I have seen. We left the city via the 14th Street Bridge and the National Airport, which figured so large in a national tragedy just two weeks later.

Travelling home via Minneapolis enabled us to visit my brother Peter and family, who live in a beautiful home just outside of Minneapolis. What a treat to toast the New Year with those who are both relatives and friends!

Jan. 4:

Classes resume at the university. Most of the students are back, eighty in one class, eager for what? Truth? A half-decent mark? A quick end to the year? I am not cynical about these young people. They work as hard as we ever did and in every group of 80 there are a dozen or more who sense that they are uniquely privileged to develop their minds and to explore ideas in a free but disciplined way. The front row is particularly alert, but it is a student in the rear who asks the most penetrating questions. My office door is always open and students walk in and out in a steady stream. They are not as afraid as we were to ask questions and to challenge their teachers.

Jan. 8:

Lunch with a friend who decided last year that he was burned out as a professor. He retired early on a small pension and now spends his time in voluntary service. I hope that his financial sacrifice won't ultimately frustrate him. He is haunted by the spectre of a nuclear war and speaks to high school groups as often as he can about creating a world of peace. He is intensely idealistic and was ridiculed by some of his colleagues for being naive. Not with it!



Roy Vogt

Jan. 10:

Preached a sermon in German, on the theme of The Church, to the older members of our congregation. Question: why do we meet here every Sunday? The cynic, I suppose, would say that we meet because we have always done so. There is undoubtedly some truth in that. However, many also meet because they know (or sincerely believe) that the church is one of the few places where they can meet God. Despite its obvious problems I remain more hopeful about the church than about any other institution, including the university.

Jan. 13:

Left for Florida to attend a Board meeting of MEDA (Mennonite Economic Development Associates). A good time to meet in Florida, though people are complaining about 65° temperatures. Several MEDA members live in the vicinity of Sarasota or have winter cottages there. They are putting a lot of time and money into economic projects in less-developed regions of the world. Florida is obviously not one of them, but it is a convenient place to meet. Each member pays his own way.

I stay with an older Mennonite couple who moved to Florida several decades ago. Their house borders on a golf course and when I go for a walk at seven in the morning there are already 10 cars in the golfcourse parking lot. Even in retirement there are holes to be played and games to be won.

I am impressed with the work that MEDA is doing. It has attracted the support of more than 1,200 Mennonite business and professional people in North America. We have met as 25 Board members to initiate new projects, in places like Haiti, and to review existing ones. The "Old Mennonites", led by a businessman, Milo Shantz of Ontario, provide much of the initiative for this group. Neil Janzen of Winnipeg is the capable president.

Jan. 16:

Invited to dinner with Dr. and Mrs. C.W. Wiebe of Tarpon Springs, formerly of Winkler. Our publishing company in Winnipeg hopes to assist in the publication of Dr. Wiebe's biography this year. Dr. and Mrs. Wiebe are in excellent spirits. His mind still focuses frequently on Winkler. When we leave the restaurant after dinner it is one of those beautiful Manitoba "June" evenings, with no wind, a temperature of 60°, and a clear sky. Why, when our parents fled thousands of miles from the Soviet Union, did they not go to Florida?

Jan. 17:

Left Tampa for Winnipeg via a direct

North West flight. I have always wanted to see the line where the snow stops. I am able to spot it near Louisville Kentucky. There below is a farmer with snow in his field, while immediately to his south is a farm field with no snow. How must it feel to be the last farmer with snow? You can almost see the snow deepen as we move north. The wind chill is -84° when we land in Winnipeg.

The chill in a segment of the Mennonite community in Winnipeg seems to be almost as great. From a circle of friends I learn of the continuing effort to change the direction and leadership of the Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute. Nothing appalling in itself, but the methods used are distressingly similar to those I have often observed in Eastern Europe: secret meetings, vicious accusations and betrayed confidences. How our church has suffered from this kind of thing through the ages!

We have lived in or close to various Mennonite communities in the past few decades and I reflect on their characteristics. The "Old Mennonites," by and large, appear to be the most serene. Quietly intent on living out their faith, they radiate goodness, as well as innocence, like no other Mennonite group. A certain blandness may accompany this, but there is much to be admired. The General Conference Mennonites, especially those in Manitoba with a "Russian" background, are more neurotic, interesting, sophisticated, and cynical, perhaps reflecting their traumatic revolutionary experience and their greater urban exposure. They are also tolerant. The Mennonite Brethren in Manitoba have produced extremely able business and professional people, and some of the finest individual Christians that I know. When I came to Winnipeg twenty years ago I thought that the Mennonite Brethren community also had some good church leaders, interested in working with other Mennonites and possessed of a broad vision. The capable and committed people are still there but, next to the Holdemans, I know of no Mennonite community in which there is so much hostility. The leadership also appears to have become insular and fearful. The tragic result may be the crippling of a high school which in the past decade has become one of the most successful and respected Mennonite schools anywhere in North America. We can only hope that the arrival of warmer weather in February may also see the emergence of a more reconciling spirit in this troubled community. mm

## Seeds of pacifism sprout in early church

*Peter Brock, The Roots of War Resistance. Pacifism from the Early Church to Tolstoy (Nyack, New York: Distributed by the Fellowship of Reconciliation, 1981), pp. 81, paperback \$5.50.*

### A review by Harry Loewen

This well-written booklet is a semi-popular summary of Peter Brock's earlier more detailed academic studies of the history of pacifism. In four chapters Brock deals with the position of the early Christians on pacifism, that of the Anabaptist-Mennonites, the Quakers, and the nonsectarian pacifists of the nineteenth century such as Leo Tolstoy and his followers.

While the author does not uncover any new material with regard to the subject of pacifism, his focus on the historical development of pacifism and his objective yet sympathetic treatment of the historic peace churches makes for interesting and informative reading.

For some readers who may not be all that familiar with the subject, it may come as a surprise to learn that the early Church was nonresistant until well into the third century. Before Christianity became a recognized religion in the Roman Empire, Christians refused to serve in the army primarily because such service violated in their view the Christian principles of love and peace. With Emperor Constantine in the fourth century, however, Christians gave up their earlier nonresistant position and began to enter the state and military services.

For readers of this magazine, Chapter 2, which deals with the Anabaptists and Mennonites, will be of greatest interest. After reviewing the pacifist position of the Anabaptists, Brock shows that as the Mennonites were increasingly tolerated in Europe they gradually abandoned their pacifist stance and that it was the more conservative and uneducated among them who held longer to the traditional belief and practise than the more liberal and cultured Mennonites. Especially in the Netherlands where

Mennonites prospered materially and in Germany where democracy and nationalism increased during the middle of the nineteenth century did the Mennonites eventually renounce nonresistance. According to Brock, it was also the more conservative Mennonites who often rather emigrated than give up their principle of nonresistance.

Brock is correct in stating that humanists like Erasmus and humanist-trained Anabaptist leaders like Conrad Grebel gave rise to the recovery of the early Christian principle of nonresistance, but when he observes that the moving of Mennonites to the cities and their attending colleges and universities contributed to the loss of their early vision, he is less than convincing. By his own admission it was Mennonite scholars who in the twentieth century have not only "sought to recover the vision of sixteenth-century Anabaptists and make it meaningful" in today's society, but have also shown that at "the centre of this vision . . . stands the principle of nonresistance" (p. 39). Moreover, Brock could have shown that it was German Pietism and American Fundamentalism which weakened Mennonite distinctives, thus undermining pacifism as well.

Brock's concluding statement on the Mennonites is both probing and instructive for Mennonites today: "It is too early yet to say whether Mennonites . . . in the New World will succeed in maintaining their traditional identity by giving fresh life to old concepts or whether, as happened with the Mennonites in the Netherlands and Germany, they will eventually intergrate fully with society and discard their traditional testimonies, including nonresistance" (p. 39).

This booklet is to be recommended highly to all those who wish to know what the early Church and the historic peace churches taught and practised with regard to what Tolstoy felt to be the heart of the Gospel.

The book is available by writing to: Carmen Brock, 82 Moore Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M4T 1V3. Price: \$5.50 plus \$1. handling. mm

# Pavarotti and I

by Mary M. Enns

When you come to think of it Luciano Pavarotti might easily have been a Mennonite. Now really, you say, that borders on the sublime, or, sorry, was it ridiculous you said? Actually it's not too impossible a thought. I'm aware that Italians and Mennonites haven't too much in common. But there is that one important bond — their love for music and singing.

The Italians, since time immemorial have produced outstanding tenors (the scorching sun and the amount of olive oil in their diet fostering this) — but then, so have the Mennonites, since Menno's children sang "Haenschen Klein" seated at a footstool at their mother's knee. The only reason why there hasn't been tremendous confusion, heritage-wise, is that most Italian tenors are dark, portly and hot-tempered (climate and diet again) and Mennonite tenors on the whole are fair, not nearly so portly and largely even-tempered,



because long ago they were taught to hold the exuberance down. Both are a proud and musically-industrious race of people.

We know that behind every good singer is someone who remembers to pay the light bills. Take Pavarotti. His charming wife chooses to keep the home-fires burning and sing the lullabies to the bambinos while father is touring the continents. She is content to make the pasta (that's another thing we have in common — Italians and Mennonites are both inordinately fond of pasta, be it said to our sorrow) and see to the supervision of the 1981 production of the fruit of the vine. In short, she leaves him free to continue to be the illustrious and shining star in their firmament, and probably ours.

Which brings us to the point of this article, if it can be said to have a point. We are focusing on a singer who not only has taken the world by storm and held its attention at a high level but whose artistry has come to mean a great deal to us at our house. Indeed, Pavarotti sang himself into first place on our roster some time ago, except. . . . well, I haven't told anyone, but this one time I was absolutely sure he was a bit sharp on one of his high notes. Not being too knowledgeable in the area of high C's I couldn't tell which. However, so keen is the master of this house on Pavarotti that he will not listen to a concert by his favorite unless conditions, atmospheric and otherwise, are just right. Say the winds are howling out of doors and shaking the rafters and the windows — no Pavarotti — that might distort the purity of perfect sound. Say a group of friends are in earnest conversation in our easy chairs, with the coffee just



right — no Pavarotti — that would certainly kill the purity of sound. I know better than ever to clatter with cups and saucers or run the vacuum cleaner while Pavarotti is singing. That would surely be grounds for . . . well, what not.

You might think that I don't love Pavarotti as much as the next person. I do indeed, maybe more, because I love so intensely, always. As a matter of fact, two of my girl friends, and I use that term lightly, gave me an album consisting of two records of the best of Pavarotti for a gift to celebrate the Advent season. When my tears of joy were dried I put the album away to await the home-coming of him who could best initiate the precious gift into our stereo. For the next while our pleasure can only be guessed at. And then it was that bold courage reared its ugly little head. All alone, one day I began hesitantly to commune with the Italian impressario. Where my Italian was not so good I just sang more softly, just as my mother did when she was learning to speak English at night school. Before I realized what was happening "La donna e mobile" (where the artist is telling us how fickle woman is) had become a part of my own repertoire. To prove how much so, I began automatically to sing with the Maestro, putting a great deal of heart and soul into my singing. (Now I can hear whisperings from those who know me well, of, I thought yours was the singing in the shower type of voice!) Be that as it may, when it comes to the crunch, and with a lead such as my friend Pavarotti, who can't sing? (I was about to confess that my contribution to the church choir is mostly decorative, but that remark being loaded, is best left unsaid) But be it said in my favour, I

knew my place; I left all high C's for Mr. Pavarotti to execute by himself. Neither did I try to emulate him in the fine trills the sixteenth notes, or even the tremulous vibrattos. And when it came to the parts they call "holding the note" I was surprised at the incredible storehouse of breath in his chest or voice-box or wherever it is they store it and I had the grace to let mine taper off and quietly wait it out. (It doesn't matter all that much when you happen to be punching the bread dough down.)

So much did this new past-time of singing opera with the best become a part of me that I was no longer conscious of when the spirit of "Kunst" would hit me. And that proved to be my downfall. One snowy day, recently, himself came home from school in something of a stormy mood, quite unusual for him. So, since music mellows the vilest moods, especially after a good dinner, he sighed, somewhat mollified, "And now, Pavarotti." I was busy putting some finishing touches onto something elsewhere when "Una furtiva largrima" penetrated my subconscious. Instantly and unconsciously my own furtive tear began to flow, gently and slowly coursing its way down toward my collarbone. Emotion — joy or otherwise — opens the flood-gates and, there I was, helping Pavarotti in one of his most poignantly lovely and sad arias. Especially was I delicate on the deeply sorrowful passages. In my ardor I was practically beside this greatest of tenors, yet close beside this greatest of the stage and preparing myself for the finale and a modest bow (a bow from him, a curtsy from me) when. . . "So its a duet we're being treated to now?" As everyone realizes one can't just stop on a dime, but I did falter a little. The man, pale, incredulous and completely without compassion, murmured as he walked away, "Well, if Joan Sutherland can do it, why not you!"

Which just goes to prove, a prophet is of no consequence in his own riding.

mm

## A Mennonite album for the collector

A review by Henry Engbrecht

Frohe Lieder is an LP recording of 14 gospel songs and hymns in the German language. It features Tina Peters, mezzo soprano and Wilhelm Peters, tenor (the two singers are not related). The piano accompanist is Susie Penner. All three artists are from Winkler, Manitoba. It was produced by Faith and Life Communications and the Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church. Items range from the very familiar "Wär' gleich blutrot die Sünde" and "Neunundneunzig Schafe" to the duets written by Dr. K.H. Neufeld "Auf Zions Höhn" and "O bleibe bei mir".

Tina Peters' lovely mezzo voice is one that many of us remember from numerous other duo and trio combinations as well as many solo appearances. Her full, rich voice is most pleasing to listen to.

What is most striking about this production is the lovely lucid, lyric tone quality of Wilhelm Peters' tenor voice. One often sees conductors, and sometimes pianists, record successfully in their mid-retirement years. But singers? (especially tenors?). I do not know of

Available at Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Box 1207, Winkler, Man. R0G 2Z0, and selected bookstores; Cost: \$9.95.

any. By far the greatest number of professional singers are "sung out" by that time. It is truly remarkable how well Mr. Peters has taken care of his instrument. This naturally gifted singer performs with excellent control.

On the whole the two voices blend and balance very well. They sing with much abandonment and freedom. Though at times their tone becomes somewhat strained, and in a few instances somewhat strident, it does not degenerate into a willful or forced sound. Their warmth and sincerity is unquestionable. Their teamwork is characterized by strong phrases, careful attention to text and the subtle shading and shaping of phrases, a touch of dynamic, a slight give-and-take, even tasteful ornamentation (as in the final cadence of "Jesus Heiland, steure du"), and pathos.

The simple, yet tasteful piano accompaniment of Susie Penner is most appropriate. She understands her role thoroughly, does not dominate but gives good support to the singers.

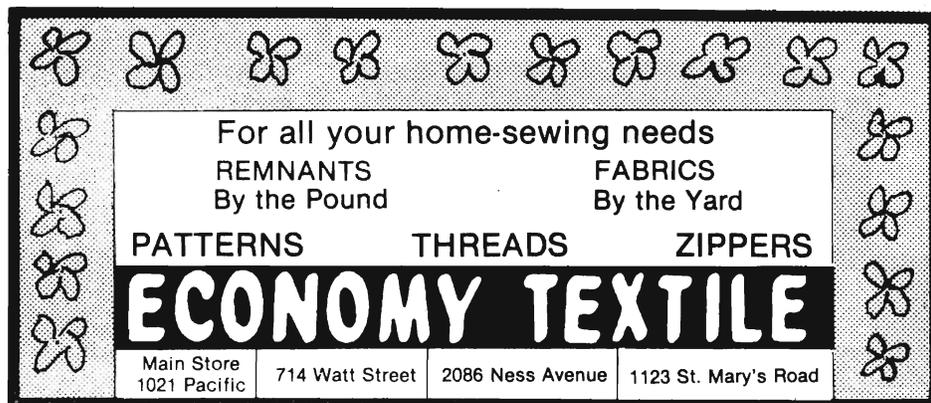
For me the highlights are: the refrain of "Neunundneunzig Schafe" (both times), "Auf Adlers Flügeln getragen" (in spite of a few irregularities), "Wenn aufstehn am Glorreichen Morgen", "Auf Zions Höhn" (by Dr. K.H. Neufeld), and "Göttliche Lieb".

I understand that the taping for this record was done in one day, as are most others by amateur groups. This is unfortunate. The price to be paid is always fatigue. One cannot help but feel that the problems of strain and mild anxiety might have been completely erased with more time for such an important project.

The recording is of good quality, providing good balance, and is virtually distortion-free.

It is remarkable that these strophic songs, so much a part of our Mennonite past, have been captured here in a flavor so true and sincere, by people who thoroughly understand their musical, textual and spiritual meaning. To those of simple faith and those who appreciate the inspiration and hope that these songs have given to our people this is a collector's item.

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# manitoba news

Mennonite Central Committee received word December 24 that its people in Poland are safe and planning to remain. Direct contact with the workers has not been possible since the December 13 news blackout. The MCC team includes Phyllis Krabill of Iowa, now in her fourth year in Poland, and Julie and Paul Keim and their two-year-old daughter of Phoenix, Arizona, who have been in Poland since 1980. Plans have been set for Sam and Doreen Myovich of Fresno, California, and their infant son, to join the other MCCers in Warsaw in 1982. They plan to teach English at the Methodist English Language School there.

Thousands of Canadians stood together in late November to voice their dismay that native rights had been deleted from the Canadian constitution, which was to include a Charter of Human Rights. MCC (Canada) and several of the provincial MCC offices stood together with the native people in their resistance, sending telegrams urging inclusion of aboriginal rights to the prime minister, the minister of Indian Affairs, and to provincial premiers. The National Indian Brotherhood claims it is the voices of groups such as MCC (Canada) who stood with them that finally tipped the scales. Existing native rights were recognized.

A Community Self-Help Centre was opened in Riverton on December 12. The building, constructed at a cost of \$50,000 exclusive of voluntary labour, houses a thrift shop which sells used clothing, household items, and MCC Selfhelp crafts. A community "Friendship Centre" has also been given space in the new building.

A presentation detailing the activities of the extended treatment unit of the Morden District General Hospital was presented at the International Gerontology Conference in Toronto in mid-November. Making the presentation for the hospital were Philippa Gerbrandt, physiotherapist at the hospital, and Dirk De Spiegelaere, occupational therapist.

Kick-off ceremonies for Morden's centennial year took place on New Year's Eve. At the conclusion of the evening mayor Max Friesen and MLA Don Orchard blew out the 100 candles on a giant birthday cake.

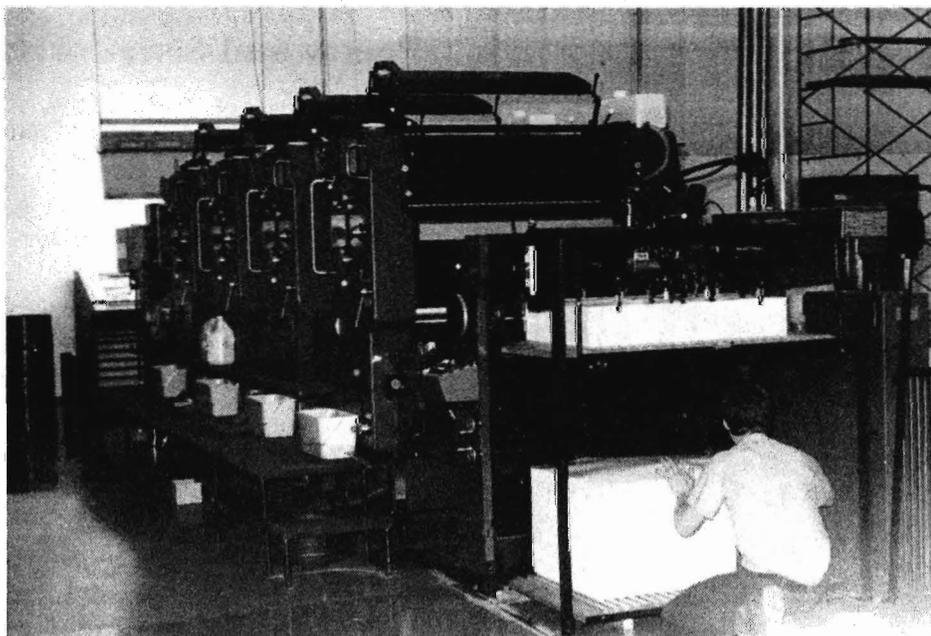
Edgar Epp, director of MCC Saskatchewan, was among those featured on a CBC radio program, *Hearts Resolve: Experiences in Non-Violence*, aired on December 20. Epp discussed his work in prisons. Heard from as well were second-world-war pacifists, and Anti-war activists Daniel and Philip Berrigan.



Harold Unger, a Steinbach town councillor for 20 years, recently became president of the Manitoba Association of Urban Municipalities. The association represents 47 cities, towns, and villages in the province.

A Steinbach couple died in their home December 31 when an early morning fire broke out. Dead are Frank Enns, 76, and his wife Kathryn, 71. Mr. and Mrs. Enns were predeceased by their 27-year-old son Randal who was stabbed in a hotel parking lot in Saskatoon in September.

William Klassen, professor of New Testament at the University of Manitoba for the past ten years, has been appointed director of resources at Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C. He will be in charge of fund-raising. The appointment was effective January 1.

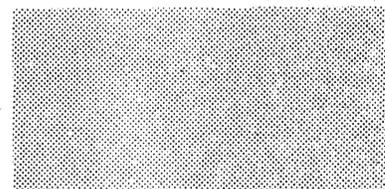


D.W. Friesen & Sons Ltd. of Altona recently installed the firm's first four-colour press, a major improvement in providing fast efficient production of full-colour printing. Chairman of the board of directors, D.K. Friesen unveiled

the \$900,000 press at ceremonies on December 16. The Friesen firm had its beginnings in 1907 as a small confectionery and stationary store. It expanded into printing in 1933.

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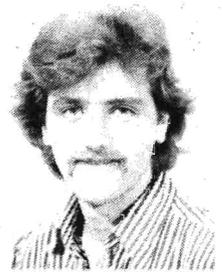
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A local history of Blumenfeld, entitled *Blumenfeld: Where Land and People Meet* and written by Peter and Irene Petkau of Morden, was released December 4 at the annual dinner of the

Blumenfeld Historical Committee. The book documents the first 100 years of the community. It is illustrated by photographs contributed by local residents.



David Neufeld of Boissevain is beginning a three-year term of service in Mue nyani, South Africa (Transkei). He works with MCC in community development by assisting with self-help projects. David attended Conrad Grebel College on the campus of the University of Waterloo, Ontario. He is associated with the Whitewater Mennonite Church in Boissevain. His parents are Werner and Elsie Neufeld.

John J. and Regina Helen Neufeld of Tourond are giving three months of services at the SELFHELP center of the MCC in Ephrata, Pa. They farm in Niverville and are members of the Niverville Mennonite Brethren Church.

The MCC (Canada) Executive Committee, meeting in Winnipeg on December 11 and 12, learned that record donations of \$3.184 million dollars, had been received from Canadian churches



The Lowe Farm Housing Corporation held an official sod-turning ceremony recently, although construction on the 18-unit elderly housing complex had already begun. The complex is expected

to cost \$600,000 of which the community has raised \$30,000. In addition to the 18 units, the complex will have a common kitchen and dining area, a lounge, and an office.

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in 1981. As of December 1, there are 851 persons in voluntary service placements in some 46 countries, an increase from 807 in 1980.



**Rudy Loewen** of Winnipeg has begun a two-year term of service with MCC as a counselor in a home for mentally retarded adults in Welland, Ontario. He is a member of the Douglas Mennonite Church in Winnipeg. His parents are William and Mary Loewen, also of Winnipeg.



**Karen Bueddefeld** of Winnipeg has begun a two-year term of service with MCC as a day care worker at the Montreal House of Friendship. Karen was employed as a teacher in Altona after graduating from the University of Manitoba with a bachelor's degree in home economics and a certificate of education. She is a member of the First Mennonite Church, Winnipeg. Her parents are Karl and Hellen Bueddefeld, also of Winnipeg.

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

The **South Park Mennonite Brethren Church** in Altona held its chartering service November 29. On the same day it welcomed pastor **James Young** and his wife **Shirley**. Rev. Young is a graduate of Nipawin Bible Institute and Winnipeg Bible College.

An installation service for pastor **Abe Froese** and his wife **Margaret** was held November 22 at the **Justice Mennonite Brethren Church**. The Froeses are the first full-time pastor couple in the church's 51-year history.

## COMING EVENTS

March 7 **Steinbach Community Singers** perform Hadyn's **The Creation** in the Steinbach Bible College gym.

## OF GERMAN AND BOOKS

If you have:

—Books for review: Writers and publishers of books that are significant to the Mennonite community may send them for review to Dr. Harry Loewen, Mennonite Chair, University of Winnipeg, 515 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg R3B 2E9.

—German articles: Authors of German-language articles should send them to Dr. Victor Doerksen, Department of German, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg R3T 2N2.

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## Little Ike — Prairie Boy





# The cry of my people

Hear, oh Lord, the cry of the migrant workers from Lesotho, who sleep on the ground in winter beside the recruiting center, waiting for word of a job in South Africa.

Hear the cry of the workers' wives and children, waiting in the village for news from their men, for money needed for food and clothes.

Hear the cry of the MCCer who works to aid the migrants. With local Christians he can offer friendship, food, caring, but despairs when there seems no way to change the harsh system—separating black and white treating black people as labor units forcing the Basotho to leave homes and villages to work in South African mines at low wages.

"Hear our prayer, O Lord. Let our cries come to you. Do not hide your face from us in the day of our distress." (Ps. 102: 1, 2)

MCCers work in many difficult places, where people literally cry out because life is so hard. Your financial gifts support MCC workers who seek to do God's will in unjust situations. For more information write to:

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Akron, Pennsylvania 17501

MCC (Canada)  
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# Ooshacka

Von Jack Thiessen

Aus etj tjlien wea enn noch jescheida aus vondoagschen Dach, saed etj eimol Ooshacka tou eine Fru enn donn tjreach etj foats so eint aunet lintje Oah jedrascht, daut etj drei Doag lang Enjeltjes doabenne sinje head. Daut wea mie doch ein baetje tou domm, enn donn fruach etj mien Brouda Fraunz, woarum Ma mie eint je-brennt haud aus etj Ooshacka saed. "Oh", saed he, "daut haud etj die saje kunnt, daut'et doafae eint aum lintjen Oah jaewe wudd. Wiels etj saed uck eimol tou Jreeta-daut wea noch enn Russlaund-Ooshacka, enn se rannd nenn enn kloagd enn donn gauf'et uck foats ein poa opp'et lintje Oah."

"Waut kaun eine dann aewahaupt saje, wann einem de Tung so morschich jaetjt?" fruach etj Fraunz. "Oh," saed Fraunz, "daut ess mett soune tjrasche Raed doch ein baetje soun tricky bizness. Well'we oppem Staulebaehn nopp krupe, enn dann woa etj die daut mol kratjt vetalle." Daut ess vleicht ein gouda Investment, docht etj bie mie, enn donn saut etj uck aul doa bowe em Hei.

Fraunz haud ein Rogers Tsierop-sahmatje mett Wota mettjebrocht wiels ahm schmeatjad, enn he wull doch woll play it safe spaele. Enn donn fung he aun: "Wanna de breedajemeindscha Tjnals Faultj eine Veadel Miel auf ess ouden noda, dann doafst du blous "Oh my" saje, uck wann du die eint mettem Hohma oppem Dume heiwst. Wann he nich doa ess, enn de Wind nich ut'em Waste tjemmt, dann kaust du uck eimol den Dach Schisjat saje, uck wann Ma daut heat. Wann eine Kouh die mett'em nauten Zoagel biem Maltje eint aewre Schnutz heift, kaust du Harre Jeen, Heinha Moss, Harre Moss ouden Donna Wata saje.

Enn wann die eine Kouh biem Maltje emm amma nennklunjt, kaust uck han enn wada mol Harre Gomz saje. Enn wann du mett Voda fenze deist enn die de Midje praetjle enn du die de Steewle vollschapst enn du dann noch enne Juschtje nenntjeiwelst, dann kaust du uck eimol verre Meddach enn eimol noh Meddach Schinda saje, enn sest uck aule aundre Weada, woune etj die jesacht hab. Oba Diewel saj goanich ouden fushel daut mau, uck wann die de Gnautz schratjlich jeatjt, wiels wann Ma ouden Voda daut heare wudde, dann reatje

diene twee Oahre nich tou toum vetjiele.

Enn wann ein poah Kenaedja irjend-woa stoahne enn sich eine Poperotz dreie, dann kaust uck mol ein poa rusche Wead brucke sous Tsuckkennisien ouden Bozsche moi ouden so waut, oba bruck niemols soune rusche Wead aus Voda bruckt wann bie ahm de Hummels emm Bossem Honich seatje. Enn wann de Kenaedja froage, waut de saedst, dann saj mau, so heet Paepakrut opp Rusch. Enn nuscht saje, wiels mank de jefft daut Kloagfiestasch. Enn de vetalle Voda aules, aus daut so ess ouden nich."

So, enn nu wea mien Private Lesson tou Enj, enn etj docht enn docht, wo vael Schichte dem Mensch siene Tung doch uthoule musst.

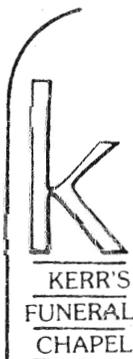
Oba eines Doages word mie daut Gaunze doch dietlich. Woarom enn wie so? Wiels etj noh Mexico foah, enn daut wea dann uck de groute Offenbarung mett daut Woat Ooshacka.

Jo, wiels doa jeft'et groute Vaejel mit roude Tjap sous ein Kuhnhoan enn lange Flichte, enn de fraete blous Oos. Doudje Tjalwa, Pead, Burros, Esels (measchtens veabeenje) ouden Hose, woune dolla stintje aus ein laewenja Kosebock enn woune sich nich waere tjenne, woare doa von dise Ooshackasch ouden Oosodlasch aunjegnoacht enn op-jefraete. Grulich schlacht sitt'et dise Ooshackasch, enn de wudde uck nich schlure einen vedarschten, ut-jewaetaden, vebiestaden Meenist enn Wiestetweitouhacke enn optefraete, uck wann'a Overauls aunhaud," saed Pan-nasch Fraunz.

Oba woarom ess de Nome Ooshacka fe Mensche so grulich taboo? Jo, kratjt daut word mie mett eimol platzlich grout enn wichtich enn seha dietlich, wiels menschliche Ooshackasch doune kratjt daut waut de Vaejel doune: Se hacke enn fraete enn spitjre sich blous von Aewabliwessel, von Second-hand Sache, waut Mensche aungohne. Jo, menschliche Ooshackasch sest nuscht aundret aus Pludameasche, ouden gossips, sou's wie opp Dietsch saje. Enn soune menschliche Ooshackasch jeftet earemol, sogoa enn Tjoatje, saed Fraunz.

Enn daut aules wisst Ma aul lang tridj, oba se saed mie daut nich. Eine mott sount dochwoll selbst uffinje emm donn vejat eina daut uck nich sou sch-wind

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# De Stripj Koata

von Jehaun Niefelt

Leppi Jasch wea ena von de, den daut en Russland to bunt hea jink no de Revolution en so trock he met sieni Familji enn de twintja Joari no Kanada. De Familji kofft sich uck bolt eni Farm onn wea doabie sich emm kanadischen Wasti eni nieji Existenz to schaufi.

Jasch wea daut jiwant tiedisch opp to stoani opp daut Somma oda Sinndag wea. Nu passead daut aun enim sea schoenen Sinndag Morji als he mett de Sonn oppjstoani wea, daut he schwind no dem Staul jink omm daut Veh to fodri. He jlewd ewent doraum waut daut oli Sprichwoat sacht, "Morgenstund hat Gold im Mund". Bie soni Tiedi weari am uck de deepsti Jidanki eawa Natuawissenschaft jikoami. Na auls he so sienen Wach jeit onn aewa aulerhaund jrebbelt doon ruschelt daut mett enmoal so vodachtig emm Krut. Na doa musst doch enmoal nojiseni woari. Enn waut denk ji sach he doa? Rechtig, daut wea en Koata.

"So, so" saed Jasch to sich selbst, "du Loslada nu schlickst du die doavon. Kjen Wunda daut daut hia enn latzta Tied so mett junge Kauti jischett haft. Oaba wacht mau die woa eck eni Lektion jeawi de du dien Lewdag nich vojaeti woascht." Enn doamett naum he enin Stock onn hauwd dem Koata en Poa opp dem Puckel. Tumm Aufscheet saed he dann noch to dem Koata, "Doa seh daut do no Hus kemmt. Enn komm nich wada, sonst jeft daut noch mea Schinelliborscht. Onn bruckst die uck goanich so domm to habi mett dieni witti Stripji. Daut wet doch auli Maun daut du mau en Koata best." Oba dem Koata wea noch goanich no Aufscheet naemi. Am wea daut doch to bunt so unfriedlich auffjoadigt to woari. Mett so weinig Respekt haud am waeda Mensch noch Tia verhea bihaundelt. He ded doon waut so gaunz natierlich fe enim kanadischen stripjen Koats ess. He dreid sich flugs omm, stalld sich en baet bretbensch opp, onn weifeld doabie gaunz jischenckt mett dem Zoagel. Daut he got jizielt haud, daut sach de oli Koata bolt.

Jasch haus doavon jilesi wo daut enn dem groten Weltjrich tojigoani haud. Nu lead he ut ejni Erfoarung waut so enn Gas-aunjriff to bidiedi haud. He kunn nuscht seni. Onn wo daut stunk. Daut wea vel oaja auls eni Ruschi Ilski.

Na jo oaba waut nu? He musst tridj no Mutta, daut wisst he. De haud emma Roat. He krop sacht verlaengst dem Tun tridj noam Hus, moak sacht de Tjaetji-

dea oap onn schlickt sich gaunz bidreкт to Dea nenn. Oba daut diad nich lang donn wea doa Revolution emm Hus. Daut haud kratjt so eni Wirkung aus wann moal ena, de to Freteck, Meddag onn Owentkost blos Tschasnick jijaeti haft, to Gaust tjemt, blos noch 25tig Moal oaja. De Kjinja kaumi ut aeri Stowi rutjirausilt onn wulli weti wo de skunk nenn jikoami wea. Mutta de doabie wea de Hoawajrett to rehri, kreach schwing den Basseem to holi onn joach Paupi Jasch to de Dea rut.

"Oaba Lied, wo du stinkst. Go enn de Garage. Eck woa Wota onn Sep bringi. Wo wellst du so to Tjoatj foari? Hast du nuscht Baetritt to doni auls aum Sinndag Morji enn de Koh-grow to fauli? saed Mutta onn schloch de Dea to.

## Das Lebensschicksal von Maria Defehr

*Mia oder über den Amur in die Freiheit: die Lebensgeschichte einer mennonitischen Frau, Maria DeFehr — auf Grund ihrer Aufzeichnungen erzählt von Gerhard Lohrenz (Winnipeg: DeFehr Foundation Inc., 1981), Paperback, 181 Seiten, \$3.95.*

Rezensiert von Harry Loewen

Einerseits ist das *Mia*-Buch andern Erlebniserzählungen, die in letzter Zeit erschienen sind, ähnlich. Wie Anna in *Anna: From the Caucasus to Canada* (Hilsboro, Kansas, 1979) und Lily in *Immer Weiter nach Osten* CMBC Publications, 1981), erzählt Maria DeFehr, wie eine mennonitische Frau aus inneren, gott-gegebenen Kräften allen unmenschlichen Mächten zum Trotz sich nicht nur als Mensch und Christin behaupten, sondern auch die erlebten Widerwärtigkeiten zum eigenen und anderer Nutzen gestalten kann. Auch ist *Mia*, wie die andern erwähnten Bücher, ein Denkmal der zur Sprache gekommenen mennonitischen Frau. Wie bekannt, war die mennonitische Frau and Mutter im Sowietrussland der dreissiger und vierziger Jahren die stumme und leidende Stütze der männerlosen mennonitischen Gesellschaft. Heute hat diese heldenhafte Frau ihre Stimme gefunden, und was sie uns zu

Obba nu wea Leppi Jasch de Jiduld to Eng. He moak de Dea en baet oap onn saed, "Nu horcht waut eck to saji hab. Wann du enn Rom best, dann do auls de Roema doni, ess en olit Sprichwoat. Eck obba saj wann du enn Kanada best, dann do auls de Kanadia doni, daut het schlo nie enim stripjin Koata opp dem Puckel. De sent hia aundasch bischauft auls enn Russland."

Aun disem Sinndag foa Leppi Jasch nich to Tjoatj. He haud sieni Lektion aul wach, onn doato weari noch sieni Tjleda hinja dem olin Staul to bigroawi.

Bitte to beachti:

Irgend eni Aehnlichkeit enn Naomi oada Staed es reina Tofaul. mmm

sagen hat und wie sie es sagt, lässt das Wohlbekannte in neuer Form erscheinen.

Mias Geschichte ist aber auch einzigartig, indem sie uns eine Frau schildert, die ihren Weg als Frau ging und als Frau behauptete als in der mennonitischen Gesellschaft die Frau noch so ziemlich dem Mann unterordnet war und nur im Mann oder zusammen mit dem Mann ihre eigentliche Geltung fand. Mia war nicht zufrieden den üblichen Weg der damaligen Mädchen zu gehen, ein Weg, der gewöhnlich mit dem Traualtar anfang und als kinderreiche Mutter endete. Wie Mia schreibt: "Ich wollte studieren und Arzt werden . . . und Männer interessierten mich daher nicht besonders" (S. 127). In Russland schon studierte sie Medizin, besuchte höhere Schulen, wurde mit dem Kulturleben der Grosstädte bekannt und verkehrte mit Menschen, die ihre Ideale und Sehnsüchte zu schätzen wussten.

Als die Sowietregierung dann ihrem Streben ein Ende machte, gelang es Mia über den Amur-Fluss nach China zu entkommen, von wo sie eine offene Tür in die Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika fand. Hier studierte sie, erwarb drei akademische Grade and wurde Lehrerin. Neben ihrer Lehrtätigkeit hielt sie in

Kirchen und Schulen Vorträge über ihre Erlebnisse in Russland.

Selbst in ihren Heiratsplänen war Mia die zielbewusste und sichere Frau. Ihr Gebet diesbezüglich lautete: "Damit ich ihn lieben kann, muss dieser Mann . . . drei Eigenschaften haben. Er muss Dich (Gott) auch lieb haben, zweitens muss er äusserlich und innerlich rein sein und drittens muss er fleissig sein, denn nichts ist mir so abstossend wie ein fauler Mensch (S. 127). In Abe DeFehr fand sie den Mann, der diese Bedingungen erfüllte.

Die Leser, die im *Mia*-Buch erfahren möchten, wie die einst armen und verfolgten Mennoniten mit Wohlstand und guten Zeiten fertig werden können, mögen enttäuscht sein, denn Mia schreibt wenig über die heute blühende A.A. DeFehr Möbelfabrik. Doch werden die Leser in diesem Buch finden, wie Mennoniten in Canada zum Reichtum gekommen sind. Immer wieder betont die Erzählerin, dass schwere Arbeit, Sparsamkeit, Ausdauer, Fairness und Wohlwollen den Mitarbeitern gegenüber und unerschütterliches Gottvertrauen zum irdischen wie auch zum inneren Glück beitragen. Auch wird gezeigt, dass materielle und akademische Ziele nicht alles im Leben bedeuten. Als Mia Ehegattin und Mutter wurde, gab sie sich ganz der Familie hin, um den Kindern und später den Grosskindern Ideale und Werte vorzuleben, die mit keinem Geld zu kaufen sind.

Das Buch ist von dem bekannten Ältesten und Schriftsteller Gerhard Lorenz sorgfältig verfasst worden. Es enthält Landkarten, einige Zeichnungen und mehrere Photographien von Maria DeFehr und ihrer Familie. Die Druckund Korrekturarbeit der Christian Press Lässt zu wünschen übrig und man kann nur hoffen, dass eine eventuelle Neuauflage dieses interessanten und wichtigen Buches die meisten Druckfehler beseitigen wird.\*

Leser, die Maria DeFehr gekannt haben und solche, die mit einem mennonitischen Frauenschicksal bekannt werden möchten, werden im *Mia*-Buch eine bereichernde Lektüre finden.

Das Buch ist bei DeFehr Foundation Inc., 55 Vulcan Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R2G 1B9, für \$3.95 erhältlich.

\*Note: When this review was written I did not know that an English version of Mia's story was planned as well. The book to be published toward the end of this year is being written by Mary Enns, staff writer to the *Mennonite Mirror*. The book will not be a translation of the above German book, but it will also be based on Maria DeFehr's journals. H.L.

## EIN MENNONITISCHES DENKMAL von Heinrich Wiebe

Vor etwa zwei Jahren trafen sich Mennoniten aus den verschiedenen Gemeinden Winnepeg, um über ein Denkmal der Opfern seit 1917 zu beraten. Jedermann zugegen willigte ein. Ein Ausschuss wurde gewählt, Entwürfe und Einzelheiten einzuholen, um sie am 18.2.1980 einer Versammlung aller, die daran interessiert sein würden, vorzulegen und weitere Pläne fuer die Errichtung des Denkmals zu klären.

Leider wurde der in unsern Zeitungen dafür bestimmte Tag der Wahltag für das kanadische Parlament. Man wählte und sass wohl vor dem Fernseher, ganz mit den Wahlergebnissen beschäftigt. Zur Versammlung erschienen nur wenige. Die meisten von uns liessen die Opfer der Vergangenheit diesmal im Stich.

Und dabei ist's geblieben. Haben wir davon vergessen? Ja und nein. Einige Leser unsern Zeitungen waren der Meinung, dass sie ihre Lieben im Herzen haben, die Mittel aber sollte man der Mission zukommen lassen.

Mission . . . sie bewegt unsre Herzen; besonders, wenn sie recht weit ab ist. Daheim bereitet sie uns schon mehr Schwierigkeiten; doch sind wir wohl alle für Mission.

Mission aber unter unsern Glaubensbrüdern und schwestern, unter unsern Kindern, ja, sogar an uns selbst? Nein, die braucht man wohl nicht. Und wer würde schon ein Mahnmal, das den Opfern der grausamen Zeit in der alten Heimat gewidmet wäre, mit Mission verbinden?

Was macht denn ein Missionar? Er zeugt von Jesu Leben, Leiden, Sterben, von seinem Missionsauftrag an seine Jünger und Gemeinde. Wenn ich daran denke, denke ich unwillkürlich an Vater, Onkel, Verwandte und viele Bekannte, die ebenfalls den Leidensweg ins Ungewisse, und meistens in den Tod, gehen mussten.

Was hatten sie verschuldet, dass ihnen solch hartes Los zuteil wurde? Die

Antwort hat man uns nicht gegeben. Jedenfalls keine wahre. Und wo sind sie geblieben? Wenige unter uns wissen Zeit, Ort oder Ursache ihres Märtyrertodes.

Natürlich habe ich ihnen in meinem Herzen ein Dankmal gestellt. Und oft hat ihr Los mich zu dankbarer Tat bewogen. Du und ich werden wohl dankbar sein, aus der Zeit der Not und Angst herausgerettet worden zu sein. Werden es aber unsre Kinder und Nachkommen sein? Wer wird sie dazu anregen?

Dankbar . . . bin ich es wirklich? Dankbarkeit ist erkennbar, ansteckend, regt die Hände. Und was tun meine? Ich würde manches hergeben, den Opfern der schweren Prüfungszeit einen Gedenkstein zu setzen. Aber wie, wo?

Für Errungenschaften sind sie leichter zu errichten. Mit dankbaren Herzen sahen wir den Film und die Denkmäler in Paraguay. Tief bewegen mich die Bartschund Hoepfnerdenkmäler in Steinbach, und eindrucksvoll wirkt die Statue von Mutter und Kind vor der Mennonitenkirche in Bielefeld.

Wann aber kommt das Denkmal fuer die vielen, vielen, die entwürdigt, entrechtet, verhöhnt, von den Lieben entzissen oder als ganze Familien in die Verbannung geschleppt wurden?

Oft denke ich an ein Bild, wie ein Jüngling mit in Ketten geschlagenen geballten Fäusten, ein älterer Mann mit schlaffen und ein Greis mit gefalteten Händen in die Verbannung getrieben werden. Sie haben angeblich keine Errungenschaften vorzuweisen. Aber als Märtyrer sind sie zum Samen der Kirche geworden.

Unsre Hände sind noch frei. Sind wir nicht verpflichtet, sie auch zur Errichtung eines Denkmals zu gebrauchen, das uns, unsern Nachkommen und vielen andern die Leiden unsern Glaubensgeschwister vor Augen führen würde? Der Segen dürfte grösser sein, als wir zu ahnen wagen. mm

# our word

## THE INSTITUTIONALIZED SOCIETY

A short time ago I had occasion to spend some time with and observe a relative of mine who has been institutionalized for almost 30 years. When I discussed some of his traits and behaviour with a knowledgeable friend, that friend, an expert in the field, observed: "You know, a good part of his behaviour is due, not to the condition for which he has been interned, but to the institutionalizing process. In fact, that might account for most of the peculiarities you observed."

We know of course that people who lie in hospitals for a long time can develop bed sores and that criminals can take even more serious scars with them out of a prison system. We have a number of institutions for the special cases in our society, whether these are old folks homes, mental hospitals, prisons or whatever, and we can recognize certain similarities in the nature and function of such places. They tend to limit an individual's freedom and impose certain conventional norms in the interests, we suppose, of the society of which we are a part.

But if we look a little closer at the society around us we will have to admit that we are much more institutionalized than these exceptions alone would indicate. Schools and churches are institutions, as is the family, and we are to a great degree their creatures. And while we may agree with a church's creed and a school's philosophy and even with the idea of marriage, that in itself does not mean that we understand what these institutions have done and are doing to us.

In mentioning the church here, it should be clear that I am not speaking about the Church Invisible, whose whereabouts and extent are not in institutional hands, thank God. Nor should the question about the church being 'instituted by Christ' muddy the argument, since I am clearly not referring to the creative work of God among men and women, but rather to the human (all-too-human) institutions which have arisen around our religious practice.

What then do I mean by institutions? The Oxford Dictionary tells us that it is "an establishment, organisation or association, instituted for the promotion of some object, especially one of public utility, religious, charitable, educational, etc." Probably the first thing to know about human institutions is that, once formed, they develop a rationale for their existence, so that it is much more difficult to end than begin them. This rationale can be summed up: since the institution exists, it must have a reason for existence. Furthermore, it begins to impose shared norms without necessarily examining them to see whether they square with the stated assumptions of the given institution. Another basic element is the implied promise of protection to those inside and threat to those outside the institution.

Human institutions of this kind have always existed (or at least long before the formation of the Christian church). When Jesus preached his message some 2,000 years ago he was con-

fronted by a very institutionalized society and some of his effort went to attacking that order that seemed to exist for its own sake. I am suggesting that a similar situation exists now and probably has always been more or less the same.

Society has tolerated some rather unchristian and immoral norms and practices because they too were a part of the institutional order. For example, the old honor code, which led to duels and other acts of revenge, has been maintained in western civilisation right into our own time. In the 19th century duellists broke the law, but the law winked at most duel murders because of the power of that convention within society. Other conventional forms and practices of primitive origin have managed to survive in various forms (think for example of our ranking of sexual vs. other sins or the vendettas occasionally carried out) even within our religious institutions and I think it should be one of our more urgent priorities to seek to identify such conventional elements and overcome them.

But perhaps the most insidious force to contend with in this whole question is the conventional force itself. In our schools we may care a great deal about an academic or a religious component, but the main effect of any school is probably the conventional force it exerts on the individual. We like to think of that as a 'socializing' process, knocking off the rough edges of the individual and turning an uncouth youth into a civilized human being. But are we aware of the price that is paid for this conformation? Are we not teaching almost complete conformity? And does not the same apply in our other institutions? Are we not cowed into the comfortable pew and docile domesticity by the implied threats of scandal and rumor? Our religious pioneers, from Jesus through Luther and the Anabaptists, were all scandalous in their behaviour, disregarding convention in order to pursue a higher order.

The Mennonite world has been convention-bound in its institutions for a long time, although it may have felt that it was different because of its outward difference from other conventional systems. Of late, our urbanization and modernization have brought us almost totally in line with the society around us. This does not represent a real change in terms of our subservience to convention; rather, it helps remove the illusion of being nonconformist.

Now is perhaps a good time to take a fresh look at what is meant by the injunction: "Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed. . . ."

— Victor G. Doerksen

*Victor Doerksen has joined the Mirror as associate editor, and will be in charge of the German. He is head of the department of German at the University of Manitoba.*

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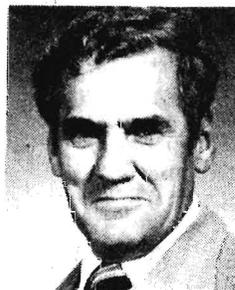
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