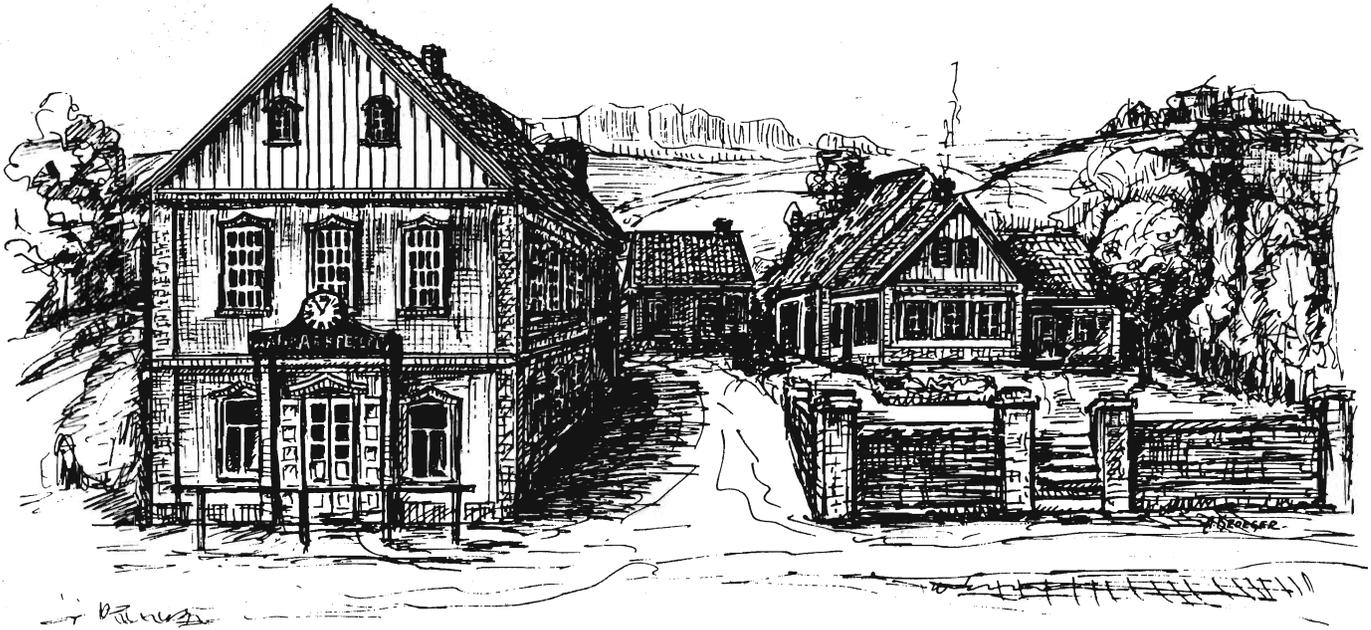


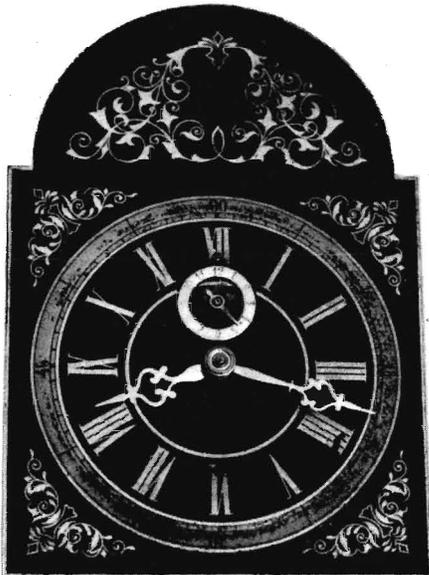
Mennonite Mirror

volume 13 / number 5

January 1984



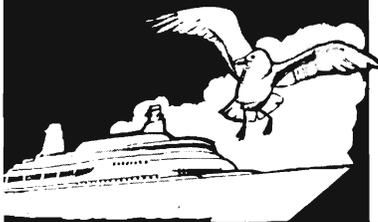
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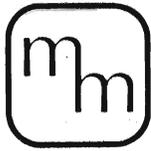
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ForeWord

The first issue of 1984 opens with a story about time — not about the pessimistic reality of George Orwell, but in the rather pragmatic sense of trying to keep it accurately. A clock is something that when it works is not noticed, even though it is essential to the way we manage our lives. When a clock doesn't work or is unreliable — well, there is nothing worse. The Kroeger family story demonstrates that art, craft, and utility can be married in one, and the Kroegers are justly proud of their family's work.

Not all North End residents leave Winnipeg to earn fame — notoriety, perhaps — in the tinsel glitter of the eastern culture capitals, there are a few who stay behind. Immanuel Horch is an example of one such person; Winnipeg's musical life would have been poorer without his contribution.

Roy Vogt returns this month. Last issue, as you recall, his column did not appear, apparently he took the long way and missed his appointment with his typewriter.

There are three reviews this month. Ed Unrau outlines his views of *And When They Shall Ask*, a well-crafted film that succeeds in adding even more polish to the image of the Mennonite "golden age" in Russia. Al Reimer went to the CMBC oratorio choir concert and left infused with a Christmas spirit. Irving Hexham reviews two books that show how Christianity is, and is not, observed in South Africa. Prof. Hexham was also the *Mirror* correspondent at the World Council of Churches assembly in Vancouver this past summer, and three months after the event, is still impressed.

Victor Peters has written a major article on the visit of his son and himself to China this past year. China has always intrigued the Western eye, and now that the winds of change have lifted the veil, more North Americans are walking behind it. The German this month comes in two versions — enjoy them both.

The Cover: Photos relating to the Kroeger clockworks.

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mennonite mirror

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A GOOD
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YEAR OF THE



Here's how not to
break your New Year's
resolutions:

MAKE NONE

Because we had to assemble the January Edition of the *Mirror* three weeks early, there is no winner to announce this issue.

Accordingly, two winners and two sets of answers will be announced in February.

Now turn your attention to this month's puzzle.

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 from among the contest entries and the prize awarded.

Entries must be sent to the *Mirror* office by January 26, 1984.

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Very little is known about the Kroeger family before their emigration from Western Prussia to the Ukraine. It can be assumed that they came to the Danzig area from Friesland along with other Anabaptist-Mennonites in the sixteenth century. The name Kroeger is prevalent in Friesland and means "inn-keeper." It is derived from "Kroeg," the dutch word for mug or inn.

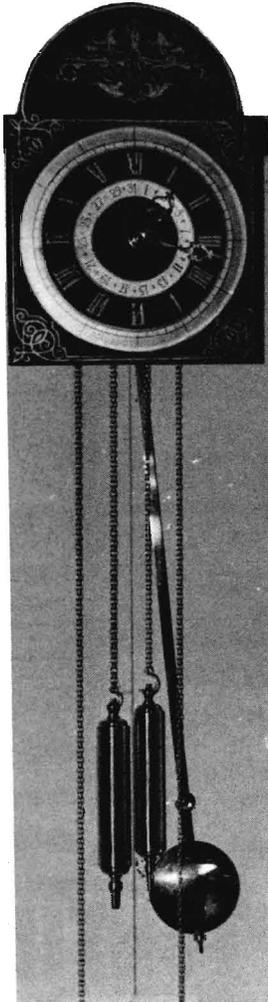
In the Chortitza-Rosental parish church register the original entry is Kröger, e.g. Kroeger.

The Kroeger clocks are large long pendulum wall clocks driven by weights, all metal and without any housing. They were intended for the farm household of the 19th century.



A timeless craft that passed through generations of Kroegers

by Arthur Kroeger



The clockmaker Johann Kroeger, originally from the village of Reimerswalde, near Marienburg West-Prussia, arrived in Chortitza in New Russia in 1804 at the age of 54, with his wife Aganeta (née Dyck) age 60, their two daughters, Anna 20, Maria 16, and son Abraham 13. At that time the first settlers of the "Altkolonie" (Old Colony) were just becoming established and economically strong enough to support such craftsman as a clockmaker. Johann had brought with him not only his skill as a clockmaker, but also the basic tools and some material for new clocks.

Soon after his arrival he set up shop in a cottage which he probably built with the help of other settlers. Since he was not a farmer, the cottage was located on land not well suited for agriculture. It was situated in the picturesque hills of the nearby village of Rosental, known for its wild roses, lilac, and large wild pear trees. Here, in one of the ravines protected from the cold northeast winds, a very primitive cottage-type house was built: mud floor, mud walls, and a straw-thatched roof. It served as living quarters for the Kroeger family of five, and as a clock shop.

We can well imagine under what circumstances clocks were made at that

time. The tools were primitive and the machines, if any, were very, very simple. Yet clocks of surprising accuracy were produced. They were of course "accurate" only in an approximate sense, since the early clocks had only the one hour hand. It was the skill of the craftsman that counted heavily, and not so much the tools of the trade. The clocks were made singly, at first probably to order, with the initials of the owner and the year it was made proudly displayed on the hand-painted face.

In 1815, at the age of 24, Johann's son Abraham married Margareta Bartsch, age 21. She was the daughter of Johann Bartsch, one of the two deputies who had helped to negotiate settlement terms for the Mennonites with Katherine the Great of Russia in 1786. The impressive monument on his grave in Rosental has been brought over from the Ukraine to Manitoba and now stands on the grounds of the Mennonite Village Museum in Steinbach.

The Abraham Kroegers continued with the clockmaking. They also built a larger, finer house (which still stands and is occupied to this day) not far from the original cottage, but closer to the main street of the village. The original cottage continued to serve as the

clockshop for a while. Abraham and Margareta had 12 children with two sets of twins. There were seven boys and five girls. Two girls died as infants, and one boy at the age of nine. Helena and Aganeta were the oldest twins, followed by Abraham junior. Then came Jacob, who lived to the ripe old age of 80. In 1850 he married Gertruda Neufeld. They had six children. Jacob is of special interest, since he has left a handwritten record of the Kroeger-Krueger clan, which was brought over to Canada by his oldest son, Jacob junior, who came to Canada in 1900. The descendants of Jacob junior are the Kruegers of southern Manitoba. Abraham and Margareta's other children were: Margareta, Johann, David, Peter and Heinrich. In Canada there are many descendants of David, Peter and Heinrich, the most numerous being the Heinrich branch, who live in Saskatchewan. Mother Margareta passed away in 1852, and Abraham married a widow Anna Guenter (née Loewen) in 1853. Abraham died at the age of 81 in 1872.

It is known that the whole Kroeger family was employed in clockmaking at one time or another. There is evidence for instance that Peter (1832-1908) also made clocks. His initials appear on a clock restored by the present writer. Clockmaking was good business at a time when the surrounding farm communities were prospering. When further Mennonite colonies were established in other parts of the Ukraine, in the Crimea, the Caucasus, and in Siberia, the Kroegers also supplied these settlements with their clocks. There are Kroeger clocks in the Orenburg area of Siberia even at the present time, as reported by visitors to that area. So in order to satisfy the demand, a new shop was built on the premises of the Kroeger property.

In time David (1829-1909), the tenth child of Abraham, became the head of the family business. In 1859 he married the energetic Agathe Sawatzky (1842-1929) from Schoenenberg. A new house had been built for them on the neighbouring lot, just to the north of their parents' property. Since the terrain of the area had a rather steep slope, a considerable effort was required to create a reasonably flat yard around the house. This was accomplished by means of retaining walls and terracing, the result of which was an interesting landscape. David Kroegers had 6 children; 3 were boys: David Junior (the author's grandfather), Abraham and Johann, and 3 girls: Helena, Agatha and Margareta.

By the time David junior (1860-1920)



Margarete and David D. Kroeger.

grew up and got married in 1882 to Margareta Krahn from Chortitza, the clockmaking had pretty well reached its peak. The business had outgrown its "cottage" and also the "house" industry stages as such and plans for expansion were made. The plans included a two-story shop and office building (with provision for expansion), a foundry, a blacksmith shop, and a new residential building with a stable for horses and other domestic animals. In time all this was built on an acquired property across the street from David senior's house. The clock sales had increased, and outside workers were hired to ensure a steady flow of production. Eventually just about every Mennonite family in Russia had a Kroeger clock.

The development and evolution of the clocks made by the Kroegers followed that of the clockmaking industries in other European countries. Even in Russia there were other Mennonite clockmakers, namely: Lepp in the town of Einlage, Hildebrand in Chortitza, and Mantler in the Molotschna, but the

Kroeger clocks were the most numerous. The early clocks were very simple, with only the hour hand and a string instead of a chain. Later came the chiming clocks. Later models included clocks with an alarm or calendar. There were also clocks set in wooden cases (grandfather type), but not many, and those only for export to the new world.

The pendulum clock has an interesting history. Briefly, after Galileo discovered the free-swinging pendulum, Christian Huygens, a scientist in the Netherlands, was able to incorporate the pendulum into a clock in 1656-57. The all-metal clock movement as such was invented in northern Italy long before that, and was used mainly for steeple clocks. At first clocks were made only for the well-to-do, but by the early 1800s clocks were widely used in all European countries.

The all-metal Kroeger clocks, it should be mentioned, were by no means cheap. A simple clock with no chimes sold for around 50 Russian rubles. This was a lot of money consider-

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ing that a man's daily wages around 1890 were between 90 kopeks and one ruble. David Kroeger senior donated the steeple clock for the *Zentralschule* (Central School) in Chortitza. It was destroyed in the latter part of World War II. There was also a steeple clock that went to Moscow, the capital of Russia.

As already mentioned, the market for clocks was reaching a saturation point before World War I. The plans for the future included diversification into other products, chiefly for use in agriculture. Clocks as the primary product were gradually replaced by such products as plough shares and the newly invented one-cylinder internal combustion engine under licence from Germany.

When David senior grew older, David junior and his brother Johann took over the business as partners, but later separated by mutual agreement. David junior and Margarete had 10 children, three of whom died in infancy. The other 7 were: David III, Agata, Peter (the author's father), Abram, Johann, Margarete and Gerhard. David junior proceeded with the production of two cycle engines and other new products. His oldest son David III was sent to Germany to study engineering. Peter apprenticed in all fields of the mechanical trade. Abram studied commerce. At the turn of the century many cities staged industrial exhibitions. These were visited by the Kroegers, and they staged their own exhibits in Ekaterinoslay, Warsaw, Kharkov, and Riga to promote new products.

The civil war following the Revolution of 1917 dealt the business a fatal blow. It is common knowledge that the anarchists maltreated the Mennonite people. David junior was questioned and severely beaten; he never recovered. Typhoid struck in 1919 and wiped out half of the family in a period of a few months. Two of the survivors, Peter and Johann, were sent into exile during Stalin's terrible purge in 1937 simply because they were the sons of "capitalists" with a German and Christian background.



Katarina and Johann Kroeger.

Johann, David junior's brother and former business partner, had married Katharina Goerz from the Molotschna. She was a deeply religious woman who contributed greatly to the Mennonite community, especially with her Christian-oriented Kindergarten. They had four sons and one daughter. As in so many Russian-Mennonite families, disaster struck during the period of transition from a well-regulated life before the First World War to Communist rule. The oldest son, Johann, perished in action. The second son was tragically shot to death by his Russian girl friend. As if this were not enough, the family was struck by smallpox, which almost claimed the life of their third son. Surviving all this, Uncle Johann and Tante Tien, the parents, continued life as a pleasant elderly couple well respected by everyone. Uncle Johann was a gentle person with a white Franz-Joseph beard. He was a true craftsman who knew every facet of clockmaking, a true master, but probably not a very good businessman. Johann had moved to a new location on the Dnieperstrasse with his family and the machinery for clockmaking. Here in his shop a limited number of clocks were produced and many older clocks were being repaired right up to 1930.

Many years have passed since. There are no more clockmaker Kroegers around, but the clocks have survived and have been brought over to this and many other countries, namely to the U.S., Mexico, Paraguay, Argentina, and lately also to Germany. How strange that people persisted in taking their large Kroeger clocks across the sea to other countries. But then, a clock becomes, so to speak, a member of the family. Home is where one hears the familiar tick-tock one grew up with. There are numerous sayings and anecdotes connected with Kroeger clocks. A common saying in the old days was, "Schmiet den Kota rut enn tratj de Klock opp ferr'em Schlopegone". Kroeger clocks have also been mentioned in the plays and poems of our people. After all, they were not like the electric clocks of today that never need our attention. They had to be wound, set, and polished regularly, and cleaned every few years. Maybe this close attention created attachment. I have not found many of these old clocks for sale. They are truly a Mennonite heirloom. One hopes that clocks will be maintained and kept in the family, preferably with a written record of the clock itself and the family, for future generations.

mm



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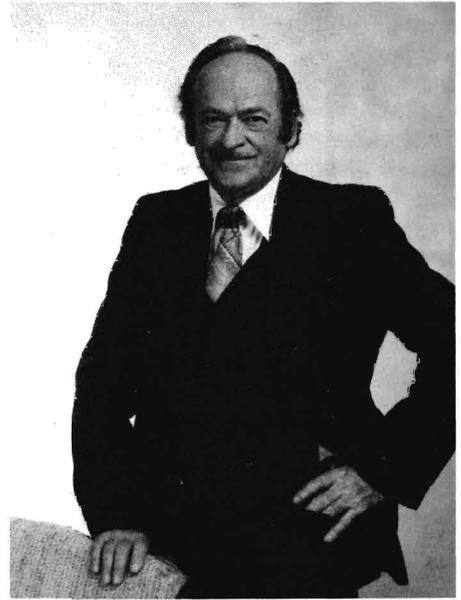
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North End Memories of a Manitoba Musician: Immanuel Horch

by Mary M. Enns

Musician Mel Horch, who lived in Winnipeg's North End before and during the 1930s, will tell you that those were not years of ease and affluence. Rather, they were years of trying to make do the best you could with the little at your disposal. It was trying to keep warm in winter with pot-bellied stoves fed with cord-wood and coal. It was trying to be innovative with hamburger and soup bones because there wasn't money to buy steak at 12¢ a pound. A hog sold at four cents a pound, uncut, against today's 95¢. It was children and young people creating their own good times because there wasn't a lot of entertainment available to them.

Emmanuel (Mel) Horch, today one of our city's most heavily scheduled violin teachers, has vivid recollections of struggle, of conflict and intense rivalry. But stronger than any of these are memories of family closeness, of church associations and friendships based on a common bond of courage and loyalty because all were equally fighting for one goal — survival. The Mennonites, beginning to trickle into Winnipeg after the 1924 migration from Russia, joined the German Lutherans and Baptists in the North End and lived in the very midst of the ethnic melting pot, rubbing shoulders and sometimes tempers with

their Ukrainian, Austrian, Jewish, Polish and Galician neighbours. "We got along very well with each other," remembers Horch, "but in the struggle for our very existence everybody fought for himself. But family members stuck up for each other."

Emmanuel's parents, Edward and Katherina (Esslinger) Horch emigrated from Odessa, Russia, to Canada via the U.S. in 1910. Four of their ten children were born in Russia (two died there), the rest were born in Winnipeg. Edward Horch was a cabinet maker and proud of his fine china cabinets and chairs. He worked also in a Winnipeg casket factory building coffins. Emmanuel was born in a little house on Redwood Avenue. On a drive recently he showed us his old neighbourhood. Most of the houses there have new facades, the shanties now disguised by add-ons and modern roofs. But the old Isaac Newton School and the little old corner grocery stores are evidence that progress has left untouched at least some of the solid old buildings and customs. From the house on Redwood the family moved to nearby Aberdeen and a small shanty to which Father Horch built an addition to accommodate his growing family.

The Horchs soon decided to leave their Lutheran church and join the Mennonite Mission Church in the area. They

stayed with the congregation when it moved into the "Basement Church" on Burrows and Andrews, and then in 1929 to a large house of worship on College and MacGregor. Pastors such as Bestvater, Nickel and Hiebert shepherded the growing flock. Always, there was a lot of music in the church, singing and instrumental. This was hardly coincidental since the catalyst was the Horch family, which had always put a high priority on music. The Horchs would sing as a family or else as a quartet at home or at the *Jugendvereins* in the church. These were held once a month, and no sooner was one finished when they began to prepare for the next one.

Church attendance was considered as natural as school attendance. "There just wasn't anything except maybe a broken leg that kept you from attending first Sunday school then the worship service, then back to a different Sunday school in the afternoon and finally the evening church service. "All services were conducted in German. The Horch family spoke *Schwaebisch* at home and even today the *Schwaebisch* dialect is still gently tinged with *Heimweh* for them. German studies were conducted by Rev. Abram Peters on Saturday mornings in the church basement, a practice observed at that time by most Mennonite communities. Like the church

services German School was where you went, with nobody asking whether you wanted to.

Most Mennonites then were not overly endowed with earthly goods and the Horchs were no exception. However, in their household things were a little different. The mother was for many years in poor health, so father with the children took over the household duties. He baked the bread and cooked *Schwae-bisch* foods like *schuf-noodles* and *knuepffe*. For breakfast he would cook a big pot of porridge, put it on the table and everybody helped himself. Nobody asked whether porridge was what you felt like that morning. After father's prayer each child prayed in turn before every meal. The children's chores were divided, with father deciding whether the floor scrubbing had been done well enough. Ed and Ben were the older sons and had other duties.

Ben and Mel had paper routes and they well remember delivering to customers like the family of Sam and Max Freedman, two sons who later achieved fame as a judge and as a Washington journalist respectively. Father Freedman diligently sold bottles and rags in order to give his boys an education.

"We grew up scrappers, always defending ourselves," says Horch. "Ed was the biggest, the strongest. He had enormously strong hands because he had worked since age 14 shaping gloves on a hot iron bar in a glove factory, a job he held for about 55 years. We had no money for skates but we played hockey in the back yard with the gate as our goal posts. We built our own wagons and rode them down the Arlington Bridge. You had to be very careful not to infringe on gang territories because every area had its gang and there would be gang fights. Mother didn't want us coming home bloodied from a fight." She also didn't want them to go swimming because they might drown; she believed water was good for only two things: for drinking and for bathing on Saturdays.

One autumn Albert, the youngest son of nine, was in Winnipeg General Hospital being reluctantly parted from his tonsils. When he was ready to go home, the nurses were slow in bringing his clothes so he took matters into his own hands. In his little hospital gown and barefooted, he walked from William Avenue to the North End, to the great surprise of his family. Soon a worried nurse was at the door asking Father Horch please not to tell the hospital officials. Independent scrappers, all right!

You could make ends meet better with careful buying. All groceries were charged at the corner grocery stores. When accounts were settled at month's end the grocer gave a chocolate bar to the children as a reward. Shoe leather was saved by a process of elimination because you didn't wear shoes in summer. But then came fall and shoe-buying time. But Eaton's was not the place to take your considerable business because at Eaton's you couldn't bargain. Instead, father would take the children down Selkirk Avenue to a Jewish store, and when the proprietor saw them coming he would shake his head and mutter "Oi Weh" because he knew that from this gang he would certainly not get his asking price for the shoes.

Music was all-important to the family's well-being. There was an old organ in the home. When Ed got a violin Ben learned to play it as well. Emmanuel was not allowed to try it but he asked questions of Ben and watched him play. There were no books on violin but it didn't hurt to ask and watch and plan how you'd do it if you ever got your hands on the magic instrument. One day after school he found out where Ed had hidden his violin. He lifted it, held it with love and reverence and tried fin-

gering and bowing a favorite hymn. From that time he was involved with the violin. Later came lessons with George Bornam and John Melnyck.

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The Dirty Thirties were tough years all around, not just for the Horchs. Ed and Ben got married in the early thirties. Edward and Katherina were both in very poor health and could earn no money. It was not enough that Millie earned \$8 a week, so the family was forced to go on relief. To qualify for this Emmanuel was chosen to go and work for it. It was 30 below and he worked from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the stockyards unloading cordwood. The exercise was the only thing that kept the young boy from freezing since he had no coat or parka, simply a light jacket, a sweater, cap and scarf. Now and again they were allowed a short break in the little shack to warm up. "It was sort of like a Siberian slave camp, I guess," says Horch, "but I really didn't resent it or rebel. If you wanted food vouchers you worked."

Mel Horch obviously enjoys talking about his childhood in the North End. He remembers that people kept cows in the barns in their back yards. A cowherd would collect them every morning for pasturing on the North End prairie (now Matheson Avenue) and return them at six in the evening. Every cow had a bell around her neck and with uncanny intuition knew exactly which yard to turn into. Everybody kept chickens in their back yard; the Horchs had rabbits and racing pigeons as well. These were also delicious in the stewing pot. "We'd send our pigeons by train to Swift Current and sometimes they'd come back the next day through a lightning storm. When they were over our house they'd come down like a dive bomber. I remember enjoying the first roosters crowing at 4 or 5 in the morning. Then the one in the next yard would start and they would be answering each other, on down the line."

The big Saturday night treat was the *Feierabend*, when bathed and in clean clothes the children would wait for the little bell announcing the coming of the horse-drawn wagon and they would race down the street clutching their nickel. In summer the Jewish peddlars drove their wagons down the street selling watermelons or cherries or vegetables. That's when the real haggling would start.

In Grade 6 Emmanuel enjoyed the distinction of being the only boy in the North End whose father had put insurance on him at 10¢ a week. He had scarlet fever and his father was afraid he would die in hospital so he was in bed at home for six weeks. Later he kept up the insurance himself and the \$300 was a good nest egg when he married. That was in 1936, when he married Agatha

Klassen, sister to C. F. Klassen of the Board of Immigration. They raised three sons, one daughter and five grandchildren.

Christmas was the highlight of the year. Practicing for the Christmas Eve program in the church began in November and included all the favorite old German Christmas songs. Ben always conducted the choir. Since Ed was the caretaker of the church, all the siblings helped him get the church ready. The tree had real candles and the children sat before the tree with open mouths. "That was more important than any gifts. And how we loved the bags of candy and peanuts and oranges distributed after the program. Our own tree," remembers Horch, "didn't have many gifts under it but there was something for everyone."

Another red-letter day was the annual family picnic in City Park. The children hardly slept the night before and the next day they knelt on the seats of the street car, taking in all the wonderful city sights. River Park was even more exciting because of the concessions. In 1929 Ed took the family to Winnipeg Beach in his car. "That was the first time I ever saw a lake," smiles Emmanuel, "and it was just wonderful!" Scrapers

they were — fighting for small pleasures like hitching a ride on the back step of the bread delivery wagon and riding along for a mile or two and then walking back. "But we had **been** someplace." A search for adventure, learning, a fight for small dignity. That was bound to involve rivalry: in sports, in music, in school, even socially. "There were obvious social distinctions," as Horch observes, "between the two main divi-

PLAY WRITING COMPETITION

Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre announces a play-writing contest with a prize of \$500 for an acceptable original play on a Mennonite theme in either German or English, preferably written by a Mennonite. Deadline for submission: June 1, 1984.

The successful play will be produced by WMT in its 1985 season.

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sions in Winnipeg. The South Enders looked down on the North Enders as the poor people, the scrubs, and the North Enders fought that much harder to prove themselves. The key word was 'Beat them'. In hockey it was the Elmwood Millionaires of the Olympic Rink in the North End versus the Winnipeg Monarchs of the Amphitheatre in the South End. The two schools that always knocked their heads together were St. Johns Tech from the North End and Kelvin High from the South End. Orchestras in festival competition were excellent ones from St. Johns, with Ronald Gibson as conductor, Kelvin, Gordon Bell and Daniel McIntyre. I remember a statement made by Davies, president of the festival committee: 'The object of the festival is not to gain a prize or defeat a rival, but to pace one another on the road to excellence.'

There seems to have been no resentment, as Horch remembers it, over the strictness and firmness of parental guidance. If it was forbidden to play cards, so be it! But Mother Horch went a step further. She instructed the children that if they were to find a card somewhere they must tear it in half because these were "devil cards". Similarly, they were not allowed to see any shows. When passing the Palace Theatre on the way to his violin lesson, Mel had firm instructions to close his eyes to the pictures posted outside the theatre or else to look at the other side of the street. "But we were happy and contented, I must say. My advice to young people today is, honour and respect your parents because they do the best they can for their children. We were happy with so little, and what we got was appreciated."

For the past 40 years Mel Horch has made a considerable contribution to the music community of this province by teaching 80 or more students a year, his students coming from as far away as The Pas and International Falls, Minnesota. They have been years of hard and dedicated work, but exciting and very rewarding, he says with satisfaction. Hard, but exciting and rewarding — like his long-ago childhood in Winnipeg's fabled North End.

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DESERVING

After a big campus dance where the dates were arranged by a computer, a girl was asked what it was like.

"It's a frightening experience," she replied, "finding out just what you deserve."



Edward and Katherine Horch and family.

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observed along the way



by Roy Vogt

The End of 1983

● It is the end of November, winter ice coats our driveway, a white stillness descends over the landscape behind our house, and we bundle in for five months of Manitoba winter. When I was very much younger I never favored one season over another: the snow of winter was like the mud of spring, something to roll around in. Then for awhile winter became the enemy. We spoke often of moving to California, but our children would have none of it; they had their hockey and skating. Now I believe I have finally made peace with winter, not only because of cross-country skiing, which we discovered a few years ago, but because of the impetus which winter provides to turn inward, to home and friends, to pause a bit, to think a little more, to enjoy the records that one is accumulating, to read a book slowly in a favorite living-room chair, in bed, or in the bath. Of course, greater amenities have eased this adjustment. Because I can still remember the old "pioneer days", when snow was melted for the weekly bath and the maximum ration was one inch of water per person, I find it tremendously satisfying to sit shoulder-deep in a hot tub of water for at least half an hour, no matter what it does to the skin. The enjoyment is so great that I was persuaded a few years ago to do it more than once a week. There is something to be said for the demands of anglo-saxon cleanliness. This may also be the point to mention that we recently improved the quality of paper used in this magazine because readers complained that it smudged badly when they were overcome by giggles as they sat in their tubs reading our Low German stories out loud. It is easier now to launder these stories without smudging.

With the arrival of winter we enjoy another new amenity: an automatic garage door opener. It is the best toy I have had for a long time. I enjoy pushing the button as we come down our street, to see how far and accurately the signal will travel. I always marvel that none of the neighbor's garage doors open as we drive by; the little gadget

really has only our number. We also purchased our first electric snow shovel (in case you wondered, the current economic recovery is due almost entirely to our consumer spending). I was moved to do this by a friend who dragged his shovel into the living room in the midst of a house party to demonstrate its qualities. The way it chewed up the rug convinced me that it had the power to get rid of our snow.

● On a Friday evening in November we are the guests of friends at a dinner honoring Stanley Knowles. I have always admired this unusual politician and now I admire even more his ability to face up to recent brain damage and to adjust his life accordingly. There are few Mennonites at this large public gathering, and that is sad, because regardless of one's party loyalty there is so much to be respected in a man like Knowles. I know many people in our own congregation who were helped personally by his interventions.

● On a Sunday evening we are able to visit with Dr. C. W. Wiebe and his wife Anne at the home of friends in Winnipeg. Despite his ninety years Dr. Wiebe has a strong interest in a wide range of activities and enjoys coming here from his home in Florida to see what is happening to Manitoba and to the Mennonites. The book that we have published on him is selling well, as it should. His pioneering work in the Winkler area was extremely important.

● A Wednesday-afternoon seminar at the University of Manitoba enables me to hear two scholars, one in political studies and one in economics, who have moved to Canada from Poland in the last few years. One of them was a member of Solidarity in Gdansk and "jumped" ship in Quebec shortly before the imposition of martial law. The vitality of these two disappointed scholars gives some clue as to why the Poles have had an unusually difficult time adjusting to the servitude imposed on them by the Soviet Union. Some people are put easily into boxes; others don't understand why there should be boxes at all.

● One man who has refused to be put

into a box is the famous Catholic theologian Hans Küng, who visits Winnipeg in later November. It is a refreshing experience to hear him speak on the Protestant reformer, Martin Luther, in a United Church in Winnipeg. Küng is one of those rare persons who has not only vision but courage. He has been reprimanded and punished by a succession of Popes but this has not deterred him from speaking and acting boldly for the sake of "truthfulness." One of the tragic ironies mentioned by him is the fact that the current Pope goes to Poland and speaks forcefully on behalf of human freedom, and then comes back to the Vatican and tries to silence critics within his own church. Until the church provides justice and freedom for its own members, he says, it cannot speak credibly to the world outside. Unfortunately, on several occasions Küng applies negative labels to groups like the Anabaptists which he would find intolerable if they were applied to him. Zwingli, in Küng's lexicon, belonged to the reformers; the Anabaptists were dangerous fanatics. Apart from this lapse in judgment, however, his appeal for Christian understanding is extremely forceful and persuasive. In the field of human spiritual progress I consider Gandhi and Martin Luther King to be the two greatest lights of this century, but Küng is not far behind. As far as life expectancy goes, that doesn't put him into very promising company.

● A Saturday morning is spent with a committee headed by Dr. Victor Doerksen which is planning to publish almost the complete works of our best Low German writer, Arnold Dyck. About four to six volumes will be published, a tremendous editorial undertaking. I am impressed with the work being done by the editors. That same morning my wife attends a large meeting on nuclear disarmament. I am glad to hear that a large number of Mennonite people are actively involved in this movement. I am convinced that the whole nuclear race is an act of madness, carried on largely by people whose degrees and achievements make them appear to be rational. The prob-

lem is, how do you stop madness that is cloaked in such respectability?

● An evening and a morning are taken up with the executive of the Economic Council of Canada which is meeting in Winnipeg. Several discussions are held with business and government leaders, getting their opinion on the state of the economy. There is now considerable more optimism than there was six months ago, although the current recovery will have to continue for some time before it begins to affect business investment and unemployment. Looking back on the tremendous cost of the last recession it seems to me that our political leaders have lacked both insight and courage in dealing with economic issues. There are better ideas around but they can't be implemented without forceful political leadership.

● On a Sunday evening a number of scholars, including Glen Klassen, a specialist in molecular biology, hold a discussion on evolution at St. Paul's College. Klassen presents the most recent research findings very clearly and honestly. The last thing that we have to fear is such a scholar, who knows that the surest foundation for establishing the truth of anything is an honest observation of the available facts, even though such observation is only a part of their final interpretation.

● On a Friday evening we hold the annual meeting of the *Mennonite Mirror* at the St. Regis Hotel, in the presence of about forty loyal supporters. The award-winning chef at that hotel provides a delicious meal, and the brief business session is enhanced by a musical program featuring two excellent young singers, Victor Engbrecht and Vern Ens, and the gifted pianist Shirley Elias. This is the thirteenth year of the *Mirror*, and it has recently survived some stormy weather with its enthusiasm intact. We have been overwhelmed by the financial support received from hundreds of readers in response to a mailing. This year, despite the unlucky number, looks more promising than ever. Several people commented on how much they enjoyed the evening, with its unique blend of fun, food, and business. Even balance sheets can be made painless. We invite you to make this an evening out next year, and we thank all those who are supporting us so generously.

● Another Friday evening is spent at the home of friends from India, who serve a wonderful Indian meal — hot! They have been in Canada for more than a decade but are trying to retain as many of their customs as possible. An

amusing incident occurs at the end of the evening. Their youngest son is a very avid Blue Bomber fan; ecstatic when they win and deeply depressed when they lose. Hours after he has gone to bed, and just while we are leaving, I ask one of the guests whether he would like to place a little bet on the Bomber-B.C. game. The guest says that he would, and he would like to bet for B.C. At this the young son of the host family comes darting out of his bedroom into the hallway, eyes glaring, to catch a glimpse of this traitor in his house. We laugh at the sight, but the boy doesn't understand what we are laughing at. A sacrilege has been committed, and we don't seem concerned. I am glad I wasn't in that household when the Bombers lost that weekend; the loss of a dollar was bad enough.

● A Thursday evening brings almost all of the Mennonites in Winnipeg together, for a showing of David Dueck's film on the Russian-Mennonite experience. There is a review elsewhere in this issue. The acted parts seem to be rather weak, but the documentary material is excellent and the shots of the Mennonite congregation in Karaganda are excellent. It is obvious that we all like to see where we have come from.

● We are going toward Christmas and the New Year. We look forward to several Christmas concerts, visits with friends, and a quiet New Year's eve. George Orwell's gloomy picture of 1984 looms before us. With God's grace we will avoid it, hopefully both within our communities and in the world at large. From our household to yours: joy and peace. Keep your nose down, your chin up, and may you enjoy life even more in '84.

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New Books

The following book titles, in alphabetical order, should be of interest to our readers.

Amish Adventure, by Barbara Smucker (Toronto/Vancouver: Clarke, Irvin & Company Limited, 1983). Paperback, 144 pages. This is the beautifully-written story of Ian McDonald who through a tragic accident comes into an Amish home and community in southern Ontario where he learns the meaning of forgiveness, love, and godly simplicity and piety.

Crisis and Commitment: Studies in German and Russian Literature in Honour of J. W. Dyck, edited by John Whiton and Harry Loewen (Waterloo, Ont.: University of Waterloo Press, 1983). Hardcover, ca. 270 pages, \$25.00. The book contains essays on German and Russian literature written by scholars in Canada, the United States, and Germany.

Fire Over Zagradovka, by Gerhard Lohrenz (published by the author, 1983). Paperback, 56 pages, \$6.00. In this booklet Gerhard Lohrenz provides additional information on the tragic story of the destruction of Zagradovka, Russia, at the hands of Nestor Makhno.

Glockenläuten — Gedichte, by Valentin Sawatzky (St. Michael, Austria: J. G. Bläschke Verlag, 1983). Paperback, 284 pages. This beautifully produced book contains many German poems by the well-known Mennonite poet of Waterloo, Ontario.

Law Breaking and Peace Making, by Edgar Epp. A Sunderland P. Gardner Lecture, August 19, 1982, Memramcook Institute, Saint Joseph, New Brunswick. Canadian Quaker Pamphlet No. 15 (Argenta, B.C.: Argenta Friends Press, 1982). Paper, \$2.00 plus .75 postage. 40% discount for bookstores.

One Quilt, Many Pieces: A Concise Reference Guide to Mennonites in Canada, by Margaret Loewen Reimer (Waterloo, Ont.: Mennonite Publishing Service, 1983). Paperback, 60 pages. A most useful booklet providing statistical and historical data, including pictures and tables, about the many Mennonite groups in Canada.

300 Jahre Pfälzer in America/300 Years Palatines in America, edited by Roland Paul (Landau/Pfalz: Pfälzische Verlagsanstalt, 1983). Paperback, 220 pages, numerous photographs and maps. The book, containing many essays written in German and English, was published on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of the emigration of Germans, including Mennonites, to America (1683-1983).

review



Who dares to ask them to recall the pain?

And When They Shall Ask, a docudrama on the Mennonite experience during the Russian revolution and after; produced by David Dueck, and written and directed by John Morrow; released by the Mennonite Media Society.

A review by Ed Unrau

The decades have not erased the memory, nor eased the pain of remembering, in the hearts of those Mennonites who lived through the Russian Revolution and the years immediately following.

The powerful emotional tone of *And When They Shall Ask* is set early in the film with the first round of personal observations from those who lived through it. Particularly moving is the man whose voice trails off as he says this "Russian" experience is something he doesn't want to talk about. As he speaks, his hands refuse to lie still in his lap, and thus underscore his inward pain.

Later in the film, another man describes how he watched the fatal shooting of his mother and father — as he speaks his voice breaks, then stops. The camera never leaves his face during the long seconds it takes him to regain his composure. The inner anguish is as fresh now as it was decades ago.

It becomes clear that time has not been able to, and never will, erase the pain.

Early this century, the Mennonites of Russia were basking in a "golden age." Years of stability had made them prosperous, vigorous, and wealthy. The Great War, the Russian Revolution, and the ensuing collapse of all social and political order, followed by the rise of Stalin and another war completely destroyed their way of life. Overnight their world became a "dark age." This film describes the events and the effect these events had on the lives of a few people who lived through it.

What is not at all discussed in *And When They Shall Ask* is the extent to which Mennonites themselves are to blame for what happened during the Russian Revolution. The narrator emphasizes the "golden age" before the Revolution and does this early in the film. Juxtaposed against the pictures of idyllic Mennonite homesteads are pictures of the extravagant life of the Russian nobility. The question that flitted through the mind of this reviewer was: "What was the difference, except in degree, between the lifestyle of the nobility and that of wealthy Mennonites?" Mennonites were as blind to the vast poverty of the common people and the need for social reform as the nobility. What the film fails to point out is that the "golden age" existed for the Mennonites only for a few short decades before the Revolution, and then only for those Mennonites fortunate enough to own land.

The film is so intent on portraying Mennonites as innocent victims that it is blind to the fact that the Mennonites were an inherently subversive threat to any Russian regime. Mennonites spoke German, they maintained "foreign" customs and religion, and were seen to collaborate with the invading German army. The image of "innocence" in the Mennonite-German army interaction is conveyed by the hero-worship of the pre-adolescent boys — but one must not forget that it was their so-called "pacifist" parents who wine and dined the troops in their homes. For the politically-astute Nestor Makhno, it made sense to crush this foreign element.

The film also portrays participation in the *selbstschutz* as a painfully difficult personal decision. This was certainly the case for some men, for others it was not. Indeed, there is written evidence to show that in some villages the consensus was so completely in favor of "fighting back" that any person who advanced anything close to traditional pacifism did so at the risk of his life.

Accordingly, viewers of *And When They Shall Ask* should be warned that the film puts an exceedingly good face on the Mennonite experience in Russia during and after the Revolution. There is a darker and less pleasant side to the Mennonite experience in Russia that must be explored if one is to be honest about Mennonites in Russia.

And When They Shall Ask is comprised of several elements: the personal observations of nine people who "survived," documentary film of the era, still photographs, and dramatic "reconstructions" of typical events. A narrative script provides the continuity.

In general, all of the elements complement each other and contribute to the development of the storyline.

The two strongest elements are the narration and the personal testimonies.

The narrator's script establishes the context by providing the historical facts and explanations. The strength of the narration is the feeling of objectivity that it conveys; it is generally factual and detached in tone.

The nine people who share their personal experiences show as nothing else could how rather abstract historical events affect real people. It is one thing to read about the Mennonite "holocaust," but it is quite another to see its effects etched on the faces and expressed in the words of those who lived through it. Their stories provide the feeling. Each person tells his story in a visual setting of stark simplicity — seated on a chair and highlighted against a black background, with camera framing designed to capture every nuance of his/her face. They are all to be commended for their courage in being willing to record their painful memories in this way.

The use of documentary film and old photographs effectively complements the narrator by providing the visual images needed to understand his words.

By comparison to the other elements, the dramatic "reconstructions" are the least effective, largely because a few of them felt "awkward." The sequence where mother and child are gathering firewood and then are attacked and robbed on their return to the house is an example; besides the attack was much too gentle to be authentic. Some aspects in these scenes were too obvious; for example in the dinner scene with the German soldiers, the long look the young boy gives the rifle during his father's grace robs this sequence of its impact.

In terms of overall effect, however, the film is an example of professional craftsmanship, the viewer senses that it was put together in all its aspects by those who knew what they wanted to achieve and who knew how to arrange the technical aspects of the film medium to achieve it. Then too, the producers wisely decided to limit the scope of their film to a narrow slice of the Mennonite experience with the result

that there is no difficulty in maintaining the storyline.

And When They Shall Ask is a film about a small period in Mennonite history, but it is not a film just for Mennonites. In other words, the work is crafted in such a way that non-Mennonites will understand the events and will be drawn into the suffering of those who lived through it. The concepts of traumatic loss, of living through political and social chaos, and still retaining one's spiritual strength are things that are common to all people.

This brings up another aspect of the film and that is the inner exuberance of those who shared their experiences. What they endured did not destroy their spirit nor their relationship with their God. So that without preaching one word of a sermon, the film becomes a powerful testimony of faith.

For those who are impressed by examples of good stewardship, this film was made at cost of about \$450,000, an amount that is incredibly low (episodes of the most popular network TV series cost that for one 60-minute episode). The people who provided the financial support can be proud that they were wise enough to contribute — it is a fine film telling a story that transcends the ethnicity of the people it is about.

There are a lot of other things that could be said about *And When They Shall Ask*, but I will conclude by saying that as a third or fourth generation Canadian Mennonite, I went to the showing with sense of detachment — none of my relatives was part of this Russian experience. As the film developed I was caught up in the story and for the first time sensed, albeit in a small way, what it was like to flee.

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SPURIOUS SAVING

When her husband came home completely out of breath, the concerned wife asked him what was wrong.

"Nothing," he said proudly. "I just ran all the way home behind the bus and saved 75 cents."

"That was dumb," she replied "Why didn't you run home behind a taxi and save \$5."

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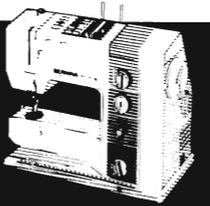
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In song and spirit, a salute to Christmas

CMBC Oratorio Choir together with the Mennonite Community Orchestra presents Mozart Vespers at Sargeant Avenue Mennonite Church, November 26, 1983.

A review by Al Reimer

Slightly disguised as an oratorio concert, this was really a Christmas concert in song (and spirit), and a most enjoyable one at that. I liked almost everything about this concert with its tasteful variety of vocal and musical treats. The atmosphere was relaxed and informal but always worshipful. And there was some excellent singing and playing from a large cast of performers.

The concert opened with a lively cantata by Johann Christoph Bach (son of J.S.) stylishly sung by the CMBC Singers, a choir of about 40 students, and sturdily accompanied by 10 members of the Mennonite Community Orchestra. Soprano Henriette Schellenberg then sang a lovely group of Christmas songs by Peter Cornelius, friend and colleague of Wagner. I had never heard these delicate, simple yet artful songs before and found them enchanting. Especially as sung by Mrs. Schellenberg, whose voice with its fine coppery lustre always pleases me. Next came an exhilarating medley of Christmas carols and hymns introduced by trumpet solos and sung by both the CMBC Ensemble (another small student choir) and the audience, with Esther Wiebe accompanying and George Wiebe conducting.

After the intermission the full CMBC Choir of 100 voices assembled for a rare performance of Mozart's *Vesperae Solemnes de Confessore*, the Solemn Vespers for choir and soloists designed to be sung in the Catholic Church as evensong. Here the lusty, accurate young voices from CMBC really came into their own under Wiebe's dynamic but sensitive conducting. The four soloists, Henriette Schellenberg, soprano, Jane Friesen, alto, Ernest Ens, tenor, and Phil Ens, bass, also acquitted themselves

well, though except for the soprano they didn't have all that much to do. The soprano solo "Laudate Dominum" is one of the most exquisite melodies Mozart ever wrote, and Henriette Schellenberg did full justice to it. My only regret was that she was so poorly positioned off to one side behind the piano that some of the majesty of her singing was lost. Young Phil Ens has a promising bass voice and more will be heard from him in future, I'm sure. The tiny orchestra struggled a bit in places, but on the whole they supported choir and soloists creditably.

The success of this concert was in

great part due to the selfless work of Esther and George Wiebe, the wife-husband team who form the heart of the music department at CMBC. Their dedication to sacred music, their intelligent planning, uncompromising standards and impeccable musical taste, all combined to make this a first-rate musical evening to usher in the advent season. How fortunate we are to have this devoted, talented pair in our midst. And how blessed they must feel in being able to accomplish so much with the student talent at their disposal.

mm

Christianity and Society in South Africa

Apartheid is a Heresy

Edited by John W. de Gruchy and Charles Villa-Vicencio, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, 1983, pp. xx, 184, paperback.

Church Versus State in South Africa: The Case of the Christian Institute by Peter Walshe, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York, pp. xv, 234, hardback.

Reviewed by Irving Hexham

When I first visited South Africa in 1969 I found that there wasn't a single book which dealt with the complex religious and social situation of that troubled land. As a result I began my own study which eventually led to a Ph.D. on the relationship between Calvinism and Afrikaner Nationalism. The situation hardly changed until the late 1970's. Since then an increasing number of excellent works have appeared dealing with religion and society in South Africa.

The two books under review are good examples of the high quality of South

African historical and theological scholarship. *Apartheid is a Heresy* provides valuable examples of the dynamic nature of Black and White theological thinking about South African society. While its discussion is specific to South Africa the principles discussed and issues raised have a universal relevance. Here Christians in a particular situation struggle to understand the application of the gospel to their own culture. In doing so they raise issues and suggest methods of inquiry which affect and challenge us all.

Church Versus State in South Africa is a different kind of book. It is a stimulating historical study which examines the development of the ill-fated Christian Institute. Founded after the Sharpsville riots of 1960 by prominent Afrikaner church leaders the Christian Institute sought to preach the gospel in apartheid society and to challenge the state to think Christianly about its policies and objectives. After failing to influence po-

litical leaders the Christian Institute then sought to mould the thinking of Church groups and denominations.

The great achievement of the Christian Institute was its ability to articulate the longings of Black groups and to stand as a beacon of hope in an apparently hopeless situation. It is easy to say that the Christian Institute "failed." Certainly in terms of achieving its political ends the Christian Institute did fail. First, individual leaders were banned, then, after extensive government scrutiny, the Institute itself was banned. But before its demise it had encouraged the emergence of a new Black Christian leadership and a Black self-confidence. More importantly the Institute provided and provides a testimony to the faith of White and Black Christians working together for racial peace and the triumph of the Gospel in South Africa.

Irving Hexham is Assistant professor, Department of Religion, University of Manitoba.

The **Kleefeld Historical Society** held its inaugural meeting Nov. 3 at Kleefeld School. **Henry Fast**, Chairman of the Society, said the purpose of the society is to collect and identify original documents pertaining to the early Mennonite Villages of Grunfeld, Rosenfeld, Hochstadt, Blunstein and Heuboden. Grunfeld, later called Kleefeld, was the first Mennonite village in Western Canada, being settled in July, 1884, by Russian Mennonites.

Rev. **Henry R. Baerg**, former president of Winkler Bible Institute, and his wife Anne, returned to Winkler in November to serve the Grace Mennonite Church as interim pastor. Henry Baerg was a pastor in Nebraska for seven years and then taught for six years at the Mennonite Brethren Bible College in Winnipeg. Later he became pastor of Portage Avenue Mennonite Brethren Church of Winnipeg. He and his wife were in Salem, Oregon for several years.

Eugene Derksen, publisher of *The Carillon* of Steinbach, accepted nine awards including one for best all-round newspaper in the province at the annual awards banquet of the Manitoba Community Newspaper Association.

manitoba news



Rev. John J. Wichert of Vineland, Ontario died November 12, 1983. He was ordained to the ministry in Vineland in 1928, and to the office of Bishop in 1944. Rev. Wickert also taught in the Niagara Peninsula Bible School, served on the Ontario and Conference of Mennonites in Canada Missions Committee; served as Vice-Chairman of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, Chairman of the Ontario Ministers' Conference, and was for a decade a member of the Board of the Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Chicago and Elkhart. He also served on the committee which produced the German "Gesangbuch" of Mennonites in Canada.

A budget of \$780,000 was approved by **MEDA** members for the current fiscal year during a business session at the November convention in Wichita, Kansas. More than half that amount will come from government sources such as the Canadian International Development Agency and the United States Agency for International Development. The single largest project assisted by **MEDA OVERSEAS** (\$269,000) is a cooperative in Haiti involved in a cocoa-growing operation. Other projects to get assistance are located in Bolivia, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Jamaica and Paraguay.

The **Art Klievers** are moving from the Maples MB Church to begin a church-planting assignment in Selkirk, Manitoba.

José Pinto of McIvor Avenue MB Church spoke at an evangelistic crusade at the Portuguese MB Fellowship in Winnipeg. Bruno Wiebe pastors the Portuguese congregation.

Calgary's first Mennonite School, **Menno Simons School**, began its first year of operations with 58 pupils enrolled in Kindergarten through grade 8. Official approval for the program was received through the provincial department of Education. Official opening took place October 16, 1983.

Former mayor **A. D. Penner** of Steinbach is being honored by town council in having a new community park at the town's north end named after him.

Gerrit Herlyn, retired pastor of the Leer-Oldenburg Mennonite church in West Germany, has translated the Bible into "Ostfriesenplatt" (East Frisian Low German).

The **Swiss Mennonite Conference** recently adopted the name "Mennonite". Previously the conference had been called "Konferenz der Altevangelischen Taufgesinnten Gemeinden der Schweiz". (Conference of Old Evangelical Anabaptist Churches of Switzerland.) The new name is Konferenz der Mennoniten der Schweiz (Conference of Mennonites in Switzerland). Some Swiss "Mennonites" oppose the new name because the Swiss Anabaptists were a group present in Zurich at the time of the Reformation, long before Menno Simons joined the movement.



Louise Helen Zacharias won the silver medal for the highest mark in Manitoba in the grade eight piano examinations. She is currently a student at the Mennonite Collegiate Institute in Gretna and daughter of Frank and Mary Anne Zacharias of Gretna.



Ernie Penner.



Jim Penner.

The principals of Southeast Regional Shopping Centre, the company which developed Clearspring Village Shopping Centre in Steinbach, are joint partners in a major shopping centre planned for Winkler in spring. **Jim Penner** and **Ernie Penner** are partners with Norquay Enterprises, a Winkler business group, chaired by **Walter Kroeker**. Ernie Penner is president of A. K. Penner and Sons, while Jim Penner is president of Penner Foods. A. K. Penner and Sons will be the building contractor for the \$5.8 million, 145,000 square foot shopping centre, to be located at the east edge of Winkler, at the junctions of Provincial Highways 14 and 32.

Jim Penner's company, Penner Foods Ltd., was recognized as the top non-Winnipeg business enterprise in Manitoba for 1983 at an awards dinner in November, sponsored by the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce. Penner bought a single store in Steinbach from his father in 1963. Penner Foods now has four stores, 275 employees and annual gross sales of about \$30 million. The store and Penner himself have won a number of awards, including best supermarket in Canada and independent grocer of the year. Employees hold 20 percent ownership, and the company donates generously to charity and has supported programs such as the Manitoba Marathon and the Mennonite Village Museum.

Ed and **Helga Hamm** begin serving in January as full-time pastoral couple in the newly chartered Transcona Community Church. They have worked in the Penticton Mennonite Brethren Church, and the Chilliwack Central and Main Centre (Sask) churches.

Emergency food needs in Lebanon, Guatemala and Kampuchea has prompted MCC Canada to launch a special 1983-84 Food Drive, which began December 1, 1983, and will last until March 31, 1984. Contributions can be sent to MCC Canada, 201-1483 Pembina Hwy., Winnipeg, R3T 2C8

Irene (Nickel) Patterson has left her position as director of the Carter Day Care Centre after seven years, to become regional day care co-ordinator for the Province of Manitoba. **Verna Guenther** has been appointed to succeed Irene.

The **Canadian Council for Teachers of German** is a new organization that was established in February of 1983 and held its first annual general meeting in Toronto on November 5, 1983. The organization brings together three levels of German teaching; the Universities, Saturday German Schools, and German teaching in the public and independent schools. Objectives of the organization are to provide a context for the sharing of information regionally, and to establish continuity between the different levels of German teaching. Gareth Neufeld of Winnipeg, who teaches in Landmark, is a member of the board of the CCTG.

The Prairie Regional Council for the Study and Teaching of German is actively involved in the promotion of the teaching of the language. The Council organizes a biennial conference for German teachers, bringing in expertise from Germany, and providing a forum for discussions of material and methodology. A meeting will be held in Spring to plan for a conference in 1985.

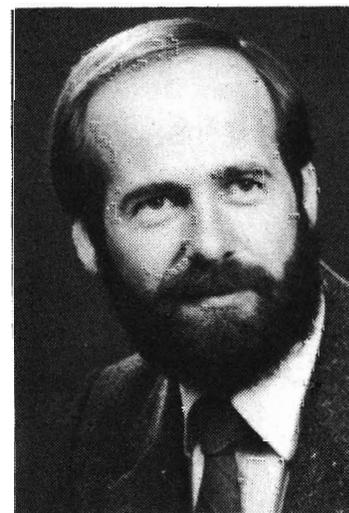
The joint General Conference Mennonite Church/Mennonite Church Task Force on Human Sexuality in the Christian Life met in October in Chicago to continue its work towards developing a study document for congregational use. On the agenda was discussion of a study resource that congregations could use for Part I of the statement on human sexuality which was affirmed at the joint Bethlehem '83 conference.

Rudy Regehr has been appointed Executive Secretary of the Congregational Resources Board of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. His appointment became effective Dec. 1, 1983.



Somali Ambassador Yusuf visited the Mennonite Central Committee Canada (MCCC) office in Winnipeg on October 28 to thank MCC for being present in Somalia now, and to ask for further help. At present there are ten MCC workers there. "We thank you from our heart of hearts," Yusuf told J. M. Klassen, executive director of MCCC. "In 1979 you were the first NGO (non-governmental organization) to respond to our refugee problem." Yusuf described his country as being the poorest in the world, with a per capita income of \$100 a year. Then, having to cope with over a million refugees "overnight" severely taxed their already weak administration. "We can't even manage the affairs of our own people," he said. Population figures for the country, the size of Alberta, stand at approximately four million.

Besides political tensions and unrest, droughts also compound the problem.



Eden Mental Health Centre, Winkler, has appointed **Dr. Howard Zacharias** as staff geriatrician. After graduating from medical college, Dr. Zacharias took on a mission assignment in Zambia. He then practiced in Winkler, and took training in London, England, as a geriatrician. Upon returning from London, he taught at the Medical College of the University of Manitoba.

A confusing but exhilarating assembly

Reflections on the Vancouver meetings of the WCC

by Irving Hexham

I don't know exactly what I expected when I went to the sixth assembly of the World Council of Churches held in Vancouver this year. I suppose that I expected something like an academic conference. What I discovered was an event! In many ways the taunt of the fundamentalist demonstrator who jeered "the World Council of Churches is a circus" was correct. More than anything else, the WCC reminded me of a highly successful circus with a bigtop surrounded by a host of fascinating side shows. In terms of sheer religious entertainment I've never experienced anything like it. This of course was not what the demonstrator meant, nor is it, I suspect, what the organizers would like to hear, yet the description is appropriate.

I suppose more than anything else I had expected the WCC assembly to resemble a stuffy conference. But it was nothing like that. It was too much fun and too many things were happening all at once. There were the worship service, press conference, working committees, study groups, a visitors program, coffee bars, art shows, demonstrators, a mountain of literature praising and criticizing a variety of events, and, of course, the general assembly itself. The topics discussed ranged from native rights to atomic war, from the plight of single mothers to the role of the church in developing countries, from pornography to art. The range was infinite. Similarly, the people there were as varied as the topics discussed. There were Bishops from Ethiopia, an Indian Shaman, ecclesiastical jet-setters and very ordinary laymen; the theologically educated and the unsophisticated. The level of discussion was equally complex. From simplistic answers and evident paranoia, to theological sophistication and thoughtful reflection.

Critics of the assembly were many, and there was a lot to be critical about. In general the level of economic and social understanding was low, so too was the depth of theological reflection. Too often jargon, catch-phrases and men of straw substituted for serious engagement. It was easy to gain the im-

pression that the socialist world and Soviet bloc represented the kingdom of God while capitalism and advanced industrial civilization in the West is to be identified with the works of the devil. Acts of ritual purification involving the confession of sin in terms of Western Christians benefitting from the work of multi-national corporations became boringly repetitive. Again and again favorite whipping boys, capitalism, multi-nationalism, western culture, individualism and technology were paraded for all to see and jeer at. Anyone seeking ammunition to condemn the WCC as a crypto-Communist plot hadn't far to look.

Yet these observations tell only half the story. The fact that the Assembly took place at all was all but miraculous. Where else do so many people from such diverse backgrounds meet to share their views on so many controversial issues? If the depth of the theological analysis was not great, there is no doubt that the quality of faith of many participants was real. Equally real were the concerns expressed. Economists and social scientists can agree or disagree about the analysis offered on the world situation. But whether or not one agreed with the solutions proposed one could not fail to be moved by the many harrowing stories told by people who had obviously suffered oppression. Equally moving were the stories of how faith had sustained many participants through awful experiences and unbelievable times of trial. The joy which Koreans and Africans, Arabs and Europeans, Polynesians and native Americans expressed when they heard one another's stories and shared their common faith was touching. It was the small meetings and informal coffee times that impressed me most of all. Here people met to share experiences and take hope for the future.

Clearly the assembly operated at many levels, and what one saw depended to a large degree on what one wanted to see. There was the Geneva bureaucracy which appeared to manipulate the assembly itself through the device of participatory democracy which in practice meant that their nominated advisors drew up the major reports which were then rubber-stamped by the elected delegates. One can easily be cynical about such procedures. And yet behind the obvious manipulation I had

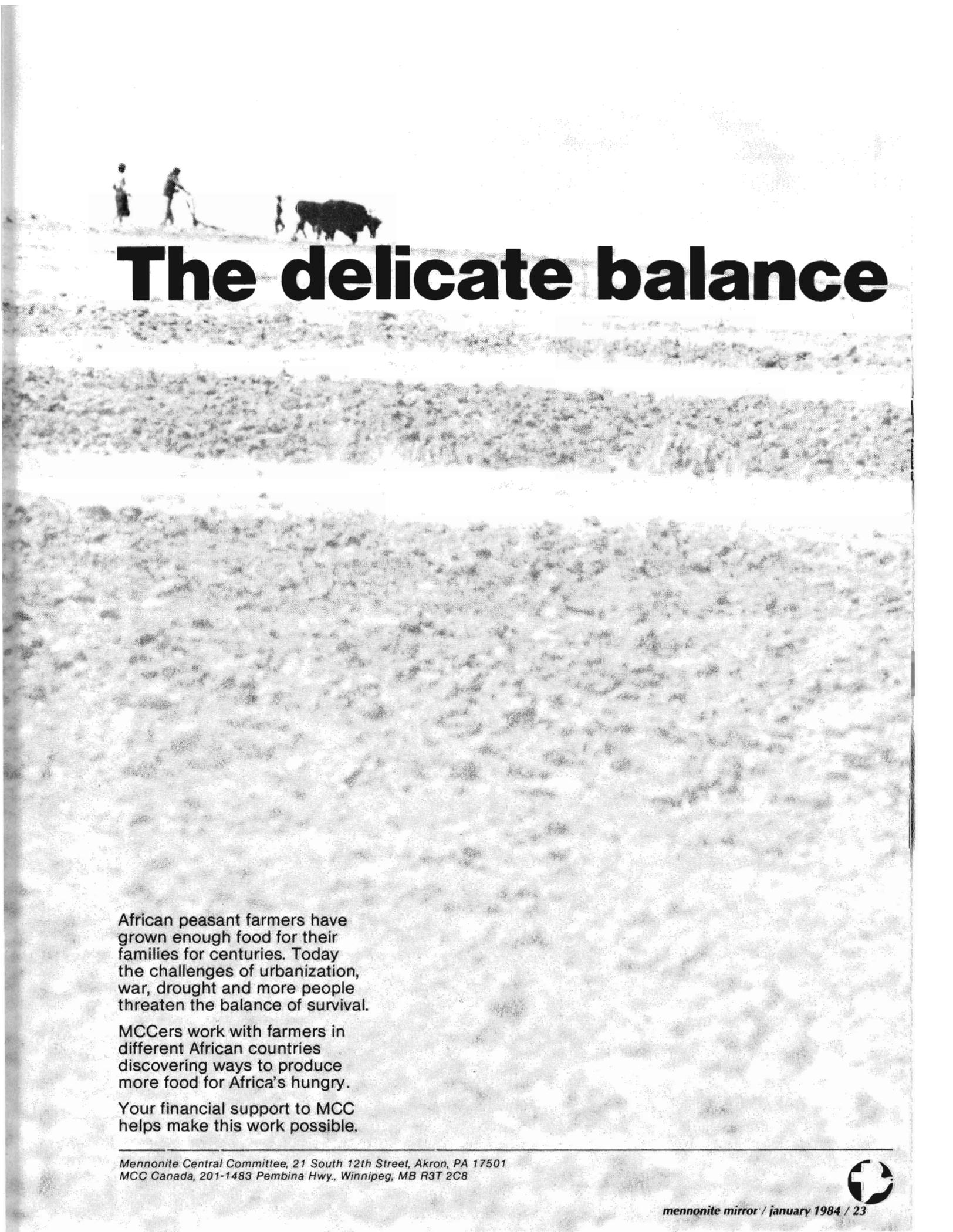
the clear impression that many of the decisions and reports genuinely reflected the view of the majority.

At another level there were the delegates. People invited from all walks of life to share their common faith and reflect on the role of the church in the world. Then there were the visitors who joined the delegates and bureaucrats to share in the immensely impressive worship services. Here was the heart of the assembly expressed in an urgent desire to serve and worship God. Finally, there was the press corps, baffled and bewildered, not knowing what to make of the assembly and trying always to find some sinister, political manipulations. Was it true that German evangelicals were trying to undermine the WCC by persuading German bishops to cut off its major source of funds? What was the significance of the detente with Rome? Were the Russian Orthodox priests really KGB agents? What outrageous statement could the chairman of the Program to Combat Racism be persuaded to make next? My impression was that the majority of press people neither understood nor were interested in what was really happening at the WCC. They wanted sensational stories with political overtones to make headlines back home. Theology, worship and talk about God frankly bored them.

Without doubt the high point of the assembly was the Friday evening vigil for peace. Here shortly after midnight, following an evening of prayer and praise, Bishop Desmond Tutu delivered a simple but profound message. After encountering considerable difficulty in leaving South Africa, Bishop Tutu brought a simple message of reconciliation. Unlike so many speakers he didn't blast the sins of apartheid, capitalism or the military-industrial complex. Instead, Tutu spoke of the meaning of the cross and Christian witness in today's world.

Three months after attending the assembly in Vancouver, I'm still not sure what to make of the event. It was absolutely fascinating and highly emotional. For many people it was the most important event of their life. The weaknesses were obvious. The strengths more difficult to analyse but deeply felt. Personally, I didn't agree with many of the arguments presented and much of the discussion I heard. Too many things sounded like the naive Left of the 1960's. But if one could ignore the rhetoric one came away with a profound sense that this was the important event and deeply Christian in its motivations. I

continued page 29



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"At a Chinese railway station," writes Victor Peters, "we saw a train pull out, destination Charbin. The coaches had 'Charbin' in large letters on them. Chinese faces looked out of the window. As we watched the train pull out I said to Karl, 'Charbin is that city in the north which provided a temporary refuge to a whole Mennonite settlement, when the people of two Mennonite villages fled from Siberia across the Amur River to China.' To recall that dramatic incident in Mennonite history made the country a little less strange to me."

An obscure event helps

by Victor Peters

Red China is changing. The first thing I noticed while visiting China this summer was that there were relatively few people in uniform. This was in marked contrast to the Soviet Union and the East European countries.

I had not been to China before. What I remembered about China were school text illustrations of rickshas, rice paddies and the Great Wall. The rice paddies and the Great Wall are still there, but the rickshas are gone. It was felt that they were degrading human dignity. Instead there are over-crowded buses, trucks, tricycles and millions of bicycles. The tricycles are used for hauling heavy loads, like coal. Sturdy shanks provide mobility to them.

The proximity of ancient ways and modern technology is one of the startling experiences awaiting the foreigner. On the way to the Great Wall, riding in a modern air-conditioned tourist bus, I thought that the highway was not unlike any paved road in Manitoba. But for miles the farmers used it as a threshing-floor, spreading their unthreshed grain on it. Instead of flails, the passing traffic "threshed" the grains as it went over it, and the farmers swept it up. The considerate drivers, on bus, truck or horse-drawn cart, carefully went around the clusters of peasants who were clearing away the grain.

I stayed in the Jinguo Hotel in Peking, one of the newest in China, with excellent service and computerized elevators that moved quickly and noiselessly. One block away the foundation was laid for a new building. Boulders provided the base. The huge rocks had strong ropes around them, which were attached to poles. Two men with these poles on their shoulder and the rock suspended between them transported one rock at a time to the building site.

The streets in the cities are clean. They are scrubbed by men and women who use plastic pails with water and crude hand-made brooms. China moves into the future on an almost inexhaustible source of energy: manpower.

China has been exploited by foreign



make China less strange

countries for centuries. They think it is time to reverse the roles. To get at foreign currency they are currently engaged in building hotels to attract tourists. These are channelled to Friendship Stores or factories. Whether a tourist buys hand-painted porcelain vases or hand-woven carpets, he can pay by Visa, Mastercard, American Express, or even by personal check.

During the Mao years China discouraged tourism. The foreigners who came to the country were party comrades from other lands or Soviet advisors. Some years after Mao's death China began to open up. In 1978 they had 125,000 tourists, more than they had in the previous 25 years put together. Last year they had 320,000, and this year, a CITS official told me, they would leave that number far behind.

CITS stands for China International Travel Service, an agency not unlike In-tourist in the U.S.S.R. But CITS guides are much more relaxed than their Soviet counterparts. If members of tour groups prefer to go on their own, the guides couldn't care less. Practically the whole country is open to tourists, in groups or as individuals. The drawback is that while the large cities provide excellent hotel accommodation, the hinterland lacks hotels and restaurants, and transportation is unreliable.

The Chinese domestic flights have a flexible schedule. In China, as in the Soviet Union, the planes do not operate their air-conditioning until they reach a certain altitude. Also the cabins are pressurized only slowly. To help the passengers over this inconvenience the stewardesses hand out bags of candy. Since it was summer and extremely hot the stewardesses also handed out attractive little fans which the passengers used vigorously. (On domestic flights Soviet stewardesses also hand out candy, but even in hot Central Asia they passed out no fans to their heat-distressed travellers.)

By all appearances China is taking giant strides to catch up with Western technology. The most encouraging impression I had was that China, while remaining a one-party state, was leaving behind the economic and cultural sterility and fanaticism that marked the Mao period. It is visibly moving towards a more open and less restricted society.

The only picture of Mao I saw in China was his large likeness on the outside wall of the Forbidden City, the former Imperial palace, in Peking. Instead of Mao posters Chinese cities now display large billboards, much like our own. Most of them advertise consumer goods, like "Daffodil" (trade name) women's silk blouses, "Flying Pigeon" or "Five Rams" bicycles, "Snowflake" refrigerators, "Royal Concubine" perfume, and laundry soaps with equally colorful names.

The most frequent billboard shows a young couple with *one* child. China has gone out for planned parenthood in a big way. I was told that if a family has a second child the earnings of the household are taxed substantially. Moreover, the entire schooling of the second child has to be paid for by the parents. The impact of these measures is much greater in the cities than in the country. In rural China the work of a child even at an early age is an economic asset, and also, especially in the case of a boy, an insurance for old age.

From my hotel window in Shanghai I saw an impressive building set in landscaped surroundings. I was informed that before the Communist take-over it had been a club for British business executives. Now it functions as a learning and recreational center for gifted children. It is known as the Children's Palace.

My son, who is a teacher in Winnipeg and accompanied me on the trip to China, said that the children appeared to be from the "better" homes of China's

classless society. The discipline was strict. The children were of kindergarten age. The enrichment program covered everything from music to playing chess. If one of the small children struck a wrong note on a musical instrument or made an unconsidered move in chess, he was reprimanded in no uncertain terms.

Most foreign tourists find the class atmosphere in Chinese schools excessively rigid. I was less critical. The schools reminded me of those I knew in the 1930s in Europe and Canada. When a teacher enters the classroom the pupils rise and greet the teacher. When they sit in their seats pupils are required to have their hands behind their back. (This was a common practice in Canada up to the Second World War.) When a teacher asks a question children raise their hand but do not wave it. Pupils are not permitted to talk to each other in class, and if they have to leave the room they ask permission.

I asked a Chinese official what provisions were made for retarded children. He shrugged his shoulders, reflected for a minute and then, in substance, said that they had enough expense to provide for ordinary and gifted children and could not afford to give much attention to less fortunate ones.

During the Cultural Revolution university life practically ceased. Academic courses were regarded as bourgeois residue, and degrees as anti-social status symbols. The chief requirement of the small student body was a positive identification with the Party of Marx, Lenin, and Mao. A few years after Mao's death this changed. Strict academic requirements were again introduced.

During my stay in China the first degrees were again granted to candidates who had completed their studies, 18 of them Ph.Ds. The "China Daily", a government newspaper, congratulated them and was "happy to see them with the same qualifications as their counterparts in scientifically advanced countries." Deng Xiaoping released a statement: "The road we will take will not become narrower. Instead, it will become broader. We have suffered too much from the narrow road we once took."

Most of us remember Deng as the diminutive Chinese (he is reportedly five feet) who visited President Carter. The political approach he represents is evident in the country. I did not see a single Chinese with a copy of Mao's famous little Red Book, but neither did I see a single poster with Deng, who is obviously the man in charge. There is a

strong feeling against the revival of the "personality cult."

One example of the changed spirit is the "China Daily", which is printed largely for foreigners. It is a paper much like Soviet publications, but unlike those its content is lively and readable. The same is true of the weekly "Beijing Review", which is published in several languages. In its articles like "Reappraisal of Confucius" indicate the new and more tolerant policy of the present government.

Deng was born in 1904. One of the concerns in China and elsewhere is whether Deng and his associates will be able to transfer their political power and broader outlook to their successors.

While I was in Peking the National People's Congress convened and elected the main leaders of the country: Li, 75, as president; Zhao, at 64 the youngest leader, as premier; Cheng, 81, Party chairman; and Deng, 79, chairman of the Central Advisory committee and chairman of the Military Commission. The big question is who will replace them when they go.

The Cultural Revolution, for which Mao's wife Jiang Qing is held chiefly responsible, was a reign of terror. Mao himself is also held partly responsible for it. In a conversation with a Chinese official, a Mr. Nu, who had spent eight years during the Cultural Revolution as a laborer in a commune, said that that period was a "national disaster and disgrace for China."

Another Chinese official said to me, "Architecturally Mao's Memorial Hall does not really fit in with its surroundings." I did not get the impression that the "surroundings," which include the Congress Hall and the ancient Imperial palace, would be razed. If anything were replaced it would be Mao's mausoleum. As I went by and looked at the embalmed Mao I was wondering how long his tenancy there would last.

While in Shanghai I visited the Tangwan Rural Peoples Commune. It admittedly is a show-place but it represents the ideal to which the government aspires. It was readily conceded that the rural communes in the interior of the country were much more backward. The guide during the tour was the chairman himself. Through an interpreter he spontaneously answered all questions.

What was evident everywhere was the absence of modern technology. There were dozens of people working in the rice paddies. The only other energy source I saw were the sturdy bullocks stomping in mud-fields or hauling loads. There were a diversity of enterprises: a saw-mill, and furniture and basket factories. In both of the latter the work was done by hand. The only enterprise that was relatively modern was the piggery with its numerous stalls for different litters.

The government has been trying to encourage the growing of wheat. It requires less work than rice. But even in the cities, where more bakeries were built, Chinese prefer rice to bread. Only tourist hotels serve bread.

On Chinese communes, unlike in the Soviet Union and (Communist) East Germany, the families eat at home. Women leave their work early and prepare the meals, which usually consist of rice. The most common meat served is fish, broiled or baked, not fried.

We visited a few homes. As visitors were expected they were perhaps not too representative of homes in general. There were three rooms: living-room, bed-room and kitchen. There was a small black and white television set standing on a small refrigerator.

Dr. Virginia Barsch, who visited China in January, was less impressed with Chinese home living conditions. She teaches Art history at Moorhead State University and visited Dunhuang, in the Gobi desert, in the interior of China. It is famous for its cave paintings. Dr. Barsch found that even during winter — and the weather is severe in Dunhuang — homes were unheated.

In Hangzhou I visited a tea commune. An impressive plant with modern machines seasons and mixes the different varieties of tea. It was not "tea-picking" time. The large, terraced tea plantation looked picturesque, but there were no workers. But today's China is public-relations oriented. Ms. Su, an attractive office worker, willingly solved the problem by going with us to the plantation. While she pretended to pick tea-leaves, the tourists took pictures. Her clothes differed considerably from those worn by the women I saw in the fields at the rural commune. Practically all women, in town or country, wear slacks.

In Shanghai I visited a carpet factory, in Hangzhou a silk factory, and in Guangzhou (Canton) a porcelain and jade-carving factory. Hand-woven carpets, silk, porcelain and jade are old Chinese industries and Chinese skill and craftsmanship in these fields is perhaps unexcelled anywhere in the world. The factories were relatively modern, though one of them lacked adequate ventilation. A look into their shipping rooms demonstrated that these industries engaged in a healthy export trade. Much of China's foreign exchange is derived from the sale of these commodities.

In Shanghai I visited the Industrial Exhibition Hall. Built by the Russians in the early 1950s it was formerly called the Palace of Sino-Soviet Friendship. It is not only monumental but also representative of the Stalin ginger-bread architecture.

We were told that Shanghai has 8000 factories, and that 1700 of them produce goods for export. Vegetables grown on 204 agricultural communes inside the city's 2588 square miles provide much of the required food supply. One reason for the fields' fertility: more than 10,000 tons of night soil are collected every day from houses without toilets and used as fertilizer. Shanghai has a population of 12,000,000.

The "Bund", the former residential and business section of foreign powers, provided an interesting study in change. Large estate-like houses where formerly lived British or French busi-

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ness executives, were now partitioned for crowded homes for dozens of Chinese families. Between the stately columns were strung clotheslines sagging with laundry.

One of the things that impressed me in the cities was the Chinese penchant for cleanliness. White was the dominant color on the streets, yet practically no Chinese household has either a washing-machine or clothes-dryer. All washing is done by hand, and the clothes are dried outside. High modern apartment buildings have clotheslines strung across the individual balconies from the first floor up. From the street the buildings look like highrise clothes-racks.

Marco Polo visited China in the thirteenth century. Since that time, because of its antiquity, unique ways and the fabulous wealth of its temples and palaces, China has exerted a special fascination to foreigners. Despite the ravages of civil and foreign wars and the Cultural Revolution, when many national treasures were purposely destroyed, a traveller to that country is not disappointed.

The most beautiful city in China is Hangzhou. It is built on the edge of West Lake. Thousands of Chinese tourists crowded the shores of this lake, watched the lotus blooms floating in the water, rowed in small boats, or observed the goldfish. One side of the lake has one of those long bridges with a dozen or so arches. On the shore some Chinese were engaged in that strange form of stylized exercise known as *tai chi*. Marco Polo on seeing West Lake wrote, "one fancies oneself in paradise."

In Guangzhou (Canton) I stayed in the White Swan Hotel, with its 34-stories overlooking the Pearl River. Later our bus parked on the edge of the north-south Grand Canal, a 7th century engineering feat. I had some trouble locating the Sun Yat-sen Memorial. That

famous Chinese revolutionary, who toppled the last Dynasty in 1911, was born in this city. I asked several sidewalk-store operators for directions, but apparently my pronunciation of the name was unsatisfactory. They did not understand me. I wrote the name on a piece of paper only to find that they could read only Chinese characters. My Western writing was as mysterious to them as their lettering was to me. Eventually I found Dr. Sun Yat-sen's monument and the Memorial Hall that is named after him.

In stores communication was easier. In Shanghai quite by accident I hit on Department Store No. 1, the largest in China. The elevators, which worked perfectly in every hotel we stayed, did not function in the store. So my son and I walked up a number of floors. Few clerks spoke English, and if they did it was only a few phrases. But all the articles were displayed on shelves. We would walk up to the counter, point out the item we wanted and buy it. Though the temperature in Shanghai was over 100°, we bought two heavy fur caps, also chessmen carved out of stone and Happy Shirts.

Peking, with its Forbidden City now open to the public, along with the Summer Palace, is a major tourist attraction. Beyond that, as the seat of the central government, it represents the mystery and awe of power. All distances in China are measured from Peking: Shanghai is 1000 miles away; Canton about 1500; Kuming 2000. Distances in China have American proportions.

As a historian my chief attractions were about a day's tour away from Peking: the Great Wall and the Ming Tombs.

The Great Wall stretches over 3000 miles through Northern China. Begun in the 7th century B.C., it was extended and reinforced through the centuries. It was the only man-made structure visi-

ble to our astronauts from the moon. Climbing the Wall is no achievement, but walking on it for some distance is attempted by only a few. Built on the ridge of mountain ranges, it winds up and down, following the natural contours of the mountains. At times the incline is so steep that one has to hold on to the railing.

The Cultural Revolution rejected past Chinese history. Not only were national treasures destroyed, ancient public buildings were also looted and burned. Peasants were permitted to quarry the Great Wall and use the stone on the communes. That has changed. The dismantled or eroded sections of the Great Wall are being restored.

The Wall is a tourist attraction not only for foreigners. On a pleasant sunny day you can see thousands of Chinese strolling on its parapet and gazing at the wild and mountainous countryside.

The Ming Tombs, some 20 miles out of Peking, are located in an enclosed valley. Thirteen emperors are buried in this valley that is about seven miles wide and as long as it is wide.

The approach, known as the Sacred Road, is lined with animals carved out of stone. Some animals are standing, others crouching, still others lying down. The strange road with its sentinels in the form of lions, camels, zebras and elephants, I found even more memorable than the majestic Tombs of the emperors.

More interesting than tombs and palaces are the people. At the market places and on the river banks in Shanghai and Canton I saw groups of men sitting idly, and when I asked about them I was told that they were unemployed. China, especially the large cities, has a severe problem of unemployment, and also an acute housing shortage.

Beyond that China is looking for better trade relations with the world, and is especially eyeing the American market. It needs foreign currency to pay for imported food. Domestic production cannot adequately provide for its millions of people.

What the future portends, no one knows. I also visited Hong Kong and Singapore, which have largely Chinese populations. Their per capita industrial output exceeds even that of Japan and South Korea. Now China and 1 billion Chinese are on the move. The industrial potential of China and also the learning skill of its people are formidable. In one generation their impact will affect every corner of the world.

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Das verschwundene Bett — eine wahre Begebenheit

von Gerhard G. Thiessen

Es wird immer Menschen geben, die von sich glauben mehr zu sein als andere Leute. So auch in diesem Falle.

Im Lager gab es eine Anzahl Menschen, die Dolmetscher genannt wurden. Da alle in Uniform stacken, gab es keinen Rangunterschied zwischen ihnen, aber damit war Kamerad K. nicht einverstanden. Er meinte, er sollte Oberdolmetscher genannt werden, was er zum Leidwesen seiner Kameraden oft und laut verkündete.

Dieses führte zu Ärger und Verdross der Kameraden. Diese beschlossen, K. eine Lektion zu erteilen, natürlich mit Erlaubnis des Lagerkommandanten, dem die Sache auch auf die Nerven ging. Man suchte die richtige Gelegenheit. . . .

Eines Morgens von einer Dienstreise zurückkehrend, bemerkte ich beim betreten des Lagerplatzes, wie einige Kameraden im Begriff waren, ein Bett aufs Barackendach zu heben. Vor der Hauptbaracke stand der Lagerführer in der Morgensonne und sah dem Treiben zu.

Ich machte meine vorschriftsmässige Meldung als von der Dienstreise zurück, worauf er mir zurief: „Thiessen, Sie haben nichts gesehen noch gehört, verstanden?“ (Er hatte wohl mein erstauntes Gesicht bemerkt.) „Jawohl, Sturmbahnführer!“

Inzwischen stand das Bett schön sauber, als wäre es hingezaubert, mitten auf dem Dach. Von den Kameraden war keiner mehr zu sehen.

Ich war im Begriff, kehrt zu machen, um auf meine Stube zu gehen, als K. mit langen Schritten aus der Baracke auf uns zu kam. Nach zackigem Gruss bittet er mit zitternder Stimme, melden zu dürfen, dass sein Bett verschwunden sei.

„Ihr waaaas?“

„Mein Bett ist verschwunden, Sturmbahnführer.“

„Habe ich richtig gehört, Ihr Bett ist verschwunden?“

„Jawohl Sturmbahnführer. Mein Bett mit allem drum und dran!“

„Kamerad K., was Sie da melden habe ich im Leben noch nicht gehört. Ein Gewehr, Schuhe oder sonst was, aber ein Bett.“ Kopfschüttelnd ging er etwas auf und ab um sein Lachen zu verbergen, währenddessen stand K. und wartete auf die Dinge, die da kommen sollten oder mussten.

Der Sturmbahnführer blieb plötzlich vor K. stehen.

„Schütze K. was Sie da melden ist ja unerhört; wissen Sie nicht, dass das Verschwundene Staatseigentum ist und falls Sie es nicht finden, müssen Sie es ersetzen. Obendrein werden Sie noch bestraft, verstehen Sie das?“

„Jawohl“ — Sturmbahnführer.

Es gab noch eine Menge mehr, an den genauen Wortlaut kann ich mich nicht

mehr erinnern. Entlassen wurde K. schliesslich mit den Worten: „Und jetzt kehrt marsch, marsch, Augen hoch, und melden Sie mir wenn Sie ihr Bett gefunden haben!“

Woraufhin der Sturmbahnführer in der Hauptbaracke verschwand. K. machte wie ihm befohlen war, kaum hatte er jedoch fünf Schritte getan, als er wie angewurzelt stehenblieb, sich dann langsam umdrehte als fürchte er etwas ungerechtes zu tun. Auf seinem Gesicht malte sich ein aussergewöhnlicher Ausdruck, den ich nicht wiederzugeben vermag, wohl Erleichterung, auch Freude mag es gewesen sein.

„Einen Moment mal, Kamerad,“ rief er mir kleinlaut zu. Ich blieb stehen und er fragte mich, so nebenbei, ob ich ihm helfen würde, sein Bett vom Barackendach herunterzuholen. Er wollte noch ein paar andere Jungens dazurufen.

So wurde dann mit unserer Hilfe das vermisste Bett unter viel Gelächter wieder an seinen Ort gestellt. Worauf sich K. zur Meldung auf die Schreibstube begab. Was dort geschehen ist, wurde nie bekannt aber seit der Zeit war von einem Oberdolmetscher nie mehr die Rede.

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Soo Wea Daut Freaja

by J. J. Neufeld

Etj hab enn dissem Mennistenspeajel woll aul 'mol doamett jepucht daut enn onsem Darp Kondratjewka enn Russland fief Daumpmäle enn eene Reaj stunde.

Dee Weat (Besitzer) fonn eene fonn dee Mälen, wea Onkel Welm Friesen. Onkel Friesen wea nich groot, uck nich ditj, oba een seea energischa Maun.

Hinja sienem Hoff, woa dee Mäl aun sien Wohnhus stund, haud hee mearere Hiesa jebut, aus Wonunge fe siene Mäleoabeida. Woo groot ooda woo Kjeen, woo goot ooda schljacht dee Wönunge weare weet etj aul nich, oba bie jieda Qautea wea een kjlienet Goadelaund, woa dee Oabeidafrues kunne Boklazhane, Tsiple, Beete onn Jalmäre plaunten. Eenje fonn dee Frues kjreaje uck bie wäm fonn dee Bures emm Darp Goadelaund onn muake doa ären *Ogorod* (Jemies). Opp daut Flekstje ferr äre Däa oba plaunte see dan Rose onn feschiedne aundre Bloome. Soo daut dee gaunse Oabeidasiedlung eajentlich eenen rajcht frinteljen Aunblick boot.

Peeta Toms, eena fonn Onkel Friesen siene Aunjestalde, wea kjeen schljachta Oabeida, onn Onkel Friesen wea sest mett am toofräd, oba wan hee enn Jesalschoft mol haud toofäl fonn dem ruschen Kroonswotatje enjenome, dan kunn hee manchmol seea daumlich senne.

Eenmol kaum hee uck fonn soo eene Konferens, woa maun fleijcht kjeenen wijcht'jen Beschluss jefot uck kjeen Protokoll jeschräwen, oba ritjlich Wodka jedrunken haud. Rajcht aunjerächt kaum hee enne Mäl, jerot mett Onkel Friesen enn Wuatwatjisel onn word soo groff, daut hee dem dän Schlips aufreet, uck 'n poa Kjneep fonne Wast. Oba aus hee daut jedone haud, word hee sitj platslijch bewust, daut ditt woll nich een goodet Benämen, een Rechtja Omgang mett sienem Näätjisen, onn omsoomeea mett sienem Baus, wea. Hee kjreajch daut mett dee Angst too doonen, dreid sich omm onn rand wajch.

Fe Onkel Friesen wea doamett de Fäafaul oba nich too enj. Omm dee Sach mett Peeta wieda beräde to kjenne, säd hee too dee omstonende Mensche: "Dort rannt dee Peeta, onn wäa den jript onn heabrinjt, dee kjrijcht ne Kull Mäl!"

Na, ne Kull Mäl, daut meend emerhan, fief mol featich Punt fomm basten Weitemäl. Een poa jingre, haundfauste Boys, dee noch bäta ranne kunne aus Peeta Toms, kjeeme dann uck boold mett am aunjeleid.

Nu word Peeta dwea äwa enn Sack Klie jestratjt, Onkel Friesen haud sich ut de Mulbeahatj eene pausende Wäd jeschnäde, onn doamett bestrickt onn masead hee nu Peeta sien Hinjadeel.

Aus hee daut no siene Meening seeajenuch besorcht haud, säd hee: "Soo, Peeta, nu go nohus schlope, onn morgen ess wada Oabeitsdach."

Aus Peeta nu seea schlaup onn watjlich no dee Oabeidasiedlung aunjestolpat kaum, weare doa de Frues enn äre Husgoades beschäfticht. Dee Maschinist-Renkelsche, dee aul fonn eea enn Groll opp am haud, sach nu äre Tiet jekome, sich aun am too rache. Seea lud, mett derchut nich schmeichelhafte Wead onn Benanunge, jing see opp am loos, fekrautst am daut gaunse Jesejcht on hau'd am mette Fust noch 'n poa opp sien grootet Muhl. Wären kunn hee sich nich, doatoo weare siene Henj too schlaup, onn dee Kopp too schwoa.

Toom Jletj kaum nu aul siene Fru, Mariejche, aunjerant onn holp am fonn de dolle Renkelsche loos. Dann jinge see toop nohus onn Peeta jing schlope.

Den nätsjen Dach wea Peeta Toms wada rajcht tätich opp sienem Oabeitsplauts onn fegaut fonn dem gaunsen Feafaul. Onn Onkel Friesen räd uck nich doafonn.

Jo, soo word daut donn, enn dee easchte Joare fonn onsem fondoagschen Joahundat jereajelt, one Jerejcht, one Offkot uck one Union.

Etj well nu nich doaräwa uadeele: Wea daut goot ooda schljacht? Wea daut rajcht ooda onrajcht?

Oba soo wea daut Freaja.

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more about Assembly

came away with a sense of hope and encouragement. The WCC may not be perfect but there's nothing else like it and it deserves our wholehearted support.

Irving Hexham is a member of the Department of Religion, University of Manitoba, and attended the WCC as a writer accredited to the Mennonite Mirror.

WHAT'S GOOD FOR THE IMAGE MAY NOT BE GOOD STEWARDSHIP FOR STEINBACH MB

We have become so used to the availability of government grants that when a government handout is turned down it becomes major news. Such was the case in November when the Steinbach Mennonite Brethren Church decided to decline a \$194,000 federal grant that would have covered about half of the cost of its new church and provided employment to those whose benefits had run out.

An administrator of the federal program said he could not recall an example of any organization turning down government money after it had been awarded.

The Steinbach church used an essentially secular argument to support its rejection of the grant — a move that was wise in the circumstances. A spokesman for the congregation said the government money would be welcome if the new church building was to be a public facility, such as a hospital or recreation complex; but because full participation in the life of the church is limited to people who must accept a specific faith and theology, the building thus becomes a “private” project. Accordingly, the membership was persuaded that “public” funds had no place in a “private” project.

This rejection of the federal money has indeed earned the church some good public relations points. At the same time, however, the congregation has still to demonstrate good stewardship.

First, the purpose of the federal grant was to create employment, not the advancement of the religious objectives of the congregation. Will the Steinbach MB church address the government's job creation objective when it finally begins building? Will it, for example, insist that its contractors do all they can to employ persons whose unemployment benefits have run out? If the congregation is genuinely concerned about the quality of its witness in the community and of the effects of joblessness on people in its community, then it will insist that the capable unemployed be hired.

Second, would it have been difficult to design a building and a use program that could be of “public” benefit while at the same time fulfilling the “private” worship needs of the members? Although this is perhaps an unfair observation, church buildings are the most under-used structures in most communities, being in use only in evenings and weekends. In terms of usefulness, most church buildings represent not an asset, but a liability — benefitting from a land-tax exemption but contributing nothing to the welfare of the community.

There are all sorts of community uses that a congregation could offer as a “public” service through its physical plant without violating the integrity of its worship. These uses must, of course, be specific to the community context around the congregation, but their range and scope is limited only by the imagination of the planners.

Evangelical churches are always concerned about “outreach.” Typically these programs are all “outreach” and therefore doomed to failure because a sermon is the last thing

someone with a problem needs. If one of the objectives of outreach is to show individuals in the community that a congregation cares, then that congregation should demonstrate its concern by sharing its physical facilities and human resources unconditionally and in such a way that individuals are helped. A congregation that reaches out by caring enough to help those in need will soon find itself overrun.

Jesus says in Matthew 11:29 “Come to me all whose work is hard, whose load is heavy; and I will give you relief.” In a sense being Christian is not a case of being concerned with faith and theology, but of helping those whose lot in life is hard.

One of the issues involved in the Steinbach decision is the nature of the relationship between church and government.

Whether or not we agree with the policy, the government decided to establish a job-creation program. It also decided to award its funds to non-profit organizations, and churches are just one example of qualifying organizations. Thus a church that is concerned about the effects of unemployment in its community should not be embarrassed about accepting government funds to create employment. Such was not the case in Steinbach where it appears that many viewed the acceptance of a grant as the first step to government control of religion.

This perception is flawed because government at all three levels is already involved in the affairs of the church. Government gives benefits to all religions in the form of special income tax exemptions for clergy, registration of clergy, exemption from land taxes for sanctuaries, charitable registration numbers so that parishioners can deduct gifts from income, etc. As well, governments at all levels have regulations in place that are accepted by all churches and that in one way or another affect church life. The only difference between the grant and the other benefits is that the grant is explicit. To be consistent in wanting to establish distance between church and state, the Steinbach congregation and others should decline all “benefits” of government.

The perception that the Steinbach MB church wanted to use government money to do something it should be doing for itself, is one that deserves support. Indeed, more groups should demonstrate that they can survive and flourish without the need “to feed at the public trough.” Governments are necessary for social order and to provide common services and in many respects should not be involved in addressing the self-interests of groups that are quite capable of managing on their own.

The Steinbach MB church is, therefore, to be commended for its rejection of the grant, but at the same time the congregation should take their stewardship further by addressing the job-creation aspect of the government's program and also use their building as a “public” facility.

— Ed Unrau

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Like John B. Toews, historian, you will find the ending "as moving as it is disturbing".

Date: Sunday, January 22 4:00 p.m.
8:00 p.m.

Thursday, January 26 8:00 p.m.

Place: Winnipeg Centennial Concert Hall
— reserved seats

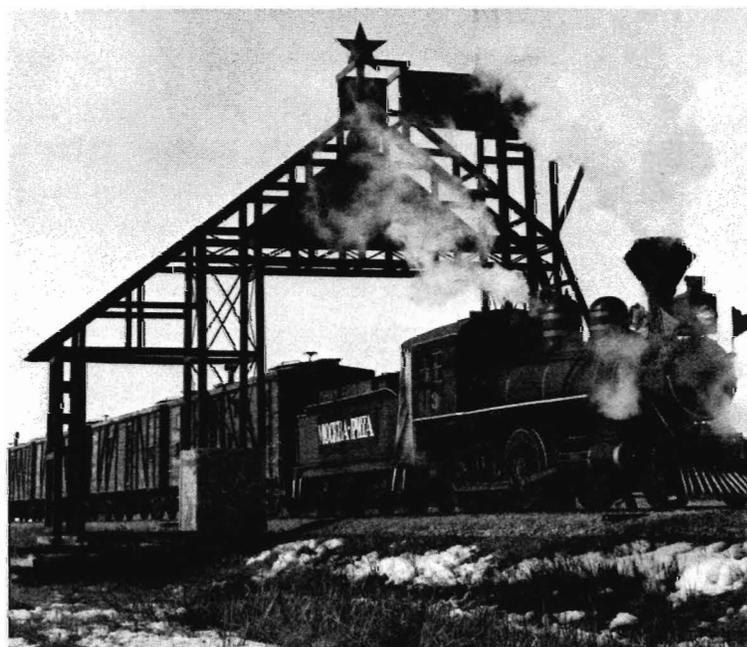
Special Offer: Two tickets plus a record for **\$25.00**

Tickets: \$10.00 each — available at ATO, BTO outlets and Crosstown Credit Union branches in Winnipeg

Records: \$13.95 each — "The Mennonite Piano Concerto" used as basis for film soundtrack

Watch for showings in other southern Manitoba locations

**For additional information
call Mennonite Media Society at 338-1237**



SOUVENIR RECORD ALBUM: Recorded by the London Symphony Orchestra
Irmgard Baerg, *pianist* Boris Brott, *conductor* Victor Davies, *composer*