

Mennonite MIRROR

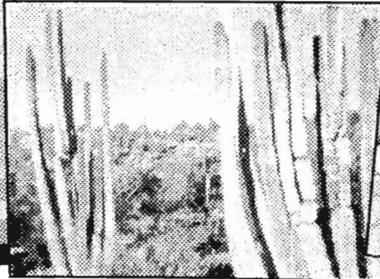
volume 18 / number 3 / november, 1988



- Taunt Malwintje at 88
- On the bus with John Fehr
- Bethania's tradition of care
- Old

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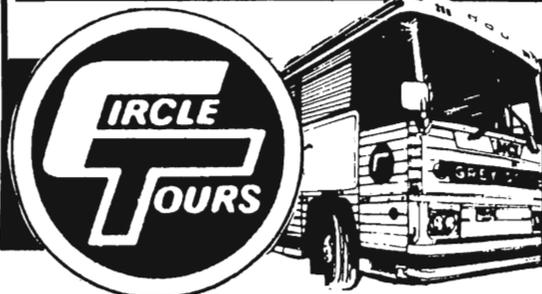
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Mennonite MIRROR

volume 18 / number 3
november, 1988

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Mennonite Mirror

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ForeWord

This edition of the *Mirror* is almost entirely devoted to a single theme — aging. There are, of course, many aspects to aging. And we have chosen to explore just a few.

The edition opens with an interview with Malvina Neufeld by Agnes Wall. Mrs. Neufeld is now 88, and our author went to visit her planning to ask her how it feels to be old. It was only after the interview ended and our reporter was on her way home that she realized she had forgotten to ask the question. The reason, as you will see when you read the story, is because Mrs. Neufeld has a lot to live for, both in terms of her personal interests as well as in terms of friends and family.

John Fehr, the man who conceived of Fehr-Way tours, appears to have found a business niche — bus tours for "mature" travellers. His tours cover all parts of Canada and the U.S. He and his family take a great deal of pride in making sure that every passenger returns home with as pleasant an experience as can be organized. His care has paid off not only in a strong business, but also in the rather high number of people who return for further tours.

Inevitably the elderly need care from younger family members and from the community. Mennonites have had a long tradition of caring for the weaker members of their community. Dr. John Bond, of the University of Manitoba, has had a longstanding research interest in the way ethnic communities care for older members. In the article in this edition, Dr. Bond takes a close look at the way the Old Order Mennonites of Ontario look after older family members by extending a degree of independence but at the same time ensuring a network of care and concern.

One of the care institutions that has become an "institution" by virtue of its decades of service is the Bethania home, next door the Concordia Hospital. This personal care home can be said to be modelled after the kind of care given to Mennonites in Russia and which was continued when Mennonites settled here. Dana Mohr in her article visited the modern Bethania and describes how it continues to be a leader in personal care.

In another article, Dana Mohr interviewed Calvin Zacharias, project manager for the National Advisory Council on Aging. Where our previous articles focussed on individuals or on local care institutions, this one examines a national program to speak out on concerns of specific interest to the older portion of the population.

In a guest contribution to Our Word, Rhinehart Friesen writes a thoughtful piece on how retirement might fit into the grand scheme of things.

Vic Penner returns this month with his Looking Over the Prairie column and describes how inevitably "progress" snares us even though we claim to prefer the old. The national election, free trade, hockey, and an almost perfect autumn preoccupy the days of our intrepid observer, Roy Vogt.

Harry Loewen in an article rejects the impression many have that Mennonite mission work was somehow non-existent during the Russian years because the government forbade it. While it was certainly true that the authorities inhibited mission and evangelization, they certainly never stopped the Mennonites from proclaiming their interpretation of Christianity.

In another article on the "Russian experience," Victor Peters writes about the unique place names Mennonites gave to their homes there, names which to a large extent where replicated in North America.

Our issue this month closes with the news and with our German and Low-German section. **mm**



Taunte Malwintje

Taunte Malwintje doesn't know the meaning of "old" at age 88

by Agnes Wall

"**W**ie stankre soo lang aus maeajlich (We struggle as long as possible)," said Malvina Neufeld, better known as Taunte Malwintje, when I visited her for another interview for the *Mennonite Mirror*. When she was first interviewed she was 74; now she is 88. She was wearing a becoming blue dress on this second visit, and her slim, erect figure, her animated face and the sparkle in her eyes completely belied her age as she welcomed me into her cozy sitting room.

The purpose of the interview was to find out how it feels to be old. I had telephoned her several times but wasn't able to reach her. I began to worry. Was she ill or had she fallen and hurt herself? I called her daughter and was told that Mrs. Neufeld was away on a holiday. I hadn't expected that.

I found her to be full of enthusiasm about her bus tour of the Canadian Rockies. She showed photos she had taken, already neatly mounted in an album. "It was marvelous to see the wonderful world God has made. We went for a walk right on a glacier, as you can see on this picture. Here are photos of my second trip to Hawaii. Just look how beautiful it all was! I enjoy travel as much as ever. My husband and I always liked to go places and see things. We went on many trips by car. And nowadays many senior citizens

like myself are doing things which were never done a few years ago. I think Fehr-Way Tours can take much of the credit. They're willing to go the extra mile. They provide opportunities for people to go out and see the world instead of sitting at home, bored and alone."

In my mind's eye I imagined Taunte Malwintje walking into countless homes and rousing the elderly to come out into the fresh air and take a bus tour somewhere. But it was impossible to imagine her sitting at home, bored and alone. It was obvious from our conversation that she is much beloved by her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, 52 in all, and by her many relatives and friends. It was also beautiful to realize how much she cares for them. She shares their joys; she shares their sorrows. They call her often and like to invite themselves over for a meal, asking for home-made *Kjieltje* (noodles) or *Warenike* (perogies). Taunte Malwintje is still an excellent cook. She insists on cooking and baking for Christmas when she invites all 52 of her family for dinner.

Taunte Malwintje was born in one of the Mennonite villages in the Ukraine. Her home was right at the end of the village, near a bridge over the Dnieper River. As a young girl she experienced the terrors of the First World War and the

Russian Revolution with its cruel consequences. "The troops were always back and forth across the river. First it was the Reds, next it was the Whites or someone else. The bridge was destroyed and rebuilt three times. I remember we lived through a period where we didn't take our clothes off for 13 weeks. My ties with Russia were severed many years ago and I will never go back there for a visit."

She, her husband and young son emigrated to Canada in 1924. They had a difficult beginning in a new country, working on various farms. Soon the "dirty thirties" made farming next to impossible. They moved to Gardenton, where Mr. Neufeld had a job in a flourmill, bought and operated by their relatives who had been millers in Russia. They bought two and a half acres of land close to the Roseau River and built a house on it. "It was a blockhouse. The two of us did all the work ourselves. For the walls my husband bought some beams which he hammered vertically into the ground, three feet apart. Next, we fitted poplar cordwood between these beams. These were to be plastered, inside and out. The plaster was prepared by mixing clay, water, and straw. I mixed it well by walking around in it. I still remember how prickly the straw was on my bare feet. My husband was very thorough and particular, so that

when the walls were done, they were very smooth, so smooth that we could wallpaper them. When we needed bricks I again prepared the clay for them by treading the mixture, which was then poured into frames my husband had made. When the clay had dried, we had strong bricks for the chimney. There was a natural spring under the house and we enlarged it into a well, so we always had clear, pure water right in the house. The house had a big kitchen, a living room and two bedrooms on the main floor. Later we built a summer kitchen and two more bedrooms upstairs. Still later, we expanded the main part of the house too."

Gardenton was mostly a Russian and Polish community. The few Mennonites living there got together for church services in one of the houses. Sometimes they were served by a visiting preacher. Mr. Neufeld taught Sunday school for many years.

Every year Taunte Malwintje still goes for a visit to her old home and is always well received. Many people there remember her. The house they built is still there too, still in use, together with the original chimney. "My husband certainly knew how to build a good chimney," she laughed. Her laugh is delightful, somewhere between a chortle and a gleeful trill.

• **No plan to move again**

In 1953, they moved to North Kildonan. The North Kildonan Mennonites built a new church and the Neufelds bought the old one and remodelled it into a general store with living quarters in the back. The business kept them both busy for 16 years until Mr. Neufeld retired. He died nine years ago, but Taunte Malwintje still lives in the house and has some very definite views about moving anywhere else.

"I love to live here. It's my home. I hate walking along the long corridors in the apartment houses when I go to visit my friends there. I put my name down as a possible tenant for *Bethania Haus*. Recently someone telephoned me about this. I said I wasn't ready to move in. They wanted to know why I had signed up for it then. I told them I did it because there should be enough names of future tenants to warrant building such a place. We need it in the community. I'm just not one who needs it."

Taunte Malwintje's house, a long, narrow, building reaches almost to the front sidewalk. It stands out from all the others on the street. I found the inside quite intriguing, especially the largest room. It used to be the room where the congregation gathered for worship when the building was a church, then it was the

main part of the store. Now it's the family meeting place used for entertaining and feeding large groups of people. Along the lower part of one wall, Taunte Malwintje has mounted a series of maps. Each one depicts a part of the world which she has visited, the tour itself clearly traced with a heavy line. Above the maps, the wall is covered with formal and informal photographs of the British Royal Family. ("I still need pictures of Fergie's baby," said Taunte Malwintje.) There is a bench running the length of this wall and in front of it, long tables neatly covered by a white cloth, all ready to set for a meal. The other walls have shelves with all sorts of bric-a-brac, some of it quite old and valuable.

• **Famous for quilts**

Mrs. Neufeld is famous for her quilted comforters. They are filled with pure wool (none of this artificial stuff for her), which is often donated by friends. She washes the wool herself and combs it on a wool-carding machine designed and constructed by her husband. She does most of the quilting by hand, her neat even stitches following a pattern she has traced on the material. She is proud of her work as well she should be, because comforters like hers cannot be bought in any store.

She keeps a record of the quilts she has made. This record shows the date each one was made and for whom. In all, she has made over 2000 quilt comforters. Sometimes she makes a few for her family (each grandchild receives one when she or he marries), but most of her work is for sale. The earnings are donated to a worthy cause. Her main project is the Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, a school she was interested in right from its beginnings. "I helped scrub the floors when the first building on Edison Avenue was readied for occupancy and still help whenever I can. We have a thrift shop on Selkirk Avenue where I work as a volunteer. The day I go there, I usually bring some money which I made from the sale of my quilts. So far, I've made 60 comforters for this purpose. I don't put them up for sale at the shop because they would not fetch a good price there. People hear about my quilts and come to my house to buy them. I'm working on a comforter for a single bed right now. Want to come and look?"

I didn't only see it, I bought it! Taunte Malwintje has this effect on people.

• **More than comfort**

Besides the comforters, she has another source of income. "When I make the quilts," she said, "there are always some pieces of material left. They are new and far too good to throw away. In a year I save quite a few of these remnants. Every January I set aside a week where I

sew these pieces into aprons. I design each apron to suit the materials and colors at hand, so all are different. I trim them with edging or rickrack which I've saved from the time we had the store. They are pretty aprons (*daut sennt straume Schaldaetja*), nice for birthday gifts. They sell very quickly at four dollars an apron. The money goes to Westgate too. I usually make about 40 aprons every year."

"I like people. Sometimes we take folding chairs to the park and I sit down and watch the people going by. I can do this for hours. I think people are the most interesting creatures God has made. Perhaps because of my people watching I like to help them. I see there is work to be done and I do it. I enjoy it (*mie jeit daut scheen*)."

She is practical and direct. Instead of indulging in maudlin sentimentality, she rolls up her sleeves and gets to work. Her sensible, no nonsense approach to helping has been her philosophy of life and she is not about to give it up just because she is 88. All her life Taunte Malwintje has always done what she wanted to do. She radiates joy and contentment.

"I am a very fortunate person to have such good health. When I was a child, I had all the sicknesses children get. Perhaps that's why I'm so healthy now. I never even have a cold. I sleep well and I can eat everything, though I never eat very much at a time. Even though I don't like medical check-ups, I went to see the doctor the other day. He calls me Taunte Malwintje too. He said, "Taunte Malwintje, what should I do with you? I can find nothing wrong with your health. You'll have to live a while longer so you can do more good work."

She laughed her infectious laugh. "Imagine, he wants me to live just so I can do more work! Maybe he is right. Last year I made five quilts for a lady who wanted to give them to her children for Christmas. She called me a "*Wunder Gottes*" (miracle of God)."

Such is Taunte Malwintje's life, always dedicated to others. She was present at the very first women's conference in Plum Coulee. She recalls there were about 40 women at this gathering. Last year she was recognized as the only woman from this original group who was still active in the organization. She can look back on many useful, fulfilling years of service to her community.

After I had concluded my interview and was already out on the sidewalk, I remembered that I hadn't asked Taunte Malwintje what it was like to be old. It just hadn't occurred to me, possibly because it hadn't occurred to her either. **mm**



The family Fehr: Dale and Sandra Janzen, Mary and John Fehr, and John Fehr Jr.

You get more than a fair deal when you pay your fare to join a Fehr-Way tour

by Sarah Klassen

Caught in the grip of a grim prairie winter, a significant number of Manitobans are reaching out, not for the traditional seed catalogue, but for the latest Fehr-Way Tours brochure. Feasting their winter-weary eyes on its glossy illustrations, they can decide how they will celebrate the end of winter when it comes. Will it be a salmon-bake in Alaska? A tour of the scenic Cabot Trail? The Passion Plays in the Black Hills?

For those who find it impossible to wait for spring, there are buses departing even in the dead of winter for Palm Springs, Fort Lauderdale, San Antonio, or Phoenix. Fehr-Way Tours are also willing to park the bus and take the traveller by air to Hawaii or even "down under," if that is desired.

Whole busloads accept Fehr-Way's colorful invitations to travel, especially members of that hardy Manitoba variety, the senior citizen. Consider the situation of this rapidly expanding population group. In the 1980s many seniors are enjoying an enviable retirement, complete with amazingly stable health, a good measure of energy and reliable pension incomes and savings that can cover more than just the rent and groceries. Many are single, living in apartments that are comfortable, though sometimes lonely. Responsibilities have decreased over the years, leaving them with time to travel, and, evidently, a

desire to see the world, provided someone else does the driving.

This situation is custom-made for an enterprising businessman, and John Fehr was prescient enough to step in. Shrewdness and energy, however, were not his only qualifications. He has, as well, a genuine desire to deliver a first-rate product and to see satisfied clients enjoying it.

The seed for Fehr-Way Tours was planted in 1979 when a group of senior citizens in the Elmwood Mennonite Brethren church approached Fehr, owner of Beaver Bus Lines, to organize a tour of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and Washington, D.C., for them. Fehr agreed not only to plan the tour and provide a bus, but also to do the driving. The 14-day tour was such a satisfying experience for the 47 passengers and driver that it launched Fehr-Way Tours.

John Fehr stepped into his venture cautiously, with modest expectations and a great deal of bus-related experience. As a young man he was employed as bus driver by Thiessen Bus Lines from 1947-1959. In 1956 he drove a Thiessen bus, chartered by 30 female tourists and one minister, from Rosthern, Saskatchewan, to Mexico City. This trip may have foreshadowed his future involvement in the tourist business and was the only time he took a bus across into Mexico — today tours park the bus at the border and hire

Mexican coaches.

From 1960 to 1963 he was manager of, and partner with Abram J. Thiessen, in the White Ribbon Bus Line in Transcona. When the city of Winnipeg expropriated this bus line and moved in with its transit system, Thiessen and Fehr also sold their not-too-successful travel agency in Transcona. They were left with a jointly-owned insurance agency which Fehr subsequently bought out and operates now as John Fehr Insurance, Ltd.

In 1972 Fehr bought Beaver Bus Lines from its aging owner, after the bank surprised him by coming through with the sizeable loan this venture required. "They trusted my experience," he explains. "This company owned eight buses and employed eight drivers and 14 other staff. Beaver Bus Lines still operates the Winnipeg-to-Selkirk run."

Clearly, John Fehr knew a great deal about buses and the people who ride them by the time he started his own tour company. He also had a supportive family to help. Speaking to John and his wife Mary one gets the distinct impression that a strong service orientation and a warm interest in people are at least as crucial to the success of this family venture as any profit motive. Their daughter and son-in-law, Sandra and Dale Janzen, were the first driver/escort team. Although they now hold the positions of vice-president and manager, respectively, Sandra says

they still "do everything," and even take the occasional tour as a quality control measure.

Lorraine Toews, another daughter, assists with hotel bookings and son John David is responsible for ensuring that all Fehr-Way buses are cleaned and serviced. John Fehr, senior, is president.

A typical Fehr-Way tour is one to three weeks in length and so carefully organized that it's unlikely anything will go wrong. Two good reasons for this are the capable driver and the congenial tour escort.

The driver ensures that passengers reach their destinations safely and on schedule, and, once they've arrived, he/she (there are two women drivers) becomes the chauffeur, and the bus, a taxi to all local points of interest.

The escort welcomes passengers on board in Winnipeg and explains and handles the itinerary. She makes sure the bus temperature is just right and hands out candies and a "thought for the day." At the start of a tour she arranges for regular seat-rotation so that each person gets a turn in that coveted front seat near the driver. Only very occasionally will a stubborn passenger, first on the bus, refuse to share that special seat. Whenever the scenery gets a bit monotonous, or spirits seem to droop (this happens rarely with seniors according to the Fehrs), she hands out the song books, starts the tape and a sing-a-long is underway. Or she may suggest a game: Bingo, with prizes, or: "Guess the collective and average age of the group."

Sometimes a husband and wife team will act as co-escorts.

• **The search for new**

Fehr-Way Tours has approximately 10 regular escorts, all of them equipped with leadership qualities, a love of travel and generous measure of common sense, according to Sandra.

The quality of accommodations and food, any traveller can tell you, correlates directly with the success or failure of a vacation. Fehr-Way Tours insist on booking only first-class hotels, so the traveller is assured of a comfortable night after a rigorous day of bus travel.

Food is not included in these tour packages, and every passenger is free to choose, and pay for, whatever the appetite and pocketbook dictate. However, any tour exceeding seven days includes in the price a "Special Fehr-Way Farewell Dinner" on the last night. Usually by this time a good degree of bonding has taken place and the skits and songs prepared for the after-dinner entertainment reflect the satisfaction as well as the spirit and creativity of the group.

John Fehr estimates that the average age of the tour members is in the low sixties, but it's not uncommon to find octogenarians in the group, even on trips to distant destinations like Alaska or Phoenix. Women are always in the majority. Seniors, Fehr says, are a spunky group, good mixers, and appreciative of what is being done for them.

On a tour of the Maritimes (a favorite with Fehr-way clients), one woman checked, each night, the hotel rates posted in her room and totalled them. After the tour she came to John Fehr, very perturbed, and said, "John, on this trip you've lost money on us." She was unaware of special group rates.

• **Widening scope**

When Fehr-Way tours first started, passenger lists showed predominantly Mennonite names. Mennonites still comprise a high percentage of most passenger lists, but occasionally a list has more non-Mennonite than Mennonite names. According to Fehr, a healthy desire to mix and a congeniality that crosses ethnic lines are evident in most groups.

Baseball tours to Minneapolis, introduced in 1988, attract fewer Mennonites than non-Mennonites. Since these are summer tours, they also attract children, who are often accompanied by their grandmothers. Where other companies doing baseball tours seek to draw crowds by promising booze and fun, Fehr promises *no* booze and fun. He's getting plenty of takers.

Although Fehr-Way tours are widely regarded as senior tours, no age group is excluded. On a Black Hills tour several years ago, the seniors were delighted to find that the very young couple from Steinbach travelling with them were honeymooners! On their tour-end evaluation the honeymooners listed "teasing by the seniors" as part of their enjoyment.

Of course bad things happen even on very good tours. On one Alaska tour, for instance, a landslide halted all traffic on the Alaska Highway at Fort St. John. Fortunately the highway crew decided to pull the Fehr-Way coach through, and the only adjustment necessary was compressing two days into one, in order to maintain the schedule.

On another occasion a brand new Fehr-Way coach broke down near Monterey, California. Fehr was contacted immediately and he phoned a friend in Vancouver to send a bus down. In the meantime, the driver arranged for a local bus to take the group to San Francisco. The tour never skipped a beat, although coaches were switched five times. On that tour, John Fehr did not make a profit. The

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reaction of the seniors, he says, was typically upbeat. When navigating the Big Sur later, they said, "We're so lucky. Our bus could have broken down here on the Big Sur."

On a certain day this past summer, two Fehr-Way tours departed from the depot on the same day, one for Toronto, the other for Churchill. The Toronto bus left first, and when the bus for Churchill was loading, one lady was missing, though her luggage was there. Dale Janzen jumped into his car and took off in pursuit of the Toronto bus to retrieve the misdirected passenger. Meanwhile, one of the Churchill-bound passengers stepped forward to confess she'd left her carry-on bag on a transit bus. Could someone chase that bus for her? That didn't seem possible. However, after the bus had departed for Churchill, Lorraine Toews tracked down the missing bag, put it on a north-bound Grey Goose bus, and the lady had her bag that evening in Thompson.

Meanwhile, at Beaver Bus Lines, managed by John Fehr Jr., there's more going on than just the Winnipeg-to-Selkirk run. Beaver buses are available for charter, and Mary Fehr, wife of John Fehr Sr., is busy arranging tours, as the requests come in. These are short, usually one to three days in length. Frequently the initiative is taken by someone in the community who represents a specific group, such as Osborne Leisure Centre, or the residents of Serena Towers in North Kildonan.

Agnes Kroeker is the travel representative on the Serena Towers residents' committee. For several years she has arranged travel opportunities for the residents of her building and of other senior citizens' blocks in North Kildonan. Together with Mary Fehr she has planned a wide variety of short tours, and has literally scoured southern Manitoba in an attempt to find new and attractive destinations for the one-day tours so popular with travel-eager seniors. Agnes serves as escort for the tours she arranges.

Sometimes a day tour is billed as a "Mystery Tour," where only the group representative and the driver know the destination. Seniors with an appetite for mystery have found themselves enjoying the pelicans on Hecla Island, touring the Mennonite Museum in Steinbach, or relaxing at a lake in the Whiteshell with lunch at the Fehr's private cottage afterwards. Mary herself is there to welcome them and serve the home-cooked lunch, while her husband is ready to take the visitors on motor boat rides.

Rumour, and the *Valley Leader*, have it that a recent mystery tour was pursued

and boarded by an RCMP officer who started out by chastising the drive for excessive speed and ended up welcoming the group to the town of Carman, their mystery destination. It's not every day a senior citizen, or anyone for that matter, gets to confront a handsome mountie in full regalia, and the ladies loved it.

Last year's Christmas Lites tour, planned by Mary Fehr and Agnes Kroeker, attracted five busloads of seniors. The 203 persons, including drivers, started the evening with a turkey dinner at the Mclvor MB church, followed by a short program. Then they were off to enjoy Winnipeg in its Christmas splendour, in a clean comfortable bus, secure in the knowledge that they would be dropped off safely at the right apartment afterwards.

Occasionally John Fehr himself will take the wheel for these short tours, and when he does, everyone considers it a special treat. His good humour and the personal attention he gives to group members add to the spirit of the outing.

Luxurious scenicruisers, the lure of faraway places, and reasonable travel costs are not likely the only enticements that draw seniors to Fehr-Way tours. No doubt the promise of companionship inherent in tours is a strong drawing card. Advantaged as many seniors are in our society, the threat of loneliness can hang over them as it does over many younger apartment dwellers. Tours offer a ready made peer group. Surely among 47 passengers there will be friendship, at least for a few weeks. Nancy, a senior, was sad at the conclusion of a trip to Phoenix. "Now I'm going to be in my little suite, alone," she said. Yes, but if she handles her money frugally, as many seniors do, she can take another Fehr-Way Tour next year. Or in two years' time.

There are many ways of measuring success. One is statistics. The number of regular (one-to-three week) tours per year has increased from two in 1979 to 80 in 1988, requiring 35 tour coaches. Sandra Janzen touched on a second evaluation measure. "At the end of a tour, the gratitude of the group is so real you can feel it," she says. "You can never forget those people once you've travelled with them."

No one will be surprised if the Fehrs decide to celebrate the tenth anniversary of Fehr-Way Tours, which is coming up in 1989, with special tours. It's what they're good at.

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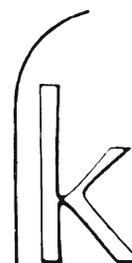
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Old Order Mennonites provide support while at the same time preserving the independence of their elderly

by John B. Bond, Jr.

Two of the most significant changes of the twentieth century have been an increase in the average age of death and an increase in life expectancy from birth.

In 1921 the average age of death of Canadian men was 39 years, while for women it was 41. Sixty years later, these ages had increased to 69.7 years for men and 75.8 years for women. Similarly, life expectancies at birth increased from 60 years (1931) to 71.9 years (1981) for men, and from 62.1 years (1931) to 79 years (1981) for women. These dramatic shifts can be attributed to control of many diseases which cause death in childhood, as well as treatment of a variety of causes of death of the elderly (pneumonia, chronic heart conditions, better medical care for accident victims, etc.).

These changes, however, have caused significant alterations in family life. While families have fewer childhood deaths to confront, the care of elderly family members is now a concern. Earlier in the century, there were few frail older people in society; widowhood occurred at an earlier age, at a healthier time of life, and lasted for fewer years. Children generally did not have very old parents, let alone elderly grandparents. Now, there are significant numbers of older family members, who may live for decades following retirement from the work force and departure of children from the home.

Given these changes, those in the middle years of life have been called the "new pioneers:" there has never before been a time when the middle-aged have had significant responsibilities to their

elderly parents as well as their children. There are no models of how families can best provide care to their older members. Each life experience with an older parent seems to be unique.

With these factors in mind, for the last several years Carol Harvey and I have been examining patterns of family life and the elderly in rural communities, first in Manitoba, and now in Ontario on a more restricted basis. We believe that family ties may be more cohesive and stable in rural areas than in urban settings where social and medical services are usually more available.

Of additional interest has been an examination of the family lives of Mennonites for whom strong family linkages

65, and have received responses to our questionnaires from more than 650 middle-aged offspring.

Most of the data we have collected are still being analyzed, using fairly complex statistical procedures. I can, however, offer some of my observations on the family life of Old Order Mennonites as it relates to the elderly. The nine families who shared their insights live near Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario. They were not randomly selected, but volunteer participants, so my observations may not represent all Old Order families. But I believe that these families honestly and openly presented their lives, and to that extent, we can all profit. All of the parents who were interviewed were males; they

A strong sense of family as well as community ensures a network of care that's there when it is most needed

have been a concern throughout history. We think that by comparing Mennonite with non-Mennonite families, much can be learned about successful intergenerational relations, and how family interactions can be improved. We have been extremely fortunate that the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) and the Centre on Aging, University of Manitoba, have financially supported the projects. Most important, however, has been the willingness of hundreds of family members to share their views with us. During the past two years, we have collected interviews from almost 200 parents over the age of

ranged in age from 67 to 89. Two parents were widowed, for almost 20 years, and all but one had at least one living sibling. The numbers of living children ranged from two to 11.

The communities in which the interviewees live are a few kilometers from a moderately sized city. All of the Old Order Mennonites we contacted live on family farms, each approximately 100 acres in size. The farms generally produce a number of crops, as well as maintaining some livestock. The homes and farm operations are usually non-electrified, with the exception of those who need refrigeration for milk from dairy cattle. In

some instances tractors are used, while horse-drawn plows are also common. There are no telephones on home or farm premises. Local transportation is typically by horse and buggy.

Two significant characteristics of the lives of the parental generation are continuity and independence. These themes can be seen in the home, marital, financial, work and spiritual aspects of life.

On the first day that I was to meet a member of the community, to determine whether my research project would be welcomed, I drove to his home and faced a house with what appeared to be two main entrances. In fact, the house contained two separate homes, one for the son and one for the parents (the *doddy* house). After subsequent visits to a number of homes, I observed that in some situations there is an inner passage between the two homes, while in others no passageway exists. The houses are completely self-contained, with no common areas. The homes can be described as side-by-side, but the lives of the families are independent. One elderly mother said that, even though she and her son lived in adjacent homes, she only saw her son once or twice a week during winter. The ability to maintain a separate household, although having family nearby, is a consistent concern of many elderly in North America. Governments are now realizing that the maintenance of older persons in their own home environments is cost-effective and psychologically beneficial to the older person.

• **Reliance network**

A second example of continuity and independence is the reliance on the life-time marital partner, rather than adult children, to meet the tasks of daily life. It was not uncommon for an older husband to continue to rely upon his wife for meals, although a daughter-in-law lived next door, who could easily set another couple of places at meal time. Keep in mind that the stoves might be wood burning and the pots and pans cast iron. Some modernization has taken place, and propane stoves are accepted by some. Similarly, the elderly wife relies upon her husband for the maintenance of the home, care of the horse and carriage, assistance with canning of food, and other household chores. At the same time, should strength and abilities fail, younger family members step in and provide whatever is needed, careful not to infringe upon the independence of the older parents.

The financial arrangements established between the generations to maintain economic independence of the elderly caught my attention. As a cau-

tionary note, only three families discussed their financial arrangements, so the generalizability of their comments is suspect; the specifics are noteworthy, in any event. When an older father is ready to "retire" from the farm, and subsequently move to the *doddy* house, he sells the farm and the current family house to the youngest son. ("Why the youngest son?" I asked. At the time the eldest son is ready to establish his own farm, the father is typically in his 40s and not ready to leave farming for the next 40 years. So, the father assists all but the youngest son in relocating to another farm.) As the youngest son is not in a financial position to buy the farm outright, the father provides the mortgage, approximating current interest rates, with the son repaying over time; this provides a consistent source of income to the parental generation. The fair market price of the farm is established by an independent assessor. In one case, the father stated that, as part of the land transfer, he and his wife are entitled to unlimited farm crops for personal consumption, and he pays his son a fixed sum each year for meat. The fathers help other sons in the financing of their farms. They repay the fathers over time, thus contributing to later life income.

In addition to the consistent income from the sale of the farm, most of the older fathers still earn an income. One repairs harnesses and horse collars, another assists his wife in production and marketing of cheese, a third is a woodworker, and a fourth serves as a broker for the community in purchasing horses for the carriages, receiving only a nominal fee for his help. It was clear to me that the income received is far less important than the desire to be a productive member of the community. One gentleman shared his financial "books" with me, which indicated that he earns less than \$1 per hour for his work; but it is important to him that he still has a work role, rather than just being an inactive burden on the community.

Faith in God is fundamental to the activities of the older parents as well as their children. Daily prayer and Bible reading are the norm. The religious beliefs and practices are not newly found, as the end of life approaches, but have been consistently verified by a lifetime of experiences. The willingness to do God's work while on this earth is a theme that I heard time and again. Their faith provides a strength to withstand cultural pressures for change in their lifestyle, a tolerance of people different from themselves, and an acceptance of their own frailties.

Given the desires of the parents to

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In this edition we announce the winner of the September contest, who is Susana Giesbrecht, of Stephenfield; she was selected from among 57 entries.

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

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remain independent for as long as possible, it would seem that there is little for the middle-aged offspring to provide their parents. This was reflected in the responses to the questionnaires which they returned. Generally, little help is given on a consistent basis for lengthy periods of time. It is not, however, because they are unwilling to give, but because the parents are not viewed by either generation as needing significant help. When the help is needed, however, it is easily forthcoming. Responses to the question "What do you feel is the most important service or support you provide for your parent?" included: "provide a home alongside our family; share and care; care when ill or sick;" "living side by side;" "companionship;" "just being there when they need us."

The motivation to provide care to older parents is simply ascribed to God's instruction to honour one's father and mother, the Golden Rule, or Jesus' love for us all. A more extensive response was provided by one son: "When I was a child, my parents took care of me, and saw to my needs, emotionally as well as others. Now when they are older, it is the turn of the child to help. Where there is mutual love, this is easy; but even where this is lacking, it is a Christian duty to take care of our older people."

As all of the older participants in this study were fairly healthy and independent, our results do not reflect what happens as the older person loses his or her health, and needs substantial care. I was told of a variety of family settings where extensive support was provided by the family. In one instance, the widowed mother was incontinent, and appeared to

have reached a stage of Alzheimer's disease which included continual wandering and periods of violence. The family had organized such that, for each day of the week, a different family member was responsible to move into the *daddy* house and care for the older mother. The family size was sufficiently large and nearby that this placed no undue strain on any individual family member. In instances where the family can no longer provide the needed care, a home has been established by some Old Order women to receive the elderly. In cases where hospitalization is needed, the individual must pay for the services, as the Old Order Mennonites are not participants in the Ontario Health Insurance Program (OHIP). The individual, family and church community collectively pay for the needed medical costs.

It can be seen that the family lives of Old Order Mennonites foster the independence and self-sufficiency of nuclear families. This can be seen in the domestic and economic roles of the families. As health and abilities become problematic, extended family members dutifully provide support to the extent that it is needed. Intergenerational interdependence, maintaining autonomy wherever possible, is the goal. It is only when the family and spiritual community are unable to provide support that assistance is sought from the larger society. Throughout these changes, faith and the desire to do God's work pervade.

John B. Bond, Jr., PhD, is a member of the Department of Family Studies, Faculty of Human Ecology, the University of Manitoba.

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Bethania maintains a long tradition of providing care to those who need it most

The Bethania Personal Care Home at 1045 Concordia Avenue in Winnipeg was built in 1970 but its history dates back to 1911, and it extends far beyond Manitoba's borders.

The Bethania story begins in Russia. In the late 1800's the Russian Mennonites, a group who had traditionally preferred to distance themselves from the political and social activities of the government, and did not want to become a burden to the state, saw the need to establish their own institutions to care for their widowed, poor, sick and elderly people.

In 1911 the first Bethania was built in the Chortitz colony. An inter-Mennonite effort, this Bethania was primarily a mental hospital. The administrators of the period believed that the most effective treatment of the mentally ill was physical labour. Hard work, it was thought, prevented patients from sinking deeper into their neuroses. So, as part of their therapy, patients were required to contribute daily to the overall functioning of the institution.

Although at first Bethania existed exclusively for Mennonite patients, after the Russian Revolution of 1917 the hospital was nationalized and it began admitting non-Mennonite persons. Bethania carried on another 10 years. It managed to survive the civil war, but in 1927 was destroyed by a flood.

Across the world a brother and sister

by Dana Mohr

team, Abram and Maria Vogt, had recently emigrated from Russia to Steinbach, Manitoba. Even in the new country, however, they recognized that the Mennonites must continue to care for themselves. In 1928, therefore, the duo founded a small, private maternity hospital. Nine years later, after a period of difficult times, it was converted into a home for the aged and subsequently prospered.

Meanwhile, in the early 1940's in Winnipeg it was becoming clear to Mennonite congregations that their city provided no care facilities for the needy with a specific German or Mennonite character. In 1945 the Mennonite Benevolent Society purchased over 100 acres of land on the west bank of the Red River, five miles north of Middlechurch, and renovated the farm buildings located on the land. On March 1 of that year Bethania at Parkdale opened its doors. Maria Vogt became the first director of nursing, a post she retained until her death in 1960.

As it was not financed in any way by the government, this Bethania also depended solely on donations and self-sufficiency. Its extensive farm provided homegrown vegetables and fresh eggs, meat and milk in such abundance to meet not only the needs of the residents, but also to sell at the local markets.

This Bethania cared for the invalid and the elderly and had a maximum capacity of 82 people. As with its sister institution in Russia, it opened its doors to all religious groups. It also shared the conviction that manual labour, for those who were able, contributed to a sense of well-being. As a result, many of the more active residents worked around the home and the farm.

At the time most care institutions did not regularly enjoy the services of a visiting doctor. Bethania, on the other hand, arranged medical services once a week, breaking new ground for high standards of medical attention. To this day Bethania has continued to lead the way in many aspects of the personal care industry.

In the 1960's, after a series of unsuccessful years, the farm aspect of Bethania was abandoned, and in 1966 a decision was made to relocate. After four years of planning and preparation, today's Bethania was established on 3.3 acres of land at 1045 Concordia Avenue.

Bethania's current administrator, Helmut Epp, has been involved with the institution for 13 years. He says the decision to relocate was based on four main factors: the buildings were becoming increasingly inadequate to meet the needs of the community; the farm operation was no longer viable; the out-of-the-city location was inconvenient for most staff; and the Concordia hospital,



The outside view of the chapel.



with which Bethania shares a strong religious and philosophical bond, was planning a move. It was decided that the two facilities would share land, and if possible, facilities. Today the two are located side-by-side, and do in fact work in cooperation with one another.

Epp explains that the relation between Bethania and Concordia Hospital "at this point is primarily a historical relationship. There aren't any formal ties as such and there is nothing in the by-law that assures any cross membership in the boards." But he adds the board of Bethania and of Concordia draw their members from the Mennonite Benevolent Society, and as such, "share a common influence base." Although no formal agreement has been struck, Epp says, "in practice there are shared service relationships, such as a shared chaplain, common purchasing, shared labtime." He continues, "I have often wondered if there ought to be a plan to bring the two facilities together in a formal sense, but it hasn't been pursued in any concrete way. Some day it is an idea that ought to be tested out."

Since its re-location in 1970 Bethania, because of its fresh approach and high standards has been recognized as a leader amongst personal care homes. Chairman of the Board, Jack Loepp, says there are many guiding principles behind the successful operation of Bethania, such as, "Bear ye another's burdens...that's something we have to live up to." The home must also live up to the expectations of the residents, their families, the board, and the community. Everyone expects the highest level of care, and it is obvious even to the casual observer that all efforts are taken to ensure Bethania is every bit a "home."

The atmosphere is openly warm and friendly; the decor is comfortable and very similar to what you would find in your own home. But it is the little things which, as they say, make a house a home, and Bethania has overlooked no detail. Families and friends are encouraged to visit at any time throughout the day and to participate in activities. A kitchen/dining area has been set up for special family celebrations. Patients all enjoy private rooms and have the liberty to decorate their space any way they wish. Residents, should they desire, even have the option of tending a small, personal garden plot; the plots have been elevated so that wheelchair-bound patients can exercise their green thumbs as well. Attention to detail is obvious everywhere.

One detail which is of great importance to a number of residents is the fact that they are living in Mennonite sur-

roundings. Epp believes Bethania is unique, "in the very fact that we accept that our ethnicity is worth recognizing. There is an awareness of the staff that these people have a certain history. They are sensitive to what it means to the residents when there is some one they can relate to in terms of language, common history, frame of reference. Today language is one of the big reasons people come here. We try very hard to have German capabilities on all levels of the staff. As a result other Germanic groups also look to Bethania as an alternative. We think we have that role to play for many years to come."

Epp points out that Bethania has never wanted to be an exclusive enclave of people of Mennonite background. Rather, he would prefer it be seen as a resource by the community. "It is generally recognized by our people that Bethania is the place to look for when they are in need. It's a major decision to have people leave home and give up their independence. To soften the blow, if they can have familiar things offered, it makes it easier for them. Ethnicity is an important consideration when faced with that decision."

According to Loepp, "A lot of people out there are totally unaware of how the system works and they come to us in a panic situation." Panicked persons are counselled and immediately put at ease; however, they often must wait some time before a room becomes available for their loved one. Bethania, as with all similar institutions, has always been faced with long waiting lists as the elderly population continues to grow. One means to alleviate the problem was the addition, in 1987, of a new wing containing 50 beds. And, another first, a distinct chapel area for holding regular religious services. "The chapel has a practical and symbolic meaning for us. The spiritual side of care has always been important. But in a practical sense it was hard to carry out because we didn't have a place set aside to represent that."

Bethania is still struggling with the question of how to continue to keep up with the waiting list. "In general," Epp says, "There's a great philosophical debate on how best to meet the needs of the elderly. Canada is looking to the European experience because they had to deal with it first. And they look to us because we have more resources. We have to be cautious about building more institutions because living in these is not necessarily the most humane solution."

Instead, he believes, a balance should be struck between having sufficient institutional care available and developing services to maintain the elderly in the



community as long as possible. To this end, Bethania became the first nursing home to implement a community outreach program. Also in the final stages is an elderly persons facility on the same grounds, Bethania Haus, which will house people who require minimal support services. It is hoped that this, and facilities like it, will be able to delay admissions to higher level care institutions.

Bethania has grown tremendously over the years and it will continue to grow. The board will always strive to develop new services to benefit the elderly. Perhaps some day the institution will again relocate. But one thing will always remain constant -- the commitment to caring, to the maximum of everyone's ability, for all the residents of the home.

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The 50-suite addition to Bethania.

It's is definitely an interesting time to be part of the 'older' generation

by Dana Mohr

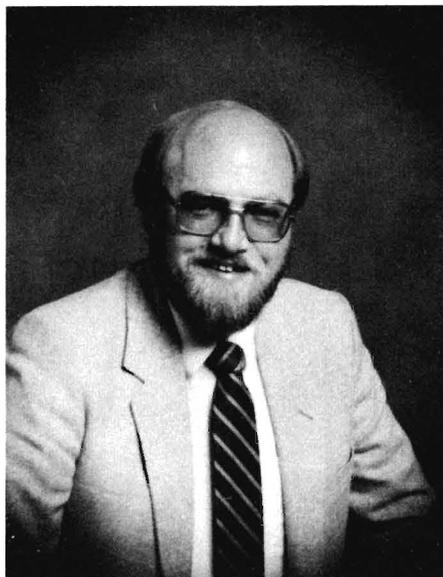
"The 'old, old population' is growing older, and more care is needed. The burden of care usually falls on the shoulders of the family, particularly the women. Mechanisms and systems must be looked at to enable the caregivers to provide appropriate care in the future."

Support for the caregivers of the frail elderly, says Cal Zacharias, project manager at the National Advisory Council on Aging (NACA), is a growing concern in the field of aging. It is just one of the many issues NACA has targeted for future consideration.

In 1980, in the absence of any similar body at the national level working to address the needs of Canada's rapidly increasing elderly population, the national council was established. Its mandate is to assist and advise the Minister of National Health and Welfare, Jake Epp, on all matters concerning the quality of life of our country's senior citizens. With the recent appointment of George Hees as Minister of State for Seniors, NACA now provides policy advice to both ministers, although it continues to report directly to Mr. Epp.

As project manager, Zacharias is primarily responsible for the co-ordination of the liaison and networking activities of the council members. In the provinces one, but sometimes several, members work on a regional level by directly contacting provincial groups, individual organizations, and concerned citizens in order to assess their needs and views. Zacharias' work is to initiate and maintain a two-way dialogue between the concerned parties. He ensures that seniors' groups receive all relevant information regarding the council's activities, and those of other federal initiatives, and in return, this liaison process provides NACA with the means to assess the concerns of seniors, and eventually pass the information along to the ministers.

At present NACA has chosen two major issues to address on a priority basis. The first, a study of barriers to independent living, was initiated to identify ways in which these barriers could be lessened, or better, overcome. To this end, NACA has distributed some 25,000 surveys



Calvin Zacharias

across Canada to seniors and professionals working in the field. By the end of 1988, a final assessment of the data will be completed and a report prepared and disseminated as widely as possible.

The second issue, says Zacharias, is "the promotion of education in aging and the inclusion of gerontological content at all levels of the school curricula." He adds that, "all persons should be encouraged to continue learning," and therefore NACA is also stressing the concept of lifelong learning.

NACA, an advisory body, is not the only government organization working to ensure a positive lifestyle of Canada's golden agers. New Horizons is a funding program which provides monies directly to seniors' organizations, allowing them to carry out expressed activities meeting a need in the elderly population or the community in general.

Prior to his term with NACA, "I'm on a one year loan to NACA," Zacharias worked for eight years as New Horizons' regional manager for Manitoba and Northwest Territories, and for three years as a field officer. Established in 1971, to date New Horizons funds in accordance with two main criteria, first, 70 per cent of the project directors of the groups requesting money must be over the age of 60 and retired. "There is some provision

for the inclusion and involvement of younger persons," concedes Zacharias. The second criterion: the projects must respond to an identified need in the community.

As with NACA, New Horizons has identified specific priority areas. They are: to encourage development of service-oriented projects; to provide funding to strengthen seniors' organizations and leadership skills; to fund projects to hard-to-reach seniors — those seniors who are isolated by virtue of language, geography or income; and finally, to encourage seniors to undertake projects addressing the issue of elder abuse.

New Horizons has allocated 12 million dollars for distribution across Canada during the current fiscal year. Grants are administered by regional offices, and maximum funding available for any given project is \$50,000. Zacharias estimates, however, "the average is much less than that. There's been a fairly low cost per project. Historically the average has been from \$5 to \$7,000." While the main emphasis of the funding is to cover the expenses of start-up costs, existing groups who are initiating a new activity may also apply.

Although Zacharias' experience in the field of aging is vast, he admits it was not his initial career interest — in university he studied political science and history. Hardly the traditional lead-in to a career in gerontology. Instead, he says, "I fell into the field and grew to love it. I drifted into it by virtue of being employed by the federal government. At that point I didn't know much about the field. But once I started I became very involved and enthusiastic." To prepare himself more thoroughly for his new vocation Zacharias studied at the University of Manitoba to receive an Advanced Certificate in Gerontology.

Prior to his appointment with New Horizons, most of Zacharias' work experience had been in community development and the delivery of social service programs. In fact, earlier in his career, he spent two years (1967-68) working with the Mennonite Central Committee in Africa. His time was spent in Zaire as an assistant manager of a church-run hostel,

and later in Burundi, as the director of a relief and development program sponsored by the MCC, the National Council of Churches and the World Relief Commission.

Concerning his work today, Zacharias feels Canada's senior citizens are living in an era unlike any other. "They are living a lifestyle that hasn't been available to seniors in the past...it's an interesting generation to be in." While he admits, "in the 70's more so than in any other decade there was a tremendous growth of programs and services for seniors, you must never lose sight of the fact that there are still tremendous needs."

Canada's changing demographics — today our population of seniors totals 11 per cent, in 2000 a figure of 18 per cent is

projected, and by the year 2015, it is thought that one quarter of our population will be over the age of 65 — will shape future programs and services. "Speaking personally," Zacharias admits, "I'm concerned whether resources will be planned and allocated in such a way to meet this large segment of the population...Again, I'm guessing; I think the resources will be there; it's a question of whether we will address the issues such as housing, and whether the pension system will be able to accommodate itself."

From his vicarious experiences in aging, Zacharias concludes that, "On the one hand I feel very positive about aging. I've learned an awful lot. There's an advantage to working in the field. You learn a lesson from people who have

demonstrated successful aging."

Thanks to initiatives such as NACA and New Horizons, in the future Canada can expect to see an increasing proportion of its elderly demonstrating "successful aging" and enjoying the quality of life they so rightly deserve. **mm**

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LOOKING OVER THE PRAIRIE

Of modern amenities, and MCC sales

by Vic Penner

"Never say never," she announces one night as eight of us are enjoying a late dinner in the Gull Harbour Resort dining room on Hecla Island. Most of us present are retired and we're at Hecla for some golf and relaxation, although for me the two don't always go together, especially when my score has ballooned to 100 and there are still two holes to play. But that isn't what this story is about.

While I am feeding on fresh pickerel supposedly pulled from the cool waters of Lake Winnipeg only hours earlier, she seems bent on eating crow.

"I used to say we would never — got that? Never! have TV in our cottage at the lake. Nor a telephone. Nor indoor plumbing. And you know what? Now we have them all.

"The other day I looked out to see what Will was doing," she continued, (any names used here are fictitious for the protection of the guilty) "and there he was up in a tree, at least 20 feet up in this tree with a loop of wire, trying to set up an antenna for a television. He shouldn't do that because of his health and everything. Andy, anyway, we shouldn't even have TV at the cottage. It takes away all the rustic atmosphere, don't you think?"

"We also used to go to the lake to get away from phone calls. Now we get them there too. But now that we're retired it is nice to be at the lake and still be able to call up the children any time. We used to all be at the cottage together but now they're married and busy with jobs and family, so I must admit it's nice to have the phone."

She also described how the outdoor toilet had once held a certain kind of romance. But now that most of us in the

group no longer feel titillated by midnight treks to a two-holer in the bush, she forgoes a description of how that broken "never" has changed their lives.

Being a news addict myself, I understand Will's need to get into that tree with his antenna. I can't imagine life without electronic and print news. I start the day with three hours of Information Radio, watch Midday at noon, followed at 6 by 24 Hours. Then I take a break and read the daily newspaper and any weeklies that may have arrived. At 10 o'clock it's time for The National followed by The Journal. At 11 I turn to CTV News for a final shot of doom and gloom before midnight. Then, strangely enough, I sleep like a baby.

"So how many stations can you pull in with that loop of wire in the tree?" I inquire.

"None," she says.

"Yes we do," he protests. "We get one. I just don't know which one. So far the picture is a little fuzzy and I can't read the call letters."

On the only foggy Saturday in September Olly and I finally make it to the Mennonite Stampede a.k.a. MCC Relief Auction Sale.

Held on the Morris Big M Stampede grounds, the sale has been attracting big crowds for several years. The size of the crowd this Saturday astonishes us. All available parking space on the grounds seems to be taken as we approach the place, and vehicles are parked along the highway into town and along the main street just like on those July days each summer when clowns and cowboys and bucking broncos vie for applause at Canada's second largest rodeo.

But on this day there is no clowning and the only bucks in evidence are those passing into the coffers of MCC Relief.

As on all occasions when Mennonites gather in fairly large numbers these days, mountains of *vereniki* are being served to Mennonites and non-Mennonites alike. Just as the sun burns off the last bit of fog, we join a long line of jabbering would-be diners (Low German is conspicuously absent) to wait our turn to ingest the *plat-ter-of-the-day*; namely, *vereniki* with cream gravy, farmer sausage, a bun, pie, and coffee. I am glad nobody is calling *vereniki* perogies this day even though I am told that dozens of Hunky Bill's Perogy Makers were employed in their manufacture.

At a plywood table in one of the smaller exhibition sheds, we join another retired couple, also on their first pilgrimage to the annual MCC sale. He identifies himself as the brother of, cousin of, and uncle of a variety of well and lesser known Mennonite businessmen in southern Manitoba.

By the time we have demolished five *vereniki* each, liberal chunks of sausage, buns, a piece of lemon pie for him and a piece of apple pie for me, we have discovered a kinship. Not in bloodlines, but in the philosophy of farming. He has been a farmer all his life, and although I have never been a bona fide farmer except for four summers spent on my sister's farm between school terms, that has never kept me from having some pretty definite ideas about how farming should be done.

So it is good to find my well-related friend also believes in the sanctity of the mixed family farm, the abandonment of which is causing a lot of hardship among young farmers today. We agree that greed is at the root of many farm bankruptcies these days — greed that has resulted in excessive borrowing to fuel attempts at producing unnaturally big crops.

My newfound friend claims that he has always believed that small is beautiful. During his lifetime as a farmer he has worked hard, accumulated 400 acres of land (we don't understand hectares) and is debt-free. He deplores the excessive use of chemicals, be they fertilizers, herbicides or insecticides. To all this I nod my agreement as I inhale lukewarm coffee.

"Nice guy," I tell my wife as we trot off to the craft tables.

"Who was that?" she asks.

"I don't know his name, but his nephew or brother — or maybe it's his cousin — is the manager of the Winkler co-op store."

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OBSERVED ALONG THE WAY

One vote for a perfect fall, with some acknowledgement of the election

by Roy Vogt

By the time you read this the snow may be falling, but I think we can all agree that we can look back on a perfect fall. These words are written shortly after the Thanksgiving weekend, just as the last leaves are falling from trees that never looked more glorious. Winter can now do its worst, and in a world where Murphy's Law is operative it probably will.

The buildup to a national election has claimed much of our attention in the past few months. People's political convictions are grooved into party lines, and over time most people develop a strong loyalty to a particular party. It seems that most of us have a deep need to belong to a particular group, and once we have made that decision we have an equally great need to defend it. By attracting us to personalities more than to parties the television screen has the power to make us waver in our party loyalties. It also favors personalities over issues. However, the important issue of bilateral free trade with the United States has put more content into this election than in many previous ones.

Unfortunately the issue itself is so complex, and contains so many unknowns, that emotion and personality inevitably take over. I think there are few persons, and certainly few economists, who question the long-run benefits of free trade with other nations. Canada has been freeing its trade for decades, with little opposition from the population. However, legitimate questions can be raised about the agreement that our government wants to finalize with the United States. First, despite the preparatory work, it was, in the end, a rush job. Many significant items are badly defined, producing seriously conflicting opinions even among experts who have tried hard to understand it. Second, it is much more than a free trade deal. It exposes the Canadian economy to American intervention that previous trade agreements never envisaged. Our participation in international trade agreements permitted us to trade more freely with other



nations without compromising our control over our resources or threatening some of our basic social programs. Third, I have been dismayed at the approach used by the government to "sell" this deal to us. Simon Riesman's emotional outbursts during and after the negotiations have not inspired much confidence in the rationality of the deal, and John Crosbie's treatment of all critics as children who must be shamed into obedience deserves nothing but contempt.

Both this government and past Canadian governments have proven capable of moving Canada gradually but surely into a freer trade environment. I consider it unfortunate that due to what appears to have been a sudden burst of misplaced inspiration the leadership of the current government has seen fit to cajole us into the acceptance of a document that was hastily conceived, badly defined, and tries to do infinitely more (and with greater danger) than it pretends.

Having voiced my personal opinion on this issue—which, of course, will have absolutely no effect on the outcome of the election — I must confess that when my ballot is cast it will be influenced more by the personal integrity of a particular candidate than by any particular position. One of the candidates in our riding is a young lawyer who personally, and with great conviction, defended the establishment of a group home for mentally handicapped adults in a residence that we owned a few years ago. He will undoubtedly have our vote now. I would also like to be able to vote for someone like Len Sawatsky, in the St. James riding, who in several personal meetings has greatly impressed me with the quality and strength of his convictions. Unfortunately, it seems that neither of these choices stands a great chance of winning. It appears that some of us are doomed to lose in politics much of the time. If the truth be told, the political leader I most admire in our time is Robert Stanfield. After meeting him two decades ago, and after reading a number of his position

papers, I became convinced that he would make an outstanding prime minister. He represented the best of 19th century Liberalism and 20th century Conservatism — the type of political tradition that seems to be resurfacing in such disparate politicians as Joe Clark and Ed Broadbent. Unfortunately it does not appear to be a very winning tradition today. It is characterized by deeply held personal convictions which are not readily sold for votes in the political market place, and which include a limited but important and compassionate role for government, a deep distrust of power based on wealth, and a core of righteous anger easily aroused by injustice.

A number of other events fortunately take our minds off the election. Nothing helps to focus the mind so much as a bout of renovation fever in the home. We love the house we live in: it has a small living room, well lived in, a spacious rec room, and is within walking distance of work. But nothing is perfect. For example, the bathroom which our guests must use has a door into our bedroom — embarrassing to those guests who wonder whether there is someone in our bedroom waiting to pounce through the door into the bathroom while they are using it. A new clothes closet and tub also seem to be in order. The list of necessary changes grows longer the more we contemplate it. In the end we calculate that it will take about \$10,000 to bring our house up to snuff. Our illusions are short lived. The estimates range from \$14,000 to \$21,000. It seems that prices have gone up since we undertook our last renovations, in another house, 20 years ago. We take the lowest estimate, scale it down a bit, and bite the bullet. Over a meal of tomato soup and crackers that evening we ruefully conclude that we just weren't destined to ever build up a savings account, let alone pay off our mortgage. The Credit Union seems to like it that way.

Now that I possibly have your sympathy I must say something about our delightful trip to Edmonton over the Thanksgiving Weekend. As our grandchildren rush up to greet us in the Edmonton Airport we know that we have entered the best of all possible worlds. They don't even ask whether we have brought them any gifts. It is also a pleasure to see their patient and competent mother again. Their father is in the midst of a hockey game, and we

arrive at the Northlands Arena in time to see the last two periods of the first Oiler game of the year, against the New York Islanders. Even without the Great One the Oilers are impressive. The next day, Saturday, is beautiful, and we spend much of it walking with the whole family through the deep valley that cuts through much of the city.

That evening we have dinner at a fund-raising festival for medical research, sponsored by the Oilers and the Eskimos. Unfortunately we just miss a pie throwing contest, in which disgruntled Oiler fans, for about \$15 a shot, can bury the face of Peter Pocklington in whipped cream and lemon. Actually it seems like a good tactic on his part to absorb the wrath of Edmonton fans in such a tasty way.

Fans do not dispute Pocklington's right to do what he did in trading Gretzky to Los Angeles. They are angry at the devious way in which he did it, and, as one observed to us, people with class don't necessarily do what they have the right to do. In people with class loyalty sometimes takes precedence over money. Sunday evening the Oilers eke out a close decision over the Winnipeg Jets. We sit in the midst of our son-in-law's family and since they have also provided the tickets we decide beforehand that we had better not let our emotions show when the Jets score a goal. However, when the Jets open the scoring our youngest daughter, with all the integrity of youth, jumps up spontaneously and cheers. My wife and I can't keep from grinning. We try to explain to the Oiler fans around us that we are merely showing some sympathy for the underdog. Later, as the Oilers score and eventually take the lead we feign applause. Still later I feel somewhat guilty as we sit among the Oiler players and share their post-game sandwiches. As my wife and I go to the sandwich table for our third helping we carefully turn our back to the players, so that they can see the Oiler logo on the back of our sweaters. Only a few spot the equally prominent Jet logo on the front of the sweaters. A little bit of hypocrisy goes a long way.

The next day the extended family gets together for a delicious Thanksgiving dinner. Watching all the children on the yard assures me, as an economist, that the economy is not about to go into a major decline. A population explosion seems to be taking place, providing a strong base for ongoing consumer demand. It should also provide a good tax base for those of us who hope to retire on government pensions in the next few decades.

Back in Winnipeg there are more than

enough activities to keep us on our toes. We particularly enjoy a series of Sunday evening lectures at the University of Manitoba by Prof. Gordon Harland of the religion department, on the social dimensions of the Christian Gospel. I am impressed that more than 200 persons attend most of these lectures, and they are well rewarded. In my opinion there is still almost nothing as stimulating as a thoughtful, well-prepared paper on a subject which can illuminate our human condition.

Other evenings also provide such stimulation. The Prairie Theatre Exchange performance of the play, *My Memories of You*, features themes and dialogue which course through our minds for many days afterwards. Equally exciting is a violin concerto by the young Russian artist, Viktoria Mullova, at one of the opening performances of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra. Music of this calibre has the power, at least momentarily, to

dispel all doubts that one might have about the kind of intentions that lie behind our universe. The coming Christmas season surely promises more of the same, and I hope that we will all be blessed by it.

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Mennonites never abandoned "mission work" throughout their years in Russia

by Harry Loewen

There is a persistent misconception that Mennonites promised the Russian government, in exchange for special privileges, that they would not evangelize or do mission work among the Russian people. Some go as far as to state that because Mennonites in Russia failed to take the Gospel to Russians, God punished them during and after the Revolution of 1917.

What are the historical facts with regard to the Mennonites and evangelism among the Russian population? The following brief comments might help to explain what really happened between the time of Mennonite migration to Russia and the end of Russian-Mennonite communal life in that country during the First World War.

Long before Mennonites in Prussia even thought of emigrating to Russia, the Russian empress Catherine II in 1763 issued a manifesto in which she invited West-European people to settle in the vast regions of her empire. To attract settlers Catherine announced liberal offers, including free land, complete freedom of religion, language and educational rights, exemption from military service and other privileges. It should be added that these offers were extended to all would-be settlers, not just Mennonites.

The manifesto of 1763 included one prohibition: the newcomers to Russia were not to proselytize or evangelize among the Russian-Orthodox population. However, mission work among Mohammedans and other non-Christian religious groups was permitted. This law against religious recruiting among mem-

bers of the state church was upheld and often enforced until the end of the Tsarist regime in 1917.

The first Prussian Mennonites settled in Russia in 1789. These early settlers and those Mennonites who came to Russia later were never asked to promise (let alone sign) that they would abstain from doing mission work among the Russians. There is some reason to believe that many among the early Mennonite settlers did not even know about the prohibition clause in the 1763 manifesto. During these pioneer years the Mennonites were more concerned with establishing themselves economically and socially than with mission work among their non-Mennonite neighbors outside their colonies. Moreover, the privileges which were extended to the Mennonites in written form in 1800 do not contain a single word about religious propaganda or evangelism. It was much later, in the second half of the nineteenth century, that the Russian Mennonites began to think about evangelism and their responsibility toward persons of other faiths.

In *The Mennonite Brotherhood in Russia* (1911), P. M. Friesen addresses the question of mission work in Russia. Quoting from Russian-Mennonite resolutions and other documents, he writes as follows: "Christ's command: 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,' etc., we understand to mean that every Christian is obligated to spread the truth of the Christian faith....

"However, we abstain from any active propaganda among members of other Christian denominations, whether this is

understood as imposing our distinctive teachings on others...or as agitating by extolling our teaching at the expense of other Christian teachings coupled with a defamation of the latter....

"The Mennonites see the 'only holy, universal Christian church, the communion of saints' and the Christian people of all groups, churches, denominations and communions of Christendom — who...preserve the faith in Christ, the Redeemer. The fullness of truth is in the common possession of all — with differing degrees of their personal perfection or imperfection....

"Therefore, any propaganda among Christians of other denominations...is far from our minds. Only when someone of another faith, out of his own mature conviction, desires to join our fellowship, we can for conscience's sake not deny his admission" (pp.630,635-636).

Allowing for the religious-social context in which Friesen wrote and his desire to portray the Russian Mennonites as law-abiding and loyal citizens, these statements agreed to by the Russian Mennonites express a theological maturity seldom found elsewhere at the time. It is also significant that Friesen himself was concerned about extending the Gospel to fellow Russians, no doubt in the spirit expressed in the above quotations.

In spite of the official prohibition against propagandizing and proselytizing among Russian-Orthodox people, Mennonites found occasion to engage in evangelism in the second half of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth. In addition to supporting foreign

missions conducted by the Dutch Mennonites and others, the Russian Mennonites began to evangelize among the Russian population, even though this was officially forbidden.

Harold S. Bender in an article on "evangelism" in the *Mennonite Encyclopedia* lists several Mennonite evangelists and mission efforts in Tsarist Russia. According to Bender, "the first recorded evangelistic outreach by a Mennonite among the Russian people was that by Johann J. Wieler (1839-89). Wieler had a good knowledge of Russian and German, serving first as a teacher in the Halbstadt Zentralschule 1879-83. He left teaching to become an itinerant evangelist and as such worked with other Russian Christians among the Russian people. Because of his evangelistic activity he was banished from Russia. He went to Rumania and there continued in evangelistic work, eventually establishing a congregation there. (There is a significant and interesting article on Johann Wieler published by Lawrence Klippenstein in the *Journal of Mennonite Studies*, Vol. 5, 1987, pp. 44-60).

Adolf Reimer was another Russian Mennonite who dedicated himself and his talents to evangelism among the Russian people about 1906. Reimer worked intensely throughout Russia, went as far as St. Petersburg where he even reached the circles of the pietistic nobility, and preached on the streets of that city. He edited a Russian devotional calendar which had extensive circulation. Reimer died of typhus in 1924. (For an interesting account of Reimer's life and work, see H. H. Goossen, *Adolf Reimer, ein treuer Bote Jesu Christi unter Deutschen und Russen [1960]*.)

A. H. Unruh, who later came to Canada and became a teacher at the Mennonite Brethren Bible College in Winnipeg, was also engaged in evangelistic work among the Russian people before 1914 and was on this account imprisoned for a short period. He founded a Bible school at Tchongrav in the Crimea which was to prepare evangelists and church workers.

The Mennonite Brethren began a public mission work among the Russians about 1905. The work had to be stopped, however, because of opposition from the government. Mennonites nevertheless continued to support native Russian and Ukrainian evangelists. Peter Wiens, the father of the well-known Georgi Vins, for example, after his studies in Germany served the Ukrainian Baptists with great success. Because of his evangelistic work he was arrested and exiled to Siberia in 1911.

There were other evangelistic efforts by Mennonites in pre-First World War Russia which can only be mentioned here. For example, Mennonite publishing efforts through the publishing house "Raduga" at Halbstadt and work by such Mennonite evangelists as Jakob Hein, Johann J. Peters and others produced converts and showed generally favorable results. Also the brief activity of the Tent Evangelism in Russia, led by Jakob J. Dyck (1890-1919), should be mentioned as a valiant attempt to bring the Gospel to non-Mennonites.

Jakob Kroeker (1871-1948), according to Bender, was "one of the ablest preachers produced by the Russian Mennonites." He was trained in Hamburg, Germany, became an itinerant minister in Russia, and travelled widely in the interest of evangelism among the Russian people. When he moved to Germany in 1910 he promoted evangelism in Russia through *Licht dem Osten (Light to the East)*. This organization trained and sent out workers, published a Bible concordance in Russian, and distributed Christian literature among Russians.

Mennonite missionary activity in Russia was no doubt in its beginning stages, as it was among other European Mennonites at that time. The reasons for this modest missionary activity among European Mennonites have been stated by Harold S. Bender. He writes: "Two factors have contributed to inhibit the development of evangelism among the Mennonites of Europe: 1) the tradition of withdrawal and introversion plus a certain amount, no doubt, of inferiority feel-

ing, the *Stillen im Lande* attitude, and 2) the immobility and static condition of European religious attitudes. Because of the deeply set cultural patterns, the feeling in Europe is widespread that one is born into a religious group and ought not to change, and ought not to be solicited to change, even though the religious connections may be very tenuous and remote" (ME II, 271).

Bender is no doubt correct in his analysis, but what holds true for European Mennonites during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, applies to the American Mennonites during the same period as well. A comparison of evangelism and mission work between the Russian and American Mennonites of the period in question, would no doubt find that the American Mennonites did not surpass their Russian-Mennonite brethren in this regard. In fact, in view of the difficulties Russian Mennonites encountered in their evangelistic efforts among Russian people, it is surprising that they were able to accomplish as much as they did. mm

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Mennonite place names have eye for beauty but *Chortitz* is uniquely Mennonite

by Victor Peters

Mennonites, it has been said, lack sensitivity for beauty. Their homes and churches are more functional than pleasing to the eye. But their place names, scattered as they are in Russia, Canada, Mexico, Paraguay or Bolivia, are beautiful.

We have any number of Mennonite villages in southern Manitoba with colorful names like: Blumenort (Place of Flowers), Gruenthal (Green Dale or Valley), Schoenhorst (Beautiful Thicket), Schoenwiese (Lovely Meadow), Rosengart (Garden of Roses), and so on. Compare them to some of the prosaic place names we have in Germany or England, where people live in places like Schweinfurt (Hog Crossing), Oxford (Ox Crossing) or Swinton (Swine Town).

Most Mennonite place names are German and it is a characteristic of that language that their meaning is self-explanatory. There are a few exceptions, like *Osterwick*. In Russia we had a village named Osterwick, and in Manitoba we have an Osterwick south of Winkler and a district by that name east of Niverville. The German *Ost* and *Ostern* have the English equivalent of *east* and *Easter*, which have a reference to *dawn*, or "where the light comes from." In Old German *wick* means a row of dwellings, or a village. Hence *Osterwick* means *Eastern Village*. The English use the same suffix in place names like Warwick, or in a slightly changed form as in Greenwich.

But the most *Mennonite* place name of all is *Chortitz* or *Chortitza*, a name which is derived from a Russian word. The first Mennonite settlement in Russia, the Old Colony, was named Chortitz and centered around the village of the same name. The first Mennonite church congregation in Russia, with a distinguished list of elders, was also named Chortitza.

Once the Mennonites emigrated from Russia to Manitoba they named two vil-

lages Chortitz, one in the West Reserve, about five miles south of the present town of Winkler, and another located some distance west of Steinbach. Before the turn of the century the Berghthaler church east of the Red River took the name Chortitz Mennonite Church because Elder Gerhard Wiebe lived in the village of Chortitz.

According to Johann G. Rempel the word *Chortitz* in Russian means a female greyhound. Rempel explains that in the region where the Mennonites first settled in Russia, east of the Dnieper, that great river had three small tributaries winding through the Mennonite colony. These slim creeks, fast-flowing in spring, had been named after a greyhound, that sleek breed of dog who, once in pursuit of a game, anticipates every turn of her prey. In other words, the three creeks twisted and turned like a greyhound in pursuit. These shallow creeks were named Upper Chortitz, Chortitza and Lower Chortitza.

The creek Lower Chortitza was on the southern extremity of the Mennonite settlement. In 1803 a Mennonite village was begun where this creek entered the Dnieper River, and it was called Lower Chortitza (in German: Nieder Chortitza, in Russian: Nizhnii Chortitza). Johann Rempel can be trusted to have his facts straight. He was born in Lower Chortitza, became a teacher in that village and later was elected a minister there. In Canada he served many years as the secretary of the General Conference and succeeded David Toews as the elder of the Rosenort congregation in Saskatchewan. Dr. David Rempel, the California historian, is his younger brother.

Johann Rempel was a many-faceted man and one of his interests was history. Among his numerous publications there is a booklet written as a tribute to his native village, *Mein Heimatdorf Nieder Chortitza*, which was published in Ros-

thern. In it he begins his story with a bright Sunday morning, when he returned home on foot from the neighboring village of Burwalde, where he had preached the morning sermon. It was the practice of the ministers to exchange pulpits to provide a little variety to their listeners.

Rempel begins his account in the year 1921 and turns quite poetic as he describes how he stopped briefly at the *Grosse Schanze* (Great Mound), which stood on the land "belonging to our neighbour." That "neighbour" were my mother's parents. Some years after Rempel had emigrated to Canada my uncle and I were cultivating the land around the Great Mound, where we had planted several acres of watermelons. The Great Mound was no ordinary hill. It was a Scythian kurgan, or burial site, and was marked for historical preservation. The Scythians, those ancient warriors in Russia, buried their chiefs by heaping earth on them. These mounds were thus man-made pyramids and contained, besides the dead chief weaponry, dead horses, food, even followers and women. Horses and people were killed so that the chief, when he reached his nirvana, would not be lonely and had a means of transportation to move about.

Excavations have been undertaken at a number of these mounds, and Rempel was intimately acquainted with some of these artifacts, but he does not mention this in his account. Later, when I was teaching at Horndean, Rempel visited us on occasion, and we would spend late hours talking about Scythian treasures, the Cossacks who had resided on the Chortitza island, the Dnieper rapids, and the flooding caused by the Lower Chortitza. Rempel was an excellent storyteller who retained a deep-seated attachment to the village and the people where he was born. **mm**



SHARING

our loaves and fishes

Like the child who shared his lunch, we too can share our gifts, small or large, with people around the world. We invite you to choose an MCC project for Thanksgiving or Christmas giving:

• In Sudan, many church leaders have not had the chance to formally study the Bible. Your gift of any amount will go toward \$2,000 needed to send two people to a theology class at a seminary in Nairobi.

• Next summer MCC Canada will sponsor gardeners to help Native people grow vegetables. \$10 buys 100 lbs. (45 kg) of potato seed. \$1,400 supports one volunteer for the summer.

• Malindza Reception Centre in Swaziland welcomes refugees from Mozambique. Malnourished children receive an egg in addition to daily milk and porridge for breakfast. \$1 buys eggs for one child for a month.

• The Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt provides child care for working parents in low income communities. MCC has pledged \$3,750 to these centers. Help MCC meet its pledge.

• Local ag extentionists work with poor farmers in Bangladesh, seeking new sources of income from limited land. \$12 provides extension services to one farmer for one year.

• Fatherless children receive one meal a day in a church feeding program in La Pista, Guatemala. 10¢ provides one meal. \$38.50 provides a daily meal for one child for a year.

• In Bolivia many families cannot afford school supplies. \$1 buys a notebook, pen and pencil for a student. \$7 buys a complete school kit with notebooks, pens, pencils, an eraser and a reader.

• The elderly poor may be hungry and lonely. In Atlanta, Ga., an MCCer takes homebound elderly people shopping and to the doctor and helps with difficult household tasks. \$20 supports this friend to the elderly for one day; \$7,200, for a year.



**Mennonite
Central
Committee**

**Mennonite Central
Committee and MCC U.S.**
21 South 12th Street
Box M
Akron, PA 17501

MCC Canada
134 Plaza Drive
Winnipeg, MB R3T 5K9

MANITOBA NEWS

John Warkentin, professor of geography at York University, was the 1988 winner of the Massey Medal of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society. Born in Manitoba, and a graduate of the universities of Manitoba and Toronto, Dr. Warkentin is a historical geographer with a special interest in the development of settlement in Canada.

Several Manitoba young people began ten-month MCC Serve and Learn Together (SALT) assignments in September. **Rochele Huebner**; **Betty Pries** and **Paul Toews**, all graduates of Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, will serve in Stouffville, Ontario, together with **Connie Friesen** of Alexander and **Lori Zacharias** of Gretna. **Daryl Loeppky** of Springstein, **Cheryl Wiebe** of Carman and **Marlee Wiebe** of Winkler will serve in Vancouver.

Three Manitobans will be spending one year overseas as part of the MCC Intermento program. **Teresa Wiens** of Grunthal will be in Kraainem, Belgium; **Karen Driedger** of Altona will be in Karlsruhe, West Germany; **Robert Penner** of Winnipeg will be in Gomaringen, West Germany.

Triple E Canada of Winkler and its employees' association were presented with a gold award for labour-management co-operation during the Canada Awards for Business Excellence ceremonies held in Ottawa in September.

The seventh annual **MCC Manitoba Auction Sale** raised a total of \$105,000 at the Morris Stampede grounds on September 17. The contributions this year were down from last year's total of \$113,000, despite this year's record crowd. Proceeds from this auction will be sent to the West Bank, Haiti and Chad for health and agricultural relief projects.

Margaret Loewen Reimer of Kit chener, Ontario, began September 1 as acting editor and manager of the Mennonite Reporter for one year while Ron Reimer takes a leave of absence.

Darrell Reimer has become interim associate editor of the Mennonite Brethren Herald. He is a member of Westwood Community Church. **Fred Koop** will work half-time on design and layout for the paper.

Disaster aid: Mennonite Central Committee is responding to disasters caused by hurricane and heavy monsoon rains. Aid will be sent to Jamaica, devastated by Hurricane Gilbert, in the form of house and roof-building materials. Vegetable seed kits will be sent to families in Bangladesh suffering from the recent floods there, while 45 tons of milk powder, 15,000 blankets and clothing, soap, school kits and sewing kits are being sent to Sudan, where many displaced people are in camps because of torrential August rains which caused extensive flooding.

Dr. Reginald Bibby, the leading sociologist of religion in Canada, author of *Fragmented Gods: The Poverty and Potential of Religion in Canada*, will be the featured speaker at the 25th anniversary of MCC in Canada, to be held in Winnipeg, September 15-16, 1989.

Altona lawyer **Harry Wiens** has been appointed to conduct a review of a Winnipeg group home, Winnserv Incorporated. It is hoped that the review will result in improvements in standards and procedures for all group homes in Manitoba.

A new **Hanover-Steinbach Historical Society** was established at the beginning of September. Charter members include Harry Fast, Delbert Plett, Roy Loewen, Art Rempel, Ernie Friesen and John Dyck, author of a biography of Oberschulz Jacob Peters.

Richard Klassen, a farmer and businessman from Sanford, has been appointed as one of five commissioners of the Canadian Wheat Board. Klassen has served for 2 1/2 years as one of three commissioners of the Canadian Grain Commission. He is also a former chairman of Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corp, a position he held from 1978 to 1982.

Karen Loewen of Winnipeg, wife of Jeff Loewen and daughter of Paul and Marlene Neustaedter, has been awarded a University of Manitoba graduate fellowship. Karen is studying in the Masters of Business Administration program at the University of Manitoba.



David and Mary Bergen of Winnipeg are beginning a three-year Mennonite Central Committee assignment in Thailand. David will coordinate the English-teaching program at Phanat Nikhom refugee camp and Mary will be at home with their two children Hilary and Nicolas. Mary received a bachelor's degree in psychology and religious studies from the University of Winnipeg. David received a bachelor's degree in French from the University of Winnipeg. David was last employed as a teacher in Winnipeg. The Bergens are members of Aberdeen Church in Winnipeg. Mary's parents are Doris and Herman Loewen of Winnipeg. David's parents are Elsie and Jacob Bergen of Hamilton, Ontario.



Marilyn Heinrichs of Niverville is beginning a three-year Mennonite Central Committee assignment in Menouf, Egypt, where she will be working as a nurse instructor at Harpur Memorial Hospital. Heinrichs previously served with MCC in Sudan. She received a bachelor's degree in nursing from the University of Alberta in Edmonton. Heinrichs was last employed as a relief nurse in northern Manitoba with Health and Welfare Canada, medical services branch. She is a member of Niverville Mennonite Brethren Church. Her parents are Herman and Susie Heinrichs of Niverville.



LaVerna and Tim Reimer of Winnipeg will begin three-year Mennonite Central Committee assignments in West Berlin, Germany, in March 1989. The Reimers will be dealing with East/West relations in the context of local churches. They will be relating to churches in West and East Berlin and elsewhere in East Germany. The Reimers previously served with MCC Canada as SALT unit leaders in Winnipeg. Tim received a master's degree in religion from the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, a bachelor's degree in philosophy from the University of Winnipeg and a bachelor's degree in religious studies from Mennonite Brethren Bible College in Winnipeg. The Reimers are both graduates of Steinbach Bible College. The Reimers are members of Aberdeen Evangelical Mennonite Church in Winnipeg. Their children are Diedre and Tobin. LaVerna's parents are Dave and Susie Eidse. Tim's parents are Mary and Peter Reimer of Winnipeg.



Henriette and James Schellenberg of Winnipeg are beginning two-year Mennonite Central Committee assignments in Unna-Massen, West Germany, where they will be working with Umsiedler, immigrants from the Soviet Union to the West. Schellenbergs were last employed as teachers in Winnipeg. They are members of Douglas Mennonite Church in Winnipeg. Henriette's mother is Sonja Klassen of Winnipeg. James' parents are Dave and Trudy Schellenberg of Winkler.

Iris Kehler-Reimer, most recently of Winnipeg, began a two-year Mennonite Central Committee Local Voluntary Service assignment in Winnipeg in July. Kehler-Reimer, originally from

Coordinator at the Young Parents Community Centre, an agency which offers support to young families. Prior to joining MCC she was a student at the University of Winnipeg. She is a member of the Blumenort Evangelical Mennonite Church. With her husband, Todd, she attends the Aberdeen Evangelical Mennonite Church in Winnipeg.

Martha Rempel of Winkler, began a two-year Mennonite Central Committee assignment in Winnipeg, in August. She is serving as mail clerk at the MCC's Canadian headquarters. She is a member of the Winkler Evangelical Mennonite Mission Church.

Dan and Rita Klassen most recently of Winnipeg, began a two-year Mennonite Central Committee assignment in Vancouver in September. The Klassens, originally from Abbotsford, will be serving as leaders at the Peace Mennonite Church-sponsored SALT (Serve and Learn Together) unit. The Klassens recently graduated from the Canadian Mennonite Bible College in Winnipeg, where both received their Bachelor of Theology degrees. They were last employed at the Mennonite Collegiate Institute in Gretna, where they served as Residence Life Coordinators. He is a member of the Ebenezer Mennonite Church and she is a member of the King Road Mennonite Brethren Church, both in Clearbrook, B.C.

Travis Reimer of Winnipeg began a three-year Mennonite Central Committee assignment in Winnipeg in August. Reimer, formerly pastor of the Winnipeg's Westwood Mennonite Brethren Church, is serving as director of MCC's Canadian Mental Health Programs. He and his wife, Lois, have three children. He is a member of the Westwood Mennonite Brethren Church.

John Bock, former assistant deputy minister of corrections, was presented with the 1988 Lieutenant Governor's medal for public administration in September. The award is designed to recognize exceptional achievement in public administration. Dr. Bock resigned from government and has since accepted an appointment in Central America with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

COMING EVENTS

November 21-23: Kristkindlmarkt. Clearspring Village. Steinbach.

November 25-26: MCC Annual Meeting. Winnipeg.

November 26: Mennonite Literary Society Annual Meeting. Birchwood Inn. 9:30 a.m.

December 5-7: Kristkindlmarkt. Sponsored by the German-Canadian Congress. St. Vital Shopping Centre.

December 11: Winnipeg Singers Christmas Concert. Crescent Fort Rouge United Church. 8 p.m.

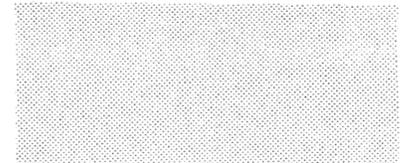
ANNUAL MEETING Mennonite Literary Society, Inc.

Will be held **SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 26**, at 10 a.m. at the Birchwood Inn, on Portage Avenue.

Anyone interested in attending, should call the office at 786 2289 for information.

Have you ever moved and forgotten your mirrors?

To change your address simply cut out the mailing label which appears on this magazine, and affix it to the space below:



and write in your new address:

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and then send it to our office:

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207-1317A
Winnipeg R3G 0V3

REVIEW

A Mennonite odyssey

Friesen, Rhinehart. A Mennonite Odyssey. Winnipeg: Hyperion Press, 1988. With illustrations by Cliff Derksen. Paperback, 124 pp. \$12.95.

Reviewed by **Andre Oberle**

Those readers who have always been intrigued by the story of the Mennonite migrations to North America and their settlement in Manitoba, but who have been hitherto intimidated by largely historical accounts of these events, will welcome this new book by Rhinehart Friesen with enthusiasm.

For most of his life Dr. Friesen was a well-known obstetrician. When the time came for the retirement from his profession he decided to devote himself more intensely to what had up to then been only a hobby: creative writing. In the meantime he has had several works published and the present book is a most welcome addition.

In his introduction to the book the author states that his main purpose in writing this work was to keep alive for his children and grandchildren the stories and anecdotes circulated within the family. In his work Friesen presents 14 episodes dealing with the move of the Jacob Friesen family from the Russian colonies to Manitoba. These episodes are largely presented in the form of dialogues, and that technique gives the whole work a very dramatic character. Twelve of the episodes are based on the memories passed down by the author's mother and grandmother, while the first two are based on the diaries of Franz Harder and the hitherto unpublished memoirs of Mrs. Gerhard Hiebert.

In a concise historical introduction Friesen sets the framework for his tale. He briefly sketches the history of the Mennonites up to the 1870's in the Russian colonies. While this is a very brief summary of events, it will prove very helpful to those readers who do not have a thorough knowledge of the history of the Mennonites and of those events that led to their migrations to North America.

The actual story of the Friesen family begins in 1874 in Russia and traces the toilsome odyssey of Margareta and Jacob Friesen and their children to Manitoba, coming to a conclusion in 1918 in Manitoba. Friesen's account shows the

incredible hardships that had to be endured by the early settlers. He examines in a painful and most immediate way how their utopian expectations became tempered by the terrible hardships of their long trip to Manitoba and by the disillusionment of the cruel confrontation with their new environment. He traces how the Friesen family slowly and against all odds establishes a farm on the East Reserve and then is led to make the painful decision to start all over again on the West Reserve. Eventually, through sheer perseverance and aided by an unsurmountable faith, the family does become prosperous. We also witness how the family in this process gradually absorbs the "worldly" ideas and values of the "outside" world. At the end of this tale the children, more attuned to the new ways, take over the business and home their parents have established to strive for ever greater success. The parents have played their appointed part and the time has come for the next generation to carry on the work begun.

During all their hardships the Friesens never lose their faith in God. They are convinced that it was the Lord who brought them to this new country and that He would protect and establish them, despite all the immediate hardships, in their new Jerusalem. It is this unshakable faith that keeps them going in the face of all adversity. Friesen's tale is a powerful affirmation of that faith.

The book is profusely illustrated with drawings by Cliff Derksen. The simple and often stark illustrations augment the text in a very effective manner. Derksen has managed in a compelling way to catch the most dramatic highlights of the account.

Mennonite Odyssey makes excellent reading and is highly recommended to all who would like to find out more about the Mennonite heritage without fighting their way through historical accounts. The work is an attempt to recreate for the modern reader the atmosphere of the time and the way our ancestors thought. Friesen's lively account will be of interest to all mature readers.

Andre Oberle is associate professor and chair of the department of Germanic studies at the University of Winnipeg. This book is available at Mennonite Books, 1217A Portage Avenue, Winnipeg.

YOUR WORD

Youthful reminder

When I was fourteen years old I worked on a farm in Manitou. My mother, who had my younger brother with her, worked as a housekeeper at Kaleida, some distance away from Manitou. Kaleida was an "English" district. Whenever my mother called me by telephone her employer was shocked that the telephone would transmit in Low German. He could not understand that that gadget on the wall would take such abuse.

I was reminded of this incident when I read in the "ForeWord" (MM, 18, 1): "Winkler is known as a 'Mennonite' town, though exactly what that means is not entirely clear because the population is not exclusively Mennonite." This statement reveals an astonishing naivete with regards to the demographic composition of rural Manitoba.

Residents of Steinbach, Grunthal and Landmark know that their neighbouring towns of Ste. Anne, Lorette, St. Malo and St. Pierre are French, and they in turn know their neighbouring towns as "Mennonite."

Winkler, Horndean and Altona are Mennonite, neighbouring Rosenfeld is rarely labelled "Mennonite" because about half of its population is German-Lutheran. Formerly Morden was "English," but a resident of that town recently said to me: "Morden is turning into a Mennonite town."

I lived in Winkler for several years and among my schoolmates were Bob Edgar, son of the "English" banker in town and later manager of a bank in Altona, and Joe Gladstone, son of a Jewish merchant in Winkler and now a businessman in Winnipeg. I am sure both think of Winkler as a "Mennonite" town. If you asked them, they would even say it in impeccable Low German.

Victor Peters,
Winnipeg

Leserbrief

"There are no easy answers," ueberschrieb Ruth Vogt ihren Artikel im Aprilheft.

Nicht nur ist die Antwort auf die Frage, ob Abtreibung legalisiert werden sollte,

nicht leicht, sie bedarf geradezu einer salomonischen Weisheit, finde ich. Und man sollte sie sich nicht dadurch erleichtern, dass man eine wesentliche Tatsache verdrängt.

Es geht naemlich um nichts Geringeres, als um die Entscheidung darueber, ob wir bereit sind, menschliches Leben zu toeten, um einer Schwangeren zu helfen. In Deutschland will man den verharmlosenden Begriff "Schwangerschaftsunterbrechung" ersetzen durch die sachlich richtige Bezeichnung "Toetung menschlichen Lebens."

Wenn wir naemlich davon ausgehen, dass ein Embryo kein menschliches Lebewesen ist, dann faellt die Entscheidung, ihn aus dem Mutterleib zu entfernen, nicht allzu schwer und man braucht sein christliches Gewissen nicht sonderlich zu belasten.

Doch ist das der Fall? Ist ein Embryo wirklich nicht lebendig? Und ist es statthaft, ihn im Zweifelsfall einfach fuer leblos zu erklaren, um danach zur Tagesordnung ueberzugehen? Es empfiehlt sich, vor der Abgabe einer solchen Erklarung den Todeskampf des kleinen Wesens, das man aus dem Uterus gerissen hat, mit eignen Augen einmal anzusehen...

Nein, vom Augenblick der Entstehung an ist der Embryo ein Lebewesen. Von welchem anderem Zeitpunkt waere er es denn sonst wohl? Auf diese Frage gibt es nur widerspruechliche akademische Antworten, die allesamt nicht ueberzeugen.

Wir moegen nun gute Gruende haben, diesen Embryo zu toeten. Ruth Vogt erinnert zu Recht daran, dass die Gesellschaft mit einer Schwangeren, zumal der ledigen, bisweilen inhuman und unschristlich verfaehrt. Man braucht nur an Goethes "Gretchen" zu denken, um sich das Ausmass der Not vor Augen zu fuehren, in die eine Schwangers geraten kann.

Und doch bleibt die Abtreibung eine Toetung, auch wenn diese nicht auf dem elektrischen Stuhl, sondern im OP stattfindet.

Wenn wir also eine Abtreibung fuer berechtigt halten, dann muessen wir auch den Mut und die Ehrlichkeit aufbringen, sie beim richtigen Namen zu nennen.

Beschwichtigungen helfen hier nicht weiter; schon eher unser Verantwortungsbewusstsein, und zwar Verantwortung sowohl fuer die Schwangere als auch fuer ihr ungeborenes Kind.

Hedi Knoop,
Germany

Wir bringen hiermit ein Gedicht, das uns während des Sommers erreichte und das wortgetreu, wenn nicht ganz liniengetreu wiedergegeben wird. Red.

Nobel muß die Welt zugrunde gehen

KANADA ist ein hoch kulturelles Land und hat Schulen und Hochschulen hat Kirchen die aller verschiedensten Sorten also ein religiöses Volk mit Bildung und auch Leute mit Doktor-Titel mit Technik und Wissenschaft kein rückständiger Typ und gerade deswegen wundert es mich daß sich dieses strebsame tüchtige Volk von der Unterwelt ich meine

Häusereinbrüche bei Tag und
Nacht gefallen läßt Straßenüberfälle
Fenstereinschlagen Kirchenplündern Autos
am hellen Tag verwüsten Schaden anrichten was
Millionen von Dollar im Jahr
ausmachen und der Steuerzahler muß
das bezahlen ist das nicht Himmel-schreiend

Frauen und Mädchen werden die Handtaschen
beim Busstop aus den Händen gerissen
hat der kanadische

Bürger denn keinen Schutz
vor dem Ungeziefer?
Wenn der Pensionär sein Geld nicht kann in der Kommode
legen und auch nicht in der Matratze aufbewahren
sondern muß es in der Unterwäsche bei sich tragen
bei Tag und Nacht und auch die Frauen und das
in einem kulturellen Land und man schämt sich nicht
einmal mehr sind wir schon so weit herunter gerutscht
und an Händen und Füßen gefesselt und der Unterwelt
ausgeliefert die nicht an Gott und auch nicht an den Teufel
glaubt sind wir nicht schon mit unserer lieben Freiheit
bis zur ansteckenden Aids Krankheit angelangt soll das
alles noch nicht pilgern? Wird der liebe Gott diese Freiheit
ungestraft lassen?

Zufriedenheit verlaß mich
nicht!

von Jacob Siemens, Winnipeg

Fonn Oolt Woare

fonn Agnes Wall

Etj kaun mie noch dentje aus etj onn-jefää fief Joa oolt wea. Etj saut aum Kjää-tjedesch onn kjitjt too woo miene Mame Kjijeltjedeajch untrold onn doabie too sitj haulf opp stelles en bät piepad. See piepad emma wann äa daut scheen jintj. Mie ess soo aus wann ditt daut easchte Mol wea, woo etj mie äa soo rajcht betjitjt. Mie leetet äa sea schmock, oba etj docht äa leetet aul oolt. Daut wea je uck een-doont — etj wea äa Kjint onn see wea miene Mame. See wea oolt, etj wea junk. Soo must daut senne. Too dee Tiet mott see onnjefää fääre enne dartijch jewäse senne.

Waut es oolt? Woo fäl Joare mott eena läwa bott eena wertlijch oolt ess? Onse Rejierung meent 65 — dann jäwe see Lied fe oolt senne Jeld — maunjchmol uck aul bediedent ea. Dee Biebel sajcht wann eena 70 woat, ess daut goot. Een enjelschet Sprejchwuat sajcht eena ess soo oolt aus eena sitj feelt. Mensche unja dartijch saje daut oba nijch. Etj hia daut fonn Soone, dee daut Hoa aunfangt grau too woare ooda utfelt; l ooda Soone, dee aul nijch mea soo steil gone aus see daut mol deede. Etj weet nijch woo etj ditt Sprejchwuat festone saul, wiels etj weet nijch woo eena sitj feele sull, wann eena eascht oolt ess.

Aus etj eenmol aunfonk School too hoole, fegaute dee kjeene Aunfenja auf onn too mol, daut see nijch Tus weare onn nande mie "Mama." Aus dee Joare donn mau soo febie jejlitscht weare, säde see opp eenmol "Oorna" ooda "Granny" too mie. Aus see noch aunfonge enn miene School Ukrainsch too unjarejchte, nande dee Kjinja mie uck "Baba."

"Ditt jriest je nu aul gauns ut," säd etj onn head opp, enne School too oabeide.

Aundre dochte nu fleijcht etj wea oolt, oba etj wea mie nijch sejcha. Wann etj no Mame spatseare jintj, kunn etj daut seene. See wea oolt, nijch etj. Dee Bewies wea kloa wiels see säd mie foaken fää. Blooss junge Mensche woat fääjesajcht.

Aus etj nijch mea bie dee Oabeit wea onn dee Kjinja weare uck aula fonn Tus, waut nu? Nu haud etj too aulahaunt. Tiet. Mien Läwe lang haud etj nijch soo fäl Tiet jehaut.

"Sull etj mie waut leare ooda meenst

etj sie aul too oolt?" fruach etj mienen Robert.

"Du meenst je emma, du motst waut schriewe," säd he. "Etj ha'ne oole Schriewmaschien emm Kjalla stone. Lea die doch doa bowe drucke. Wann du daut leascht, best du noch nijch too oolt fe mie."

Daut drucke-leare wea äwajens leijchta jesajcht aus jedone. Etj jintj no Owentschool doatoo. Dee Leararin, jinja aus mien eilsta Sän, kijjt mie soo fonne Sied aun. See wea too heeflijch mie too froage aus etj mie opplattst febiestad haud? See naum aun daut miene Finjasch noch nijch too stiew weare onn wees mie wua etj opp dee Maschien too dretje haud soo daut dee schriewe wudd. See wort meist stolt opp mie wiels no en poa Moonat haud see mie daut biejebrocht.

Onn etj wist nu daut etj noch nijch too oolt wea onn wull daut nu uck nijch soo

schwind woare. Etj wea direkt huach-näsijch jeworde, soo sea, daut mie dee oole Schriewmaschien nijch goot wea onn Robrt must mie too Wienachte eene niee kjeepe. Hee wea soo jescheit daut hee mie nijch fruach aus sitj daut noch fe mie loone wudd.

Nu kunn etj leijchta onn schwinda schriewe. Waut wea doa too schriewe? Etj must mie äwent opp plautdietsch schriewe leare onn hold mie däm Hermaun Rampel sien Buack fää. Nu schriew etj pienijch plautdietsche Jeschijchte.

Wäjjen oolt. Mame ess nu 95 Joa jeworde. Wann etj no äa spatseare go kaun etj seene, daut see aul rajcht oolt jeworde ess. Daut ess je enndoont — etj sie äa Kjint onn see ess miene Mame. Soo mott daut senne. See ess oolt onn doawäjjen sie etj junk.

mm

Zur Diskussion:

Menschen und Tiere

„Wir müssen nicht vergessen,“ sagte der Mann am Radio, „daß wir Tiere sind.“ Ho! Wartemal, was hat er denn da gesagt?

Es sprach ein Mann, ein Naturwissenschaftler, darüber, daß die natürliche Welt sehr am Menschen leidet. Der industrielle Mensch beutet die Natur aus und verdirbt dabei Luft, Wasser, Bodenbestände an Bäume und sonst vieles. Daß der Mensch etwas Besseres sei, etwas Höheres als die Tiere, hat ihm offensichtlich nicht davon abgehalten, so etwas zu tun.

Er ist ja der Herr der Schöpfung, haben wir gehört. Er soll sich den Erdboden untertan machen. E Robert hat der Mensch die Welt und, zu einem gewissen Grad ausgeraubt und ausgebeutet. Jetzt bekommt er es langsam mit der Angst zu tun. Wie soll er sich in der neuen Situation verhalten?

Da klingt die Parole, der Mensch sei ja ein Tier, schon etwas anders. Als Tier müßte er *mit anderen Tieren* leben, nicht über sie herrschen. Er müßte die Luft und das Wasser auch mit anderen Kreaturen teilen. Es klingt fast so, als wenn jetzt ein Tier zu sein ein Schritt vorwärts, oder aufwärts bedeuten müßte!

Oder besteht noch die Möglichkeit zu beweisen, daß der Mensch höher steht? Höher nicht nur in einem Herrschersinn, sondern in Einsicht und Erkenntnis. Um die Welt zu erhalten müssen wir im besten Sinne des Wortes *menschlich* denken und handeln. Das heißt aber in der gegenwärtigen Situation, daß wir unseren Sinn ändern müssen. Heute, mehr als je zuvor, ist die Farbe der Hoffnung ein natürliches Grün. **VGD**

OUR WORD

There is still a long way to go before retirement is truly fair

In prehistoric times life expectancy was about 18 years, in ancient Greece 30, among early European settlers in North America 35, and not until 1900 did it reach 55. Obviously, until quite recently there was no place for retirement as we understand it.

How, then, were the elderly regarded and treated in former times? It is widely thought, possibly mistakenly, that early man was a brutish being completely occupied by the struggle for survival with no time for the less fortunate old or weak. On the other hand there are presently existing primitive societies where the elderly are not considered useless but are greatly respected for their wisdom. Their longer life experience has made them experts at observing the position of the sun and stars and changes in nature. These observations help them make important decisions regarding when to plant crops or move to another hunting ground. Their opinion may be so highly rated that they are regarded as custodians of the wisdom of their ancestors and even their gods.

In better organized societies, providing for those unable to help themselves had to be limited to the extent that the community as a whole produced a surplus. Survival of the family or clan required that the more productive adults receive priority for food over the elderly. We know, for example, that Inuit and other societies sometimes abandoned an old member on the trail or that such an individual of his or her own volition wandered away from the camp. That the heroic characters in these stories actually 'acted of their own volition' is open to question as we have only the survivors' word for it.

Until the end of the nineteenth century most people in industrial Europe and Britain started work at an early age and continued until they dropped. In farming societies (read Mennonite) the family of the child who was to take over the farm usually lived in the parent's home, caring for them as they aged and gradually taking over the management of the farm. (Would it be unkind and cynical to suggest that the anticipated inheritance tended to promote filial love?)

In present usage the word, 'retirement,' describes a stage in life much like 'infancy,' 'childhood' or 'adolescence,' It is a later stage in which people, when they get older, will (should?) withdraw from active productive and remunerative work. Along with this goes the idea of pensions, that is, income from savings, their former employer, or society in general, which will at least in part replace earnings from employment.

Various small pension schemes grew up in Great Britain during the 1800s. At first these applied only to government white collar workers, possibly because few manual laborers were expected to live long enough to qualify. Canada's first major legislation in this field, the Old Age Pension Act of 1927, established a national, non-contributory, means-tested plan providing \$20 a month to persons after age 70. At present, by means of Old Age Security, the (means-tested) Guaranteed Income Supplement, and Spouses Allowance Program, the Federal Government covers basic needs. Contributory Canada/Quebec Pension Plan, a variety of company

pensions, and private savings encouraged by tax incentives like Registered Retirement Savings Plans are designed to provide a somewhat better standard of living.

Two deficiencies stand out in this system. There is too little provision for the effects of inflation; no matter how well he has planned, the retiree had better not live too long or he will find himself living below the poverty level.

I used 'he' advisedly in the above sentence because the way our pension system treats women is its other glaring deficiency. Typically the woman interrupts her 'working' life to bear and raise several babies. Then she tries to fill two roles by working part-time outside the home. Even if she succeeds in increasing this to full-time, her job tends to be a poorly paid one. Soon after the children leave home entirely her husband (if she still has one) retires, perhaps because of ill health. Then he dies and she finds that employers consider her too old for any but the most menial of jobs. With such a work history her savings and contributions to pension plans are small. But she still has a life expectancy of many years. Twenty per cent of widowed, divorced, and single women over the age of 65 depend entirely on OAS and GIS, and an almost insignificant provincial supplement.

Seniors themselves are increasingly influencing the direction this new social experiment, called retirement, is taking. One wholesome development is that they are establishing more and stronger advocacy groups of their own to look after their interests. Emphasis seems to be changing from pensions and financial affairs in general to matters like health in all its aspects, independent living arrangements, discrimination, bereavement, and perhaps most importantly, use of time. The idea that retirement constitutes a well-deserved rest from years of toil has itself been retired.

There can be no doubt that in many ways the elderly benefit from the pensions which accompany retirement. Their standard of living is higher. They maintain their independence longer. They are almost certainly healthier and will live longer. It is harder to tell whether they are happier because of retirement, however, as it is difficult to measure contentment or happiness. If suicide can be taken as a measurement of extreme unhappiness, then the following figures may be meaningful. Men of eighty are 23 times as likely to kill themselves as men of forty. Since the First World War when retirement was not yet the rule, suicides in the United States have decreased by one third, but this reduction is scarcely noticeable among those over sixty, that is, those affected by retirement.

Economists warn that the experiment stands on shaky financial foundations. The entire scheme is based on a huge transfer of funds from the young to the elderly. This produces a potential for intergenerational conflict roughly in proportion to the percentage of unproductive elderly. The 1981 census showed that less than eight per cent of the population was over 65. By 2010, when the bulge of the baby boom generation reaches that age, estimates run to near 20 per cent. To baby boomers who read this I would like to suggest that in 2010 when your grandchildren are struggling with mortgage payments, they will not be happy when they calculate what proportion of the cost of your holiday trip to Hawaii comes out of their taxes.

— Rhinehart Friesen



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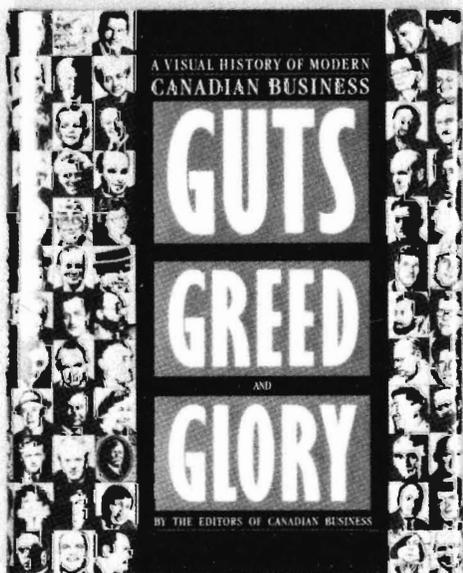
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